

Giving Youth a Voice



NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE
Speech and Debate Honor Society

www.NFLonline.org



NFL Mission

The NFL promotes high school and middle school speech and debate activities as a means to develop a student's essential life skills and values.

NFL Vision

Our vision is that every child in the United States will be empowered to become an effective communicator, ethical individual, critical thinker, and leader in a democratic society.

Harness life-changing benefits without reinventing the wheel.

About Us

The NFL is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit honorary society created to recognize high school students in speech and debate. We are the oldest and largest interscholastic forensic organization. In 2009, more than 112,000 students, representing nearly 3,000 middle and high schools, built their communication, leadership, cognitive, and presentational skills as members. Since 1925, more than 1.3 million students have found their voice in the NFL.

Recognizing Achievement

POINTS

Credit points measure student progress, motivating continued participation. Students earn points each time they participate in interscholastic partnership projects and community service.



ADVANCED DEGREES

The more students participate, their point totals will achieve levels qualifying them for advanced degrees: Honor, Excellence, Distinction, Special Distinction, Superior Distinction, Outstanding Distinction, and Premier Distinction. Each degree is signified by special NFL seals to add to the student's membership certificate and school diploma, as well as with jewels to place in a membership lapel pin or necklace key.

BOOSTING student performance:

- A study published in *Rostrum* October 2009 shows a direct relationship between higher reading and writing test scores and participation in interscholastic speech and debate.
- A 1999 study published in the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that interscholastic speech and debate give students a decisive edge in college admissions, by as much as 30% more than non-forensic peers.
- 90% of speech and debate participants matriculate to college, and a majority continue to graduate school.

MEETING standards and frameworks:

- Speech and debate participation meets all English Language Arts *Common Core Standards* and *College Board Standards for College Success*;
- Participation in forensics meets the first three core areas of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' *Breaking Ranks* strategies.

STIMULATING cognitive outcomes:

- Literacy skills: reading, listening, speaking, writing;
- Critical thinking at the highest levels of *Bloom's Taxonomy*.

ENHANCING behavioral outcomes:

- Speech and debate activities foster intellectual curiosity;
- Competition motivates students to improve themselves;
- Successful competitors spend hours reading, researching, and practicing;
- Top competitors invest effort comparable to a graduate school thesis (Minch 2006);
- Both at-risk and gifted students engage more and act out as much as 50% less.

BUILDING affective outcomes:

- One-on-one tutoring/coaching model provides individualized instruction;
- Squads provide a safe, familial atmosphere that nurtures student growth.

IMPROVING outcomes in urban schools:

A study in Chicago schools¹, published in October 2009, suggests that participation in competitive debate drastically improves educational outcomes for underperforming students in urban schools. Specifically, students who participated in at least 25 rounds of debate during their high school careers showed the following improvements:

- Average graduation rate 40% higher than non-debating peers (77% compared to 55%);
- African-American males had an average graduation rate 70% higher than non-debating peers (73% compared to 45%);
- Average GPA of .20 points, or 20% of a letter grade, higher than non-debating peers;
- African-American males had a GPA of .50, or 50% of a letter grade, higher than non-debating peers;
- 50% more likely to reach the ACT's college-ready benchmark on the English portion of the exam;
- African-American males were 70% more likely than non-debating peers to score at or above the college-ready benchmarks on both the ACT English and Reading exams.

¹ Source: *The Journal of Negro Education*. (2009).

SERVING successful students for more than 86 years:

- 112,000 students at nearly 3,000 middle and high schools;
- 1.3 million alumni from all 50 states;
- \$200,000 in college scholarships awarded annually.

LOOKING for more information on the proven benefits of forensics?

- Visit www.NFLonline.org/AboutNFL/Advocate



Enriching
Education

Join the NFL family!

- Media visionaries **Ted Turner** and **Oprah Winfrey**
- Academy Award winners **Mark Boal**, **Patricia Neal**, and **Renee Zellweger**
- Tony Award winners **David Henry Hwang** and **BD Wong**
- Pulitzer Prize winner **David Lindsay-Abaire**
- Emmy award winners **Kelsey Grammer** and **Shelley Long**
- Former Vice President **Hubert Humphrey**
- Senators **Russ Feingold**, **Richard Lugar**, **Arlen Specter**, and **Jon Tester**
- News correspondents **SuChin Pak** and **Jane Pauley**
- C-SPAN founder **Brian Lamb**
- Supreme Court Justices **Stephen Breyer** and **Sonia Sotomayor**
- Rights activists **Wynona LaDuke** and **Nadine Strossen**
- Political leaders **Janet Reno** and **Tom Ridge**
- CEOs **Jeff Bezos** and **Steve Odland**
- Comedians **John Belushi**, **Stephen Colbert**, and **Jon Lovitz**
- Actors **Chris Colfer**, **James Dean**, **Zac Efron**, **Brad Pitt**, **Zachary Quinto**, **Kenan Thompson**, and **Michael Urie**
- Musicians **David Cook** and **“Weird Al” Yankovic**



Today, more than 112,000 middle and high school students and 5,000 coaches are developing their speech and debate skills in the National Forensic League. Since 1925 the NFL has enrolled more than 1.3 million members in fulfillment of its motto, “training youth for leadership.” Many of these members have risen to the pinnacle of their respective fields (*see sidebar*).

