

Rostrum Voice of Youth – Background Advice to Participants

Request from Teacher:

I have a student preparing a speech for the Rostrum Voice of Youth.

They have asked me for help and I do not know much about this competition, but have read the information on your website.

I was wondering what the students have to do in their speech. Do they have to define what the term means to them? Do they have to give examples of the term from their everyday life? I am unsure, as they are, as to what they must mention in their speech.

Any information that you have that can shed light on this would be greatly appreciated,

Reply:

The speech does not have to conform to any particular process.

The approaches contestants take vary widely; some are amusing, some philosophical, some a mixture.

What the adjudicators will really be impressed by is a blend of some of the following qualities:

- A speech with a message or purpose.
- A speech which may move the audience in some way (such as a profound message, an insight - personal insights are very well received - humour relevant to the topic is good too, as long as the speech is much more than a string of jokes).
- Originality.
- Imagination.
- Freshness. (e.g. Don't speak on something such as saving the environment unless you have a new and compelling approach to solving the problem as the adjudicators have heard all of the conventional views before.)
- Good command of language.
- Possibly not just a string of facts that can be found on Wikipedia; there are many other websites to explore as well as conventional resources to be searched.
- A series of facts that lead to a conclusion are excellent.
- A logical argument for a particular cause (but you can never be sure of the bias of any audience so politics can, but need not be, be a minefield! Nevertheless, social issues are often well presented and well received.)
- A speech that 'speaks' to the audience, but doesn't 'preach'.
- A speech (or talk) that really relates to the topic.
- An entertaining talk (that relates to the topic).
- A really gripping opening and a firm and decisive conclusion will favourably influence the adjudicators.

Clearly your student will want to define the terms, but I would caution against being caught into simply defining the terms - the last thing you would want is to be so caught up in definitions as to be boring. But, explaining what the topic really (truly) means to them would be good.

It is, after all, a speech (refreshing, vibrant, entertaining, pushing the boundaries, informing, motivating, convincing, entertaining, logical and imaginative) that will win the day - it is not a debate.

Oh, winners rarely, if ever, cover ALL the above desirable characteristics, so please don't think the task is impossibly difficult. I have known people to speak sensibly, convincingly and movingly about issues such as euthanasia. Humour here might not be appropriate, so you do not have to "tick all the boxes".