

CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH  
**CONCOURS** d'art  
oratoire  
Canada's French Public Speaking Contest

## **Impromptu**

**Sponsored by Canadian Parents for French -  
Saskatchewan (CPF-SK)**

The Impromptu Category was developed to encourage high school students, who may have outgrown their interest in speech competitions, to stay involved by developing a new skill set. This activity encourages a fresh approach to public speaking. Students require a significant level of mental preparedness to be able to draw from skills acquired by previous years of public speaking. Speech preparation time is limited and topics are pre-selected.

### **Impromptu Category Details**

1. Impromptu Categories are for students in grades 9 through 12 only. Students in the same grade, in the Core French, Post-Intensive French and French Immersion Programs will compete in the same category.
2. Students can participate in both Impromptu and traditional speech Categories.
3. Students participating in Impromptu receive their topic on site and have 15 minutes to prepare notes for a two to four minute speech. Dictionaries, cue cards, pens, and pencils will be made available.
4. Students present their speech before a panel of three judges.
5. No questions are asked to students after their speech.
6. Students are judged according to voice, quality of language, structure, oratory, and presentation.
7. Students are penalized if time allotments are not respected: a one point penalty for every 30 seconds over or under the allowed time.
8. Prizes are awarded to first, second and third place finalists.

### **Impromptu Speaking Guidelines**

1. Before beginning Impromptu practice it is recommended that the basics of speech writing be reviewed with the students.
2. Practice with your students often to allow for the development of research and writing skills that are fundamental to achieving ease of expression for several types of public speaking: serious, humorous, argumentative, etc.
3. Select a topic for students to address, keeping the subject broad enough to allow for personal interpretations. (i.e. winter in Canada, music in your life, dining alone, etc.). Students should be given different topics to allow for unique ideas.
4. Students may use a dictionary and/or thesaurus; however, caution against over-researching as time is limited and speech construction should be the primary focus.
5. Student should become accustomed to using 15 minutes to prepare notes and cue cards. Several minutes should be reserved for going over their notes to prepare for the speech. Speaking time is limited to two to four minutes; therefore, notes should be constructed accordingly (i.e. one card for each major point = x number of minutes).
6. Familiarize the students with the Judges' Rubric that will be used to evaluate their speech. These will be the same as regular speeches. HOWEVER, questions will not be asked.
7. When your students have shown an understanding of this activity through practice and improvement, you will be ready to choose two representatives for the Provincial *Concours d'art oratoire* Finals.

## **Preparing Impromptu**

Advise the students of the following:

1. They have 15 minutes to write their speech on the chosen topic that is two to four minutes long.
2. When they choose their topic, they are permitted to exchange their card one time only (allow them to make a second choice and then put their first card back in the envelope) move on to the next student.
3. They can use dictionaries if they need to.
4. When the time is up, they cannot make any changes or additions to their speech;
5. When they are on stage, the timer will signal them at the two minute mark of their speech.
6. They are not permitted to sit with friends or family while waiting to present their speech, but can do so after they have presented.

## **Procedures on the Day of Competition**

- There are two envelopes, one labelled grade 9/10 and the other labelled grade 11/12, that contains card with the Impromptu topics on them. Make a few (two or three) extra topic cards than the number of students participating.
- Have the grade 9/10 students sit on one side of the room and the grade 11/12 students sit on the other side.
- Have the grade 9/10 students choose a card from the envelope marked grade 9/10 and then the grade 11/12 students do the same from the envelope marked grade 11/12.
- Supply all of the students with index cards to write their speech on, a pencil and a dictionary should they want one.
- At the 15 minute mark have the students stop writing. They cannot make any changes after this time.
- Do not leave them on their own. Escort them to competition rooms and have them sit at the front of the audience. Please stay with them until the last participant finishes their speech.