

Speech/Individual Events Judge Handbook

Required Reading for All Judges

- [Tournament Schedule](#)
- **Required Judge Training Tutorial:** [NFHS Adjudicating Speech & Debate](#)
- Implicit Bias Judge Statement
- [Cultural Competence Handout](#)
- [NSDA Competition Events Guide](#) (All Event Rules & Guidelines)

Speech/Individual Events (IE)

- Accessing, Completing, and Submitting Your Speech Judge Ballot on Tabroom.com (step-by-step screenshots/instructions)
- Starting the Round: Where Do I Begin?
- Scoring the Speech/IE Events
- Dramatic Interpretation
- Duo Interpretation
- Humorous Interpretation
- Informative Speaking
- International Extemporaneous Speaking
- Original Oratory
- Programmed Oral Interpretation
- United States Extemporaneous Speaking



Implicit Bias Judge Statement

Please read this statement carefully prior to each round of judging.

We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision making process.

Speech/IE Round Judging Procedures: How to Start the Round

- Please hit the **ON MY WAY!** button on your electronic judge ballot Tabroom.com at least 20 minutes prior to the round's published start time. This lets the tournament officials know you, the judges, plan to show up to the room and judge at that time. It is imperative that all judges hit the Start button well in advance so the competition runs smoothly.
- Please arrive to your competition room 10 minutes prior to the published start time.
- Confirm all judges are present. For this competition, each **preliminary round will have 2 judges** in each room. Do not start until ALL judges are present & ready.
 - **Semi-final & Final Rounds will have 3 judges in each room.**
 - If your round is missing a judge at the start time, please text 615-812-6121 with your Event, Section, and the Missing Judge Name(s).
- At the start time, please call roll (student-competitor names) to see which students are present.
- If any students are not present at the start time, they are likely double-entered (competing in 2 events). **Do not wait for any student who is not present at the start time.** Please begin on time and begin with the students who are present in the room. The missing student(s) will arrive to your round later, once they finish their other event.
- If, after 1 full hour after the start time, you are still missing a competitor, please text 615-812-6121 with the *Event* you are judging and the *Student Name* so we can contact the student's coach. If you are missing a student, please do not leave until you have been told to do so by a tournament official.
- Please write your feedback for each competitor as they perform. If you do not feel comfortable typing while judging, you may enter your feedback between judging rounds, but please know you may be asked to judge a couple of rounds in a row.
- Please be sure to submit your Rankings/Scores very soon after the last speaker has finished. Please do not leave your competition room until you have submitted & confirmed your judge ballot/Rankings on Tabroom.com.
- Once you submit your Rankings/Scores, you may continue to write feedback until Sunday evening.
- Students/Competitors will not see their rankings or judge comments until Monday morning.

How to Score the IE/Speech Events

After all speakers have spoken/performed, it's time for judges to make their final rankings. Judges should determine their ranking decisions independently. **Judges may not confer with one another** about their rankings until after both/all judges have submitted & confirmed their Judge Ballots for that round.

Ranking Competitors at the end of the round

Once all competitors in the round have spoken, judges should rank students first through last. If there are 6 competitors in a round, you will Rank students first through sixth. In the **Rank** column enter each student's Ranking (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6)

- First Place = Rank of 1
- Second Place = Rank of 2
- Third Place = Rank of 3
- Fourth Place = Rank of 4
- Fifth Place = Rank of 5
- Sixth Place = Rank of 6



Speaker Order	Entry Code	Title/Question	Rank
1st	Marianne [redacted]	Enter title or extemp question	6
2nd	Lila [redacted]	Enter title or extemp question	3
3rd	Ashley [redacted]	Enter title or extemp question	5
4th	Kyra [redacted]	Enter title or extemp question	2
5th	Cianna [redacted]	Enter title or extemp question	4
6th	Isabel [redacted]	Enter title or extemp question	1

Low-Point Ranks? **Submit**

Speech Events: Time Limits & How to Give Time Signals

Dramatic Interp, Duo Interp, Humorous Interp, Programmed Oral Interp, Informative Speaking, Original Oratory,
10-Minute Maximum, with a 30-second grace period (10:30 max)

- A Competitor may speak for 10 minutes and 30 seconds without penalty.
- Any competitor or team that exceeds 10 minutes and 30 seconds may not be ranked 1st in the round. They may rank 2nd - 6th, but they may not receive the 1st place ranking from a judge.
- No student will be disqualified for going overtime.
- Judges may not disqualify a competitor. If a judge feels a student has violated a rule, they must report it to the Tabulation Staff in the form of an official protest. See Tabulation Staff for details.

Extemporaneous Speaking: International & United States

7-Minute Maximum, with a 30-second grace period (7:30 max)

- An Extemp Competitor may speak 7 minutes and 30 seconds without penalty.
- Any Extemp Competitor that exceeds 7 minutes and 30 seconds may not be ranked 1st in the round. They may rank 2nd - 6th, but they may not receive the 1st place ranking from a judge.
- No student will be disqualified for going overtime.
- Judges may not disqualify a competitor. If a judge feels a student has violated a rule, they must report it to the Tabulation Staff in the form of an official protest. See Tabulation Staff for details.

