

THE 2025 UNIVERSITY— ROSEDALE VOICES OF CHANGE CHALLENGE

Speech Competition

Information & Educator Guide



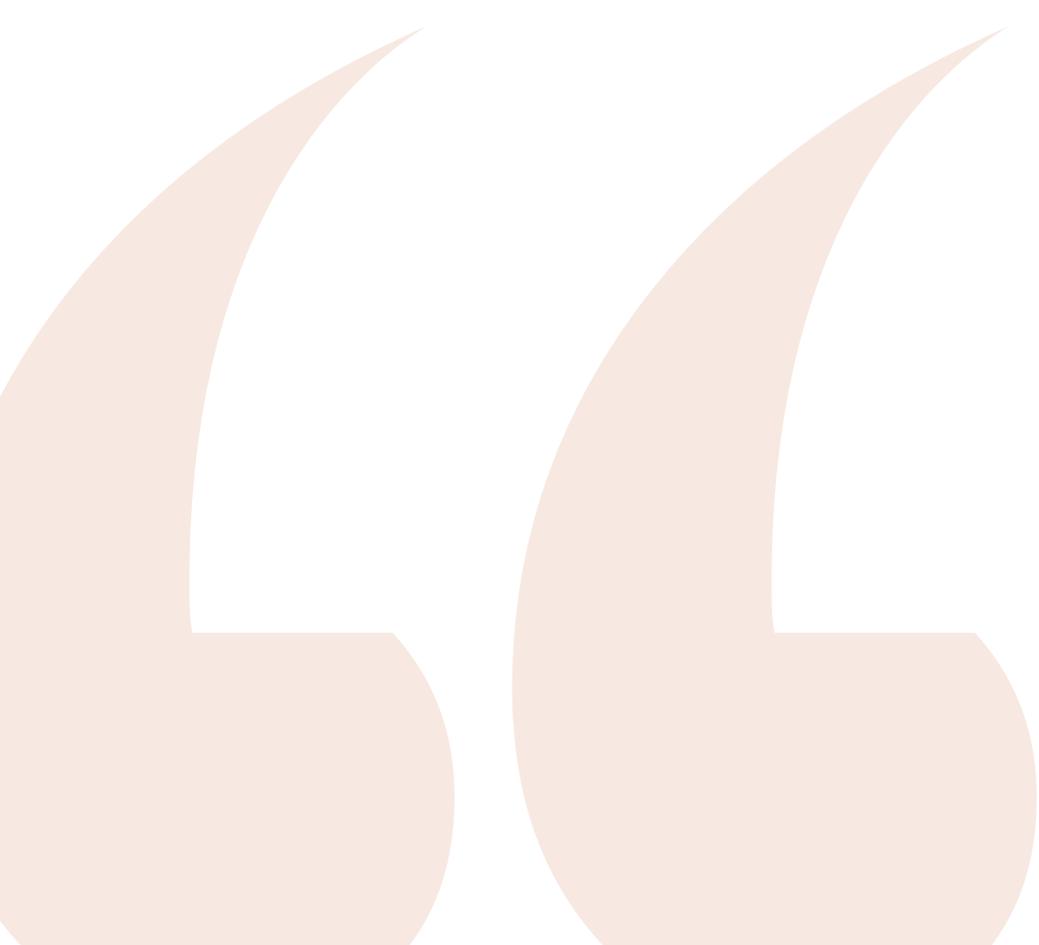
Hosted by Jessica Bell, MPP for University—Rosedale

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OVERVIEW OF THE 2025 UNIVERSITY—ROSEDALE VOICES OF CHANGE CHALLENGE

Hosted by Jessica Bell, MPP for University—Rosedale

Event Date: First Week of December 2025

Location: Venue in the University—Rosedale riding, Toronto (venue TBA)

This speech competition invites passionate young students to take the stage and share persuasive speeches on political issues that impact their lives and communities. Parents, students, and teachers are welcome to attend the speech competition.

Who Can Enter?

- ▶ **Grades 5–6 Division**
- ▶ **Grades 7–8 Division**
- ▶ Each school may select **up to 2 students total**

Teachers are invited to select and support their student representatives, whether through class integration or independent enrichment.

