



9-19 MAY  
2024



An Online Celebration of Speech & Drama  
[oratoryfestival.com](http://oratoryfestival.com)

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> International ORATORY FESTIVAL



Enter by  
8 April 2024

[oratoryfestival.com](http://oratoryfestival.com)



Affiliated to the British & International Federation of  
Festivals for Music, Dance & Speech



INTERNATIONAL  
ORATORY FESTIVAL

**MAY 2024**



# Welcome!

We're really excited to welcome you to the third year of the International Oratory Festival, an online celebration of speech and drama.

Do you love words?

Do you like to meet new people from around the world?

Do you like to think differently?

If you do, you've come to the right place!

We'll be holding Zoom events in a range of time zones from Thursday 9 May to Sunday 19 May 2024.

If you're between the ages of 6 and 18, you can enter our friendly competition in the following categories:

- **Poetry recital**
- **Your original poetry**
- **Shakespeare sonnet**
- **Prose reading**
- **Solo acting**
- **Public speaking**  
Presenting an argument,  
Speaking to inform & Impromptu
- **Live news report**



Everyone who takes part will be sent a beautiful digital certificate, and receive useful feedback to help you to develop as a speaker and performer.

We'll also be recognising the best speakers in every category, and you'll also be in the running to receive our Jubilee Trophy for 'Best in Festival'.

We can't wait to meet you!

*Debbie Alison Harold*

Chief Judges



Enter now at  
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Main entry deadline:  
8 April 2024

Entries subject to our  
rules (see pages 18-21)

# Our categories



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## Poetry recital

Enjoy performing the wonderful words from one of our great poems **page 9**

## Your original poetry

Perform poetry that you have composed yourself in our very own poetry slam **page 10**

## Shakespeare sonnet

Explore multitudes of language and expression in 14 lines by the Bard of Avon **ages 12-18 page 11**

## Prose reading

Read an excerpt from a novel or short story by a writer of your choice **page 12**

## Solo acting

Choose a section from your favourite play and wow us with your performance! **page 13**

## Public speaking Presenting an argument

Give a persuasive speech presenting one side of our topical issues, or a balanced argument considering both sides **page 14**

## Public speaking Speaking to inform

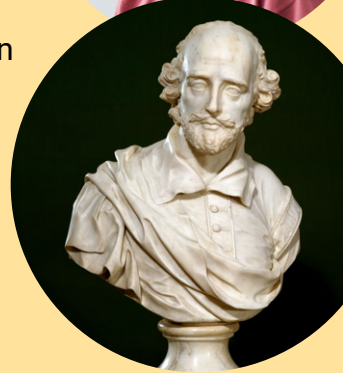
Deliver an interesting and informative speech about one of our topics **page 15**

## Public speaking Impromptu

Speak on a topical subject given to you 10 minutes before you speak! **ages 12-18 page 16**

## Live news report

"Going live in 5, 4, 3 ..."  
"This is the news ..."  
**ages 9-18 page 17**



**Enter now at**  
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£15 per entry

See page 5 for details of discounts for schools and group entries

# Age groups








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	6-8 Years	9-11 Years	12-14 Years	15-18 Years
 <b>Poetry recital</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
 <b>Your original poetry</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
 <b>Shakespeare sonnet</b>			✓	✓
 <b>Read from a story</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
 <b>Solo acting</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
 <b>Public speaking</b> Presenting an argument	✓	✓	✓	✓
 <b>Public speaking</b> Speaking to inform	✓	✓	✓	✓
 <b>Public speaking</b> Impromptu			✓	✓
 <b>Live news report</b>		✓	✓	✓

## Equal opportunities

Oratory can be great whatever your background, accent or nationality. **We welcome participants from around the globe on equal terms!** The International Oratory Festival is committed to an Equal Opportunities Policy:

-  Apart from age-linked categories, there are no restrictions in entry.
-  We also welcome candidates who are **neurodiverse or have additional needs**; special considerations will be made where appropriate. You can let us know more about this (including potential adjustments we might need to make) by email at [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com), or when we ask you to fill in a more detailed form about each entrant closer to the event.
-  We are always happy to discuss, learn and adapt our practices to enable all children and young people to be able to participate.
-  We welcome participation from any volunteers in the running of the festival.
-  Participation is open to anyone with a sincere interest in oratory.

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# How to enter

Entries are open from Monday 15 January 2024  
until the main closing date of **Monday 8 April 2024**

## Individual entries



This year, you'll choose session dates and times when you book, making scheduling simpler. Check out our festival diary for individual entrants on page 6 to find session dates and times that work for you.

Enter online and pay by credit/debit card, PayPal or money transfer:

**oratoryfestival.com**

If you have any questions or problems, get in touch with us at [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com).

 **£15** per entry

## Group entries



Schools and clubs are encouraged to book a group session where entries cost £10. This year, if you like, we can try to pair you with another group from a different country.

 **£10** per entry

with a minimum cost per session of £100

For institutions wanting to make over 20 entries, please contact [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com) to work out an additional discount

In previous years, we've had everything from a small club of 6 students, to institutions with over 150 entries, maximising participation in oratory from across their school.

In any one session, you can enter both different age groups and any mix of categories across **either** Poetry/Prose/Acting **or** Public Speaking/News.

Email us at [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com) and we'll liaise with you on convenient times for your sessions. Sessions longer than an hour can be broken up so each student doesn't have to be on the Zoom call for too long.

Closer to the time, we'll ask you to provide your students' details (including names and dates of birth).

Enter now at  
**oratoryfestival.com**

Main entry deadline:  
8 April 2024

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rules (see pages 18-21)









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## Festival diary for individual entrants

Individual events will be held between Saturday 11 May and Sunday 19 May. Times are given as UTC/BST, so a session advertised as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 Universal Coordinated Time, or 0900 British Summer Time<sup>1</sup>.



**Events in red:** Taking place in the afternoon/evening in Asia and Australasia, and in the morning in Europe and Africa

 UTC	 UK (British Summer Time)	 Central Europe	 Saudi Arabia	 India	 China	 Japan	 Australia (East)
	+1	+2	+3	+5:30	+8	+9	+10
0800	0900	1000	1100	1330	1600	1700	1800



**Events in blue:** Taking place in the afternoon/evening in Europe and Africa, and in the morning in the Americas

 USA (Pacific)	 Peru	 USA (Eastern)	 Argentina	 Brazil (Brasilia)	 UTC	 UK (British Summer Time)	 Central Europe	 Saudi Arabia
-7	-5	-4	-3			+1	+2	+3
0900	1100	1200	1300	1600	1700	1800	1900	1900

### Poetry, Prose & Acting

### Public Speaking & News

Saturday

11

Poetry recital (6-8 years) 0800/0900

Original poetry (6-8 & 9-11) 0930/1030

Poetry recital (9-11 & 12-14) 1100/1200

Present argument (6-8 & 9-11) 0800/0900

Present argument (12-14 years) 1000/1100

Sunday

12

Poetry recital (15-18) & Sonnets 0800/0900

Poetry recital (6-8 & 9-11) 0930/1030

Solo acting (12-14 & 15-18) 1100/1200

Prose & Acting (all ages) 1600/1700

News report (all ages) 0800/0900

Speak to inform (6-8 & 9-11 years) 0930/1030

Present argument (15-18 years) 1100/1200

Public speaking & News (all ages) 1600/1700

Monday

13

News report (all ages) 1600/1700

No individual events on Tuesday 14 May

Wednesday

15

Public Speaking & News (all ages) 0900/1000

Thursday

16

Poetry, Prose & Acting (all ages) 0900/1000

No individual events on Friday 17 May

Saturday

18

Solo acting (6-8 & 9-11) 0800/0900

Prose reading (6-8 & 9-11) 0930/1030

Solo acting (12-14 & 15-18) 1100/1200

Poetry (all categories & ages) 1600/1700

Speak to inform (12-14 & 15-18) 0800/0900

Impromptu (12-14 & 15-18) 0930/1030

Sunday

19

Prose reading (6-8 & 9-11) 0800/0900

Prose reading (12-14 & 15-18) 0930/1030

Original poetry (12-14 & 15-18) 1100/1200

Impromptu (12-14 & 15-18) 0800/0900

<sup>1</sup> It's entrants' responsibility to ensure you calculate your time difference correctly. Use a website like [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com) to help you check. Remember that, if your country uses a daylight saving time (aka clock change), the time difference from UTC in May may be different from when you book.

# Get ready!



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All oratory benefits from reading widely and from thorough research using various media. If you're reading a poem, read all the options in your category to find the one you like best. You could also read other works by the author you've chosen, or other works in a similar genre, to help develop your imagination and feel for words. Public speeches and news reports should also be well-informed. Use books, libraries, conversations, and the internet to generate ideas and make sure your speech includes accurate facts and reasoned opinions. If you're speaking in the Impromptu category, following the news and being widely read increases your all important general knowledge.

You may already have a teacher or coach to help you prepare. You can also visit our website for some handy videos that will help you understand what our judges are looking for, and how to wow your online audience with your oratory.

If you'd like some extra help, you can book Zoom coaching sessions at [oratoryfestival.com/practise](https://oratoryfestival.com/practise). One of our fun and engaging expert coaches<sup>1</sup> will help you practise for your category in a 1-on-1 session, or with a few of your friends. You'll build your skills, and gain confidence for your Festival performance.



On the day, you'll be welcomed to our Zoom by your friendly judge. You can be joined by up to two audience members<sup>2</sup>. During the session, you'll deliver your oratory, and hear other participants speak. The judges will give you all useful and positive spoken feedback.

After your round, you'll also receive individualised written feedback, and a stunning digital certificate to provide you with a record of your oratorical achievement.

Each session will have its own winner. At the end of the Festival we'll also announce Gold, Silver and Bronze awards for every category, and International 'Best in Category' Awards. The Jubilee Shield will be awarded to the best orator overall this year. However, in the International Oratory Festival, it's really true that everyone's a winner!

<sup>1</sup> Our coaching team overlaps with our judging team. However, we ensure the Festival is fair by making sure that noone is judged by someone who's helped coach them. <sup>2</sup> Audience members must use a different device, using headphones or in another room (see page 19)

Enter now at  
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8 April 2024

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# Our chief judges

At the International Festival of Oratory, we celebrate the power of the spoken word. Sure, we'll pick some winners, but the most important thing for us is giving you great feedback that will help you improve. We know that great oratory has the power to change the world, and our judges will help you do that even better.

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## Debbie Newman

### Public Speaking

Debbie is the founder and lead trainer of the Noisy Classroom, experts in teaching public speaking, debating and oratory in schools. Debbie has experience of coaching speech and debate around the world at all levels. She is a previous English national debating champion, president of the Cambridge Union Society and world champion schools debate coach. She has been on the faculty of the World Debate Institute, the International Debate Academy (IDAS) and the UK Debate Academy and is a former Head of the Centre for Speech and Debate at the English-Speaking Union in London.

Debbie is a qualified secondary teacher, and her focus is on speaking and listening in schools: both working with children, from 8-18, and also working with teachers to help build their skills and confidence. She has been a trustee of the English Speaking Board, a tutor at City Lit college, a primary school governor and a Speech and Debate committee member at the English-Speaking Union. In her spare time, she enjoys going to the theatre with her daughter and son.

## Alison Coates

### Poetry & Prose

Alison is passionate about oracy and communication, in all its forms, and has worked in this area for over 25 years. A graduate of the University of Lancaster, with Joint Honours in English and Drama, she ran her own Speech and Drama business for 17 years, preparing students for examinations, festivals, and drama school. Alison has worked in several schools teaching Speech and Drama and spent ten years as the Business Development Advisor for Speech with the English Speaking Board, also writing their three accredited debating qualifications during her time with the awarding organisation.

As well as the above, Alison has been lucky enough to travel across the UK and internationally as a trainer, assessor, and adjudicator for the English Speaking Board, the PiXL Club's *Up for Debate* programme, the Business and Professional Women's Public Speaking Competition, and others. Highlights have included time spent working in The Channel Islands, Belgium, Malta, Poland, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Shanghai and Trinidad and Tobago.



## Harold Raitt News & Acting

is a multi-talented speaker, director, filmmaker, singer and educator. He was nominated for a BAFTA (British Academy of Film & Television Arts) award for his films exploring life behind-the-scenes at London's National Theatre. He's directed several plays by Shakespeare, and he co-founded the innovative Great Shakespeare Debate with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-on-Avon. He now leads artistic and educational projects from his base in Central Scotland, with forthcoming youth and community work including a monthly livestreamed Youth News show, and productions of *Macbeth* and *Joseph & His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. As a speaker and debate coach, he regularly trains young people and adults across the UK and around the world, and co-developed the innovative *Up for Debate* programme with Debbie Newman. As a singer, pianist and lyricist he specialises in translating songs from global languages into fresh new English translations. The first volume of his New Anthology of Scottish Song (featuring settings of poems by Robert Burns) will be published this year.

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The three chief judges bring together an expert team of adjudicators, from our wide range of international contacts including champion debaters and top theatrical talent.





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# Poetry recital from memory

Perform words written by some of the greatest wordsmiths ever, from the 18th to the 21st centuries. Links to all of the poems are on our website at [oratoryfestival.com/poetry-recital](https://oratoryfestival.com/poetry-recital).



## 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Poetry recital from memory** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Saturday

**11**

**6-8 years** 0800/0900

**9-11 & 12-14 years** 1100/1200

Sunday

**12**

**15-18 years** 0800/0900

**6-8 & 9-11 years** 0930/1030

Thursday

**16**

**All ages** 0900/1000

Saturday

**18**

**All ages** 1600/1700

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
[oratoryfestival.com](https://oratoryfestival.com)

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

## 🗨️ What we reward

- ✓ Secure, well-memorised words
- ✓ Clarity and audibility
- ✓ Sensitivity to, and capturing of, mood and meaning
- ✓ Vocal variety which engages the audience and adds power to the words
- ✓ Thoughtful and appropriate use of pause
- ✓ Facial expressions which support the successful communication of the words

## 🗨️ 6-8 Years

Perform one of the following:

- a 'Forbidden Poem' by Tony Mitton
- b 'Daddy Fell into the Pond' by Alfred Noyes
- c 'Please do not feed the animals ...' by Robert Hull
- d 'Eletelephony' by Laura Elizabeth Richards
- e 'The News' by Michael Rosen

## 🗨️ 9-11 Years

Perform one of the following:

- a 'Please Mrs Butler' by Allan Ahlberg
- b 'Good Morning, Dear Students' by Kenn Nesbitt
- c 'The Language of Cat' by Rachel Rooney
- d 'Pumberley Pott's Unpredictable Niece' by Jack Prelutsky
- e 'Poetry Means the World to Me' by Tony Medina

## 🗨️ 12-14 Years

Perform one of the following:

- a 'Caged Bird' by Maya Angelou
- b 'The Thought Fox' by Ted Hughes
- c 'A Dream Within a Dream' by Edgar Allan Poe
- d 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' by William Wordsworth
- e 'How to Cut a Pomegranate' by Imtiaz Dharker

## 🗨️ 15-18 Years

Perform one of the following:

- a 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen
- b 'An Arundel Tomb' by Philip Larkin
- c 'To Autumn' by John Keats
- d 'Female Fashions for 1799' by Mary Robinson
- e 'the root word of babble is babel' by O-Jeremiah Agbaakin

Our membership of BIFF means that the copyright permissions for your performance are all taken care of, and the author will receive payment for use of their work where appropriate (see page 20) • All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.



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# Your original poetry from memory

## 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Your original poetry** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Saturday

**11**

**6-8 & 9-11 years** 0930/1030

Thursday

**16**

**All ages** 0900/1000

Saturday

**18**

**All ages** 1600/1700

Sunday

**19**

**12-14 & 15-18** 1100/1200

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
**oratoryfestival.com**

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

## 🗨️ What we reward

- ✓ Effective and original use of language and form, which leaves an impression on the audience
- ✓ Secure, well-memorised words
- ✓ Clarity and audibility
- ✓ Vocal variety which engages the audience and adds power to the words
- ✓ Thoughtful and appropriate use of pause
- ✓ Facial expressions which support the successful communication of the words

Sometimes performing other peoples' words just isn't enough. What do *you* want to say through the spoken word?

This category is very much about quality, rather than quantity! Make sure that every word is carefully chosen and expresses something unique and powerful.

You will need to provide us with a **written copy of your poem, exactly as you plan to perform it by 30 April 2024**. You will be sent full information about how to do this after the main entry deadline on 8 April 2024.



### 🗨️ 6-8 Years

Perform your own composition lasting **no more than 2 minutes**, but long enough to show variation and skillful use of language

### 🗨️ 9-11 Years

Perform your own composition lasting **no more than 2 minutes**, but long enough to show variation and skillful use of language

### 🗨️ 12-14 Years

Perform your own composition lasting **no more than 3 minutes**, but long enough to show variation and skillful use of language

### 🗨️ 15-18 Years

Perform your own composition lasting **no more than 4 minutes**, but long enough to show variation and skilful use of language

All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.



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# Shakespeare sonnet from memory

## 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Shakespeare sonnet from memory** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Sunday

**12**

**12-14 & 15-18 years** 0800/0900

Thursday

**16**

**12-14 & 15-18 years** 0900/1000

Saturday

**18**

**12-14 & 15-18 years** 1600/1700

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
**oratoryfestival.com**

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

## 🗨️ What we reward

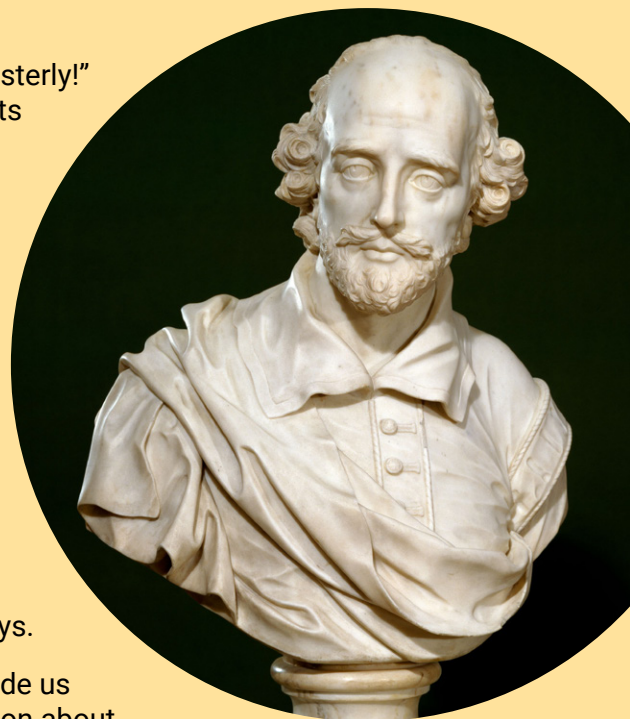
- ✓ Secure, well-memorised words
- ✓ Clarity and audibility
- ✓ Sensitivity to, and capturing of, mood and meaning
- ✓ Vocal variety which engages the audience and adds power to the words
- ✓ Thoughtful and appropriate use of pause
- ✓ Skilful handling of the volta (where the feeling of the sonnet 'turns') when appropriate
- ✓ Facial expressions which support the successful communication of the words

"Thou dost speak masterly!"

