# **2024 Frederick Douglass Oratorical Contest Official Rules**

* Students must reside in the United States, Canada, or Ireland in order to participate in this contest.
* The contest will be held between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on the following days:
  + Wednesday, December 4th On-Line
  + Thursday, December 5th On-Line
  + Friday, December 6th In Person
  + Saturday, December 7th In Person
* NPS staff does their best to schedule students who live in other time zones at times that are close to their regular school day but there is no guarantee that we will be able to accommodate everyone’s schedules.
* The site reserves the right to add an additional day for the contest on Tuesday, December 3rd to accommodate additional students.
* Contestants should memorize and deliver an excerpt of one of the four speeches featured on the Frederick Douglass NHS website [Annual Oratorical Contest - Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)](https://www.nps.gov/frdo/learn/kidsyouth/oratorical-contest.htm).
* Students are permitted to dress up in costume appropriate to the time period or the role however, costumes are not required. Since this is a speech competition, the emphasis of the contest is on the delivery, accuracy, and emotional appeal to the audience. No points will be given for costumes or props.
* Deaf students will have an ASL sign language interpreter present to communicate any greetings and directions from the moderator to the students and to translate the speech from ASL to English for the judges.
* Students should be standing when they present their speeches (unless they request an accommodation) and they will be judged on their posture and presence as they present the speech.
* Speeches must be memorized. Students may not read from cue cards, computer screens or teleprompters and they may not be prompted by another individual to help them remember lines, etc. Students will be disqualified for reading their speeches and/or receiving prompts/help from someone else.
* For students participating on-line, it is okay to have a parent help you run the technology or to assist you with a phone, iPad or computer camera to make sure you look your best while you give your speech on-line. If the judges feel that a student is reading their speech, they will be disqualified from the contest.
* Students must begin by introducing themselves and will receive a deduction in points for not including the following in their introduction:
  + Name
  + Age
  + Where they are from (city/state or city/country in the case of Irish or Canadian Students)
  + School Attended
  + Name of the speech that they will be reciting. Students may also choose to say something about the speech in the introduction such as when and where Douglass delivered the speech.
* Students must meet the meet the minimum time requirements for their speech while not going over time. A judge will begin the timer as soon as a contestant completes the introduction and begins giving the speech. ***A one-point deduction will be taken for every 10 seconds that a student is under or over the time required for their division.***
* During the contest, the contestant may request a 30 second timeout for a penalty of 2.5 points to regain composure or remember part of his/her speech. The timer for the overall speech length will be paused during the timeout period however once a student has gone 30 seconds over the maximum length of a speech for their division level, they will be asked to stop. If the student does not request a “time out,” the clock will continue to keep time.
* A contestant who reads their speech from note cards, paper, cue cards, computer screens, etc.…will be disqualified. **Speeches must be given from memory**.
* Contestants must be on time. Students may incur a penalty or be disqualified for a late arrival. More details will be sent to all contestants once they are selected.
* The National Park Service will notify all winners within one week of the completion of the contest and park staff may follow up by telephone for additional communication. After all students are notified by email, a competed listing of all winners will be posted on the park’s website.
* All judges’ rulings are final.
* National Park Service retains the right to amend the rules of the contest before the start of the contest. Students will be notified of any changes to the rules prior to the beginning of the competition.
* Students registering after November 16th deadline may not be admitted to the contest.