ISA ARTS



ISA PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Open to KS2 - KS5
Final: Monday 15 March 2027
Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge, CB2 1TA

SCAN HERE

DEADLINE
Tuesday 12 January 2027

Supported by

ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
discovering voices

isaschools.org.uk | isaarts@isaschools.org.uk
Competition open to ISA Members Schools only

ISA Public Speaking Competition 2027
Rules and Guidelines

The ISA Public Speaking Competition is an opportunity for students to display their oratory skills by performing a reading or speech to an audience. Key Stage 2 students are asked to perform a poetry reading, whilst Key Stages 3 - 5 are challenged to write and deliver their own speech. By practising public speaking, students can build their confidence and learn to communicate clearly.

Year Groups and Eligibility

Only schools whose Head is a Member with ISA are eligible to enter ISA competitions. Any pupils competing must be on the main school's admissions register, on the date of the event.

Our year groups follow the UK National Curriculum. For guidance on selecting the correct year group for your student(s), please refer to the UK system here. When completing your application, please enter students according to the UK year group, even if your school uses a different age or stage structure.

Access and Inclusion

At ISA, we are committed to making our opportunities as accessible as possible. We warmly welcome applications from all students, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

If a student (including those with an EHCP or on the SEND register) is working at a level that does not align with their chronological year group, or if your school prioritises developmental stages, skills, or personalised progression rather than fixed year groups, please do get in touch with us at the following email address hannah.lovegrove.campion@isaschools.org.uk. We are happy to discuss individual circumstances and advise on the most appropriate way to apply.

Accessible Formats

Alternative formats of these guidelines are available on request. Please let us know as early as possible if you require this, so we can provide the information in a format that works for you.

Competition Format

The first stage of this competition consists of an online qualification round. Successful entries will be invited to the final on **Monday 15 March 2027, Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge, CB2 1TA.**

Late cancellations cause considerable inconvenience to the organisers and prevent other schools from taking part. All entries received will be regarded as a definite commitment to attend the final if successful.

If you have any questions, please contact isaarts@isaschools.org.uk

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Judging criteria

The English-Speaking Union (ESU) will be judging our competition this year. The ESU evaluates oracy across four key skill sets: Reasoning & Evidence, Expression & Delivery; Organisation & Prioritisation; and where oracy is interactive Listening & Response.

These skill sets translate speech and debate into targeted and tangible learning journeys. The skill sets make it simple to imagine, plan, teach, track, and assess speaking and listening by breaking oracy down at each ability level.

The ESU explains how their activities promote such skills; they offer a language that teachers AND learners can use to describe oracy. The ESU in collaboration with the ISA have used their skill sets to create rubrics for the 2025-26 public speaking competition**. Please refer to the performance tips document on our website for more details**, which will help you to prepare your speech and understand what the judges will be looking at.

For poetry – (KS2)

- Stance, gesture, & eye contact
- Pace, volume, pauses
- Emotional content & emphasis

For Prepared Speeches – (KS3-5)

- Reasoning and Evidence
- Expression and Delivery
- Organisation and Prioritisation

HOW TO ENTER

Entries must be submitted via the online form on the ISA website here by **Tuesday 12 January 2027** at the latest. Please note you will need to be logged in to your account to access the entry form.

- For individual video entries, **students must say their name and school at the beginning of the recording**. The time limit will start from the beginning of the performance, not at the start of the recording.

- **A working URL link must be given** for the video and accessible for at least 3 months, without a required password. ISA will not accept any files to download or links via SharePoint. Please ensure to check the sharing permissions with your school:

    - YouTube videos will need to be **unlisted**
    - Vimeo videos will need to be **unlisted** and **age rated**
    - Google Drive will need to be set to **anyone with the link**
    - OneDrive needs to be set with a **share link to anyone**

The videos are only for judging purposes and will not be shared elsewhere

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COMPETITION CATEGORIES

Schools can submit a **maximum of 3 entries per year group.** Therefore, all schools can submit **30 entries in total**.

We encourage schools to run a competition in house and submit their speeches.

Please note: For judging purposes, the year groups will be combined as following:

- **Junior** (Year 3 – 6)
- **Middle** (Year 7 – 9)
- **Senior** (Year 10 – 13)

Topics for both rounds

KS2 (Year 3 - 6): Poetry reading (by heart or from notes). A **1–3-minute reading of a poem** of their choice either written by themselves or an existing one.

KS3 (Year 7 - 9): Written speech. A **2–3-minute speech written** by the student on the following topics: The World Turned Upside Down… OR written speech of their choice on any topic.

KS4-5 (Year 10 - 13): Written speech. A **3–5-minute speech written** by the student on the following topic: A Story You Were Never Meant to Hear… OR written speech of their choice on any topic

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Rules

- Judging will stop after the time limit has been reached. Competitors are responsible for keeping track of their time limit.
- Speeches can be read from notes or performed from memory.
- Speeches must not contain offensive or discriminatory language.
- Speeches can be in any language with a translation provided.
- Students must perform the same speech in both rounds.
- **AI generated entries will not be allowed in the competition.**
- Image and sound quality for the first round must be clear enough for adjudication.
- Entries previously submitted to ISA Arts Competitions will not be accepted.
- Each speech must be **performed by one student only**.
- Each student can enter only one speech in the competition.