

What to Expect Competing in United States Extemporaneous Speaking

*In United States Extemporaneous Speaking, students are presented with a choice of three questions related to current events in the United States and, in 30 minutes, prepare a seven-minute speech answering one of the proposed questions. Students may consult articles and evidence they gather prior to the contest, but may not use the internet during preparation. Topics range from political matters to economic concerns to U.S. foreign policy. The speech is delivered from memory. Sophomore **Joshua Tran** gives his take on USX.*

Why did you choose your event?

I chose Extemp, in general, because it offers a different experience and requires you to think on the spot. This helps with other forms of debate, especially in the second speaker role. United States Extemporaneous Speaking, in my opinion, gives you more freedom to talk about a wide range of issues that headline today's news cycles.

What skills are important in United States Extemporaneous Speaking?

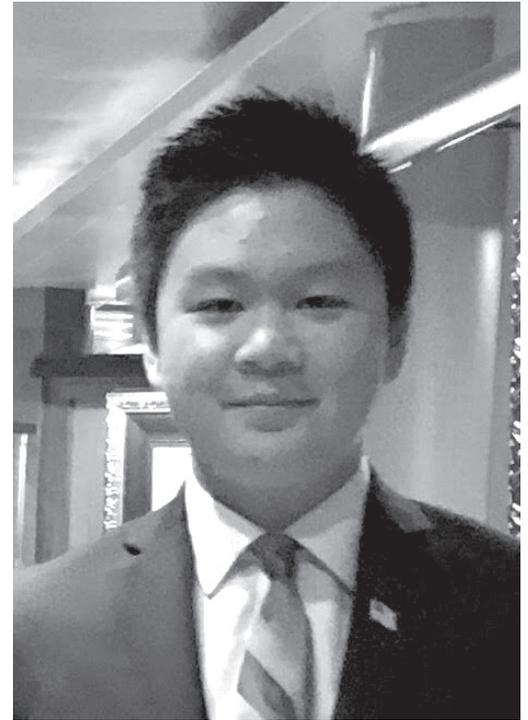
I believe that the ideal competitor for USX is one that is interested in what's going on around the nation and one who enjoys talking about different issues. One of the biggest skills is taking what is on the news and turning it into a message to convey to the judge. Extemp is partly about competition, but it also focuses on informing the public about issues that are relevant to everyone.

What kind of challenges did you face in round?

The biggest challenge is filing articles and knowing what to read about each night. With so many possible topics, it's important and challenging to grasp as much as you can before a tournament. Resources, like the *New York Times Daily Digest*, are really helpful in making this challenge easier to accomplish. Reading a few articles every night also aids in overcoming this challenge.

What does a typical tournament look like for someone in United States Extemporaneous Speaking?

A typical tournament involves looking for the prep room and waiting for your name to be called up! Seeing all the other competitors pacing and already practicing gives you a feeling of anxiety and really causes you to look through your stored articles more. When drawing, the questions may or may not be known to you and that is also a stressful moment. However, looking through information and practicing your speech really builds the experience needed to be a successful extemper. Overall, the Extemp environment is very different in comparison to the other debates, it really brings a different experience that expands your worldview.



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— Joshua Tran, student,
Carlsbad HS, CA