

# Oratorical Contest

## District Chair Packet



### Purpose

Since its start in 1928, the Oratorical contest has become the longest-running program sponsored by Optimist International. The contest is designed for youth to gain experience in public speaking and provide them with the opportunity to compete for a college scholarship.

### District Contests

Districts may choose to hold combined gender or separate gender contests. The decision must be made during the fourth quarter District conference. There is no minimum or maximum number of years a District must hold their selected type of contest. **Clubs, Zones and Regions are required to conduct the type of contest chosen by the District.**

### How to Enter

Interested students should prepare a 4 to 5 minute speech on the pre-assigned topic to be presented at their local Optimist Club's contest. The speeches are judged at the Club level, Zone level, Regional level (if needed) and then at the District level.

### Eligibility – **NEW CRITERIA!**

The contest is open to students under the age of 18 as of December 31 of the 2011-2012 school year (December 31st, 2011) who have not yet graduated from high school or the equivalent

### Topic

“How my Optimism Helps me Overcome Obstacles”

### Minimum Number of Participants

Combined gender Zone, Regional and District contests must have no fewer than three participants. Separate gender Zone, Regional and District contests must have no less than six participants (three boys and three girls).

In cases where the minimum number of 3 contestants at the **Zone or Regional** contest cannot be met, there are two options:

- A. Send winners directly to the next level of the contest.  
If your Zone or Regional competition has at least 3 contestants of one gender, you can hold the contest for that gender and send the winner on to the next level. Again, if there are less than 3 contestants for either gender, please forward them to the next level of competition.
- B. Combine Zone or Regional level contests.

### Contest Deadlines

Club contest date is set by the Club Chair, once the Zone and District dates have been obtained. Zone contest date is set by the District Oratorical Chair with the Lieutenant Governors to occur prior to the District contest date.

The District contest date is set by the District Oratorical Chair. **The deadline to submit District winners to Optimist International is June 15, 2012.**

District winners will be notified by a letter from Optimist International between June 15th and July 31st. Districts shall notify the Programs department by May 15th if they would like winner notification to be delayed.

### Prizes

Scholarships are awarded to students in the United States and the Caribbean in US dollars and in Canadian dollars for Canadian students.

#### Club level - medallion

Clubs are allowed to give monetary awards of up to \$500 per winner for the Oratorical contest in addition to the official medallions. The Club level awards may be given in the form of a scholarship, savings bond or cash prize but are completely discretionary.

\*Disclaimer - Clubs planning to present cash or savings bond awards to student winners should first consult the association for their state or province that coordinates scholastic activities and competitions to determine if such payments would result in the recipient's forfeiture of amateur status. If a student loses their amateur status, they may be unable to compete in collegiate athletics and activities.

#### Zone and Regional level - plaque

#### District level - plaque and a college scholarship

Plaques should be ordered directly from Promotions Corall.

Scholarship amounts may vary. Combined gender Districts may award two \$2,500 scholarships or one each in the amount of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000. Districts with separate gender contests award each boy and girl first-place winner a \$2,500 scholarship.

Districts choosing to increase funding for the scholarships or fund additional scholarships will need to manage those funds through other resources. Optimist International will not handle the awarding of any scholarships not funded by the Optimist International Foundations. The responsibility for record-keeping and awarding of additional funds or scholarships will be the Districts. Districts may choose to hold the additional funds in District accounts or contribute those funds to the



Optimist International Foundations. Individual donors and Clubs will receive lifetime credit for gifts for increased or additional scholarships.

The Foundations will process requests from the Districts to have scholarship funds returned to them. Requests must be in writing and specify the type of scholarship and the amount. The Foundations will not award the scholarships or write checks to the individual scholarship recipients or their schools.

### **Judges' Criteria and Duties**

Select three qualified judges who are not acquainted with the contestants. At the Club level, the judges may be Optimist Members. At all other levels of the competition, judges must be non-Optimists. Judges should have expertise in the field of public speaking. Always have a back-up judge, just in case someone gets sick. Judges are also potential new Members, so don't forget to recruit them!

The Oratorical Contest Chair supplies each judge with a copy of the rules and the judging forms. Judges should never discuss or compare their impressions of the speakers or their scores. Each judge must score independently from other judges and Optimists. No one is permitted to view the scores except the Oratorical Contest Chair.

### **Timekeepers**

One timekeeper should be appointed. This person can be an Optimist Club Member. The timekeeper is responsible for recording the official length of each speech and assessing penalties if needed, noting failure to announce the topic, verbal identification of nonoriginal material as noted in the typed copy of the speech and totaling all penalties on the timekeeper's score sheet. The timekeeper will need the official form, pen, stopwatch and a copy of each participant's speech. The completed timekeeper's score sheet is turned in to the Contest Chair to be included in the master scores of each speaker.

### **Handling Protests**

A Sergeant-at-Arms should be the contact for protests and given index cards and pens/pencils to distribute when necessary. Anyone who wishes to protest should raise their hand at the completion of the student's speech before the next speaker begins. The Sergeant-at-Arms gives the person protesting an index card and pen/pencil. The protest must be written on the card. The Sergeant-at-Arms collects the card as soon as it is completed. This process is repeated for any person who wishes to make a protest. The Contest Chair collects the protest cards before leaving the room to compile scores. Protests are addressed at that time by the Chair and decided. Any adjustments judges need to be aware of will be made at that time. This procedure allows the students to compete without interruption or embarrassment, allows for an accurate description of the protest to be reviewed and should prevent any disturbance or public discussion.