How to Give Time Signals to IE/Speech Competitors

Some students may ask the judge(s) for time signals while they are speaking/performing to ensure they do not exceed the maximum time limit of their event. This is common and allowed. Please do your best to accommodate the time signals for students as they need them. Judges in Extemporaneous Speaking are required to give time signals by hand while the student speaks.

Mandatory Time Signals in Extemporaneous Speaking (7 Minutes)

Students competing in Extemporaneous Speaking (either International or United States) **must receive time signals from the judge**. As the student is speaking, please give them the following time signals:

- When a speaker reaches 2 minutes of speaking, hold up **5 fingers** (5 minutes remaining)
- When a speaker reaches 3 minutes of speaking = **4 fingers** (4 minutes remaining)
- When a speaker reaches 4 minutes of speaking = **3 fingers** (3 minutes remaining)
- When a speaker reaches 5 minutes of speaking = **2 fingers** (2 minutes remaining)
- When a speaker reaches 6 minutes of speaking = **1 finger** (1 minute remaining)
- When a speaker reaches 6 minutes & 30 seconds = make a **“C” with your hand** (30 seconds remaining)
- When a speaker reaches 7 minutes, hold up a **closed fist** (grace period begins)
- It is common for speakers to exceed 7 minutes and go a few seconds into the grace period. Just be sure they do not exceed 7 minutes & 30 seconds. Any Extemp competitor who speaks longer than 7:30 may not receive a 1st place ranking by a judge.



Time Signals in Other Speech Events (10 Minutes)

Students competing in Interpretation Events (DI, Duo, HI, POI) and Public Address Events (Info, OO) may ask judges to give a few time signals towards the end of their performance/speech to ensure they adhere to the time limits. Please do your best to accommodate the student's time signals requests.

Common Time Signals in Non-Extemp Events (with 10 minute maximum time limits)

- When the competitor reaches 9 minutes of speaking, **hold up 1 finger** (1 minute remaining)
- When a competitor reaches 10 minutes, **hold up a closed fist** (grace period begins)

It is common for speakers to exceed 10 minutes and go a few seconds into the grace period. Just be sure they do not exceed 10 minutes and 30 seconds. Any competitor who speaks longer than 10:30 may not receive a 1st place ranking by a judge.



CULTURALLY COMPETENT JUDGING

Starting this year with the 2020 National Speech & Debate Tournament every ballot will have the following language:

We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision making process.

As you learned in the [Cultural Competence Video Training](#), judges play an important role in supporting students' educational and competitive endeavors. In order to ensure that speech and debate tournaments are a more equitable environment, it is important for judges to ensure they are providing culturally competent and inclusive performance feedback and decisions that meet students where they are in order to create safe spaces and healthy competition. This brief document is designed as a companion to the judge training course.

Cultural competence encompasses the lifelong learning process of:

- Being aware of one's own view and perception of the world
- Striving to expand understanding and awareness of different cultural practices and worldviews
- Developing the skills to communicate and interact effectively with people from different life experiences

Increasing our knowledge and awareness about our own self and subsequent identities can help to open our understanding to the wide breath of characteristics that meld together to create the life experiences of others. Project Implicit also has several free [Implicit Association Tests](#) that you can take to become more aware of your biases.

Please be intentional and deliberate about how you will incorporate this training into your judging at the National Tournament. Please take a few minutes to make a plan, which takes into account the potential implicit bias you may bring to judging based on your own lived experience, as well as the difficult and sometimes stressful process of evaluating and deciding rounds. The best approach is an active process. For example, you could write a short statement to remind yourself of this training and commit to re-reading it before you write or submit a ballot. While awareness of these issues is important, it is insufficient without corresponding action to make sure that awareness is consistent and the problem is addressed in a meaningful way.



Please also ask yourself how each participant in the round might interpret your ballot or judge comments. Remember each participant is an individual, with their own identity and background instead of just a neutral competitor.

Judging Feedback

Please be aware that students may have filled in pronouns on their Tabroom.com profiles. In order to make the tournament a better experience for students, please look at the email/text blast with the round's pairing and use the pronouns students have given.

It is important to remember that the feedback provided to students will be utilized as a tool to further their development, and as such should stand as productive and educational in its content. Comments provided on the ballots should center around the content of the presentation, avoiding any comments related to dress, appearance, pitch of voice, etc. **Please remember that although some comments may seem well-intentioned, they may only serve to reinforce the status quo of societal norms, potentially creating a non-inclusive space for students.**

Below are examples of comments that can have detrimental effects on students in our speech and debate communities.

Example Comments:	Problematic because...
<p>“You were dressed professionally and seemed well prepared for this speech.”</p>	<p>Students will come from a wide variety of socioeconomic AND cultural backgrounds. What is available and “professional” to students may vary based on these factors. Female-presenting students and people of color most often receive comments on their dress. In general, try to focus your comments on the performance itself. It is important to remove personal biases and expectations in regards to dress so that we can be inclusive of all bright young minds who want to participate.</p>
<p>“Your body language was awkward.”</p>	<p>While speech and debate involve physical movement, judges assuming all bodies can “perform” in the same way perpetuates ableism. Keep in mind that many disabilities can be invisible and many students may not disclose their disabilities to you. Almost 20% of Americans experience some form of disability. Use of ableist language as described in this article can hurt our students. (Washington Post, 2015).</p>