NFL *at a glance*

More than **1.3 million**
members from all **50** states

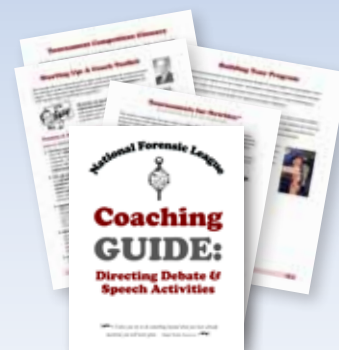
86 years of
excellence

Over **\$200,000**
in college scholarships
awarded annually



Be more effective—and make your life easier.

- Online resources help coaches at all levels of experience. Materials include novice training tools, instructional videos and sample performances, curriculum, advocacy tools, and more.
- Professional development opportunities build and reward educators. Programs include coach accreditation, online professional development, summer workshop scholarships, national clinics, and school faculty seminars.
- *GiveYouthAVoice.org* is a members-only fundraising portal that taps into a nationwide network of NFL alumni interested in giving back to programs around the country. Teams use the portal to obtain thousands of dollars used to pay for buses, entry fees, and resources to run their teams.
- Inexpensive materials and merchandise further support your program and commemorate student achievement, including a clearinghouse of texts and videos, lapel pins, chenille patches, and graduation honor cords.
- More than half a million dollars in scholarships are available to members. The NFL and its partner programs award more than \$500,000 in scholarships each year to student and coach members on the basis of academic excellence, competitive success, and/or community service.



Find your voice.



Create your niche in one—or all—of NFL's interscholastic events!

The following *main events* are offered at NFL district and national tournaments:



- **CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE:** Research and write legislation, then debate extemporaneously in an assembly, using parliamentary procedure.
- **LINCOLN DOUGLAS DEBATE:** Argue value propositions in a one-on-one format.
- **POLICY DEBATE:** Debate a policy proposition in a team format.
- **PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE:** Debate controversial issues inspired by current news in a team format.
- **EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING:** Speak on a topic inspired by current news using 30 minutes to prepare by synthesizing published sources. This event is separated into United States and international divisions.
- **ORIGINAL ORATORY:** Research and speak on a significant topic.
- **DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION:** Perform a memorized, serious selection from printed, published literature.
- **HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION:** Perform a memorized, humorous selection from printed, published materials.
- **DUO INTERPRETATION:** Perform with a partner a selection from printed, published literature.





Reward participation at the local, state, and national level.

Throughout the entire school year, students may participate in a wide variety of additional speaking, interpretation, and debate events and earn NFL merit points for their efforts.

At the National Tournament, the NFL also offers *supplemental and consolation events* for students who do not advance in their main events:

- **POETRY:** Present an interpretation of printed, published, poetic literature, from a manuscript.
- **PROSE:** Present an interpretation of printed, published, prose literature, from a manuscript.
- **EXPOSITORY:** Research and speak to inform an audience.
- **EXTEMPORANEOUS COMMENTARY:** While seated, speak in the mode of a news commentator on a topic inspired by current issues, using 20 minutes to prepare by synthesizing published sources.
- **SUPPLEMENTAL DEBATE:** Spontaneously debate controversial issues inspired by current news in a one-on-one format.
- **STORYTELLING:** Perform a narrative in an engaging manner that transports an audience to the time and place being recounted.
- **IMPROMPTU SPEAKING:** Spontaneously respond to a prompt, such as a quotation or proverb, with a clear, creative and concise speech.



Imagine your future with the NFL!



Join the NFL today!

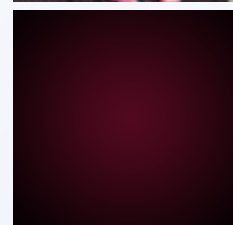
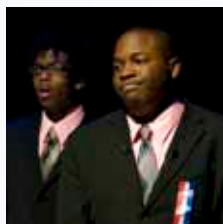
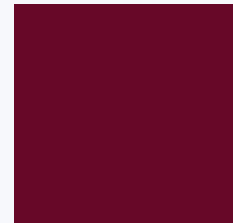
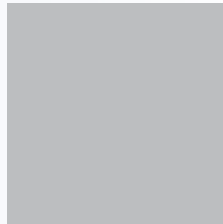
Are you ready to begin your journey with the National Forensic League?

Simply visit www.NFLonline.org to complete the form under **About the NFL/Join** and include the \$99 annual school membership fee.

Once a student earns 25 points (at least 10 in interscholastic competition—debate and/or speech and/or congress), s/he will be eligible to join the NFL as an individual.

Each lifetime student membership is \$15.

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