### **Videotaping Guidelines**

All Oratorical contests must be conducted live, not judged on videotape. However, you may allow for the use of one video camera at a contest to give participants a take-home copy of their speech. Each contestant shall have the option of having the camera off during his/her presentation. An Optimist Club Member should run the camera. A tape supplied by the Club or contestant is put into the camcorder at each break between speakers. The tape should be labeled with the speaker's order designation. When the speaker is finished, the tape is removed and a new one is inserted. This process is repeated for each child who wants a copy of their speech. A master copy could also be recorded of all speakers, then copied for contestants. This gives everyone the chance to have a copy of their speech, and allows the contestants to make their speech with minimal interference.



**The District Oratorical Contest Chair is responsible for all phases of the Oratorical Contest in the District. All District competition must be conducted by Optimists only, and this responsibility must not be delegated to outside groups.**

**Each Club should submit for each of their winners:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Zone/Regional/District Entry Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of speech
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of birth certificate or passport
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entry fee (if applicable).

**Zone Contests**

Zone contests will be held at times and places determined by the District. The Chairperson of the Zone contests will be determined by the District and supervised by the District Oratorical Contest Chair.

In cases where the minimum number of 3 contestants at the Zone contest cannot be met, there are two options:

- A. Send winners directly to the next level of the contest. If your Zone or Regional competition has at least 3 contestants of one gender, you can hold the contest for that gender and send the winner on to the next level. Again, if there are less than 3 contestants for either gender, please forward them to the next level of competition.
- B. Combine Zone or Regional level contests.

All Zone contests must comply with the official rules and only the Zone winners shall be eligible to compete at the Regional or District Contest. Each Club is allowed to send two contestants to the next level. If the District decides in advance to hold combined gender contests, the representation to the next level from each Club in that District can be from two boys, two girls or a boy and a girl. If the District decides in advance to hold separate contests for boys and girls, the representation from each Club to the next level will be from one boy and one girl only.

**After the Zone Contest**

The Zone Chair should:

- 1. Announce the winners to the audience and present their winner plaques.
- 2. Submit for each winner:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Completed Zone/Regional/
  - \_\_\_\_\_ District Entry Form
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of birth certificate or passport
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of speech
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Entry fee (if applicable)

**To the Regional (if applicable) or District Oratorical Chair**

**Regional Contest**

This is a mandatory level for Districts with 11 or more Zones, but it is optional for smaller Districts. This level is designed to reduce the contestant pool to 20 students. Depending upon District decision, this pool can be 10 boys and 10 girls (separate gender contest) or any combination of 20 contestants (combined gender contests).

The Regional Chair should:

- 1. Announce the winners to the audience and present their winner plaques.
- 2. Submit for each winner:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Completed Zone/Regional/
  - \_\_\_\_\_ District Entry Form
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of birth certificate or passport
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of speech
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Entry fee (if applicable)

**To the District Oratorical Chair**



## Contest Day Checklist

- Get to the contest location early and make sure:
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seating is sufficient
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Podium/lectern is present (with portable steps is suggested)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Microphone is working
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Awards are present
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Certificates are signed and present
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Video camera (optional) is set up in an appropriate place
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Assistants are aware of their responsibilities
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Sergeant-At-Arms are aware of their responsibilities in recording protest (see guidelines)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Contestant's briefing is held
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Judges' briefing is held
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Contestants draw letters for speaking order
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The emcee begins the contest on time

## Once All Speakers have Finished:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Judges and timekeepers total their individual scores for each contestant, sign their score sheets, and give them to the Contest Chair
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contest Chair leaves the room to review and rule on protests, and to complete scoring procedure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Announce the winners
- \_\_\_\_\_ Present each winner with their award and give the date and location of the next contest level
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduce the judges and timekeeper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take lots of pictures to use with postevent press releases
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have the first-place winners sign any required forms for the next contest level before they leave

## District Contest

The District administration shall determine the date and location of the District Contest. If District preliminary contests or regionals are necessary, they may be held as determined by the District administration, at locations other than at the site of the District Contest.

## After the District Contest

The District Chair should:

1. Announce the winners to the audience and present their winner plaques.
  2. Have the winners provide their social security numbers/SIN for the Winner's Information Form. Social Security numbers/SIN must be given for the District winners in order to aid in tracking of scholarship funds to colleges and universities.
  3. Have the District Governor sign each Winner's Information Form.
  4. **Submit for each winner:**
    - \_\_\_\_\_ **District Winner's Information Form**
    - \_\_\_\_\_ **Zone/Regional/District Entry Form**
    - \_\_\_\_\_ **Copy of birth certificate or passport**
    - \_\_\_\_\_ **Copy of speech**
- to:**

*(For United States & Caribbean Clubs)*

**Optimist International Programs  
Department • Attn: Oratorical Coordinator  
4494 Lindell Blvd. • St. Louis, MO 63108  
or fax to: 1-314-371-6006**

*(For Canadian Clubs)*

**Optimist International Canada  
5205, boul. Métropolitain Est,  
bureau 200  
Montréal, QC H1R127 • Canada  
or fax to: 1-514-721-1104**

**Please Note: Scholarships will not be processed until all paperwork has been completed in its entirety and received by Optimist International.**

# Application for 2011-2012 Optimist International Oratorical Contest

Name \_\_\_\_\_ M F  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ M F  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Have you participated in any other Optimist Club's Oratorical Contest this school year?  
 Yes  No

Contestant Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
I have studied the rules of the contest, and I will be bound by all of the requirements.  
Contestant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Permission: \_\_\_\_\_  
I give my permission for my child/ward to participate in this contest.  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Optimist Club Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Optimist Club Number \_\_\_\_\_

## Please send application to address below:

### Topic: "How my Optimism Helps me Overcome Obstacles"

#### Official Rules

##### Section I — General Rules

1. The Optimist International Oratorical contest will begin at the Club level, proceed to the Zone level and end with a contest at the District level.
2. Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club.
3. The official application must be completed by each contestant and submitted to the sponsoring Club's Contest Chair.
4. The District has the right to decide whether to have a combined gender contest or a separate gender contest.
5. No Zone, Regional or District level contest shall have fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants competing.
6. Optimist International has the right to edit, publish and record any speech used in any contest without payment to the author.