Example Comments:	Problematic because...
<p>“Don’t be so aggressive in CX.”</p>	<p>This comment does not provide action steps that support the growth and continued learning of the student. Also, consider the connotation associated with the word aggression when layering in gender stereotypes.</p> <p>A recent study showed that female-presenting debaters are criticized on ballots for being “aggressive” at twice the rate than male-presenting debaters. (Lynn and Kawolics, Rostrum, 2018).</p> <p>A research team at Stanford’s VMare Women’s Leadership Lab “uncovered patterns of ambiguity in how performance reviews are written that can lead to a disadvantage for women” (Mackenzie, Harvard Business Review, 2019). While comparing reviews, men were more likely to receive lengthy feedback that focused on technical skills. Women were more likely to “receive vague feedback that did not offer specific details of what they had done well and what they could do to advance.”</p> <p>Another study stated that “when acting authoritatively, women leaders are disliked much more than men.” This article also notes that women are “often penalized when they behave in ways that violate gender stereotypes” (Cooper, Harvard Business Review, 2013).</p>
<p>“The pitch of your voice could use some work, try not to be so shrill.”</p>	<p>With the increasing usage of technology for speech and debate competitions, it is important to consider how technology may be impacting your perception of the competitor.</p> <p>Technology and sound transmission equipment has been optimized to accommodate lower voices, thereby disadvantaging higher pitch voices. (Tallon, The New Yorker, 2019). One researcher found that technology <i>reduced</i> the intelligibility of female speech as a result.</p> <p>Recent study showed that female-presenting debaters are criticized on ballots for being “emotional” 10x more often than male-presenting debaters. (Lynn and Kawolics, Rostrum, 2018).</p>



Example Comments:	Problematic because...
<p>“Next time, please find a quiet space in your home from which to compete.”</p> <p>“You should plan ahead to have backup technology available to give your speeches.”</p>	<p>Our participants come from a diverse set of backgrounds and as such, not all have access to back up technology or quiet homes. Their location may be further impacted by proximity to the internet, lighting, and other family members’ presence in the home. Please do not assume that they have control over their environment.</p> <p>Please remember that implicit bias means we are more likely to assume someone whom we have unconscious bias against has failed to prepare properly. For others, we’d assume they have bad luck.</p>
<p>“You have chosen a piece that isn’t commonly known. It wasn’t clear what the intent of the speech was.”</p> <p>“For your next presentation, consider choosing something that your audience will know more about so that we can relate more to it.”</p> <p>“Another piece on race? There’s so much more out there.”</p> <p>“Since my personal experience is different from yours, I couldn’t connect with your piece. I just resonated with other performances more fully.”</p> <p>“You made us all uncomfortable when you started speaking in Spanish.”</p>	<p>Through speech and debate, students are empowered to choose pieces that are meaningful to them. The comments to the left overlook the importance that the piece may hold for the student, potentially overlooking or ignoring a part of someone’s identity. Students may choose pieces that are more culturally relevant to their own background or personal experiences, which may not always be commonly known to all judges.</p> <p>In order to create a diverse speech and debate community, we want to welcome a wide spectrum of speeches, authors, and topics, honoring the diversity that they represent. New pieces provide us with the opportunity to learn and grow.</p>



Be sure to ask yourself if your feedback is related to the **content and quality of the presentation/speech** or if feedback denotes things that the student cannot change, or might not be able to change due to a variety of circumstances.

Remember, judging and supporting a diverse community of students requires you to be open and curious about yourself and others around you.

Thank you for your commitment to supporting students in this activity!

NSDA Florida Manatee District Speech Judging Instructions

Each event has its own special characteristics, requirements, customs and conventions that you will come to understand more fully as you judge different events. The following is a brief synopsis of the different events along with some of the judging criteria for each. If at any time you are assigned to an event that you are not sure about, please ask for some general help from the tournament staff.

Speech Events General Notes:

- Please make sure you record the following on the ballot: debaters' names and codes, title of topic or selection, and points and/or ranks (if applicable) to each competitor (an average range is 90-100).
- In addition to this information, please make sure you write a few sentences of constructive feedback on the ballot for each competitor. Try to make constructive comments that will help the student improve.
- Some competitors may be "double entered" and will be assigned to two events at the same time. They may be arriving late because they went to their other event to speak before coming into your room.

Extemporaneous Speaking (IX, USX)	Judging Criteria	Time Limits
<p>There are two separate areas of Extemporaneous Speaking: International and U.S. (or domestic). Thirty minutes before they come to the room where you are judging, the speaker will draw a topic in "draw." The topic is in the form of a question, which the speaker MUST answer. The speaker is offering an answer, which should not be considered right or wrong. This should be a logical opinion supported by cited facts and quotes. The speech should consist of an introduction, body of speech, and conclusion. A judge's personal beliefs should not influence their decision.</p>	<p>Did competitors...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively answer the topic question? • Support their answer with logic, reasoning, and reputable sources? • Present ideas in an organized and cohesive manner? • Communicate with clarity, organization, fluency, and diction? 	<p>The maximum time for IX and USX is 7 minutes in length, with a 30 second grace period.</p> <p>If a competitor exceeds 7:30, they may not be given the "1" rank in the round. But don't ever stop the speech.</p> <p>If there is not a timekeeper in the room, please try to give appropriate time signals. (1 finger for each minute remaining, then a C at 30 seconds, two fingers at 15 seconds, and a fist at 7:00)</p>

