

Rules and FAQs

I am a teacher, and I want my students to participate in the competition. What do I do?

Our resources are suitable for all secondary school teachers, but particularly recommended for English, CSPE and Politics and Society classes. These include three presentations, each one focusing on the different themes of the climate crisis, women leadership during emergencies and ODA and women rights' organisations. All our presentations feature interactive elements and are accompanied by lesson plans to help deliver the class. To download our resources simply go to "Download Resources" and enter your details.

Which topic do I write my speech on?

This year there are three questions:

1. During emergencies, climate disasters and conflict women experience higher levels of death, gender-based violence and marginalisation, and yet women are also critical to emergency responses, community cohesion and collective action. The leadership role of women during emergencies, conflict and climate disasters is overlooked, and yet is so important in preparing for and recovering from disasters. Discuss.
2. The climate crisis is causing devastation across the globe, affecting in particular countries in the Global South and particularly for women, driven by our dependence on fossil fuels. Unless the world urgently ends our reliance on fossil fuels, women's rights will be denied and violated due to the impacts of climate change. Discuss.
3. Around the world, women experience violations of their human rights and higher levels of poverty than men. Despite this, just 5 per cent of Official Development Assistance allocated to ending violence against women reaches women's rights organisations. The focus of overseas aid needs a radical reform to address the denial of women's rights and gender inequality globally. Discuss.

All speeches must be based around one of these questions.

What is the word count?

There is a word count of approximately 600-800 words, excluding bibliography.

Who can enter? Can I only participate if my school is taking part?

Anyone aged 14-18 residing in Ireland can participate in the competition. While some classrooms use our learning resources, it is not necessary to have partaken in one of these classes to participate. However, our resources can be helpful as inspiration to get started and can be downloaded on the main web page.

How much does it cost?

ActionTalks is free to enter.

When is the deadline? What is the timeline of the competition?

The deadline for submissions is on the 24th of January 2025. Regional finalists will be announced early in February, with the award ceremony announcing the overall winner in late March.

How do I submit?

To submit just email your entry to comms.ireland@actionaid.org and erica.beccarello@actionaid.org , with your name and school clearly in the heading.

Can I enter the competition without downloading at the resources?

If you meet the age criteria and live in Ireland, yes, you can enter. However, we strongly recommend reading our resources as a good starting point for writing your speech.

Can I enter if I live in the North of Ireland?

Unfortunately, our competition is only open to those residing within the Republic of Ireland.

How should I write my essay? Do you have any tips for how to get started?

A good way to get started is to look over our resources, which can be downloaded under “Download resources” and pick the theme which interests you the most. Another good idea is to read over the speeches of our last year's winners – these should give you an idea of what a very well written speech looks like. If you are partaking in ActionTalks through your school, it might also a good idea to let your teacher proofread your essay and give you feedback.

Below is the criteria our judges look for in a speech:

Speech Writing Skills

Writing skills are important, so we recommend having someone proofread your speech to check for any grammatical or spelling mistakes. It's also a good idea to read your speech out loud to yourself or someone else a few times to check the punctuation and flow of your speech. While the tone should be formal don't forget to make your unique style come through in your writing!

Innovative Ideas or viewpoints

We recommend reading through a wide variety of sources about our chosen topic and coming up with your own viewpoints, ideas and solutions. Remember that you are not only writing about a certain issue, but also critically analysing it and providing your own viewpoint.

Creativity in getting points across

Be creative! Try to find unique ways to present your arguments. Think outside of the box and be original!

Global outlook

Your speech should have a global outlook. While it is encouraged to base elements of your speech in an Irish context, you should analyse your theme with a global outlook in mind.

Ideas complemented by case studies, facts and figures

References are very important- while it is amazing to incorporate your own experiences and viewpoints into your speech, it is important to have your arguments backed up by case studies, facts and figures. While in-text citations aren't necessary, please include all your sources in the bibliography.

Additional Rules:

1. Speeches must be written only by the participants- plagiarised speeches or speeches written using AI will be disqualified.
2. After submission, each entrant must fill out the following [short survey](#), [available here](#).
3. By submitting a speech, the student and school are giving permission for the speech and the student and school name and image to be publicized on the ActionAid website and in third party publications. Only finalist speeches will be published.