



Our Authors Study Club, Inc., Los Angeles Branch of  
Association for the Study of African-American Life and History (ASALH)

## RISING VOICES ORATORICAL PROGRAM ENTRY FORM

**Date:**

**Grade:**

**Student Name:**

**Address:**

**Parent Phone:**

**Student Phone:**

**Student Email Address:**

**Parent Name(s):**

**Name of High School:**

**Hobbies:**

**Student Activities:**

**Career Interest(s):**

**Desired Colleges(s):**

## **Overview / Purpose:**

(This is not a dramatic speech presentation.)

1. Cultivate strong oratorical and public speaking skills, emphasizing clarity, organization, and persuasive communication
2. Strengthen critical thinking, research, and the effective articulation of ideas
3. Provide high school and college students with a platform to express informed perspectives on community and societal issues
4. Encourage intergenerational engagement through the study, honoring, and sharing of African American history
5. Increase participants' knowledge of Black history and its contemporary significance, connecting historical insight to present-day realities

## **Program and Speech Requirements/Final Contest Rules:**

1. Participants must attend and/or send a representative to the orientation unless they are excused with prior permission. Only one (1) speech is to be presented.
2. Participants must attend a minimum of two (2) workshop coaching sessions. A failure to do so without prior permission will be grounds for disqualification. Permission can be granted upon request.
3. The original first draft and outline is to be submitted by Sunday, February 15, 2026.
4. Speech must adhere to the Black History National Theme.
5. The speech must be a minimum of 4 minutes and not exceed 6 minutes.
6. A copy of the original outline and/or first draft must be submitted. There will be no exceptions. A failure to do so will be grounds for disqualification.
7. Contestants must prepare and deliver original speech selections. The content of the speech is a decision of the contestant.
8. The speech must be original and written by the contestant.
9. A small excerpt from a speech written by a famous individual or historical figure may be included in the speech with proper acknowledgment.
10. If the contestant decides to include information already published, we recommend that the selection not be limited to speeches delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. There are many great speeches by other prominent African Americans, including Mary McCloud Bethune, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and W.E.B DuBois.
11. The selected excerpt cannot exceed one paragraph in length.
12. The speech is not to be presented as a dramatic presentation.
13. Costumes and props are not permitted.
14. The material must be completely memorized. The use of notes will disqualify a speaker from participating in the contest.
15. Students should demonstrate a level of confidence with a microphone.
16. Contestants that exceed 7 minutes or whose speech is less than 4 minutes cannot win a prize.
17. Contestants that stop and restart two or more times cannot win a prize.
18. Contestants will be judged on the following:
  - a. Delivery (25 points) - Voice, diction, pronunciation, enunciation, gestures, emphasis
  - b. Interpretation (25 points) - Content, subject adherence, theme, logic & color
  - c. Platform Presence (25 points) - Poise, appeal, impression, attitude & effect
  - d. Projection (25 points) - Voice, emphasis, tone, pitch, volume

## Oratorical Contest Overview

1. All sessions will be via Zoom from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.
2. Black History National Theme: *A Century of Black History Commemorations*
3. Contest Format: All orientation meetings, workshops, and practice sessions will be held via Zoom, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

## Dates & Deadlines

### *Application Deadline*

- **Sunday, February 15, 2026**, or by permission

### *Orientation & Writing Support*

- TBA: **Orientation Meeting & Idea Development Session**
  - Zoom link will be emailed to participants
  - Applications may be submitted at this time

### *Draft Submissions & Workshops*

- **Saturday, February 14, 2026: Speech Outlines/First Drafts Due**  
Initial session for writing and speech delivery.
- **Saturday, February 21, 2026: 1st Workshop – Speech Presentation Review**  
First draft of speech due. Participants must email a copy of their speech draft prior to the session.
- **Saturday, February 28, 2026: 2nd Workshop – Practice & Refinement**  
Participants must email a revised copy of their speech prior to the session.
- **Saturday, March 7, 2026: 3rd and Final Workshop – Practice Session**

## Important Contact Information

- **Contest Chairperson:** Terri Lyons
- **Phone:** (310) 259-7779
- **Email:** [watto@oasca.org](mailto:watto@oasca.org)
- Completed applications must be emailed to: [watto@oasca.org](mailto:watto@oasca.org)

## Eligibility & Participation Requirements

- A parental consent form is required prior to participation. If consent is revoked after the contest, the contestant must forfeit any prize money awarded.
- Practice sessions may be scheduled individually with coaches if listed dates are not feasible. Advance permission is required.
- A recent headshot photograph must be submitted with the application.

## Contest Day

- Saturday, March 14, 2026
- Time: Contestant Check-In: 9:00 a.m. | Contest Begins: 10:00 a.m.
- Location: TBD