Original Oratory (OO)/Informative Speaking (INFO)	Judging Criteria	Time Limits
<p>In Original Oratory, competitors should give an original speech about a topic of universal importance. The speaker is not required to solve a problem, but is expected to discuss it intelligently. Speakers are allowed no more than 150 quoted words, which must be credited to the source. Since this is the speaker's original work, he or she has significant time to rehearse.</p> <p>Informative speaking has the same preparation process as OO however, there will be visual aids during the speech. Vas should add to the speech not be a distraction. Informative speeches do not have a quoted word limit either.</p>	<p>Did competitors...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a unique, engaging, and creative speech? • Utilize appropriate vocabulary? • Present ideas in an organized and cohesive manner? • Communicate with clarity, organization, fluency, and diction? 	<p>The maximum time for an OO is 10 minutes in length, with a 30 second grace period.</p> <p>If a competitor exceeds 10:30, they may not be given the "1" rank in the round.</p>

Interpretation (HI, DI, DUO, POI)	Judging Criteria	Time Limits
<p>There are four types of interpretation: Dramatic Interp (DI), Humorous Interp (HI), Program of Oral Interpretation (POI) and Duo Interp (Duo). The selections must be from a published play, screenplay or teleplay, and it must be memorized. The speaker(s) will provide an introduction, which must include the title and author's name. The "cutting" does not necessarily have to be one continuous section from the original piece. The selection can be a monologue or dialogue with two or more characters. Speakers may present any number of characters, and you should be able to tell them apart. As in acting, the speaker does not necessarily look at the audience. In Duo specifically, speakers will use focal points so that they are not looking at you or at each other. There should be a genuine sense of interaction, not a mechanical exchange of lines.</p>	<p>Did competitors...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a cohesive, flowing performance? • Maintain appropriate volume, presence, and energy throughout the entire performance? • Seem believable as their character(s) and telling their stories? • Develop an entertaining and enjoyable presentation? 	<p>The maximum time for an OO is 10 minutes in length, with a 30 second grace period.</p> <p>If a competitor exceeds 10:30, they may not be given the "1" rank in the round.</p>

Thank you for judging!

Humor, Dramatic, & Duo

Interpretation Comment Sheet



Contestant Name _____ Code _____

Round _____ Section _____ Speaker Time _____

Selection Title _____

Judge Name _____ Judge Affiliation _____

Directions: Using the prompts below, please provide constructive feedback to the competitor. Your comments should highlight areas of strength as well as provide areas for growth. Be as specific as possible in your feedback. Use the space to expand your thoughts on any of these areas or to comment on specific moments or lines that stood out to you. Please do not comment on participants' attire or appearance; this should not play a role in your decision.

Characterization

*Is each character well-developed?
Is each character relatable? Does
a character's response seem
believable given the situation
being portrayed?*

Blocking

*Can you tell what the performer is
doing in the scene? Is it clear
what character(s) they are
playing? Is the movement
motivated?*

Cutting

*Do you understand what is
happening? Is the story line easy
to follow? Does the sequence of
events make sense?*

Reason for Decision: *(Why did this performance earn the rank that you assigned?)*

Contestant Rank _____ / _____

Speaker Points _____ (out of 100)

Judge Signature _____

Humor, Dramatic, & Duo Interp

Interpretation Comment Sheet



Contestant Name Christoph Lothar Code 214

Round 2 Section 2 Speaker Time 10:29

Selection Title Peter, Peter, Peter

Judge Name Andrea Oni Judge Affiliation Hired

Directions: Using the prompts below, please provide constructive feedback to the competitor. Your comments should highlight areas of strength as well as provide areas for growth. Be as specific as possible in your feedback. Use the space to expand your thoughts on any of these areas or to comment on specific moments or lines that stood out to you. Please do not comment on participants' attire or appearance; this should not play a role in your decision.

Characterization

Is each character well-developed?
Is each character relatable? Does
a character's response seem
believable given the situation
being portrayed?

-The work that you did to create believable characters, especially multiple Peter's, was impressive. The back and forth nature of the exchanges was executed well. I personally loved the Scout Master character the most.

-The popping between characters was solid. There were times in the climax of the piece where the pops could have been a bit more polished. The door opening by the piano instructor seemed awkward. Otherwise, the blocking was well done.

Blocking

Can you tell what the performer is
doing in the scene? Is it clear
what character(s) they are
playing? Is the movement
motivated?

-All of the elements of dramatic structure were present. The teaser was a bit long, but not too bad. There is not a point in the presentation when I do not know what is going on. Great work putting together a cohesive story!

-I really enjoyed your performance. The two things I enjoyed most about your performance were 1) comedic timing and 2) non-verbal reactions of your characters. You created some great moments without any words being verbally delivered.

Cutting

Do you understand what is
happening? Is the story line easy
to follow? Does the sequence of
events make sense?

Reason for Decision: (Why did this performance earn the rank that you assigned?)

The performer was the most polished in the room with an easy to follow and enjoyable presentation.

