

# Christian School Finals Competition

## Spanish 160/French 165

*October 2010*



### **CSFC Event Highlight – Spanish 160/French 165**

¿Habla usted español? Parlez-vous français? Do you speak Spanish or French as a second language, or are you considering learning one of these languages? If so, there are two events at Christian School Finals Competition geared just for you, even if you are a beginner—the Spanish and French Events (160 & 165).

At CSFC, the Spanish and French events include recitation from memory of a compulsory poetic selection as well as an impromptu, uncoached brief presentation of one poem in the language.

While this may sound overwhelming, especially if you are just a beginner, Dr. Robert Skinner, Chair of the English and Modern Languages department at Oral Roberts University, encourages all schools and students to participate in these events and shares some insights to make the Spanish and French competitions not quite so daunting.

If you are currently studying a foreign language, I encourage you to continue in your pursuit. If you have not yet explored learning a new language, I encourage you to consider adding a new language to your skills. There are several benefits to learning a foreign language. Let's take a look at just a few.

One of the first things you may notice as you begin learning a new language is that the skills in your native language develop simultaneously. Let's look at how this happens. First, learning a new language builds on what you already know. As you continue learning a new language, similarities to your native language will emerge. For instance, if your native language is English and you are studying French, you probably have noticed that 70 percent of the French language is the same as English. It is just pronounced differently. This is also true of the German language. As language skills are expanded, a larger, overall picture of how grammar goes together and of how languages work develops. This understanding enhances all of your language skills.

Additionally, you will notice an increase in your vocabulary. Some students have reported an increase of 3-4 times in their English vocabulary secondary to learning a foreign language.

Of course, knowing a second language opens doors to career opportunities where knowledge of another language is needed.

Yet, above and beyond all these benefits are the bridges you can build to other people, cultures and communities through a second language. This, of course, is beneficial as we seek to fulfill the Great Commandment to go into all the world.

The Spanish and French events at CSFC are a great place to practice language skills, and there is an opportunity to place high, even if you have just started learning one of these languages. Here are a few tips for those entering these events.

Audio clips will be available for both the Spanish and French compulsory poetic selections. (The poems are available on the CSFC web site. Listening to and practicing from the audio clips has been found to improve pronunciation. Practice also increases fluency allowing for the incorporation of thought and feeling into your delivery. Since you already have access to the compulsory recitation and the audio clips, you have the opportunity to excel in this portion of the event.

The impromptu portion of this competition is more challenging, in that there is not the opportunity to practice before Competition as with the compulsory piece. The rules for the impromptu selection state: Another brief poem will be given to the performer at the competition site. After a preparation period of fifteen minutes, the performer, without coaching, will recite this brief selection from memory. Performers will have a maximum of three minutes to recite their selection.

Though you will not see the impromptu piece until Competition, there are still several ways you can prepare. Here are a few suggestions:

- Read selections out loud in either Spanish or French (whichever language you are competing in) that you have not read before
- Record yourself reading an impromptu selection, listen to your recording and make corrections
- Read a Spanish or French magazine or newspaper
- Attend a church service in the language you are studying
- Listen to Spanish or French computer recordings
- Take advantage of the resources available to you such as teachers, pastors or others who have studied and/or worked abroad
- Incorporate the help of native Spanish or French speakers

As you develop a background in the language you are learning, your comfort increases. You will find this comfort level beneficial for the impromptu portion.

Another facet of the Spanish and French Competition events is the delivery of both pieces. While the event is not an exercise in dramatics, for Competition purposes poetry in a foreign language is defined as the communication of thought and feeling through the sound, rhythm and meaning of words in a foreign language. Having a meaningful delivery is easier when you have practiced your compulsory piece to the point that it is automatic thus allowing you to focus on and speak to your audience. Presentation tips are also available in January 2009 CSFC newsletter, *Powerful Presentations* and in the March 2009 newsletter, *Vocal Technique and Stage Performance*. Both newsletters are available online. While presentation is important, for this event the performer's primary concern should first be the spoken word. Judges will evaluate competitors on correctness of pronunciation, intonation, smoothness of delivery and interpretation of the text. However, as you practice you will find all of these elements merging into one great presentation!

Hopefully, you will consider trying the Spanish and French events at the 2011 CSFC, even if you are just a beginner you have the opportunity to do very well. And, as you start exploring another language, a new world will open up to you that will reach beyond Competition.

View and/or download the 2011 [Spanish and French Compulsory Selections](#).

Bio: Dr. Robert Skinner is Chair of ORU's Department of English and Modern Languages. He has an Ed.D. in Bilingual Education from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Dr. Skinner has faithfully assisted with the Spanish and French events at CSFC for several years. He is a wealth of information on languages and would enjoy the opportunity to talk with you about the English and Modern Languages department at ORU. He can be contacted at rskinner @oru.edu.

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