Shakespeare's sonnets are revered for a reason: infinities are explored in just fourteen lines ...

You're free to choose any of Shakespeare's complete sonnets. Your choice could be any one from his quarto of 154 sonnets, or any complete sonnet (of 14 lines) from his plays.

You will need to provide us with further information about which sonnet you have chosen by **30 April 2024**. You will be sent full information about how to do this after the main entry deadline on 8 April 2024.



## 🗨️ 12-14 Years

Perform any of Shakespeare's sonnets from memory

## 🗨️ 15-18 Years

Perform any of Shakespeare's sonnets from memory

All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.



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# Prose reading

Roam through the entirety of prose fiction, to choose an excerpt from any non-dramatic work of prose fiction. Novels, short stories or (for our 6-8 Years group) picture books are all possibilities. You can choose either a work originally written in English, or read a work from another language in an officially published English translation.



## 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Read from a story** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Sunday

12

All ages 1600/1700

Thursday

16

All ages 0900/1000

Saturday

18

6-8 & 9-11 years 0930/1030

Sunday

19

6-11 & 9-11 years 0800/0900

12-14 & 15-18 years 0930/1030

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
[oratoryfestival.com](http://oratoryfestival.com)

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

## 💬 What we reward

- ✓ An engaging and helpful introduction
- ✓ Familiarity with the text (to be read from a book, *not* memorised)
- ✓ Clarity, audibility and eye contact
- ✓ Sensitivity to, and capturing of, the mood
- ✓ Clear differentiation between narrative and dialogue
- ✓ Vocal variety which engages the audience and adds power to the words
- ✓ Thoughtful and appropriate use of pause
- ✓ Facial expressions which support the successful communication of the words

**Your selection should include both narrative and dialogue.** Choose a story that you have read in full, and that you really enjoy.

At the start of your time, you need to **give a brief introduction** to your excerpt, lasting no more than 30 seconds. This should help set the scene for members of the audience who aren't familiar with the story, and don't know what's already happened. Finally, **you should read your excerpt from a copy of the book** (either on paper or an electronic device), which you should be holding in front of you. This category rewards the important skill of reading engagingly from a book, rather than the different skill of memorising a text (which you can demonstrate in our poetry and solo acting categories).

You will need to provide us with **a copy of your extract, and details of the title and author** by **30 April 2024**. You will be sent full information about how to do this after the main entry deadline on 8 April 2024.

## 💬 6-8 Years

Perform an excerpt from a novel, short story or picture book, lasting **1 to 2 minutes** (including your introduction)

## 💬 9-11 Years

Perform an excerpt from a novel or short story, lasting **2 minutes** (including your introduction)

## 💬 12-14 Years

Perform an excerpt from a novel or short story, lasting **3 minutes** (including your introduction)

## 💬 15-18 Years

Perform an excerpt from a novel or short story, lasting **3 minutes** (including your introduction)

Our membership of BIFF means that the copyright permissions for your performance are all taken care of, and the author will receive payment for use of their work where appropriate. See page 19 for full details. • All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.

# Solo acting

Choose a **dramatic monologue** which you feel excited to perform. The section you choose should have been written as a monologue, and you're not allowed to alter your selection from the words originally written by the playwright.

Also new this year, at the start of your time, you'll need to **give a brief introduction** to your excerpt, lasting no more than 30 seconds. This should help set the scene for members of the audience who aren't familiar with your choice.

You will need to provide us with a **copy of your monologue, and details of the title and author** by **30 April 2024**. You will be sent full information about how to do this after the main entry deadline on 8 April 2024.

At the International Oratory Festival, our focus is on the words. Please don't wear any special costumes, just dress as you would for any other category.



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## 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Solo acting** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Sunday

**12**

**12-14 & 15-18 years** 1100/1200

**All ages** 1600/1700

Thursday

**16**

**All ages** 0900/1000

Saturday

**18**

**6-8 & 9-11 years** 0800/0900

**12-14 & 15-18 years** 1100/1200

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
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See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

## 💬 What we reward

- ✓ An engaging and helpful introduction
- ✓ Secure, well-memorised words
- ✓ Clarity and audibility
- ✓ A demonstrable understanding of character and situation
- ✓ Vocal variety which engages the audience and adds power to the words
- ✓ Use of appropriate movement, stance, facial expressions and gesture

### 💬 6-8 Years

Perform a monologue from a play lasting **up to 2 minutes** (including your introduction)

### 💬 9-11 Years

Perform a monologue from a play lasting **up to 3 minutes** (including your introduction)

### 💬 12-14 Years

Perform a monologue from a play lasting **up to 3 minutes** (including your introduction)

### 💬 15-18 Years

Perform a monologue from a play lasting **up to 4 minutes** (including your introduction)

All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.