Contestant Rank 1 / 6

Speaker Points 99 (out of 100)

Judge Signature

Andrea Oni

International and/or United States

Extemporaneous Speaking Comment Sheet



Contestant Name _____ Code _____

Round _____ Section _____ Speaker Time _____

Question/Prompt _____

Judge Name _____ Judge Affiliation _____

Directions: Using the prompts below, please provide constructive feedback to the competitor. Your comments should highlight areas of strength as well as provide areas for growth. Be as specific as possible in your feedback. Use the space to expand your thoughts on any of these areas or to comment on specific moments or lines that stood out to you. Please do not comment on participants' attire or appearance; this should not play a role in your decision.

Argumentation and Analysis

Is the student directly answering the question? Does the student develop justifications for their ideas and establish the significance of their points? Have they established a clear understanding of the topic area?

Source Consideration

Does the speaker offer a variety of sources? Are the sources provided credible? Are appropriate citations used when citing a source?

Delivery

Is the student using voice, movement, and expression effectively? Is the speaker confident? Is there consistent eye contact? Is the volume appropriate?

Reason for Decision: *(Why did this performance earn the rank that you assigned?)*

Contestant Rank _____ / _____

Speaker Points _____ (out of 100)

Judge Signature _____

Informative Speaking Comment Sheet



Contestant Name _____ Code _____

Round _____ Section _____ Speaker Time _____

Title/Topic _____

Judge Name _____ Judge Affiliation _____

Directions: Using the prompts below, please provide constructive feedback to the competitor. Your comments should highlight areas of strength as well as provide areas for growth. Be as specific as possible in your feedback. Use the space to expand your thoughts on any of these areas or to comment on specific moments or lines that stood out to you. Please do not comment on participants' attire or appearance; this should not play a role in your decision.

Relevance

Is the topic timely? Is the thesis clearly established? Does the delivery assist in establishing the importance of the topic?

Relatability

Can the audience relate to the topic? Is the delivery personable? Does the speaker establish how others are impacted by the topic? Does the speaker do a good job informing?

Originality

Does the speaker address the topic in a unique, inventive way? Are the supporting examples new and interesting?

Reason for Decision: *(Why did this performance earn the rank that you assigned?)*

Contestant Rank _____ / _____

Speaker Points _____ (out of 100)

Judge Signature _____

Original Oratory Comment Sheet



Contestant Name _____ Code _____

Round _____ Section _____ Speaker Time _____

Title/Topic _____

Judge Name _____ Judge Affiliation _____

Directions: Using the prompts below, please provide constructive feedback to the competitor. Your comments should highlight areas of strength as well as provide areas for growth. Be as specific as possible in your feedback. Use the space to expand your thoughts on any of these areas or to comment on specific moments or lines that stood out to you. Please do not comment on participants' attire or appearance; this should not play a role in your decision.

Importance

Is the topic significant? Is the thesis clearly established? Does the delivery assist in establishing the importance of the topic?

Relatability

Can the audience relate to the topic? Is the delivery personable? Does the speaker establish how others are impacted by their topic? Is the rhetoric of the speech inclusive?

Originality

Does the speaker address the topic in a unique, inventive way? Are the supporting examples new and interesting?

Reason for Decision: *(Why did this performance earn the rank that you assigned?)*

Contestant Rank _____ / _____

Speaker Points _____ (out of 100)

Judge Signature _____

Program Oral Interpretation Comment Sheet



Contestant Name _____ Code _____

Round _____ Section _____ Speaker Time _____

Title of Program _____

Judge Name _____ Judge Affiliation _____

Directions: Using the prompts below, please provide constructive feedback to the competitor. Your comments should highlight areas of strength as well as provide areas for growth. Be as specific as possible in your feedback. Use the space to expand your thoughts on any of these areas or to comment on specific moments or lines that stood out to you. Please do not comment on participants' attire or appearance; this should not play a role in your decision.

Programming
Were at least two of the three genres of literature (Poetry/Prose/Drama) used in the program? Did all of the literature contribute to the theme or argument? Did the flow of the performance make sense? Was there a balance among genres in the performance?

Blocking
Can you tell what the performer was doing in each scene? Was it clear what selection the performer was using in each section? Did the performer maintain control of the manuscript at all times? Was the movement motivated in the performance?

Characterization
Did each selection have distinct and engaging characters? Did the performance match the genre (e.g., did the performer emphasize poetic elements when performing a Poetry selection)? Was the performance dynamic?

Reason for Decision: *(Why did this performance earn the rank that you assigned?)*

Contestant Rank _____ / _____

Speaker Points _____ (out of 100)

Judge Signature _____

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to Dramatic Interpretation (DI)



Event Description

Using a play, short story, or other published work, students perform a selection of one or more portions of a piece up to ten minutes in length. With a spotlight on character development and depth, Dramatic Interpretation focuses on a student's ability to convey emotion through the use of a dramatic text. Competitors may portray one or multiple characters. No props or costumes may be used. Performances may also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the title and author.

Considerations for Selecting DI Literature

Students who do Dramatic Interpretation may perform selections on topics of serious social subject matter such as coping with terminal illness; significant historical situations, events, and figures; as well as racial and gender discrimination, suppression, and oppression. Students should select pieces that are appropriate for them. Considerations for selecting a DI topic should include the student's age, maturity, and school standards.

