

SPEECH – HERITAGE/NATIVE SPEAKER

University of Memphis Language Fair 2026

GUIDELINES

- Students will prepare a speech in the target language. **The speech must be related to this year's theme for the Fair.** This is a leveled event: it is expected that students' speeches will be level appropriate.
- Only native speakers and heritage speakers/learners can participate.
 - **Native Speaker** – the majority of formal education is in the target language
 - **Heritage Speaker/Learner** – the majority of formal education is in English, but the target language is commonly used for communication in the home
 - **Second Language Learner** – little or no experience with the target language outside of formal education
 - **Cognate languages** are ones that closely relate to the language being tested, such as Portuguese speakers in Spanish contests.
- Maximum of **three (3)** entries per class.
- Format: Speeches must adhere to the following **time restrictions**:
 - Level I and II – minimum of two (2) minutes, maximum of three (3) minutes
 - Level III and IV – minimum of four (4) minutes, maximum of five (5) minutes
- The speech should be recited from memory. Note cards are allowed; however, students should remember that reliance on notes will be taken into account during judging - see judging rubric.
- Students participating must be currently studying the language in which the speech is given.
- On the day of the Fair, students will sign up for the order in which they will present at the room of the event. The student will also pick up a judging sheet at registration. The student must complete the top part of the form and give it to a judge of the competition before the competition begins. The judge(s) will use the form to judge the students as they present.

See the next page for judging criteria.

CRITERIA	OUTSTANDING (4)	NOTEWORTHY (3)	FAIR (2)	POOR (1)
Level-Appropriate Pronunciation	Few or no errors, completely comprehensible .	Comprehensible, though some errors ; errors do not impede comprehension	Adequate , though errors might occasionally impede comprehension	Incomprehensible / Inadequate
Communication	Communication is exceptional. Main ideas are clear , supported with well-organized elaboration and detailed development .	Communication is satisfactory. Main ideas are clear , supported with some elaboration and development.	Communication is adequate but may be repetitive . Main ideas are usually clear but lack development .	Communication is inadequate . Main ideas are unclear and/or have minimal detail . Content is not cohesive.
Language Control	There is mastery of level-appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Very few or no mistakes that do not obscure meaning.	There is satisfactory control of level-appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Very few or no mistakes that rarely obscure meaning.	There is general control of level-appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Mistakes rarely obscure meaning. English structures might be used.	There is minimal or no control of level-appropriate grammar and vocabulary with frequent mistakes that obscure meaning. English structures are frequently used.
Memorization and Delivery	OUTSTANDING (2)	NOTEWORTHY (1.5)	FAIR (1)	POOR (.5)
	Memorized, flows naturally with few to no references to note cards	Memorized, with little pauses or only occasional references to note cards	Partially memorized, with lengthy pauses or repetitive reference to note cards	Read, not memorized

If teachers have any questions about **speech** event, please contact flfair@memphis.edu.
Judges will also determine whether the speech has real learning value for the competitor in the event of a tie.