# Public speaking

## Presenting an argument

Give a persuasive speech clearly presenting one side of one of an exciting and topical issue (for or against)<sup>1</sup>.



### 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Presenting an argument** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Saturday

**6-8 & 9-11 years** 0800/0900

**11**

**12-14 years** 1000/1100

Sunday

**15-18 years** 1100/1200

**12**

**All ages** 1600/1700

Wednesday

**All ages** 0900/1000

**15**

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
**oratoryfestival.com**

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

### 💬 What we reward

- ✓ A clear and reasonable stance for or against your issue
- ✓ Well chosen points which are clearly explained and supported by relevant evidence
- ✓ Language choices which engage the audience and add power to the speech
- ✓ Facial expressions and body language which support the successful communication of the words
- ✓ A well-thought out structure with a clear beginning, middle and end

### 💬 6-8 Years

Argue for or against the statement "it's better to live in the countryside than the city" in a speech lasting **2 minutes**.

### 💬 9-11 Years

Argue for or against the statement "we should send humans into space" in a speech lasting **3 minutes**.

### 💬 12-14 Years

Put forward your own argument on your choice of a contemporary moral or ethical issue, lasting **4 minutes**.

### 💬 15-18 Years

Put forward your own argument on your choice of a contemporary moral or ethical issue, lasting **5 minutes**.

<sup>1</sup> Entrants from previous years should note that we no longer accept a balanced argument presenting both sides of the argument in this category. Those of you who debate can think of this as being like a really good standalone First Proposition / Opening Government speech. Balance is still very important to us, though, and you can be rewarded for this skill in our 'Speaking to Inform' and 'News Report' categories.

All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.

# Public speaking

## Speaking to inform

What the world needs more now than ever is information we can all trust! But we are also always grateful when that information is presented in an interesting and engaging way. Engage the audience with an interesting and informative speech about one of our topics.



### 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Speaking to inform** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Sunday

**12****6-8 & 9-11 years** 0930/1030**All ages** 1600/1700

Wednesday

**15****All ages** 0900/1000

Saturday

**18****12-14 & 15-18 years** 0800/0900

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
**oratoryfestival.com**

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

### 💬 What we reward

- ✓ Clearly explained content which shares relevant information with the audience
- ✓ Language choices which engage the audience and add power to the speech
- ✓ Facial expressions and body language which support the successful communication of the words
- ✓ A well-thought out structure with a clear beginning, middle and end

### 💬 6-8 Years

Talk about “a species of animal that I am interested in” in an informative speech lasting **2 minutes**.

### 💬 9-11 Years

Talk about “an invention which changed the world” in an informative speech lasting **3 minutes**.

### 💬 12-14 Years

Talk about “a historical figure who deserves to be better known” in an informative speech lasting **4 minutes**.

### 💬 15-18 Years

Talk about “an issue facing young people today” in an informative speech lasting **5 minutes**.

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# Public speaking

## Impromptu

You'll speak on an exciting general interest topic which will be given to you by the festival organisers 10 minutes before you speak<sup>1</sup>. This is the perfect category for everyone who likes debating or thinking on your feet.

### 🕒 Festival dates

Enter **Impromptu** in one of one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Sunday

**12****12-14 & 15-18** 1600/1700

Wednesday

**15****12-14 & 15-18** 0900/1000

Saturday

**18****12-14 & 15-18** 0930/1030

Sunday

**19****12-14 & 15-18** 0800/0900

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
**oratoryfestival.com**

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

### 💬 What we reward

- ✓ Content which explores ideas that are relevant to the topic in an interesting way
- ✓ Language choices which engage the audience and add power to the speech
- ✓ Facial expressions and body language which support the successful communication of the words
- ✓ A well-thought out structure with a clear beginning, middle and end

### 💬 12-14 Years

Talk for **3 minutes**

### 💬 15-18 Years

Talk for **4 minutes**

<sup>1</sup> You'll be asked before you receive your topic to state that you will not receive any help during your preparation period from other people or from computers (including AI or chatbots).

All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.



# Live news report

Reporting on an exciting news story is a thrilling challenge. But it's also the gateway to a career as a journalist, one of the world's most interesting and important jobs.

From local problems like litter on your street or problems with your public transport links, through national issues like education and healthcare, and on to worldwide problems like the climate emergency or global peace: whatever your choice of news, we look forward to receiving your live report!

You can use notes while reporting, but try to maintain as much eye contact as possible with your camera throughout your report.



## 9-11 Years

Report on a local, national or global news story for **3 minutes**

## 12-14 Years

Report on a local, national or global news story for **4 minutes**

## 15-18 Years

Report on a local, national or global news story for **5 minutes**



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## 🕒 Festival dates in May

Enter **Live news report** in one of the events below. A session given as 0800/0900 starts at 0800 UTC and 0900 BST (British Summer Time).