Traits of Successful DI Performers

When considering what event you should choose, or in which direction to point a student when selecting an event, below are some general traits of successful DIers to keep in mind:

- Insightful character analysis
- Mature demeanor
- Controlled performance
- Depth/breadth of emotion
- Makes motivated choices
- Expressive

Examples of Past DI Titles

- *13 Things About Ed Carpolotti* by Jeffrey Hatcher
- *Fences* by August Wilson
- *Marilyn: Her Life in Her Own Words* by George Barris
- *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel
- *Master Class* by Terrence McNally
- *Misery* by Steven King
- *My Left Breast* by Susan Miller
- *Spoonface Steinberg* by Lee Hall
- *The Bald and the Beautiful* by JJ Jonas
- *The Women of Lockerbie* by Deborah Revooort

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Dramatic Interpretation, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Interp; access to DI final round videos; an interpretation textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. ✨

Find Your Voice

DI helped me develop a better understanding of the world in which I live. To be able to create a narrative that portrays a person you have never known or a situation you've never been in so others can learn from it is worth everything!

— Jamaque Newberry, Association Alum

Dramatic Interpretation

Basic Understandings

Dramatic Interpretation, contrary to its name, is not all about drama. While dramatic elements are key aspects of the event, melodramatic, or overly-sad selections are not ideal choices for performance. DI lacks props, costuming, sets, and other luxuries seen in various forms of performance art. There is a set time limit of ten minutes, with a 30-second grace period. Students who choose to compete in Dramatic Interpretation should focus on suspending the disbelief of the audience by portraying a realistic, emotional journey of a character(s). The performance should connect to the audience.

Research

When looking for a Dramatic Interpretation, it's important to know your limitations, and your strengths. Technical skills, vocal flexibility, physicality, and gender can be factors in your choice. Additionally, it's important to think of the performance itself when searching for a script. Does the literature lend itself to performance, or is the language too flowery? Is the plot complicated or is it a simple story told in a simple way? Think about what you are capable of, and how you would like to be challenged throughout the season when making a selection. Remember to consult your state's rules in regards what is acceptable literature.

Ask yourself, what kind of character am I comfortable playing? What kind of story am I comfortable telling? What story do I want to tell? Narrow your search from there. Remember to keep an open mind. Sometimes, you can create an ideal of the piece you'd like to perform, and reject other suggestions that come along the way. Sometimes it's better to try something different that will stretch you as a performer.

When searching for a script, it's important that the language sounds natural when read aloud. For instance, Shakespeare and Hemingway may be less effective choices for DI because the language is archaic and less conversational. Find a script that when read aloud, feels natural, or comfortable to speak and hear.

Tense is also an important factor of selecting a dramatic interpretation. Because the majority of DI's take place

within one scene, or have an anchor reality, the tense should reflect the reality the character is telling the story from. An anchor reality is the imagined-space from which the character is speaking. For instance, a house-wife's anchor reality may be her kitchen. Throughout the story, she may move to other realities that exist in a different space and time, but she will return to tell her story from her anchor reality. Also, consider how the tense will influence blocking, or movement in the performance space, before deciding on a selection.

Go to your local library, visit the biographies section of a bookstore, or visit Play Scripts, Dramatists, or Samuel French online. These are just a few of the places you may find material for your performance.



Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30

Previews the topic and mood of the selection

INTRO • 1:30 – 3:00

Explains the purpose of the performance

EXPOSITION • 3:00 – 3:30

Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00

Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30

Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30

Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30

Resolves the conflict

Competition Events Guide

Dramatic Interpretation



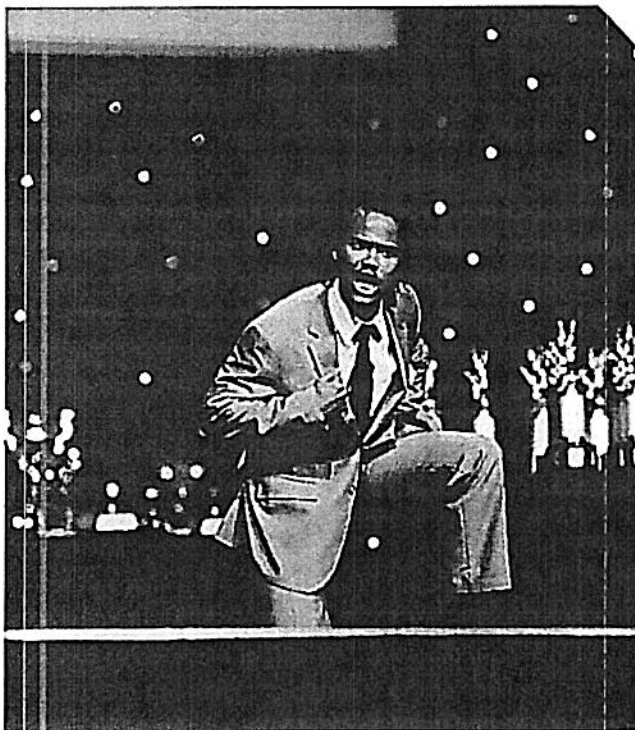
There are a few key structural components of every DI:

Cutting. Your cutting is the ten-minute portion of your selection you chose to perform. This is how you've arranged the literature, and what aspects of the story you've decided to tell. It will directly influence the other two aspects of your performance.

