

2018 SUBDISTRICT – IMPROMPTU SPEECH PROMPTS



These topics were drawn from or inspired by the National Speech & Debate Association's 2018 celebration of Black History Month. For more information, visit www.speechanddebate.org.

Instructions: *These sheets should be duplicated for however many rooms/sections of Impromptu Speech you will have. For each round, cut the 10 prompts into strips, place in an envelope, and give to the adjudicator who will hear the students. Instructions for facilitating drawing three prompts are on the rules side of evaluation sheets.*

Round 1

1. "Racism is not an excuse to not do the best you can." — Arthur Ashe
2. "Have a vision. Be demanding." – Colin Powell
3. "Nobody is as powerful as we make them out to be." — Alice Walker
4. "The thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely." — Lorraine Hansberry
5. "It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength." — Maya Angelou
6. "If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress." — Barack Obama
7. "The whole world opened to me when I learned to read." — Mary McLeod Bethune
8. "Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong." — Ella Fitzgerald
9. "Hate is too great a burden to bear. It injures the hater more than it injures the hated."
— Coretta Scott King
10. "In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute."
— Thurgood Marshall

2018 SUBDISTRICT – IMPROMPTU SPEECH PROMPTS



Round 2

11. "Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly."
— Langston Hughes
12. "If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities." — Maya Angelou
13. "Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge." — Toni Morrison
14. "If you don't understand yourself you don't understand anybody else." — Nikki Giovanni
15. "The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you." — B. B. King
16. "A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination." — Nelson Mandela
17. "One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation." — Arthur Ashe
18. "I think music is one of the hero/heroines of the African-American existence." — Maya Angelou
19. "If my future were determined just by my performance on a standardized test, I wouldn't be here. I guarantee you that. Michelle Obama say luck is when an opportunity comes along and you're prepared for it." — Denzel Washington
20. "If you fall behind, run faster. Never give up, never surrender, and rise up against the odds."
— Jesse Jackson

2018 SUBDISTRICT – IMPROMPTU SPEECH PROMPTS



Round 3

21. "How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these." – George Washington Carver
22. "I think education is power. I think that being able to communicate with people is power. One of my main goals on the planet is to encourage people to empower themselves." – Oprah Winfrey
23. "You're not to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it." – Malcolm X
24. "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." – Barack Obama
25. "Living in the moment means letting go of the past and not waiting for the future. It means living your life consciously, aware that each moment you breathe is a gift." – Oprah Winfrey
26. "Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world." – Harriet Tubman
27. "Greatness occurs when your children love you, when your critics respect you and when you have peace of mind." – Quincy Jones
28. "You're not obligated to win. You're obligated to keep trying to do the best you can every day."
– Marian Wright Edelman
29. "No one should negotiate their dreams. Dreams must be free to flee and fly high. No government, no legislature, has a right to limit your dreams. You should never agree to surrender your dreams." – Jesse Jackson
30. "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." – Frederick Douglass