

The following excerpts are to be used for the Famous Speeches classes at the 2026 Festival. Please ensure you check which class you have entered and use the correct excerpt.

11, 12 & 13 years (Class 64)

Speech: Marie Curie, Nobel Lecture (1911)

Excerpt:

"You must never be fearful of what you are doing when it is right. Science, in its essence, is an adventure. We venture into the unknown, not knowing what we may find, but trusting that the pursuit of knowledge is always worthwhile. The discoveries we make today will change the world tomorrow.

Our work is not done simply for ourselves, but for all of humanity. Through dedication and perseverance, we may unlock the secrets of nature and use them to better the lives of others. Science has no boundaries, and knowledge belongs to everyone. It is in this spirit that we continue to seek truth and to push the limits of what is known.

Each discovery is like a light shining into the darkness, revealing the mysteries that surround us. We must approach our work with patience, courage, and humility, understanding that the greatest achievements are often the result of many small steps forward. Our pursuit is not just for our own satisfaction but for the benefit of all people, everywhere.

For me, the pursuit of science has always been driven by a deep curiosity and a desire to better understand the world we live in. But beyond that, it is also about serving others. The knowledge we gain must be shared and used to uplift humanity. In this way, the work we do today will resonate far beyond our own time, shaping the future in ways we cannot yet imagine."

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14, 15 & 16 years (Class 65)

Speech: David Attenborough, “Climate Change: The Facts” (2019)

Excerpt:

“We are facing a crisis that could have devastating impacts on the natural world and on human life as we know it. It is a crisis that has been caused by human actions, and it is one that we can solve if we choose to act now. But we need to act swiftly, with determination and unity, because time is running out. The science is clear, the facts are undeniable, and the reality is that the future of our planet and our species depends on what we do next.

This is not just a problem for future generations; it is a problem for all of us right now. The forests that give us air to breathe, the oceans that provide us with food, and the climate that sustains life are all at risk. But there is hope. We have the tools, the knowledge, and the ability to make the changes necessary to protect our planet and ensure a future for all species. The question is: will we choose to do so? Will we rise to this challenge, or will we allow our inaction to lead us to disaster?

What we need is a global effort, a unified response that transcends borders and differences. It is a choice we all must make—to preserve the beauty and diversity of our world for future generations, or to face the consequences of our negligence. The time for action is now, and every moment we delay puts more lives at risk.

We know what we need to do: reduce emissions, protect ecosystems, and transition to cleaner sources of energy. This is no longer just an environmental issue; it is a human issue. If we fail to act, the consequences will be felt by every one of us, from the poorest communities to the richest nations. We must work together, across borders, to create a future that is sustainable for all living things.”

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17 years and over (Class 66)

Speech: Stephen Hawking, “The Future of Humanity” (2017)

Excerpt:

“We are standing at the threshold of a new era. The challenges we face as a species are greater than ever, but so too are our opportunities. Science and technology are advancing at a pace we could not have imagined even a few decades ago. We are unlocking the mysteries of the universe, reaching beyond our own planet, and exploring the very nature of time and space. But with these great discoveries come great responsibilities.

We must ensure that the progress we make is for the benefit of all. We must protect our planet, strive for equality, and work towards a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. The future of humanity depends on our ability to work together, to continue asking questions, and to never stop seeking the truth. In the end, it is not just about surviving—it is about thriving, as one species united by curiosity, creativity, and compassion.

The solutions to our most pressing problems—whether it’s climate change, global inequality, or the pursuit of sustainable energy—will only come through innovation and collaboration. We must be willing to push boundaries, explore new ideas, and use our intellect to improve the world for future generations. This is the time to be bold, to take risks, and to invest in research and education that will guide us into a more hopeful future.

Our journey into the future will not be easy. There will be obstacles and challenges we have yet to foresee, but with knowledge, courage, and unity, there is no limit to what we can achieve. The answers are out there, waiting to be discovered. We are explorers by nature, driven to understand the universe and our place in it. With that drive, and our shared sense of purpose, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.”

In the end, our survival, and our ability to flourish, will depend on how well we learn to adapt, not just to the world we have created, but to the ever-changing universe around us. The future of humanity is in our hands, and it will be shaped by the choices we make today. Let us move forward with optimism, curiosity, and a shared responsibility to safeguard our planet, our species, and the generations to come.”