Characterization is informed decisions you've made on how the character(s) will think, act, move and sound. The choices you make about your character should be informed by the script itself.

Blocking, or tech, is how the character(s) moves in the space you've created for them. Sometimes blocking is expressive in nature, symbolizing how that character is feeling emotionally, while at other times, denotes events that are occurring in the imagined space i.e. opening up a soda or sweeping the floor.

Introduction. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, after the teaser, a performer will give a brief explanation of the piece's relevance, then give the title and author before returning to the performance.



Organizing

Before memorizing the material, take the time to “beat” out your script. This means reading the script aloud and making notes as you go. As you read aloud, use symbols to indicate shorter pauses “/” or longer pauses “//.” Consider the emotionality behind each line. Ask yourself what the motivation for the characters' actions are. Use this to influence blocking choices.

Indicate rough blocking in the margins of your script. Choose gestures that reflect the emotional state of the character, or blocking that enhances or creates the illusion of the imagined space of the character. (i.e. resting a hand on a counter or leaning on the back of a chair.) Think in terms of symbolic gestures and psychological gestures. A symbolic gesture is a gesture that is not commonly used in day to day communication. Example: if you were to show me what “freedom” looked like, you may outstretch your arms like Maria Von Trapp singing “The Hills Are Alive” on the side of a mountain. This isn't a common gesture found in conversation. However, it communicates without words the idea of freedom. Conversely, a psychological gesture is one that is found in conversation. Examples include, scratching your nose, or shaking your head yes or no. For more information on these techniques, check out *Interpretation of Literature: Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman.

Read your script aloud. Eliminate any excess language that sounds awkward or is unnecessarily redundant. A DI script should be no more than 1,200 words, which requires continuous cutting of superfluous language.

Practicing

Often, you'll find that if you've spent the appropriate amount of time reading, cutting, and analyzing a script, memorization will be an easier process. Here are some things to keep in mind, to help simplify the process:

First, our brains are a muscle. The more time you practice memorizing, or simply memorize things, the better you become. Often, performers take more time in the beginning of a season to commit a script to memory than they do at the end of the competitive season. Memorizing is a process.

Dramatic Interpretation

Next, memorization is physical. Staring at a script, re-reading the lines in your head will not be beneficial. Memorize the script with the intent to perform it. Type up a clean version with only your finalized text and blocking. Then, tape it to the wall and actively memorize. Read the lines aloud moving with them as indicated by your cutting. Sometimes, it's helpful to do this in front of a mirror, so you can evaluate the effectiveness of your movements. It is helpful to memorize a paragraph at a time, building off of the paragraph that came before. This will significantly decrease the time it takes to memorize your performance.

Once memorized, you and your coach can then build off of the choices you've made for your character. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made.

Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If you've put the work in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Go into that round with your head held high, ready to show the world what you've got! Trust what you and your coach created. Do what you practiced, and if you feel compelled to "try something new," review it with your coach beforehand. Consistency is key. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if your performance in the round is completely different than what you've been working on.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile, be a warm, inviting audience member. There is nothing worse than performing and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: each round is about 60 minutes. Ten of those involve you performing, the other 50 are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will inspire you, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. It's also nice to know who you competed against in each round. This way, you have a better understanding of who your competition is. When you review your ballots after the tournament, you can go back through your notebook and compare your ballots to your notes.



Between rounds, figure out what room you will be performing in next. Congratulate your competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. Be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to yourself, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.

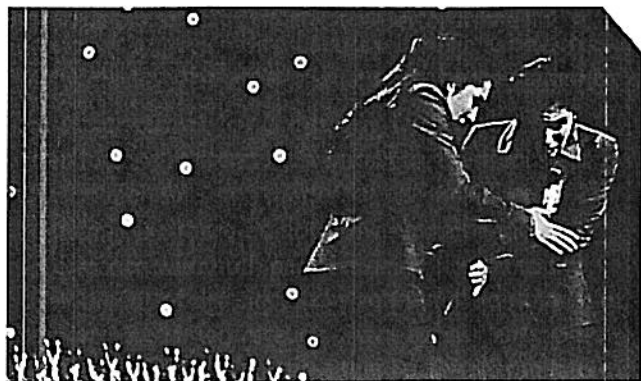
Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, if this is your first time doing Dramatic Interpretation, go watch a final round of DI! Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but be aware of effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what this performer is doing? The best way to learn DI, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

Member students and coaches at NSDA schools can access these materials and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Interp and Dramatic Interp. ✎

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to Duo Interpretation (DUO)



Event Description

Two competitors team up to deliver a ten-minute performance of a published play or story. Using off-stage focus, Duo Interpretation competitors convey emotion and environment through a variety of performance techniques focusing on the relationships and interactions between the characters. No props or costumes are used. Performances may also include an introduction written by the students to contextualize the performance and state the title and author.

Considerations for Selecting Duo Literature

When looking at literature, a Duo entry must consider how the literature would work for both members of the team. Duo Interpretation strives for a balanced performance with both partners being integral to the development of the piece's characters, relationships, plot, and more. Duo Interpretation allows for students to do humorous, dramatic, or pieces that combine both into the performance. Considerations for selecting a topic for a Duo Interpretation should include age, maturity, and school standards.