##### Section II — Qualifications For Contestants

1. The contest is open to students under the age of 18 as of December 31 of the 2011-2012 school year (December 31, 2011) who have not yet graduated from high school or the equivalent. Contestants must be educated in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. There is no minimum age.
2. A contestant is eligible to enter/compete in only one Optimist Oratorical contest during a contest year.
3. Each contestant shall prepare his or her own preparation of the speech and may make minor changes or improvements in the speech at any time.
4. A student who has won a District Oratorical scholarship is not eligible to compete at any level of the competition again.
5. All contestants at each level of the contest must furnish a copy of their birth certificate or passport with their entry before competing.

##### Section III — Contest Rules

1. All contestants must speak on the official topic.
2. A speech may be delivered in a language other than English if the language used is an official language of the country in which the sponsoring Club is located.
3. All contestants must state the official topic before beginning their speech in order for the timekeeper to record the exact time of the speech. A 3-point penalty is automatically assessed by the timekeeper for failure to state the official topic.
4. Any quotation or copyrighted material used in the speech must be identified verbally during the presentation and in the written copy of the speech with the original author's name. The contestant shall be fully responsible for the use of any quoted material and Optimist International shall assume no responsibility. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
5. The use of props, special costumes or clothing, or the use of prompters will not be permitted. The penalty will be disqualification. Notes and lecterns can be used if the contestant desires.
6. The time allowed will be not under 4 minutes or over 5 minutes. Contestants going over or under will not be cautioned, and will be penalized one point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time. This penalty will be determined by the official timekeeper.
7. Timing will begin immediately after the official topic is expressed. Any salutation to judges, audience, etc. should precede the announcement of the topic. Timing will stop when the contestant finishes.
8. No reference can be made that identifies the student, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. This will result in a deduction of 5 points or a fraction of based on the degree of identification.
9. Contestants shall not be identified by name or

sponsoring Clubs until after the last oration has been presented and the judges and timekeeper have left the room.

10. Any protest in the conduct at any level of this contest must be made immediately after the condition is noted. Protests received after the next contestant has been introduced, or in the case of the last contestant, after the judges leave to total the scores, will not be accepted under any circumstances.
11. The Contest Chairperson will decide all protests in accordance with the official rules. The decision of the Contest Chair is final and no higher appeals will be recognized. In the case of Club contests, the Club Contest Chair has this authority. In the case of Zone and District contests, the final authority is vested in the District Contest Chair. The Zone Chair has the authority to handle protests that may arise during the Zone competition with the District Chair having the final authority.

##### Section IV — Scoring

Scoring in all Club, Zone and District contests will conform to the following criteria.

1. Poise – appearance and personality: 20 points
2. Content of Speech – subject adherence, theme, delivery, logic and color: 35 points
3. Delivery & Presentation – voice, volume, pronunciation, gestures, eye contact, sincerity and emphasis: 35 points
4. Overall Effectiveness – appeal, impression, attitude and effect: 10 points

##### Section V — Penalties

1. Failure to announce the official topic - 3 points
2. Failure to identify non-original material - disqualification
3. Use of props, etc. – disqualification
4. Time penalties – 1 point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time

5. Self-identification – 5 points or fraction of based on degree of identification

##### Section VI — Awards

1. Club level – medallion
2. Zone level – plaque
3. Regional level – plaque
4. District – plaque and scholarship
  - A. Each winner of the District level contest will receive a scholarship for use at a college, university or trade school only. In a combined gender contest, there will be two winners awarded \$2,500 each, or three winners awarded scholarships of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively for first, second and third place. In Districts conducting separate gender contests, the first-place boy and girl will receive a scholarship of \$2,500.
  - B. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
  - C. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International. D. Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.

##### For more information contact:

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact phone or e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



# Official Rules

## Section I – Contest Organization

1. All Optimist Oratorical contests must be sponsored in their entirety by an Optimist Club, Zone or District.
2. Zone and District contests should be conducted by the District administration.
3. An Optimist Club must be in good standing in its District and with Optimist International to be eligible to sponsor participants in the Zone or District Oratorical contests.
4. The contest will begin at the Club level, proceed to the Zone level, then the Regional level (if needed) and end with a contest at the District level.
5. Club Contest —
  - A. **A Club may be represented by only two qualified contestants. If the District decides in advance to hold combined gender contests, the representation to the next level from each Club in that District can be two boys, two girls or a boy and a girl. If the District decides in advance to hold separate gender contests, the representation from each Club to the next level will be one boy and one girl only.**
6. Zone contests —
  - A. Zone contests will be held at times and places determined by the District. The Chairperson of the Zone contests will be determined by the District and supervised by the District Oratorical Chair.
  - B. All Zone contests must comply with the official rules and only the Zone winners shall be eligible to compete at the District contest.
  - C. **Each Zone is allowed to send two contestants to the next level. If the District decides in advance to hold combined gender contests, the representation to the next level can be from two boys, two girls or a boy and a girl. If the District decides in advance to hold separate gender contests, the representation to the next level will be one boy and one girl only.**
  - D. Zone level contests shall have no fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants participating. If the District is holding a separate gender contest, there must be at least 3 boys and 3 girls participating.
  - E. In cases where the minimum number of 3 contestants at the Zone or Regional contest cannot be met, there are two options:
    - a. Send winners directly to the next level of the contest.  
If your Zone or Region has at least 3 of one

gender, you can hold the contest for that gender and send the winner on to the next level. Again, if there are less than 3 contestants for either gender, please forward them to the next level of competition.

b. Combine Zone or Regional level contests.

