



The 44th ONTARIO JAPANESE SPEECH CONTEST

<https://buna.yorku.ca/ojsc/>

1. Time & Venue

Date: Saturday, February 28th, 2026,

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Venue: Innis Town Hall (IN112), Innis College, University of Toronto

Address: 2 Sussex Avenue, Toronto ON M5S 1J5

2. Hosted by

Organizer: The Organizing Committee for the Ontario Japanese Speech Contest

Supported by:

Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto

The Consulate General of Japan

The Japan Foundation

3. Qualifications

Applicants must:

- 1) Be 18 years of age or older;
- 2) Reside in Ontario (excluding the Ottawa and Kingston areas).
- 3) Be studying Japanese as a foreign language.

Notes:

- Contestants must submit their speech by email to the Organizing Committee by 9:00 a.m. a day before the contest (see your screening results email for details).
- Contestants must register at the reception desk by the designated time on the day of the contest.
- Attendance is required at the opening session, your category session, and the closing ceremony.
- The judging committee's decision regarding eligibility is final. If false application is discovered - even after the contest - the Organizing Committee reserves the right to withdraw awards.

4. Program Affiliation

- 1) Applicants studying Japanese at multiple institutions must apply through the institution with which they have the longest affiliation.
- 2) If an applicant's current institution offers a Japanese program—even if they are not enrolled in it—they must still be screened through that institution.
- 3) Applicants without institutional affiliation may apply. However, if applications exceed the category limit, priority will be given to those affiliated with a program.

5. Categories

Eligibility is determined by home language, study hours, and time spent in Japan. (Study hours include those completed in primary and secondary school.)

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Open
Japanese spoken at home	None	None	None	No limit
Hours of study	less than 130 hours	less than 260 hours	No limit	No limit
Time spent in Japan (age 6+)	3 months or less	6 months or less	Less than 1 year	No limit

Notes:

- All qualifications must be met by February 27, 2026.
- Past winners of the Grand Prize or the First Prize may not enter the same category again.
- Learners who have taught Japanese (formally or informally) must apply to the Open Category.
- Unsure of your category? Contact the Organizing Committee before applying.

6. Number of Participants per Institution

Each institution may nominate up to **3 participants per category**, with an overall maximum of **10 participants**.

7. Regulations

- 1) Contestants may choose their own title and topic (topics relating to Canada and Japan are encouraged).
- 2) Speeches must be written by the contestant and must be original, unpublished work.
- 3) Cue cards may be used, but excessive reliance may result in penalties.
- 4) The speech must not mention the contestant's institution by name.

8. Speech Length

- Beginner Category: **3 minutes**
- Intermediate Category: **4 minutes**
- All Other Categories: **5 minutes**
(Note: Maximum speech length for Advanced and Open categories has been updated starting this year.)

Time Limit Rule: Speeches exceeding the limit by more than **10 seconds** will be penalized.

9. Evaluation

- 1) A panel of five judges from diverse fields related to Japan will assess the speeches.
- 2) The Organizing Committee has no role in judging decisions.
- 3) Evaluation criteria are available on the [OJSC homepage](#).

10. Certificates and Prizes

Winners in each category will receive certificates and prizes.

11. Participation in the National Japanese Speech Contest:

First Prize winners in each category may be invited to participate in the National Japanese Speech Contest, to be held in March 2026 at the Prince Takamado Japan Centre for Teaching and Research, University of Alberta.

12. Application:

Forms (available January 2026 at <https://buna.yorku.ca/ojsc/>)

- **Referee's Form:** Completed by the representative of the applicant's Japanese institution/program.
- **Application Form:** Completed by the applicant.

Deadlines:

- Referee's Form: **Monday, February 2, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.**
- Application Form: **Wednesday, February 4, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.**

Result announcement: Results will be sent by e-mail by **Wednesday, February 11, 2026**

Notes:

- Applicants without institutional affiliation do not need a Referee's Form. Instead, the Organizing Committee will arrange a brief interview (in person or online) after the application deadline to confirm the correct category.
- If you do not receive a confirmation email within 48 hours of submitting your application, please contact the Committee.

13. Contact

Organizing Committee for the 44th Ontario Japanese Speech Contest

Email: ojsc.committee@gmail.com