

Rules & Information for Contestants in the 2013 Ingersoll Oratory Contest

To be held at high Noon on Sunday, June 30, 2013, in Dupont Circle, Washington, DC

The contest will be limited to 15 contestants.

Contestants MUST register no later than June 15, 2013, by going to the [event registration web site](#).

The registration fee is \$20.

Contestants who attend the event and arrive on time (by 11:45 a.m.) will be eligible to receive a refund of \$10. Those who withdraw with at least seven days' notice (by June 23, 2013) will be entitled to a \$10 refund. Registered contestants who withdraw less than seven days before the event, those who fail to attend, or who arrive later than 11:45 a.m. will not be entitled to any refund.

Instructions to the contestants:

Please select a passage from the works of Robert G. Ingersoll that has relevance to topics current today. Bring the text and read or recite it. You should choose a passage that will take at least three minutes and no longer than six minutes to read. We are primarily looking for excellent oratory. Imaginative presentation, such as costume or props will be rewarded in so far as they enhance your oratory.

To summarize:

- Select a topical passage
- Bring a text and read or recite it
- At least three and not more than six minutes long
- Move the audience with your voice

Official Rules:

1. **Eligibility:** Individuals who are registered. The following are not eligible: the First Place winner from the most recent contest; members of the contest organizing committee, the judges, or any members of their immediate families.

Each year, the First Place winner will be invited to be a judge for the next contest and will not compete. He/she will also be invited to deliver, if they wish, a non-competing Ingersoll excerpt per the contest rules.

2. **Format:** Each contestant will prepare and deliver a three to six minute excerpt from one or more of Robert G. Ingersoll's speeches.* Timing will begin when the reading starts.
3. **Subject/Content:** Contestants are free to select one or more excerpts from any of Ingersoll's speeches, but they must state the source (i.e. speech title) of their chosen excerpt on the sign-in sheet before the contest and announce the source or speech title(s) for their selection(s) to the audience.

Contestants may briefly (in a few sentences) explain their selection before they begin speaking. This will not be counted in the three- to six-minute time limit.

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4. **Delivery:** Contestants must use the provided microphone. Speakers are encouraged but not required to deliver their excerpt from memory (as did Ingersoll).
5. **Evaluation:** Judges will evaluate each contestant's presentation on the following criteria and point system: Points are awarded on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) for each listed criterion, for a maximum total of 35 possible points per judge, per contestant. One point will be deducted if a presentation exceeds the six-minute limit or is shorter than the three-minute minimum.

	Category	Criterion
1	Selection	Saliency, relevance to current events.
2	Audibility	Can s/he be heard easily? Does the contestant rely on volume to be heard, or is s/he able to project her/his voice without just shouting.
3	Passion	Engagement with the topic. Is the speaker's delivery appropriate to the content? Does it indicate the speaker knows what s/he is saying? Does the speaker convey that meaning to the audience?
4	Pacing and intonation	Is the overall speed of delivery appropriate? Are pauses used to effect? Is volume varied to add emphasis?
5	Clarity/enunciation/ pronunciation	Can the speaker be easily understood? Are words pronounced clearly and correctly?
6	Crowd Engagement	Is the speaker engaged with the audience? Do spectators respond to her/his delivery?
7	Creativity and Authenticity	Additional elements that enhance the presentation, e.g. costume, props, memorizing.

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6. **Awards:** Each winner will receive a prize as follows:

First Place - \$250

Second Place - \$150

Third Place - \$ 100

Fourth Place - \$ 50

+ in addition to cash, other items may also be awarded. All contestants will receive a certificate.

7. **Standby list and sign in:** Contestants must sign in at the Judges Table before the contest. You must arrive by 11:45 a.m. or you will forfeit the right to claim the \$10 refundable portion of the registration fee and may lose your place to someone on the standby list. Contestants arriving after noon might not be permitted to compete. Only registered or standby contestants will be allowed to compete for prizes.

After 15 contestants are registered, standby contestants will be accepted using the same web site as above. If there are “no-shows” or less than 15 contestants checked in at 11:45 a.m. on the day of the contest, the standby ticket holders will be offered the opportunity to compete in the order in which they registered. If positions become available in advance of the contest, standby contestants will be informed by e-mail and offered the chance to register as a paid contestant.

8. **Video recording** of this event is anticipated. This is a public event. Contestants will be asked to sign a “release” form allowing their image to be used by the contest sponsors. If a contestant declines to sign this, their image will not be used or shared.

The winners and prizes will be announced and presented at the end of the contest. Checks for the cash portion of each prize will be mailed by July 15, 2013 to the address you provided at registration.

Call 202-657-6346 or e-mail Steven LOWE at Ingersoll@wash.org with any questions.

Visit <http://ingersollcontest.wash.org> for more information and updates.

9. **In case of rain** or inclement weather, the contest will be held at the James Hoban’s Irish Restaurant & Bar, one block away at One Dupont Circle, NW. (202-223-8440).

***Ingersoll’s speeches may be found (among other places):**

- Online (Vol. 1 & 2) : <http://sacred-texts.com/aor/ing/index.htm>
- Online at http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/robert_ingersoll/
- At your local library.
- From Amazon.com