Sunday

**12**

**All ages** 0800/0900

**All ages** 1600/1700

Monday

**13**

**All ages** 1600/1700

Wednesday

**15**

**All ages** 0900/1000

£15 per entry; enter by 8 April at  
**oratoryfestival.com**

See page 5 for details of our discounted rates for schools and larger groups

## 💬 What we reward

- ✓ A clear explanation of the key facts about your chosen story: who, what, where, when, why (and so on)
- ✓ Interesting details which further engage your audience
- ✓ Some use of relevant sources
- ✓ Language, facial expressions and body language which are suited to your story, and to your genre of news report
- ✓ A well-thought out structure with a clear beginning, middle and end

All entries are subject to our rules on page 18 to 21 • Entrants must be within the age bands on the first day of the festival. For example, to qualify as "9-11 Years Old", you must have your 9th birthday on or before 9 May 2024, and your 12th birthday must be after 9 May 2024.



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# Good to know!

The International Oratory Festival is fun! Our judges are really friendly, and will give you really useful feedback to ensure that you grow in confidence and can return to our next Festival as an even better orator.

That said, we do have some rules. Everyone who enters is required to abide by the full set of rules on our website at [oratoryfestival.com/rules](https://oratoryfestival.com/rules). The key ones are included below, along with some other helpful points:

## Language



The International Oratory Festival takes place using the English language. **We celebrate the range of accents and dialects used to speak English around the world.** We encourage you to speak with your own voice, while ensuring that your pace and diction enable your performance to be understood.

## Entering online or by email



- Individual entrants should enter online at [oratoryfestival.com](https://oratoryfestival.com), where you can choose to pay by credit/debit card, PayPal or money transfer
- Small groups can choose to enter online or by email
- Schools and larger groups should enter by email at [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com), so we can discuss your needs with you fully and to enable you to provide us with detailed information about your own scheduling and pedagogical needs.



## Getting entrants' names right

Whether you're making an individual entry on the website, or sending us a spreadsheet of a group's names by email, the names that you provide us with are the ones that will appear on that entrant's certificates. Please make sure you get them right! So that we address your participants in the right way, we also ask you to provide their preferred pronouns.

## Before the Festival



## Preparation and nerves

If you are feeling any nerves, we can reassure you that we are the friendliest bunch of judges in the world and we are only interested in celebrating your successes and supporting you in confidently presenting or performing online. If you want any last-minute tips, watch the videos and read our top tips on the festival website: [oratoryfestival.com/tips-on-preparing](https://oratoryfestival.com/tips-on-preparing).

Enter now at  
**[oratoryfestival.com](https://oratoryfestival.com)**

Main entry deadline:  
8 April 2024

Entries subject to our  
rules (see pages 18-21)



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## Providing further details

For some categories, you will need to provide us with further information by **Tuesday 30 April 2024**. You will be sent full information about how to do this after the main entry deadline on 8 April 2024.

- **Your original poetry:** the text of your poem, exactly as it will be performed
- **Shakespeare sonnet:** the number of your sonnet, or its location (act, scene and line) in one of Shakespeare's plays
- **Prose reading and Solo acting:** a copy of the full text of the excerpt you will be reading or performing. If you found your excerpt in a book, please also provide the title of the book, and the ISBN number of that book (normally found just above the barcode on the back cover).

## On the day of your session



### No photography or recordings!

Screen capturing, audio recording, taking photographs, or otherwise recording any part of any performance or part of the festival is not permitted.



### Your Zoom link, and testing beforehand

Individual bookers will receive your Zoom link in your confirmation email when you book your session on our website. Group bookers will receive your link at least 48 hours in advance so if you haven't heard anything, please get in touch at [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com).

Please test out your camera and microphone in advance and be ready to arrive in the Zoom room in good time in case there are any technical problems. Make sure you are in a quiet space or wear headphones if you need to. We have all seen babies and cats invade video calls over the last few years: try your best to be somewhere you won't be interrupted. But, whatever happens, the show will go on!



### Joining your Zoom

On the day you'll be in the Zoom room with other people from your category (and perhaps other similar categories and ages) alongside guests who the entrants have invited (each entrant can have two devices join to watch).

Please try to enter the waiting room at least 10 minutes in advance of your session. Make sure you're using the full name given on your entry form. If you cannot join the call or have technical problems on the day, please email [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com). Don't despair if the tech goes wrong on the day - we'll do our best to see you at another time.

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## Making sure you can be seen

Please orientate your camera in landscape format. You can stand or sit when you perform, but make sure that all of your head, and your hands and upper body, can be seen at all times. The participant should be the only person in view.



## Audience members

You can have up to two additional devices join to watch you perform. They should either be in another room, or use headphones so that they can't be heard on your microphone. The audience members should join the Zoom using the entrant's name and their relationship, for example "Christina Rossetti's mum and dad" or "Chinua Achebe's teacher".