7. District Contest —
  - A. The District administration shall determine the date and location of the District contest.
  - B. If District preliminary contests or Regionals are necessary, they may be held as determined by the District administration, at locations other than at the site of the District contest.
  - C. The District Oratorical Chair is responsible for all phases of the Oratorical contest in the District. All District competitions must be conducted by Optimists only, and this responsibility must not be delegated to outside groups.
  - D. The District has the right to decide whether to hold a combined gender contest or separate gender contests.
  - E. District-level contests shall have no fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants participating. If the District is holding a separate gender contest, there must be at least 3 boys and 3 girls participating.

## Section II- General Rules

1. Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club.
2. The official application must be completed by each contestant and submitted to the sponsoring Club's Contest Chair.
3. No Zone, Regional or District-level contest shall have fewer than 3 or more than 20 contestants competing. If the District is holding a separate gender contest, there must be at least 3 boys and 3 girls participating. In cases where the minimum number of 3 contestants at the Zone or Regional contest cannot be met, there are two options:
  - a. Send winners directly to the next level of the contest.  
If your Zone or Region has at least 3 of one gender, you can hold the contest for that gender and send the winner on to the next level. Again, if there are less than 3 contestants for either gender, please forward them to the next level of competition.
  - b. Combine Zone or Regional level contests.
4. Optimist International has the right to edit, publish and record any speech used in any contest without payment to the author.



5. In keeping with the prestige of the Oratorical contest and Optimist International, alcoholic beverages shall not be sold, consumed or possessed at any Optimist Oratorical contest.
6. Any award bearing the words "Optimist Oratorical Contest," "Optimist International," "Friend of Youth" and/or the emblem of Optimist International must be obtained from Promotions Corall. These marks are owned by Optimist International and may not be manufactured without the permission of the Optimist International Board of Directors.

### **Section III - Qualifications for Contestants**

1. The contest is open to students under the age of 18 as of December 31 of the 2011-2012 school year (December 31, 2011) who have not yet graduated from high school or the equivalent. Contestants must be educated in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean.  
There is no minimum age.
  2. A contestant is eligible to enter/compete in only one Optimist Oratorical contest during a contest year (October 1 to September 30).
  3. Each contestant shall prepare his or her own speech and submit a written copy. The contestant may receive advice in the preparation of the speech and may make minor changes or improvements in the speech at any time.
  4. A student who has won a District Oratorical scholarship is not eligible to compete at any level of the competition again.
  5. All contestants at each level of the contest must furnish a copy of their birth certificate or passport with their entry before competing.
  6. Each contestant entered in the Zone or District contest must present one typewritten copy of their speech, double-spaced and identified with the contestant's name and sponsoring Optimist Club. This copy must be attached to the official entry form with the contestant's birth certificate or passport before competing in the contest. The contestant must sign the entry form.
- introduced as "Speaker A," "Speaker B," etc
  3. All contestants must speak on the official topic.
  4. A speech may be delivered in a language other than English if the language used is an official language of the country in which the sponsoring Club is located.
  5. All contestants must state the official topic before beginning their speech in order for the timekeeper to record the exact time of the speech. A 3-point penalty is automatically assessed by the timekeeper for failure to state the official topic.
  6. Any quotation or copyrighted material used in the speech must be identified verbally during the presentation and in the written copy of the speech with the original author's name. The contestant shall be fully responsible for the use of any quoted material and Optimist International shall assume no responsibility. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
  7. The use of props, special costumes or clothing, or the use of prompters will not be permitted. Th penalty will be disqualification. Notes and lecterns can be used if the contestant desires.
  8. The time allowed will be not under 4 minutes or over 5 minutes. Contestants going over or under will not be cautioned, and will be penalized one point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time. These penalties will be determined by the official timekeeper.
  9. Timing will begin immediately after the official topic is expressed. Any salutation to judges, audience, etc, should precede the announcement of the topic. Timing will stop when the contestant finishes.
  10. No reference can be made that identifies the student, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. This will result in a deduction of 5 points or a fraction of based on the degree of identification.
  11. An interval of at least one minute shall be allowed between contestants.
  12. At all District final contests, a wireless and lectern microphone will be available for contestant's use, if desired.
  13. No spectator may enter or leave the audience while a contestant is speaking. The audience must be alerted to these rules before the competition begins, and at various intervals, by the Contest Chair. A Sergeant-at-Arms should be appointed to enforce these rules.
  14. Contestants shall not be identified by name or sponsoring Clubs until after the last oration has been

### **Section IV - Contest Rules**

1. All contestants must receive a copy of the official rules and be instructed to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the rules.
2. The Contest Chair, prior to the beginning of the contest, shall conduct a drawing with all the contestants present for the speaking order. All contestants will then be



presented and the judges and timekeeper have left the room.

15. No contest shall have more than 20 contestants competing. Depending upon District decision, this pool can be 10 boys and 10 girls (separate gender contests) or any combination of 20 contestants (combined gender contests). When a contest has more than 20 contestants, preliminary contests, in turn, shall have no more than 20 contestants.
16. In the event that a first-place winner in a Club or Zone contest cannot compete in a subsequent contest for any reason, the second-place winner shall be declared as an alternate contestant.
17. Any protest in the conduct at any level of this contest must be made immediately after the condition is noted. Protests received after the next contestant has been introduced, or in the case of the last contestant, after the judges leave to total the scores, will not be accepted under any circumstances.
18. The Contest Chairperson will decide all protests in accordance with the official rules. The decision of the Contest Chair is final and no higher appeals will be recognized. In the case of Club contests, the Club Contest Chair has this authority. In the case of Zone and District contests, the final authority is vested in the District Contest Chair. The Zone Chair has the authority to handle protests that may arise during the Zone competition with the District Chair having the final authority.

