

Climb Programs for High School Students (9th-12th graders)



Climb the Mountain
Speech and Debate

SUMMER CAMPS 2026

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Register!

About the High School Programs

High School students are encouraged to participate in our Speech, Congress, and Debate Programs.

Speech is great for a student that likes to work more on their own and wants to gain presentation skills including organizing material with relevant and engaging information along with good delivery.

Speech Program: High School students in our Speech program will learn new kinds of speeches and prepare, practice, and present one or two different kinds of speeches. We are offering 1) PowerPoint speaking; 2) Extemp-Impromptu speaking; 3) Informative-Persuasive-Humorous (ADS) speaking; 4) Interpretation (Play Prose Poetry performances). ***The last day of class, students present their speeches leading to awards and recognitions (no extra fee, it is part of the camp program).***

Debate is great for students that want to advance in-depth knowledge on issues and to directly respond to what others have to say, preparing on a national high school debate topic.

High School Debate Program: High School Students use the one on one LD debate format. They learn about values, philosophy, and current issues reflecting choices society is making. They learn research, case building, responding, and rebuttal arguments to persuade judges. The topic is one chosen by the national organization NSDA. ***The last day of class, students engage in debates leading to awards and recognitions (no extra fee, it is part of the camp program).***

Congress is great for students that like to work more on their own but to reach out to others to examine, research, and discuss government policies. Students in Congress learn bill advocacy and argumentation skills.

High Schoolers in CONGRESS learn how to argue policy proposals in a congressional like setting. They'll research and learn about bills, how to make a persuasive case for change, and how to question, refute, and defend their bills. As they progress, they'll learn parliamentary procedure and effective, strategic ways to win over others. This is an excellent event for students who want a balance between speaking and debating. ***The last day of class, students engage in congressional debate leading to awards and recognitions (no extra fee, it is part of the camp program).***

Yes—high school students can do congress and speech in July.

In August, high school students can do speech OR debate, not both (they conflict time wise).

Register!

Location Dates Times Fees for High School Students

JULY ONLINE SPEECH High School Program

July 20-24, 1230pm to 220pm, \$439

JULY BELLEVUE SPEECH High School Program

July 20-24, 1230pm to 220pm, \$549

JULY BELLEVUE CONGRESS High School Program

July 20-24, 10am to Noon, \$549

AUGUST ONLINE SPEECH High School Program

August 10-14, 1230pm to 220pm, \$439

AUGUST SEATTLE LD DEBATE High School Program

August 10-14, 1030am to 530pm, \$999

Prices include the new Washington Sales Tax on Non-Profit Educational Programs.

Prices include culminating debate/speech event showcasing student learning and growth.

Note that Congress and Speech classes may also have Middle School students.

--BELLEVUE Location is at Bellevue College. 3000 Landerholm Cir SE, Bellevue, WA 98005.

--SEATTLE Location is at Seattle University. 901 12th Ave, Seattle WA 98122.

--Online uses Zoom.

Register!

New & Experienced Students

NEW DEBATERS: Students begin by learning key skills for debating. The structure of an argument, responding to opposing arguments, ask and answering questions, taking notes, making cases, researching, and synthesizing the arguments in a debate into a persuasive argument. Students work in small groups--our staff to student ratio is typically 1 to 4 students in high school LD debate. Students engage in debates with expert feedback and engage in redos to improve their speaking and argument skills. All the while, they are building up social connections and friendships with other students who share their goals.

RETURNING EXPERIENCED DEBATERS: Experienced students build off the debate knowledge they have gained. Working in small labs of 4 to 8 students, they learn advanced skills and strategies and how to put them into action. They work on and debate different topics. They are challenged by more difficult debates. They are challenged to improve their cases and responses. All along, they are working with their debate friends--a supportive, high achieving group who want the best for each other.

NEW SPEAKERS: Students will learn new kinds of speeches and prepare, practice, and present 2 different kinds of speeches. We are offering 1) PowerPoint speaking; 2) Extemp-Impromptu speaking; 3) Informative-Persuasive-Humorous (ADS) speaking; 4) Interpretation (Play-Prose-Poetry performances). Throughout you work with other friendly students who are just as interested in ideas and communication as you are.

RETURNING/EXPERIENCED SPEAKERS: Students advance their preparing, practice, and presentation skills in new speeches. Experienced speakers get advanced work with our experts to take their speeches from decent to great. Throughout students work with other experienced students who bring their own talents and skills into the mix to advance at a peer level student understanding and engagement in high quality speeches.

NEW IN CONGRESS: High School Students in Congress will learn the foundations to prepare, practice, and advocate for and against bills. Students learn how to craft a bill, how to argue for and against the bill, ask and answer challenges and questions to the bill. Throughout, students engage with other smart and collegial students who are interested in policies and the needs of our communities.

RETURNING/EXPERIENCED CONGRESS MEMBERS: Students advance their preparing, practice, and presentation skills in congressional debating. Experienced congress members work at a higher level to make their arguments the strongest possible. Students work with other experienced congressional debaters. The result is stronger, more advanced levels of congressional argumentation.

Register!

About Fees and the Refund Policy

Lower income or Rainier Scholars household? When you register, choose one of the two options for 50% or 95% fee reduction (no forms--just a click). We want our programs to be affordable to all families.

Fees include: All instruction in small 6 to 8 person labs for personalized attention, example arguments and speeches, materials with extensive tips, and a feedback system for students and parents that provides guidance for improving. Fees also include a culminating experience of debates/speeches leading to recognitions and awards.

Refunds (Summer Camp Policy)

If you drop before June 1, you will receive 95% refund.

If you drop 7 or more days before the first day of class, you will receive 85% refund.

If you drop 72 or more hours before the first day class, you will receive 75% refund.

If you drop 24 or more hours before the second day of class starts, you will receive 65% refund.

If you drop 24 hours or more before the third day of class starts, you will receive 45% refund.

After the third class begins, there are no refunds.

We do NOT refund for missing a class, for being late to a class, nor for missing a tournament that is part of the program, nor for dropping the class after day 3 starts.

Students can makeup missed classes by viewing our program's PowerPoints or by attending another class if session available (arrange with Jim Hanson).

You can switch days at no cost IF there is space available to do so. We will refund price differences ONLY if you switch 7 or more days before the first class.

The refund policy is based on the fact that registration processing takes our time and once we hire a staff member--we have to pay them for the entire program even when students drop. Dropping is also disruptive to teams and labs who have to be reconfigured.

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