## When other people are performing

When other people are performing, we ask that other people:

- Keep themselves on mute when it is not their turn
- Keep their cameras on if they can, so that the person speaking has a sense of their audience (obviously it is crucial to have your camera on when it is your turn!)

If you've booked as part of a group, we'll liaise with the teacher or group leader about the logistics of your session.



## Age-appropriate? Triggering?

A lot of our Zoom events mix participants from different age groups. Some topics that older participants might choose to speak on might involve violence or more mature subject matter that might be inappropriate for younger viewers. Mentions of violence or traumatic situations can be triggering for other audience members of any age. If this is the case with your oratory, please remember to inform everyone before you start that it might not be suitable for everyone in the room, so they can choose to mute their speakers during your contribution.



## Copyright and changes to your text

Through our membership of the British & International Federation of Festivals for Music, Dance and Speech, we have an agreement with the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society. This means that entrants do not have to seek copyright permission for any for any poetry, prose or solo dramatic items performed to a time limit of 10 minutes.

- Please announce the title and author before you perform
- For any works in copyright, you may not change the wording, or the gender of the character.

Performers and teachers will be delighted to know that their participation in the Festival means that the author of any works which are still in copyright will be directly reimbursed as a consequence of their work being performed at the Festival.

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## Feedback, marks and awards

Of course, taking part is the main thing at the International Oratory Festival. The greatest thrill is in sharing your oratory with other speakers from around the world.

Everyone who enters gets a beautiful certificate, and a copy of their adjudication sheet with personalised feedback.

But marks and prizes are also fun, and we have special prizes and certificates for participants who do particularly well!



### Mark scheme

All entries are marked according to the following mark scheme:

- Fair 75-77
- Moderate 78-80
- Merit 81-83
- Commended 84-86
- Distinction 87-89
- Outstanding 90+

### Prizes & certificates

We also award the following special certificates:

- Bronze, Silver and Gold
- Best in Category
- Exceptional Achievement for Multi-Disciplinary Excellence
- Best in Festival (who also is awarded the Jubilee Shield)

## Other important information



### Child Protection and Safeguarding

We take the safety and wellbeing of all our participants very seriously. For more information, see our Child Protection and Safer Festivals Statements at [oratoryfestival.com/safeguarding](https://oratoryfestival.com/safeguarding).



### Data Protection

The International Oratory Festival is committed to protecting your privacy and maintaining the security of all personal information received from you. All data requested is necessary for the general administration of the festival or for processing entries. Personal data is not disclosed or shared with third parties. For more details, see our privacy policy at [oratoryfestival.com/privacy](https://oratoryfestival.com/privacy).



### We're here to help

If you have any questions about the Festival, do get straight in touch with us at [entries@oratoryfestival.com](mailto:entries@oratoryfestival.com).

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noisy  
classroom

**Helping young people become persuasive and creative speakers, critical listeners, analytical thinkers and engaged citizens**

The International Oratory Festival is founded and run by the Noisy Classroom. Based in the UK, we are a training organisation dedicated to promoting and supporting the use of speaking and listening in schools. We also offer online coaching for families and individual young people around the world. Visit [noisyclassroom.com](https://noisyclassroom.com) or email [info@noisyclassroom.com](mailto:info@noisyclassroom.com) to book!

## Schools

We help teachers use a range of techniques including debate, discussion, dialogue, role play and enquiry as part of the Noisy Learning experience. A noisy classroom can be both inspirational and rigorous; we love all of the vibrant, active work going on inside it and campaign against the idea that only a silent classroom is an effective one. All students should leave school as confident and articulate adults and our team of experts is dedicated to fostering those skills.

**Training** Noisy Classroom offers popular training sessions (in person and online) for schools and teachers who want to use debate and critical oracy in the classroom.

**Student Workshops** We work with all ages, abilities and group sizes. Schools bring us in for for a range of debate and oracy workshops with a whole cohort or targeted group. Popular choices include our debating Shakespeare Days for able 14-18 year olds, debating football sessions for reluctant writers, interview skills training for senior school or university entrants, public speaking workshops for new prefects and Model United Nations days.

We regularly come up with bespoke workshops to meet a school's particular needs around the world and we can deliver in person or online.

## Website

Our popular website at [noisyclassroom.com](https://noisyclassroom.com) is packed with useful videos, worksheets and ideas, used by teachers and young people around the world.

## Online coaching

We work daily with families and individual young people around the world, providing individualised coaching and support in speaking, listening, conversation and debate. Whatever your location or background, we help you develop key skills that lead to success in the modern world.

## Books

Our director, Debbie Newman, has two books published by leading international publishers Routledge: *Pros & Cons – A Debater's Handbook* and *The Noisy Classroom – Developing Debate and Critical Oracy in Schools*.

