



Building Your Public Speaking Competition Team

The Public Speaking Competition helps students develop confidence, communication and critical thinking while learning to express their ideas effectively. Students don't need previous experience to take part—just a willingness to have a go. Here are a few simple ideas to help you recruit and inspire your team.

1. Raise Awareness

Promote the opportunity to help students discover hidden talents.

- Introduce the competition during a school assembly or during form time.
- Share the livestream/photos from the previous year's grand finals.
- Advertise through tutor notices, school newsletters and school social media.

2. Look Beyond Your Obvious Candidates

The best teams are made up of students with different strengths. Ask colleagues across departments to nominate students who demonstrate:

- Clear communication
- Leadership and organisation
- Curiosity and critical thinking
- Creativity and persuasive writing
- Confidence—or the potential to grow in confidence

Remember: Public speaking isn't just for the loudest voices. Thoughtful listeners, strong writers and supportive teammates often excel.

4. Celebrate the Journey

Recognise students throughout the competition, not just at the end.

- Celebrate achievements in assemblies, newsletters and on social media.
- Display certificates and competition photos.
- Encourage previous competitors to share their experiences with others.
- Invite students to present at school events or open evenings.

3. Run a Fun Taster Session

Help students experience public speaking before asking them to commit.

Try activities such as:

- One-minute talks on fun topics
- Chair a two-minute discussion
- Ask follow-up questions after a short speech
- Questioning games using mystery objects or current affairs

Keep the focus on building confidence, encouraging participation and having fun. Additional resources can be found here: <https://www.esu.org/resources/>

Why Take Part?

The Public Speaking Competition helps students develop:

- ✓ Confidence and resilience
- ✓ Communication and presentation skills
- ✓ Critical thinking and persuasive speaking
- ✓ Active listening and questioning skills
- ✓ Leadership and teamwork
- ✓ Skills that support English, interviews, university applications and future careers

Top Tip: Look for potential, not perfection.

The strongest Public Speaking teams aren't always made up of the loudest students. Thoughtful listeners, organised leaders, persuasive writers and curious questioners often make excellent competitors. A personal invitation from a teacher can be all it takes to inspire a student to discover a talent they never knew they had.