

TENNESSEE RIGHT TO LIFE

2026 Oratory Contest FAQ

Who is eligible to participate?

Grades 9 through 12 students are able to participate locally and at the state level, but only Grades 11 and 12 are able to participate at the national level.

When/Where are the local and state contests?

The Shelby County Chapter contest will be held on Saturday, March 28, 2026 at Saint Benedict at Auburndale High School, 8250 Varnavas Drive, Cordova, TN. The state contest will be held in the Nashville area on Saturday, May 2, 2026. THE WINNER OF THE SHELBY COUNTY CHAPTER CONTEST WILL BE ASKED TO ATTEND THE STATE COMPETITION ON May 2nd.

Where can students obtain resource materials for their chosen topics?

There are many great pro-life websites available. You may want to use the following web sites: www.nrlc.org and www.tnrtl.org for extensive information on aspects of the topics.

What are the rules concerning speeches?

1. Contestants are to research, write and present an original pro-life speech on abortion, infanticide, stem cell research, or euthanasia. Students may not use the same speech from a previous year. Judging criteria include introduction, content, presentation, conclusion and judges' overall opinions.
2. Because the speech is to be an oration, appropriate gestures are allowed. The style and speech type should be appropriate to the message, but the speech may not be a dramatic presentation (i.e. portrayal of baby in the womb, etc.). Quotes are acceptable, but should not dominate the speech. Props are not permitted.
3. Speeches are to be 5-7 minutes. Disqualifications will occur if the speech is under 4 or over 8 minutes at the state or national level.
4. When using statistics, contestants should make sure to use the most current information available.

What are the prizes?

Shelby County Chapter will award \$150, \$100, and \$75 for the top three winners. The 1st place winner will also receive \$50 travel expenses to attend the State competition. The State awards will be \$750, \$500, \$300 and \$200 respectively. The National level awards will be \$1000, \$750, \$500 and \$250.

Must speeches be memorized?

Though **highly** encouraged, memorization at the local and state level is not required, and it is acceptable for contestants to use notes or refer to their written speeches if necessary. At the national level, speeches **must** be memorized. Most state level contestants memorize.

Where can I get additional information?

For additional forms or more information contact Tennessee Right to Life:

(615) 298-5433 / Info@tnrtl.org / www.tnrtl.org