

# Real Talk: Student Edition

## Applicant Guide

**Thank you for your interest in speaking at Real Talk: Student Edition! We encourage you to read the following information as you prepare to apply to speak at the event.** *—Real Talk Team*

### Tips for Preparing to Apply

#### Step 1. Identify the story you want to tell.

Think about an experience that has been formational for you. Is there a challenge you faced which helped shape you into the person you are today?

Past speakers have talked about topics such as: recovering from academic setbacks, navigating cultural identities, discovering personal purpose, mental health, receiving a medical diagnosis in college, and resilience as a first-generation college student.

#### Step 2. Determine the clear, central theme of your story.

A theme is the primary topic on which you are focusing, and you should be able to describe it in just a few words. The story that you identified in Step 1 likely won't be directly relatable to every audience member, so we want to zoom out to a larger level and identify a universal takeaway that you feel is relevant to most college students. When you tell your story, you should center on this theme.

For example, if Harry Potter were telling part of his story through Real Talk, he may choose to focus on the theme of love triumphing over hate. To be clear—he *will* talk specifically about his own experiences with Voldemort. But he will use the greater theme to guide him in crafting a clear narrative with a relatable lesson.

Think about the following questions to when identifying your theme:

- What's one assumption or problem amongst college students I'd like to challenge?
- How did you grow, or see change in yourself or your beliefs through this experience?
- What message from this experience could help other students in their own challenges?

#### Step 3. Create an outline.

Compile the central plot points of your story, including a beginning, middle, and end. Think about what specific examples and experiences you may want to share to help create your story vividly in the minds of your listeners. You don't need to have it all figured out yet—just a general idea of how you would want to tell this story and what examples will illustrate it.

## What to Expect

Preparing an effective talk requires an investment of time. We believe this investment is worthwhile for the impact that intentional and thoughtful preparation can have on your peers. If selected for Real Talk: Student Edition, you should be prepared to allocate at least 2 hours per week toward talk preparation between selection and the event.

### Tentative Preparation Timeline:

4 Weeks to go:

- Gather with all speakers for Writing Workshop (approximately 2 hour commitment)
- Individually create first draft of talk

3 Weeks to go:

- Individual meeting with your coaches
- Develop a title for your talk
- Individually revise draft of talk

2 Weeks to go:

- Individual meeting with coaches; email updated draft of talk to coaches
- Continue to individually make edits to talk

1 Week to go:

- Individual meeting with coaches; completed written talk due to coaches
- Speaker rehearses talk individually

Week of event:

- Rehearsal with full group a few days prior to event
- Event night! Call-time for speakers is approximately 30 minutes before event

Week after event

- Group get-together for informal dinner & debrief

## FAQs

### **Do I already need to have my talk written/outlined by the time I interview?**

No. You should have at least a rough idea of the outline of the story you want to tell, and we will ask you to talk us through that story during your interview. You don't need to have it written out at this point.

### **Are speakers required to fully write out their talk, or will an outline suffice?**

We will ask all speakers to fully write their talk in order to prepare to deliver it effectively.

### **Will my talk need a title?**

Yes. However, you are not required to submit a title at the time of application. We will work with you throughout the coaching process to identify a title for your talk.