## Section V – Judging and Timing

1. Each contest shall have three qualified judges and one timekeeper. At the Club level, judges may be Optimist Members. At all other levels of the competition, judges must be non-Optimists. Judges must not be acquainted with the contestants.
2. The judges and the timekeepers cannot be identified at the time of the contest or by advance publicity, but only after the last oration has been presented.
3. Judges and the timekeeper must use the official score sheets provided in this guide.
4. During the contest, the judges and timekeeper shall each be in different locations within the room.
5. The timekeeper shall be provided with a stopwatch or equivalent timing device.
6. Each judge must render a final decision on all contestants without consultation with other judges or any other

person. Each judge and timekeeper must sign his/her official score sheet.

7. The result of a judge's decision must be kept confidential. No one shall attempt to discuss a contestant's score with a judge.
8. After the judges have totaled their scores for each contestant, deducted penalty points and ranked each contestant, the judges shall sign their score sheets and give them to the Contest Chair. Each judge's score and rank for each contestant shall then be entered and tabulated on the Official Contest Report Form. From this form, the winner will be determined.
9. In all Club and Zone contests, the first, second and third runner-up contestants shall be determined and announced. However, if preliminary contests are held, then only the first-place winner will be announced; or if desired, the top two or three contestants, without reference to their actual position in the contest.
10. **Each District will declare either two or three winners. In combined gender contests, there will either be two winners awarded \$2,500 each, or three winners awarded scholarships of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively for first, second and third place. In Districts conducting separate gender contests, each first-place boy and girl will receive a scholarship of \$2,500.**
11. No judge may serve at more than one level of competition in the contest, i.e. Club, Zone, Regional or District.

## Section VI - Scoring

Scoring in all Club, Zone, Regional and District contests will conform to the following criteria.

Poise – appearance and personality: 20 points

Content of Speech – subject adherence, theme, content, logic and color: 35 points

Delivery & Presentation – voice, volume, pronunciation, gestures, eye contact, sincerity and emphasis: 35 points

Overall Effectiveness – appeal, impression, attitude and effect: 10 point

## Section VII – Penalties

1. Failure to announce the official topic - 3 points
2. Failure to identify non-original material - disqualification
3. Use of props, costume, etc. – disqualification



4. Time penalties – 1 point for each 15 seconds or fraction of over or under the allotted time
  5. Self-identification – 5 points or fraction of based on degree of identification
  6. Failure to complete speech – disqualification
- F. If a District chooses to raise the amount of a scholarship funded by the Optimist International Foundations or award additional scholarships, the District will be responsible for the management and awarding of those funds.

## Section VIII - Awards

The following are the only awards to be given in the Optimist International Oratorical Contest at all Club, Zone, Regional and District contests. These official Optimist International awards are available from Promotions Corall. Awards will not be ordered or sent automatically.

1. Club level – The official Optimist International medallions must be awarded. They may be awarded as first, second and third, or as first, second and runner-up. Any combination of medallions may be presented at the option of the Club. Clubs are allowed to give monetary awards of up to \$500 per winner in addition to the official medallions. The Club level awards may be given in the form of a scholarship, savings bond or cash prize but are completely discretionary.
2. Zone level – Zone winner plaques and Certificates of Participation
3. Regional level – Regional winner plaques and Certificates of Participation
4. District – District winner plaques
  - A. Each winner of the District level contest will receive a scholarship for use at a college, university or trade school only. In a combined gender contest, there will be two winners awarded \$2,500 each, or three winners awarded scholarships of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively for first, second and third place. In Districts conducting separate gender contests, the first-place boy and girl will receive a scholarship of \$2,500.
  - B. Scholarships are funded by the Optimist International Foundations of the United States and Canada.
  - C. All scholarships funded by the Optimist International Foundations will be administered by Optimist International.
  - D. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
  - E. Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.

# Visitor Sign-In Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bringing Out the Best in Kids. . .Join Today!**  
**[www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org)**



## Instructions to Judges

*The contest scoring has been divided into four phases. The general intent of each phase is as follows:*

**1. Poise .....20 points**

**2. Content of Speech .....35 points**

*(Subject Adherence, Theme, Logic, Content, Color)*

In this category just the material and its organization as presented by the contestant should be judged. A judge should consider the importance of adherence to the subject of the speech, the proper introduction and the logic and coherent development of the theme which brings about a successful and adequate conclusion. Figures of speech, similes, metaphors, colorful choice of words and zestful, descriptive phrases are important qualities.

**3. Delivery and Presentation .....35 points**

*(Voice, Pronunciation, Enunciation, Gestures, Emphasis)*

Delivery and presentation shall be judged on several factors. Voice quality should be recognized in tone, pitch and volume. Delivery should be continuous without hesitation or halting. Enunciation and pronunciation are most important. Gestures should be appraised for frequency, nature and effectiveness. Desire to be convincing should be obvious and emphasis should be well placed and dynamic.

**4. Overall Effectiveness .....10 points**

*(Appeal, Impression, Attitude, Effect)*

In this category the overall impression created by the speaker and the speech should be rated. In this phase of scoring, the general overall impression is given actual point values. While it must not be used as such, it is in making this particular score that a judge would most closely approach a conclusion that would actually rank the contestants in his or her own opinion.