Speech Requirements

- ▶ **Topic:** A political issue with direct personal relevance
- ▶ **Length:** 3 minutes or less
- ▶ **Type:** Persuasive
- ▶ **Delivery:** In-person speech (no slides or visuals)

Prizes

Gift cards to local bookstores

- ▶ 1st Place – \$100
- ▶ 2nd Place – \$75
- ▶ 3rd Place – \$50

HOW SPEECHES WILL BE EVALUATED

Student speeches will be thoughtfully reviewed by Jessica Bell, MPP for University—Rosedale, and members of her office team.

We understand that students come from a range of public speaking experiences. The goal of this event is to celebrate student voice and civic engagement, not polished perfection.

Evaluation Criteria

Each speech will be scored out of **45 points** using the following categories:

Criteria	Points	What We're Looking For
Content & Organization	/10	A clear argument with structure (hook, main points, conclusion) and logical flow
Voice & Delivery	/10	Confident pace, audible voice, expressive tone, and strong presence
Audience Engagement	/10	Enthusiasm, a connection with the audience
Originality & Insight	/10	Unique perspective, creativity, and meaningful personal or community connection
Relevance to Provincial Issues	/5	The issue is clearly within Ontario's provincial jurisdiction (e.g., education, housing, health) and the speaker demonstrates an understanding of that connection

Time Limit

- ▶ Speeches should be **no longer than 3 minutes**
- ▶ Speakers may be gently stopped if they go significantly over time

Preparing with Students

Teachers can help students prepare by:

- ▶ Rehearsing speeches with peer feedback
- ▶ Encouraging students to highlight their main message clearly
- ▶ Discussing why the issue matters to them and how to express that meaningfully

Registration Details

Please email **student names, grade levels, and speech titles by November 10, 2025** to jbelle-qp@ndp.on.ca

WHAT MAKES A GREAT SPEECH?

While every student’s approach will be unique, effective speeches often follow a recognizable structure and use rhetorical tools that elevate their message.

The Core Elements of a Strong Speech

Element	What It Does
Hook	Captures attention from the first line
Introduction	Frames the issue and student’s stance
Body	Shares evidence, examples, and stories
Conclusion	Summarizes ideas and offers a “call to action”

Great speeches also reflect the speaker’s authentic voice, energy, and connection to the issue.

Sample Mini-Speech: "We Deserve Mental Health Support in Schools"

Hook:

Last year, my best friend stopped coming to school. At first, I thought maybe she was sick, but later I found out she was struggling with anxiety. She didn’t know who to talk to—and there wasn’t a counsellor at our school.

Main Argument:

Mental health matters just as much as physical health, but in too many Ontario schools, students can’t get the help they need. We need full-time mental health counsellors in every school.

Supporting Point 1:

Right now, many schools only have a counsellor once a week—if at all. But anxiety, stress, and even depression don’t follow a schedule. Kids need someone to talk to when things feel overwhelming, not just once a week.

Supporting Point 2:

If we had a full-time counsellor, my friend might have gotten support before things got worse. She eventually got help, but she had to wait months. Nobody should have to wait that long.

Call to Action:

I’m asking Ontario’s government to fund a counsellor for every school. Not just for my friend—but for all of us. Because caring for our mental health should be part of our school day, not something we’re left to figure out alone.

Sample Mini-Speech: "Everyone Deserves a Safe Place to Live"

Hook:

Last winter, my family had to move out of our apartment because the rent went up by hundreds of dollars. We had lived there since I was in kindergarten. It didn't feel fair and it didn't feel like home anymore.

Main Argument:

In Ontario, too many families are struggling to find affordable housing. The government needs to build more affordable homes and make stronger rules so landlords can't raise the rent so high that families are forced to leave.

Supporting Point 1:

Some of my classmates have moved two or three times in just a few years. It's hard to focus in school when you're worried about where you'll sleep next. Having a stable home helps kids feel safe and succeed in school.

Supporting Point 2:

The province is in charge of rent control and building affordable housing. But many cities don't have enough safe, affordable places for families. This affects everyone—especially people with low incomes, single parents, or newcomers.

Call to Action:

I want Ontario's leaders to take action: build more affordable housing, protect tenants from unfair rent increases, and make sure every kid has a safe, stable place to call home. Because nobody should have to choose between paying rent and buying groceries.

