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October 20th, 2025

Dear Coaches and Students,

You are cordially invited to participate in the Speech and Debate Canada Foundation's 2025-26 Annual National Persuasive Speaking Competition. The event is open to all current middle and high school students who attend schools located in Canada. There is no registration fee. The theme for our event will once again be **"Making Canada Stronger."**

What is Speech and Debate Canada's National Persuasive Speaking Competition?

Participants will create a 5–7-minute speech that identifies a problem they believe Canada is facing. Each speech must explain the nature and consequences of the selected issue and suggest strategies for overcoming this problem. All speeches performed must have been written by the presenting student; students are not permitted to reuse speeches from earlier tournaments. The speech should not have been entered in previous years in this competition. Students are free to select an issue about which they are passionate. The selected problem can be one that impacts specific regions or communities or the country as a whole. It need not be a problem that is unique to Canada, but **it must be an issue that impacts people living in Canada** on some level. We also request that the competitors not have any national and/or international experience. Speeches **must not have been completed with the aid of AI!** We will ask for sources used to gather information on your topic. The competition is open to submissions in both English and French.

Land Acknowledgement:

The Speech and Debate Canada Foundation's headquarters are located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit and the traditional territory of the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee. Today Toronto, a city which is also referred to as Tkaronto, is home to many diverse communities of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples from across Turtle Island. We are thankful to live and work on this land.

Important Dates:

The event has been divided into two parts: for the preliminary rounds, participating students must register no later than **Sunday, January 3rd, 2026**. Currently, we are only taking 3 entries per category, per school. We expect school coaches to ensure their school regulates the 3 entries per category, per school. Early registration is strongly encouraged.

The finished persuasive speeches should be submitted in video format. All videos should be uploaded to the student's Google Drive. In the body of your email, please **list the sources used to research** your topic, with page numbers. Please note that the **opened accessible link** should then be sent to ed@speechanddebatecanada.com. Speeches need to be submitted on or before Sunday, January 3rd, 2026. All submission emails must contain the subject line: **"National Persuasive Speaking Competition."** The competition's finalists will be contacted via email on Monday, January 26th, 2026, with comments for preparing the finals. Finalists will then have an opportunity to use the feedback and present their final submission live on zoom.



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The finals themselves are scheduled for **Sunday, February 28th, 2026**. They will take place online between **9:30 am and 11:30 pm Pacific Time**. The top three competitors from both English and French in the junior and senior categories will be asked to present their speeches live over Zoom for a panel of celebrity judges and other guests. We will have 12 live speeches.

The Categories:

English:

Junior Category: Students in middle school (defined here as Grades 6, 7, 8, or 9) will be placed here.

Senior Category: Students in high school (defined here as Grades 10, 11 or 12) will be placed here.

French:

Junior Category: Students in middle school (defined here as Grades 6, 7, 8, or 9) will be placed here.

Senior Category: Students in high school (defined here as Grades 10, 11 or 12) will be placed here.

The Prize:

We will award the top entry in each category with a cash prize of \$250. The Speech and Debate Canada Foundation will also give \$250 to a non-profit of that student's choosing. The non-profit must be a registered current charity within Canada. The selected non-profit should be working to alleviate the problem identified in the student's speech.

Registration:

As mentioned previously, there is no registration fee. If you would like to participate, please complete the form on this link <https://forms.gle/y8ndJe9tUENX8GqF9>

Registration must be received on or before Sunday, January 3rd, 2026. Please make sure that your parents/legal guardians are aware of our media release waiver on the registration.

Evaluation:

Speeches will be evaluated on four criteria: research, persuasiveness, speaking style, as well as the clarity of the problem and solution(s) identified in the speech. Comments will be provided to all participants, however there will be no scores released. Our focus is on growing the love of this activity, rather than getting caught up in numbers.

Speech Structure:

Students are free to experiment with their speech structure, but the speech must, at the very least, identify and explain a problem facing Canada.

Time Limits:

Speeches should be 5-7 minutes in length in both the senior and junior categories, with a grace time of 15 seconds for speeches under 5 minutes or over 7 minutes. Speeches that fall more than fifteen seconds short or exceed the time limit by more than fifteen seconds will be penalized.

All questions regarding this event can be sent to ed@speechanddebatecanada.com. Looking forward to seeing a lot of submissions.

Thank you,

Debra Miko

Debra Miko, Executive Director
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www.speechanddebatecanada.com