

# What is Speech?

Speech is a Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) sponsored activity.  
Students compete in one or more of the following 13 categories:

## MSHSL Speech Categories

### Creative Expression

Students write and perform their own 10-minute piece of original writing (although 20% of the material may come from other sources). The mood of the writing may be serious or humorous. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

### Drama, Poetry, and Prose Interpretation

In these three categories, students choose a serious piece of literature and perform an 10-minute interpretation of it. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

### Humorous Interpretation

In this category, students choose a humorous piece of literature and perform an 10-minute interpretation of it. The selection may be taken from prose, poetry, or a play, as long as the mood is essentially humorous. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

### Duo Interpretation

This category pairs two students together to perform an interpretation of prose, drama, or poetry. The mood may be serious, humorous, or both; students are not limited in the number of characters they may perform in the 10-minute time period. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

### Extemporaneous Reading

Students read aloud various 7-minute selections from a book of either poetry or prose (your choice) interpreting the reading in such a way as to add meaning and interest. Students are given a list of story selections and poems at the start of the season that will be used at all competitions. Each tournament will require the reading of 3-4 of those stories or compilations of poems.

### Storytelling

Students retell selected folk stories in their own words, interpreting and performing various characters during the 7-minute retelling. Students are given a list of stories at the start of the season that will be used at all competitions. Each tournament will require the telling of 3-4 of those stories.

### Original Oratory

Students in this category research a topic of their choosing, and then write their own 10-minute speech on that topic. The intent of the speech is to persuade, and while the speech may contain elements of humor, the mood is essentially serious. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

### Informative

Students research a topic of their choosing, and then write their own 10-minute speech on that topic. The intent of the speech is to inform, and most speeches are supported by a visual aids, though VAs are not required. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

### Great Speeches

Students choose a speech that was delivered by someone else, and analyze why the speech is considered to be "great". The 10-minute performance will include portions of the original great speech interspersed with the student's research and analysis of the speech. Students perform the same selection at every tournament during the season.

### Extemporaneous Speaking

Students build research files on current events, and then deliver 7-minute speeches based on questions related to national or international politics (your choice). At each tournament, students will draw questions of national or international interest, and will then have 30 minutes to formulate their response using the research files they have created. Each round of competition will draw from new questions.

### Discussion

Students build research files about a pre-selected topic (selected by the MSHSL, not the student) and then participate in round-table discussions of related sub-topics with 5-7 other students. Students are given an outline of topics and sub-topics at the start of the season, and each tournament will draw from 3-4 of those sub-topics.