## **Penalty Explanations**

- A. **Use of props, costumes, etc.** - The use of props, special costumes or clothing or the use of teleprompters will not be permitted. The penalty is disqualification. Notes and lecterns may be used if the speaker desires to do so.
- B. **Self identification** - To eliminate any potential bias or prejudice, no reference can be made that identifies the student, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. This will result in a deduction of 5 points or a fraction of based on the degree of self-identification.
- C. **Time penalties** - The time limit for speeches is not less than 4 minutes or over 5 minutes in length. Contestants going over or under the time limit will not be cautioned, but will be penalized one point for each 15 seconds or portion thereof over or under the limits. These penalties will be determined by the timekeeper.
- D. **Failure to announce the official topic at the beginning of the speech** - To assist the timekeeper in establishing a uniform starting time, all contestants must express the official topic of the speech before beginning the speech. A 3-point penalty must be assessed by the timekeeper for failure to state the official topic.
- E. **Failure to complete the speech.** Each contestant must complete the entire speech. The penalty is disqualification.
- F. **Failure to identify non-original material.** Any quotation or copyrighted material used must be identified verbally. The failure to do so will result in disqualification.



**Make 6 copies**

**Combined Male Female  
(Circle One)**

# Official Oratorical Contest Judge's Score Sheet

For all Club contests

<b>SPEAKERS' ORDER</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>
<b>Judging Criteria</b>										
<i>Poise</i> 20 points <i>(Appearance, Personality)</i>										
<i>Content of Speech</i> 35 points <i>(Subject Adherence, Theme, Logic, Content, Color)</i>										
<i>Delivery &amp; Presentation</i> 35 points <i>(Voice, Volume, Pronunciation, Gestures, Eye Contact, Sincerity, Emphasis)</i>										
<i>Overall Effectiveness</i> 10 points <i>(Appeal, Impression, Attitude, Effect)</i>										
<b>Total Judge's Points</b>										
<i>Each judge shall assess the following penalties against a contestant as infractions of the rules occur.</i>										
<b>Contestant</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>
Use of props, costume (Disqualification)										
Self-identification (1 to 5 points)										
<i>The timekeeper will assess the following penalties only after a judge has totaled the speech score for each contestant.</i>										
Time Penalties (1 point each 15 seconds or portion over or under official limits)										
Failure to announce the official topic at beginning of speech (3 points)										
Failure to complete speech (Disqualification)										
Failure to identify non-original material verbally (Disqualification)										
<b>Total Penalty Points</b>										
<b>Net scores of points</b> (no ties permitted)										
<b>Contestant's rank</b>										

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
*Judge's Name*





**Combined Male Female  
(Circle One)**

**Make 2 copies**

## Official Report Form

### **For all Zone, Regional and District contests**

The Oratorical Contest Chair should check the math for each contestant's score. Enter the final point grades and ranks on this report form. The Contest Chair should announce the results from this form. For preliminary contests, the Chair will name by letter the two or three best contestants without announcing first, second or third-place. For final contests, the Chair will name by letter the third, second then first-place winner.

Contestant's Speaking Order	First Judge		Second Judge		Third Judge		Total of Point Grades	Total of Rank	Place
	Point Grades	Rank	Point Grades	Rank	Point Grades	Rank			
<b>A</b>									
<b>B</b>									
<b>C</b>									
<b>D</b>									
<b>E</b>									
<b>F</b>									
<b>G</b>									
<b>H</b>									
<b>I</b>									
<b>J</b>									

To determine rank in Zone, Regional and District each judge ranks the speakers as 1, 2, 3, etc., according to their scores. Ties are not permitted. At the end of the contest, the Chair collects the judges' score sheets and checks the math. The point grade and position of rank for each contestant is entered on this form. The winning contestant is then determined as follows:

1. If any contestant is ranked first by a majority of the judges, he or she is automatically declared the winner.
2. All other contestants are ranked by the "total of rank" system. This means that the rank, not the points each judge has given each contestant, is added and this figure is placed in the Total of Rank column. First-place is determined by this means also, if no one qualifies under the method explained in #1 above. The lowest total wins first-place, the next lowest wins second-place and so on.
3. If a two-way tie results for any place, it is broken by a preferential vote. Using the rankings given on the ballots, a tabulation is made on the number of judges who placed one of the tied contestants higher than the other. Example: Two contestants, speakers D and H, are tied for third place and each has received a rank of nine.  
  
**Speaker H would be declared the third-place winner as two judges (#2 and 3) ranked H higher than speaker D, who would be ranked fourth in the contest.**
4. If a three-way tie results by the total of rank system, then and only then, are the point grades for each contestant totaled to break the three-way tie.

**Caution: Scores and rankings should be checked by a second person to ensure accuracy, but remember this information is confidential! Announcing winners incorrectly can be disastrous!**



**Make 2 copies**

**Combined Male Female  
(Circle One)**

## Zone/Regional/District Contest Worksheet

Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Facility \_\_\_\_\_  
District \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

It is the responsibility of the sponsoring Club to provide the Zone/Regional/District Entry Form, copy of the birth certificate or passport and the speech to the Zone Contest Chair. It is the responsibility of the Zone Contest Chair to provide this information to the District Chair.

<b>Speaking Order</b>	<b>Contestant's Name, Sponsoring Club Name &amp; Number</b>	<b>Entry Form Received</b>	<b>Birth Certificate or Passport Received</b>	<b>Copy of Speech Received</b>	<b>Place in Contest</b>

This form and its contents should be viewed by contest officials only.