VIDEO EXAMPLES FOR CLASSROOM EXPLORATION

To inspire students and spark discussion, consider watching and analyzing the following:

- ▶ [Adora Svitak: What Adults Can Learn from Kids \(TED\)](https://www.ted.com/talks/adora_svitak_what_adults_can_learn_from_kids?language=en)
[ted.com/talks/adora_svitak_what_adults_can_learn_from_kids?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/adora_svitak_what_adults_can_learn_from_kids?language=en)
- ▶ [Genesis Butler – A 10-Year-Old's Vision for Healing the Planet \(TEDx\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4ptaIDAIY)
[youtube.com/watch?v=E4ptaIDAIY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4ptaIDAIY)
- ▶ [Severn Cullis-Suzuki – “The Girl Who Silenced the World for 5 Minutes” \(1992 Earth Summit\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJJGuIZVfLM)
[youtube.com/watch?v=oJJGuIZVfLM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJJGuIZVfLM)

Students can analyze tone, structure, and delivery style using a basic organizer (e.g., “hook,” “main idea,” “support,” “call to action”).

A FLEXIBLE PATHWAY FOR CLASSROOM INTEGRATION

Stage	Activities	Tools to Use
Explore	Watch sample speeches, identify strong elements	Use TED or YouTube links above
Brainstorm	Students reflect on local issues, interests	Graphic organizers, journaling prompts
Draft & Refine	Students write, revise, peer review	Collaborative writing, peer checklists
Practice & Present	Rehearse, record, or perform live	Cue cards, timers, small groups

ALTERNATIVE TEACHING RESOURCES

These public/open tools may complement your planning:

- ▶ [TeachOntario \(by TVO\)](http://teachontario.ca) – Resources from Ontario educators.
teachontario.ca
- ▶ [Civix’s Student Vote Canada](http://studentvote.ca) – civics-based activities.
studentvote.ca
- ▶ [TED-Ed Student Talks Toolkit](http://ed.ted.com) – Free framework for student-led TED-style talks
ed.ted.com
- ▶ [Speech and Debate Canada](http://speechanddebatecanada.com/resources)– A collection of speeches from Canadian students participating in national competitions, covering various topics and showcasing different rhetorical styles.
speechanddebatecanada.com/resources

This educator guide and sample lesson content draw inspiration from the instructional materials originally developed by 2 Peas and a Dog. Used with reference to best practices in middle school speech writing and oral presentation pedagogy. To explore more of their educational resources, visit: www.2peasandadog.com

WHAT COUNTS AS A PROVINCIAL POLITICAL ISSUE?

Ontario's provincial government makes decisions about many areas that affect students and their families every day, from what happens in the classroom to how communities are designed and supported.

Encourage students to choose a topic they **personally relate to** and that falls under provincial jurisdiction. The key is to help them connect their lived experiences to **real policies** they want to see changed or improved.

Understanding Provincial Responsibilities

Below is a breakdown of areas of provincial jurisdiction with student-friendly topic ideas for each. These are designed to spark discussion, reflection, and persuasive speech writing.

Provincial Area	What It Includes	Student Topic Ideas
Education	Curriculum, school safety, special education, funding, standardized testing, mental health support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Should there be more art/music/drama in schools? ▶ Why every school should have a full-time mental health counsellor ▶ Make standardized tests optional for all students ▶ More funding for special education programs
Healthcare	Mental health services, pediatric care, hospitals, access to doctors and nurses, public health programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improve mental health services for youth in Ontario ▶ More support for eating disorders and body image education ▶ Address wait times for emergency rooms
Transportation	Public transit, traffic safety, road construction, student transit fares, bike lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Safer crosswalks and bike lanes near schools ▶ Extend GO Transit service to more neighborhoods ▶ Make school buses available to more students

Provincial Area	What It Includes	Student Topic Ideas
Environment & Climate	Parks, air and water quality, recycling, energy policy, conservation, land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ban single-use plastics in Ontario schools ▶ Make recycling rules the same across the province ▶ Protect Ontario’s forests and wetlands
Housing	Tenant rights, rent control, affordable housing construction, homelessness programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Build more affordable housing in my neighborhood ▶ Improve shelters for homeless youth ▶ Make rent control stronger across Ontario
Social Services & Equity	Child welfare, family services, community support programs, disability access, support for newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increase support for kids with disabilities

Helping Students Make It Personal

When brainstorming, prompt students with questions like:

- ▶ “Have you ever been frustrated by something in your school or community?”
- ▶ “What would you change if you were in charge of Ontario for a day?”
- ▶ “What have you or your family struggled with that the government could help fix?”

By linking public issues to personal stories, students will develop more persuasive, passionate speeches.



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