

TIPS FOR EXCELLENCE IN DECLAMATION COMPETITIONS

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1) After you select the speech you like, cut it down to the required length of 5-8 minutes by selecting the best parts of the speech for your declamation

2) Each declamation must have an introduction in which you explain why you selected the speech and why the ideas in it are important still today. The introduction counts as part of your 5-8 minute total time.

3) KEY YOUR SPEECH AS IF IT WERE POETRY: A secret from Winston Churchill

- Winston Churchill said, “A speech is poetry without form or rhyme.”
- A speech should not sound like an essay - and it should not look like an essay! You will deliver your speech better if you key it up as if it were poetry. Space it out in bite-sized phrases. The “poetry format” lets the key words and phrases leap out at you.
- EXAMPLE: President John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address:
 1. In essay format: Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.
 2. In poetry format:
Let every nation know
Whether it wishes us well or ill
That we shall pay any price
Bear any burden
Support any friend
Oppose any foe
To assure the survival and success of liberty.
- Change the layout of your speech to Churchill’s poetry format and you will sound like a winner. This is one of the best-kept secrets for excellence in speech delivery!

4) SLOW PACE WINS THE RACE: Importance of speaking slowly

- Inspiring speakers pull in their audiences by slowing down their rate of speaking. Most speakers speak much too quickly.
- Great speakers speak at a rate of 110-115 words per minute, while the average person speaks at around 150-170 words per minute.
- The human mind can absorb only a limited number of spoken words or ideas. If you speak faster than about 130 words per minute, you will lose your audience in a sea of words.