**Make 2 copies**

**Combined Male Female  
(Circle One)**

## Official Zone/Regional/District Entry Form

**Be sure that your contestants are fully qualified to compete by filling in each line of this entry form. Your Club should complete all requirements including signatures. Attach the speech and a copy of the birth certificate or passport and submit them to the Chair of the next level at least two weeks prior to the contest date.**

District Oratorical Chair is \_\_\_\_\_

Contestant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### **To Club and District officers**

*"As a contestant, I received a copy of the official rules for the Optimist International Oratorical Contest and fully understand them. I agree to be bound by all requirements. I have prepared my own speech with limited assistance on the topic, and have given due credit in writing and verbally in my speech. I understand that any omission or violation of the rules on my part will mean immediate disqualification."*

Contestant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**The following contest information should be completed by the appropriate level's Chair as the paperwork progresses with the winner.**

Combined Gender Contest:

Number of youth in **Club** contest \_\_\_\_\_

Was Zone contest held?  yes  no

Number of youth in **Zone** contest \_\_\_\_\_

Number of youth in **Regional** contest \_\_\_\_\_

or Separate Gender Contest:

Number in **Club** contest \_\_\_\_\_ boys \_\_\_\_\_ girls

Was Zone contest held?  yes  no

Number in **Zone** contest \_\_\_\_\_ boys \_\_\_\_\_ girls

Number in **Regional** contest \_\_\_\_\_ boys \_\_\_\_\_ girls

### **For Club, Zone, Regional Chairs' signatures**

*"We, the undersigned, in full compliance with the Optimist International Oratorical Contest rules, enter this contestant in the Zone/Regional/District Contest. We understand that this form, the speech and a copy of the birth certificate or passport must be submitted to the Contest Chair before this contestant competes in the next level of the contest."*

Optimist Club of \_\_\_\_\_ District name \_\_\_\_\_

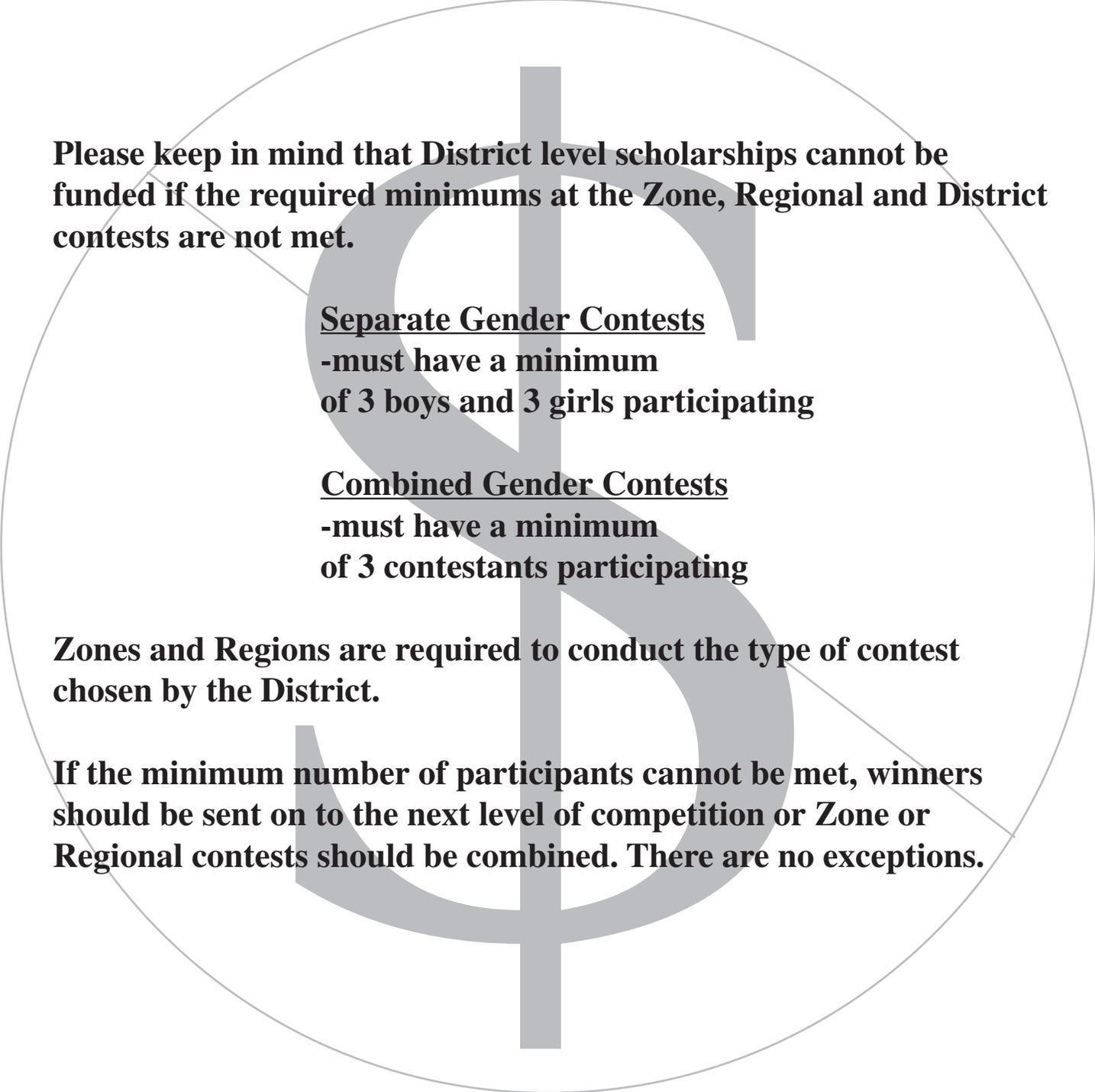
Club Number \_\_\_\_\_

Club President's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Club Contest Chair's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Chair's Signature (to enter Regional or District level) \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Chair's Signature (to enter District level) \_\_\_\_\_



**Please keep in mind that District level scholarships cannot be funded if the required minimums at the Zone, Regional and District contests are not met.**

**Separate Gender Contests**

**-must have a minimum of 3 boys and 3 girls participating**

**Combined Gender Contests**

**-must have a minimum of 3 contestants participating**

**Zones and Regions are required to conduct the type of contest chosen by the District.**

**If the minimum number of participants cannot be met, winners should be sent on to the next level of competition or Zone or Regional contests should be combined. There are no exceptions.**

Make 2 copies



Combined Male Female  
(Circle One)

## District Oratorical Winner's Information Form

### To Be Completed by the District Oratorical Chair Only

*Please print or type*

Name of District Winner \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ SSN/SIN \_\_\_\_\_  
month/day/year

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by the Optimist Club of \_\_\_\_\_

District Name & Number \_\_\_\_\_

Number of contestants in **District** contest:

Combined Gender contest: \_\_\_\_\_ youth **OR** Separate Gender contest: \_\_\_\_\_ boys and \_\_\_\_\_ girls

We certify that the above named contestant is the winner of the \_\_\_\_\_

District

Oratorical Contest conducted on \_\_\_\_\_

month/day/year

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

District Governor

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

District Oratorical Chair

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Submit this form (with all required signatures) along with the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Official Zone/Regional/District Entry Form

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy of Birth Certificate or Passport

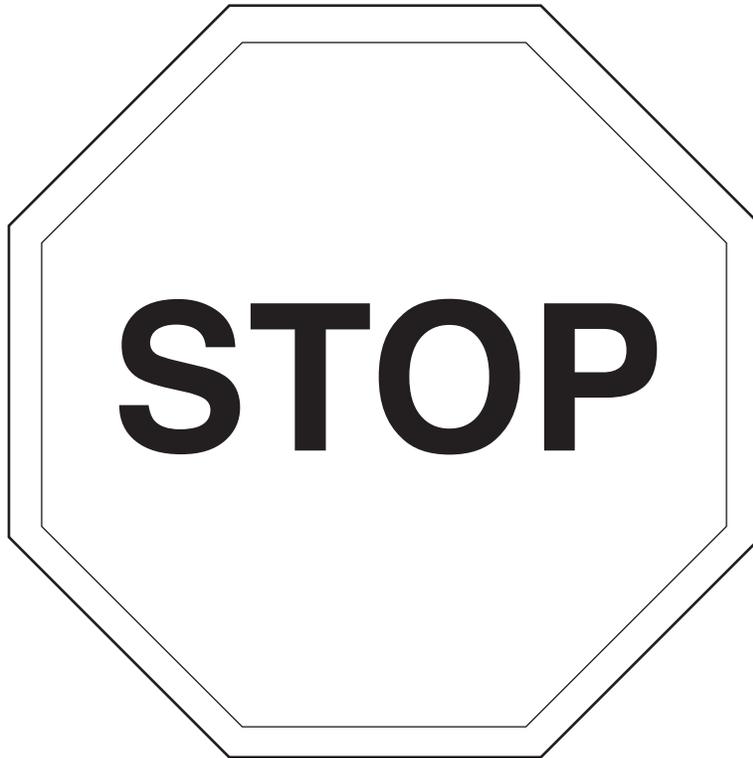
\_\_\_\_\_ Copy of Speech

To :

(For United States and Caribbean Clubs)  
Optimist International Programs Department  
Attn: Oratorical Coordinator  
4494 Lindell Blvd. • St. Louis, MO 63108  
or fax to: 1-314-371-6006

(For Canadian Clubs)  
Optimist International Canada  
5205, boul. Métropolitain Est, bureau 200  
Montréal, QC H1R127 • Canada  
or fax to: 1-514-721-1104

To be received no later than June 15, 2012!



**In order for District scholarships to be processed, District Chairs must submit the following for each winner:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Winner's Information Form

- **Must have Social Security Number or SIN (for Canadian Students)**
- **Must have District Chair and District Governor's signatures**
- **Must have number of students that competed in the District contest**

\_\_\_\_\_ Zone/Regional/District Entry Form

- **Must have number of students that participated in each level of the contest**
- **Must have appropriate signatures, including the contestant's**

\_\_\_\_\_ Birth Certificate or Passport (can be a copy, if legible)

- **Other age verification documents will **not** be accepted**

\_\_\_\_\_ Typed copy of speech

**To be received no later than June 15, 2012!**



# Oratorical Contest District Chair Evaluation Form

District Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of males \_\_\_\_\_, females \_\_\_\_\_, competing in contest.

Are you a first-time or repeating Chair? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your favorite part of the contest as Chair?

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What was your least favorite part of the contest as Chair?

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What was our opinion on this year's topic? Do you have any suggestions for future topics?

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What recommendations, if any, would you propose for improving the Oratorical contest?

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Please share any procedures that worked well for your Club.

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Please list any changes your club will make for next year's contest.

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**This form should be submitted to:**

**(For United States and Caribbean Clubs)**  
**Optimist International Programs Department**  
**Attn: Oratorical Coordinator**  
**4494 Lindell Blvd. • St. Louis, MO 63108**  
**or fax to: 1-314-371-6006**

**(For Canadian Clubs)**  
**Optimist International Canada**  
**5205, boul. Métropolitain Est, bureau 200**  
**Montréal, QC H1R127 • Canada**  
**or fax to: 1-514-721-1104**