



PROJECT TIMELINE

- Club decides to hold an Oratorical Contest
- Determine Tentative Date to hold the Oratorical Contest
Coordinate the date of the Club Oratorical contest with the school calendar and find out when the Zone and District Contest will be held. Club contest must be held before the Zone contest.
- Take brochures to local schools, home school associations, etc. to promote the contest.

12 Weeks Prior to Contest:

- Club decides location of the contest: Club meeting, school media center, auditorium, or other speech environment and confirms availability of date and time.
- Optional - Decide whether the Club will offer a monetary award.
If the Club decides to present cash or savings bond awards to student winners, they should first consult with 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. If you need assistance, ask a local English teacher or Debate coach if they can direct you to the appropriate organization.
- Create a proposed budget for the Oratorical Contest.

10 to 12 Weeks Prior to Contest:

- Print "Club Contest Program Planning Guide" off of the Publications page of the Optimist International website: [www.optimist.org/Members/Programs/Scholarship Contests/Oratorical Contest](http://www.optimist.org/Members/Programs/Scholarship%20Contests/Oratorical%20Contest)
- Contact District Oratorical Chair to see if the District is sponsoring a combined or separate gender contests. Optimist Clubs must sponsor the same type of contest as the District.
- Obtain posters and Applications. You can create your own posters. Applications can be printed from www.optimist.org. These items will promote the contest and encourage students to enter.
- Make available handouts of the rules and application including membership information to

familiarize program contacts with the organization. Rules and application are included in the Club Contest Program Planning Guide.

- Contact the Department of Education and ask for a contact name for local home-schooled students and send contest information to them.
- Contact the School Principal and ask them to make the Oratorical Contest a part of their curriculum.
- Contact local schools and provide details about the contest. Ask for permission to hang a poster and rule pad in the school. The English department head, Speech/Debate, or Drama teacher will ensure a good number of entries.
- Contact local youth Clubs such as Boy/Girl Scouts, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and JOI (Junior Optimist.)
- Contact the local PTA/PTO President to distribute information to parents about contest at a meeting.
- Contact local bookstores, libraries, coffeehouses, recreation centers and places where young people spend time and ask if they will display information about the contest.

8 Weeks Prior to Contest:

- Contact the Lt. Governor, Zone and/or District Oratorical Chair to discuss rules and contest procedures.
- The Zone Chair is normally the Lt. Governor and if you do not know who the District Chair is, look in the District directory. If he/she is not listed, contact the District Governor or Optimist International.
- Correspond with the District Chair for this year's entry fee for Clubs to submit winners to the Zone level contest.
- Ask for volunteers from the Club to fill other positions such as Contest Sergeant-At-Arms, Judges Coordinator, and Contestant Coordinator.
- Purchase Oratorical contest medallions and participation certificates from Shumsky (U.S. and Caribbean) at 877.648.2582 or Ansell Awards (Canada) at 800.565.7062.

4 Weeks Prior to Contest:

- Secure three qualified judges and timekeeper.
Club level judges and timekeeper may be Optimist Members. Some possibilities of individuals who are experienced in public speaking include: teachers (not from a participant's school), church leaders, business professionals, attorneys, judges, politicians, or media personalities.
- Determine a back-up judge to be used in case of an emergency.
- Give the judges/timekeeper a copy of the rules and "Judge's Score Sheet" and "Timekeeper's Score Sheet"(both are in the Club Planning Guide), along with membership information to familiarize them with the organization.
- If sponsoring separate gender contests and the number of contestants of either gender exceeds ten, a preliminary contest should be arranged.
- Contact the local newspaper and ask them to include contest details in their Community

Calendar section.

2 Weeks Prior to Contest:

- Send press release(s) to local media outlets – newspapers, radio and TV stations. A sample can be found on www.optimist.org.
- Give each of the judges a copy of the Score Sheet (included in the Club Contest Program Planning Guide).
- Verify that each contestant has prepared a speech which is at least four minutes and not more than five minutes in length on the contest topic. Verify that each participant is under the age of 18 as of October 1 of the current Optimist year.
- Make sure that contestants are notified that they will need to bring a copy of their birth certificate or passport, a copy of written speech, and Entry Application.
- Ensure that all invoices are paid.

One Week Prior to Contest:

- Meet or call each of the judges and the timekeeper to make sure they understand the judging procedures.
- Prepared enough squares of paper for speaking order drawings: A, B, C, D, etc.

Day of the Contest:

- Review contest day check list.
- Welcome contestants and use “Club Contest Worksheet” to record contestant’s documents. Ask all contestants upon arrival to submit their copy of birth certificate or passport, copy of written speech, and Entry Application. Ensure all information is filled out on Entry Application.
- Welcome the judges and timekeeper and provide contest “Official Score Sheets.” A secure meeting location should be defined for the contest chair and judges/timekeeper to complete score sheets after all oratories are completed.
- Contestants draw for alphabetical speaking order.
- Hold contest(s).
- Contest ranking and winners should be determined from scoring procedure in planning

guide.

- Present certificates to all contestants.
- Present medallions and (optional) monetary awards to the winners in contest: First, Second, Third.
- Present the judges and timekeeper with a certificate of appreciation or small gift to show the Club's appreciation of their work.
- Take photos!
- Give first and second place winners in contest(s) details about the Zone Contest.
- Complete the "Official Zone/Regional/District Entry Form" (contained in the Club Contest Program Planning Guide). The form must be signed by the student, Club President and Club Contest Chair.

Immediately After Contest

- Supply the Lt. Governor or Zone Contest Chair with the contestant-signed "Official Zone /Regional/ District Entry Form," a copy of speech, copy of birth certificate or passport, and District entry fee for each contestant's entry.
- Zone Contest Date is set by Lt. Governor or Zone Contest Chair.** Zone contest is held no later than (enter date: _____). District contest scheduled for (enter date: _____) at (enter place: _____).

1-3 Weeks After Club Contest

- Club Members show support by attending the Zone and District Contests.
- Send "Thank You" note or letter to school principal and/or teachers for their participation in the event.
- Send "Thank You" letter and membership information to judges and timekeeper.
- Send follow-up letter to parents of participants with Club membership information.
- Send article and picture to local media about awards presentation.
- Complete Evaluation Form (form available on the Optimist website) and send to Optimist International 4494 Lindell Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63108 or to the Canadian Service Centre.