



Persuasive Speech Contest: "Why CTE? A Student's Pathway, A Community's Future"

Location: College of the Sequoias, Visalia

Chairperson:

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CHECK IN: 9:00 am

CONTEST BEGINS: 9:15 am

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligibility is limited to individuals. No team entries will be allowed.

SCOPE OF CONTEST:

Background:

Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways provide students with hands-on learning, real-world skills, and clear connections to careers and postsecondary opportunities. Through industry-aligned coursework, certifications, leadership development, and work-based learning experiences, CTE helps students discover their strengths, build confidence, and prepare for both college and career success.

Students who participate in CTE are uniquely qualified to share the impact of these programs. Their personal experiences offer powerful insight into how CTE pathways benefit individuals, schools, and communities – and why continued participation, support, and funding are essential.

Purpose of the Speech:

Students will prepare a persuasive speech that highlights their personal CTE pathway experience and encourages others to enroll in, support, and invest in CTE programs.

Speeches should be rooted in authentic student experiences and demonstrate how CTE pathways create opportunity, relevance, and career readiness.

Expectations:

- Students should take a clear persuasive stance and may choose one primary audience for their speech. The speech should explain *why CTE pathways matter* and *why others should care*.
- Students may address questions such as, but not limited to:
For Incoming or Current Students:
 - How has your CTE pathway helped you discover your interests or career goals?
 - What makes CTE classes different from traditional academic courses?



- What hands-on skills, certifications, or experiences have you gained?
- Why should students consider enrolling in a CTE pathway?

For Parents and Families

- How does CTE prepare students for college, careers, and life beyond high school?
- How has CTE improved your confidence, motivation, or engagement in school?
- Why is CTE a valuable option for students with diverse goals and learning styles?

For School Leaders, Local Officials, and Community Members

- Why are CTE pathways essential to workforce development and the local economy?
- How do CTE programs create equitable access to high-wage, high-demand careers?
- Why is continued funding, support, and expansion of CTE programs necessary?
- What would be lost if CTE programs were underfunded or eliminated?

Audience:

Students must clearly identify their intended audience, which may include:

- Incoming students or current students
- Parents and guardians
- School administrations and educators
- Local officials, industry partners, or community stakeholders

Length:

The speech must be 4-5 minutes in length.

Format:

Introduction

- Begin with a compelling hook (personal story, question, statistic, or experience).
- Introduce your CTE pathway and clearly state your persuasive message.

Body

- Supporting Arguments
Develop three to four key points that demonstrate the value of your CTE pathway. Support your points with personal experiences, examples, data, or industry connections.
- Addressing Counterarguments
Acknowledge common misconceptions or opposing views (e.g., "CTE isn't for college-bound students") and respond with thoughtful, evidence-based rebuttals.

Conclusion

- Summarize your main arguments.
- Reinforce the importance of CTE pathways.
- End with a strong call to action (enroll, support, advocate, or invest).

Evaluation Criteria:

- **Purpose & Persuasive Message – 20 points**
The speech clearly encourages the intended audience to enroll in, support, or fund a CTE pathway.



- **Personal CTE Pathway Experience – 20 points**
The speaker uses authentic, specific examples from their own CTE pathway to strengthen their message.
- **Organization & Structure – 15 points**
The speech includes a clear introduction, well-developed main points, and a strong conclusion.
- **Supporting Evidence & Reasoning (15 points)**
Ideas are supported with examples, explanations, data, or real-world connections.
- **Addressing Counterarguments – 10 points**
The speaker acknowledges common misconceptions about CTE and responds to them thoughtfully.
- **Delivery & Presentation Skills – 15 points**
The speaker demonstrates confidence, clarity, eye contact, and audience engagement.
- **Time Management – 5 points**
The speech meets the 4 – 5 minute time requirement.

Equipment and materials

Students should prepare a written script for practice, but aim to deliver their speech naturally. One 5"X7" notecard may be used; however, it should not be simply read or relied on heavily. One visual aid may be used to enhance the presentation; visual aid NOT required.

Tie-Breaker

In the event of a tie, the team with the highest score in the Purpose & Persuasive Message section of the scoring rubric will be the winner.

Persuasive Speech Contest – Judge’s Rubric

Student Name: _____ School: _____

Judge Name: _____

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement	Score
Purpose & Persuasive Message (20 pts)	18–20 Clear, compelling, persuasive throughout; strong call to action	14–17 Clear purpose; mostly persuasive	10–13 Purpose somewhat unclear or inconsistent	0–9 Purpose unclear or missing	
Personal CTE Pathway Experience (20 pts)	18–20 Strong, authentic, specific pathway examples	14–17 Relevant personal experiences included	10–13 Limited or general references	0–9 Little or no personal connection	
Organization & Structure (15 pts)	14–15 Clear intro, logical flow, strong conclusion	11–13 Mostly organized; minor lapses	7–10 Some organizational issues	0–6 Lacks structure; difficult to follow	
Supporting Evidence & Reasoning (15 pts)	14–15 Strong reasoning with examples, data, or industry relevance	11–13 Adequate supporting details	7–10 Limited or repetitive support	0–6 Unsupported or unclear claims	
Addressing Counterarguments (10 pts)	9–10 Clearly identifies and refutes misconceptions	7–8 Counterarguments addressed adequately	4–6 Weak or minimal response	0–3 No counterarguments included	
Delivery & Presentation Skills (15 pts)	14–15 Confident, engaging, clear voice, strong presence	11–13 Clear delivery; minor issues	7–10 Uneven delivery or reliance on notes	0–6 Difficult to hear or disengaged	
Time Management (5 pts)	5 Within time limit	3–4 Slightly under/over (±30 sec)	1–2 Significantly under/over	0 Far outside time limit	

TOTAL SCORE: _____ / 100

Judge Comments:

Strengths:

Suggestions for Improvement:
