

## ORIGINAL ORATORY (0.0)

An oratory is a persuasive speech on a timely subject that is inspirational, controversial, or philosophical. A speaker attempts to convince the audience to accept an idea through a well-written and well-delivered speech. The speaker may make the audience aware of a problem or concern and may offer a solution; a solution, however, is not mandatory. Someone once stated that an oration must “convince the mind, warm the heart, and move the will.” A good oratory must then catch the audience’s interest early and hold it throughout the speech. The speech, though expressing an opinion, should be factually based.

### Tournament Requirements

1. All orations must be the work of the contestant. No speeches or subjects used by that contestant in previous years may be used. In the same or subsequent years, the contestant cannot use the same subject in competition in expository or advocacy and vice versa.
2. The script must be prepared in advance. The manuscript must be double-spaced typewritten, with all quotations underlined. The manuscript must follow the MLA style guidelines for internal citations and must include a “works cited” page.
3. There may be no more than 150 quoted words.
4. The presentation must not exceed ten (10) minutes. There is no minimum time, but preferably not shorter than five (5) minutes.
5. The speech must be memorized. No notes may be used. Some leagues allow notes in novice division.
6. No costumes, props, visual or audio aids are permitted.

### Writing the Speech

1. The first step is to choose a topic. The topic should be something “current but not overdone.” Unless the speaker has a very limited audience, s/he should avoid topics which are too deeply embedded in personal beliefs to allow for change in the judges’ opinions. Such topics include abortion, capital punishment, and euthanasia. The topic will be most effective if it is one that interests the speaker but also has a chance of being “heard” by the judges. Recent magazine headlines, shows like *60 Minutes* and special reports on news shows are good sources for topics.
2. Gather information on the subject. Read magazines, books, and newspaper clippings to learn about the topic. Use the Internet. Take notes on all interesting information.
3. Formulate a thesis for the speech and decide the main points to be covered.
4. Fill in the main points from the research. Gather more facts if necessary. Try for interesting factual support -- especially emotional material.
5. Once the body is finished, look for a strong, “audience catching” introduction and conclusion. These are extremely important parts of the speech and special time should be given to their development. Quotations, stories, anecdotes, illustrations, personal experiences, and startling statements are effective.
6. When turning the outline into a manuscript, write complex, yet carefully thought-out sentences using advanced vocabulary and strong emotional appeals.
7. Polish the speech, having someone else look it over for possible alteration, and type a final script.

### Practicing the Delivery

1. Get the basic format firmly in mind. Read the manuscript silently several times. Then, read it aloud, repeatedly, with vocal expression. Set the manuscript down and try it from memory. Use the manuscript only as a prompt.
2. When the speech is memorized, practice it in front of a mirror. Work at gestures and facial expression, but do not over-rehearse. A good delivery should be conversational yet polished, direct, clearly enunciated, easily heard, and interesting to watch.

## SAMPLE TOPICS FOR ORATORY

AIDS	American Competitiveness	Anger
Apathy	Appearance	Art Appreciation
Attitudes/Morals	Bankruptcy	Be Yourself
Blameshifting	Boredom vs. Blues	Cocooning
Caring	Chaos	Charisma
Cloning	Communication	Cooperation
Couch Potato Ethic	Cultural Literacy	Cynicism
Do Your Best	Doer vs. Watcher	Don't Know/Can Hurt
Drs. as Gods	Eccentrics	Education
Efficiency Experts	Entrepreneurs	Escapism
Ethics	Ethnic Literacy	Extremism
Failure	Fairy Tales	Family
Fear	Feelings	Forgive Yourself
Foster Care	Friendship	Futility of War
Greed	Guilt	Happiness
Health	Honesty	Illusion/Reality
Importance/Fathers	Individuality	Judging Others
Lack of Honor	Language Evolution	Laughter
Liability	Listening Skills	Loneliness
Materialism	Meaning of Life	Media Manipulation
Media/Politics	Medical Ethics	Mental Illness
Mistakes are OK	Money	Name Calling
Need for Diversity	Non-Conformity	Nostalgia
Obsession with Fun	Open Mind	Optimism
Originality	Overuse of Statistics	Peace
Popularity	Power Hungry	Pride
Procrastination	Public Service	Questioning
Quiet Hero	Racism	Risk
Sanctuary	SAT	Self-esteem
Self-Potential	Setting Goals	Sexual Responsibility
Silence	Social Injustice	Stress
Style	Success	Taking Advice
Tears	Teen Problems	Time
Touch the Future	Touching	Trauma Centers
Trends	Trust	Values
Verbal Rudeness	Violence in Media	What's in a Name

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*The Elephant Child* by Anton Ford, Bellarmine College Prep

In a high and far off time, Africa's deepest, darkest jungles were filled with the humid murmur of animal voices. Amongst them could be heard the never-ending question of one elephant, a new elephant, an elephant's child, for he was filled with an insatiable curiosity. The elephant's child asked ever so many question about anything and everything. And in recognition of his sharp mind and driving curiosity, all his aunt and uncles spanked him. Then one morning the elephant child asked a fine, new question, one that he had never asked before.

"What does the crocodile eat for dinner?" In response his aunts and uncles proceeded to spank him immediately and for a long time, leaving him a little warm, but not at all astonished. However, the elephant child refused to give up. Full of courage and driven by his insatiable curiosity, he walked across Africa, to the banks of the Great Grey Green Greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever trees, so that he could ask the crocodile himself. Upon reaching the banks of the Limpopo, this Promethean Pachyderm found the answer for which his insatiable curiosity had driven him long. You see, it was the elephant's child that the crocodile had for dinner.

Perhaps Aesop's fable doesn't depict such a high and far off time as we would like to believe. Our society ever squelches the probing curiosity of the American elephant child. Our Cliff-notes-generation discourages curiosity and mental stimulation, only to find the comfort and simplicity of anti-intellectualism. America's anti-intellectual values reflect an alarmingly skewed set of priorities. For ours is an age in which athletes are idolized while academics are ostracized; in which socialites are commended while intellectuals are condemned; in which glitz is adored and logic abhorred. Ours is an age in which few could doubt that whoever said "Ignorance is bliss" was probably an American.

It is a telling tale, indeed, when our anti-intellectual values have become intertwined with the very fabric of our society, when the language we speak has only derogatory terms like "geek" and "nerd" for the intellectually curious and the academically serious. A geek, according to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, is a street performer who shocks the public by biting off the heads of live chicken. It is, indeed, revealing that in our society someone who is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge is equated with a side-show freak. Even at such prestigious institutions as Harvard University, many students are ashamed to admit, even to classmates, how much time they spend studying. And while good grades are usually important, Harvard professor Leonid Freidman states that "there is but a minority of the undergraduates for whom pursuing knowledge is the top priority during their years at [the University]." Many of our nation's students continue to hide their academic triumphs in order to avoid the loathsome stigma of being "an intellect." Because, hey, a geek is a geek.

In Orthodox Jewish families there is such a reverence for learning that a book is considered a sacred object. Should it touch the floor, it must be picked up and kissed; should it become old and unreadable, it must be buried. Chances are, most of us won't have to worry about dropping a book because, well, we rarely pick one up. In fact, studies show the 58 percent of all Americans never read a non-fiction book once they finish school. It's not that Americans lack the resources of the ability or the time to learn—we simply lack the desire. In every other industrial society in the world, studious pupils are held as role models for others to emulate—they are recognized with social and economic rewards which reflect an emphasis on intellectual achievement. But here, in the land of the free, where anything and everything is possible, these minds find themselves rejected, cast away, littering our streets with unwanted thought and discarded brilliance.

By the end of this school year, one out of ever four high school students with drop out—some because it's too difficult, a few because they can't keep up, but many because they feel it's just not important. Carolyn Delury states, in *The Story of Underachieving Gifted* that 19 percent of all high

school drop-outs are in the top ½ of 1 percent intellectually. This means that the true prodigy and genius of our time is being turned away and turned off by education. Our brightest students are being left helpless to shape their own destinies, lost to the growing evils of anti-intellectualism. Can we really blame them? Is it any wonder that we have such attitudes when everything around us, every facet of the media enforces our anti-intellectual values?

Backed by her “New Bohemians,” nouveau singer Edie Briel begs “choke me in the shallow waters before I get too deep [in thought].” And Roger Waters of Pink Floyd propounds the “We don’t need no education!” Fact is, Pink, you do, we do, and it is attitudes such as these that have sparked a sharp and alarming change in American values. As we flock to the movies and spill over the rim of every bowl in college football, our financial support of educations and educators paints a vivid picture of American anti-intellectualism.

In the words of Henry Adams, “A teacher affects eternity; no one can tell where his influence stops.” While no one would deny this, the teacher’s value to society has been clearly designated: just under \$20,000 a year. It is a bit disheartening to imagine that the people responsible for shaping the minds of our youth are paid less than those who serve us cocktails, paid less than those who build our houses, paid less than those who dispose of our garbage. When our politicians fail to support education, it is the teacher, the students, and the posterity that will pay the ultimate price.

Eighteen months after the Bush administration named it one of four model districts in the country, the Richmond School District, lacking government support, was forced to declare bankruptcy, and thirty-one thousand students got an extra month of summer vacation. At Morris High School in the South Bronx, chairs are positioned to avoid falling pieces of ceiling and children cannot write on the cracked blackboards for fear of cutting their hands. Last year, we gave eight billion dollars in military aid to countries that our under-educated children can’t even find on a map. When will this stop? When, and only when we show our children how important learning is.

When Copernicus postulated that the earth revolved around the sun, when Einstein defined relativity, when Darwin theorized evolution, it was not because he had to, it was because he had a deep-seated desire to learn and to grow intellectually. It is this desire with which we must imbue our youth. And it’s not so hard as it may appear.

Children are natural scientists and philosophers. By the time they enter school, they are recreational thinkers pondering the most elusive scientific dilemmas. Why is the sky blue? What makes a rainbow? Where do babies come from? Where does the sun go when it sleeps? “All too often,” claims Carl Sagan, “parents respond with irritation or ridicule, or quickly move on to something else.” What they should do is praise children’s questions and encourage their budding intellects.

And we must. We must encourage that light of curiosity which shines in the eyes of every little boy and girl, that spark of wonder, that glimmer of intellect. For look at us now; our eyes, the light, it’s not as bright as it once was. What’s happened to our flame? Where have we gone wrong?

Harvard doctoral candidate Leonid Freidman states that “our fault lies not so much with our economy, or with our politics, as within ourselves, our values and our image of a good life.” We must imbue in our children the notion that a good life necessitates intellectual stimulations and stretching one’s mind to its fullest extent. We must show the American Elephant Child, once and for all, that it’s all right to ask why.

It’s high time that the Nerds and Geeks of the nation stand up! Stand up and face the troglodytes who have haunted your hallways since the first grade. Stand up to the society that attempts to stifle your insatiable curiosity. For our nation’s sake, the anti-intellectual values which pervade our society must be fought. Stop being ashamed for who you are and someday “nerd” and “geek” will be words of approbation and not derision. But unless we, as individuals, stand up for what and how we think, America will find itself in a sad, yet United State.

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*Genetic Human Experimentation* by Jennifer Cowen, Redlands High School

One chilly October afternoon, with the wind whistling through the trees and the fall-colored leaves dropping to the ground, a young couple sits in a doctor's office talking with their physician. Their discussion concerns the child they are planning on having. Their requirements are simple. They want their pride and joy to be a blond boy with blue eyes, six feet tall when grown, his IQ at least 150 and his personality outgoing. The wife almost forgets something, but reminds her husband in time, "Oh, yes, straight teeth, please." No, this isn't an adoption office. Remember this is their doctor, a doctor who specializes in producing "superkids." He is a genetics specialist, one who informs parents which eggs are good eggs and which ones are, how shall we say, bad eggs. He is an expert on combining genes from different fertilized eggs to make designer children.

Does this sound like a Ray Bradbury plot line? Surprisingly enough, this kind of science fiction is becoming a reality. What do you think of when you hear: Genetic Human Experimentation? Do visions of the *Inquirer* and *The Star* come to mind, with their stories of three-headed men marrying Siamese twins and women in Alaska having cow babies? Or do you think of the structure of DNA and the Human Genome Project? Today, we are going to discuss an oxymoron—Real Life Science Fiction. Genetic scientists are working toward reading all the human chromosomes at their highest level of resolution; their ultimate goal is to list the whole encyclopedia-length recipe for making a human being.

In discussing this issue, we must look into the genetic history that led to the creation of the Human Genome Project. We will look at the possible outcomes of such a scientific find. Next, we will discuss the economic aspect and the values of this information and, then, decide if we, as a society, are prepared to support and encourage real life science fiction.

First, let's look at the history of genetic human experimentation. The dream of making a man actually began in Dr. James Watson's mind long before many of us were born. The dream came closer to becoming a reality when, in 1953, Dr. Watson won the Nobel Prize in Science for discovering the structure of DNA. Since then, Watson, along with a multitude of other geneticists, has been striving to sequence chromosomes inhabiting different diseases, diseases including Downs Syndrome, Cystic Fibrosis, and Tay-Sachs in the hope that they will be able to prevent these diseases from racking the human body. Finding the indicators for these diseases eventually led to the founding of the Human Genome Project. This government-funded organization began in 1989, and soon after its founding, Dr. James Watson stepped into the key leadership position.

As stated earlier, the goal of this organization is to obtain the recipe for making a human being. What are the possible outcomes if such a recipe is discovered? One possible and very frightening outcome of this discovering is eugenics. Wait isn't that a Hitler term? Didn't the Nazis use that? The answers are "yes" and "yes." Eugenics is the science that deals with the improvement (by control of human mating) of hereditary qualities of a race or breed. Biologists and ethicists are concerned that governments will begin a new quest for a superior race. However, a more realistic and immediate fear is that governments won't get involved in reproductive choices. The knowledge and conscience will be left to the free market and so people will do as they please. This means that doctors will be able to diagnose a fetus' condition. They will be able to decipher its chromosomes and tell whether it will have a tendency to be smart or slow, tall or short, feminine or masculine, mentally active or mentally handicapped.

As you have already guessed, this leads us to another problem/outcome: bio-social stratification, or a caste system determined by who has enough money to run the tests and go through the procedures to have a guaranteed, above-average child. Because of being able to sequence Downs Syndrome, we already see this happening. Arthur Caplan of the University of Minnesota's Center for Bio-Medical

Ethics has noted that the people using the few fetal diagnoses now available are both financially and culturally at the high end of the income scale. Downs Syndrome children are almost certainly being born disproportionately to the less affluent. You see, as the July 9, 1990, issue of the *New Republic* stated, “Once we can isolate genes conducive not just to specific pathologies, but to say, lower than average intelligence, we are headed toward a literal caste system.” So, what stands between us and this Brave New World? The questions: Will science find such genes? And will parents dare to use the information for their benefit?

Geneticists come closer each day to finding the key that will unlock the door to all of the information. Last spring, two researchers announced their discovery of a gene that predisposes people toward alcoholism. They examined seventy diseased people, half of them alcoholics, and found that the alcoholics were substantially more likely to have the gene than the non-alcoholics. The small number with which they worked leaves a little room for skepticism, but the point is that these statistical correlations are a perfectly valid way to prove a link between a gene and a complex behavior.

Concerning the second question: will parents use this information? Have you heard about the waiting lists that parents living in New York put their newborns on to ensure them a place in the best preschools in Manhattan? What about the intensive SAT prep courses and lessons in a particular sport to perfect their child’s talent? If we stand by and let projects such as this continue, feasibly in ten or fifteen years we’ll all have Super Children, strange science experiments from a test tube, faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound! Individuality will be erased.

Something that is difficult to justify is the money being invested into the Human Genome Project and its research. According to the July 9, 1990, issue of the *New Republic*, over three million dollars have been funded to the project from the national government. We are living in an age when everyday problems and issues are being overlooked and vague possibilities are being actively pursued. Taxes are at an all-time high, school funding is being lowered everyday, and we are fighting a war in the Middle East, yet we are giving to the Human Genome Project overly generous amounts of money to produce, scientifically, a man.

How vitally important is the information? And will it benefit us more than it dehumanizes us? Granted, the more we learn about our genes the better chance we have of tackling the incurable diseases of today. However, the risks involved in this venture are just too huge to overlook: a world full of clones, the enormous price for this medical knowledge, doctors taking the roles of gods. Predicting the future is impossible, but being concerned with the outcome of scientific research is a definite responsibility of every scientist. As shown by a recent interview, Dr. Watson hasn’t taken the time to weigh the pros and the cons. He said, “I know that knowledge will come out and I know that people are going to use it, but I don’t know what knowledge will come out.” If we support this project, we will be supporting a blind man leading the blind man.

So then, the ultimate question remains: Are we going to support and encourage genetic human experimentation? Some are hungry for knowledge and will go to any length to attain it. They are the people like Dr. Watson who aren’t concerned with outcomes. They haven’t stopped to think about that genetic aristocracy that feasibly could be created, or the international race for perfect humans, or the loss of so many different, yet unique, possible members of society who won’t be given a chance to live. They see only the uncharted land we haven’t crossed and the personal satisfaction they will gain from such knowledge.

*The Bible* states in Ecclesiastes 3:1, “There is a time for everything.” This is not the time for Institutes like the Human Genome Project. One look at our society will prove that we, as a nation of human beings, have already created a world of unsolvable and insane problems. This knowledge will not solve these problems. In fact, it will only create more problems that we must add to the never-ending list and deal with.

One chilly October afternoon, with the wind whistling through the trees and the fall-colored leaves dropping to the ground, a teenage boy steps into a library and picks up a Ray Bradbury novel. Finally, science fiction where it belongs.