Traits of Successful Duo Performers

When considering what event you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, below are some general traits of successful Duo students to keep in mind:

- Combination of comedic and dramatic skills
- Enthusiasm for choreography
- Strong listening skills
- Willingness to co-create
- Flexibility

Examples of Past Duo Titles

- *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* by Rachel Sheinkin
- *Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged* by Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield
- *Expecting Isabel* by Lisa Loomer
- *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* by Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts
- *Little Shop of Horrors* by Howard Ashman
- *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie
- *Regina Flector Wins the Science Fair* by Marco Ramirez
- *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* by Frank McGuinness
- *The Crayon Map* by Oliver Leslie and Christopher Marianetti
- *Year One* by Harold Ramis, Gene Stupnitsky, and Lee Eisenberg

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Duo Interpretation, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Interp; access to Duo final round videos; an interpretation textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. ✨

Find Your Voice

Duo Interpretation is an excellent crash course on creativity. The process of cutting, blocking, and refining a script really encourages young artists to think differently and create form and empty space. I think the best part of Duo was the opportunity to meet so many talented, creative people who turn words on a page into phenomenal showcases of artistry, and to have the ability to do it all with my best friend! — Zach Snow, Association Alum

Competition Events Guide

Duo Interpretation



Basic Understandings

Duo. The event everyone wants to do with a best friend. In truth, while the appeal of Duo might be performing with a friend, this approach may not be best. Duo is about balance. Partners should complement one another stylistically and maintain a similar skill set and work ethic. Chemistry is an important element of Duo, but chemistry outside of a practice/performance setting does not always translate to chemistry when practicing or performing at a tournament. Be sure to share your goals with your coach as they help you through the process of getting started in Duo.

Duo is an event that can be dramatic, comedic, or a combination of the two. With a ten-minute time cap, and a requirement of an off-stage focus, Duo is one of the most unique forms of performance. The main objective is to maintain a sense of balance between performers that focuses on the relationship(s) between the characters they create.



Research

There are two ways to go about finding a script: You can either let the choice of partner influence the material you want to perform, or let the selection determine the ideal partner.

Go to your local library, visit the bookstore, check out children's stories, or search for plays with two or more characters. Look for a simple story told in a simple way.

Complex plots are hard to follow, especially if there are more than two characters in the selection. Remember: you have ten minutes to tell a story. Don't pick anything too abstract or complicated.

Keep in mind that each partner should be assigned to a specific character(s), and that you should not switch between characters throughout the performance.

Know the strengths and weaknesses of the team. If the piece requires a lot of physical tech, or vocal variance, and a partner struggles with this, it might not be the best idea to choose that selection.

Finally, it's always a good idea to watch the latest Duo rounds. Duo is an incredibly diverse event. Watch a final round to get a feel for the stylistic differences that are found throughout the event.

Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30

Previews the topic and mood of the selection

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Explains the purpose of the performance

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Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00

Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30

Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30

Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30

Resolves the conflict

Cutting. This is the parts of the selection you've chosen to perform. Having a solid cutting is incredibly important because it influences every performative choice you make. It should dictate characterization, motivation, blocking, and relational tensions.

Competition Events Guide

Duo Interpretation

Characterization. All interpretation events require that strong character choices are made. Distinct physical, vocal, and emotional choices should be made for each character.

Relationship. This is probably the biggest component of an effective Duo. The Duo should focus on the relationship between the characters. There should be a constant push and pull as the characters fight for power in the relationship. The approach can be humorous or dramatic in nature, but there should be defined goals for the performance, and each scene within that performance. Discuss the motivation for each character and set objectives for the message to convey in each scene and how the audience should feel.

Blocking. Duo can be the most visually stunning of interpretation events because when you've got double the performers, there is double the potential for creative blocking choices. Blocking is how the characters move within the imagined space you've created for them. Make sure the blocking creates the imagined space the characters exist in (i.e. a spaceship, or an office), and the emotional state of the characters (i.e. standing farther apart to symbolize emotional distance, or turning inward during an intimate conversation).

Intro. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, each Duo partner takes a turn explaining the justification for the performance. Competitors usually close the intro by giving the title and author before continuing with the performance.



Organizing

When you cut a Duo, make sure partners agree on the objective of the story. Establish what the climax should be, and from there, construct the story leading up to it. Make sure that the lines are balanced, and remove redundant lines, or chunks of the story that are not integral to the plot of the cutting. Consider what the visual representation of the piece will look like, taking into account that Duo is meant to be performed with an off stage focus. Denote in the cutting changes in pace, where to take beats (pauses), and important blocking moments. Partners need to discuss why the characters are doing what they're doing.

Practicing

Often, if the appropriate amount of time was spent reading, cutting, and analyzing a script, memorization will be easier. However, it can still be a challenge. Here are things to keep in mind:

First, brains are a muscle. The more time a person practices memorizing, or simply memorize things, the better they become. Memorizing is a process.

Next, memorization is physical. Staring at a script, re-reading the lines will not be beneficial. Memorize the script with the intent to perform it. Type up a clean version with only finalized text and blocking. Then, tape it to the wall to actively memorize. Read the lines aloud moving with them as indicated by the cutting. Partners should be in front of a mirror, so they can evaluate the effectiveness of their movements. This is particularly important in Duo because "clean" blocking, or blocking that is defined, motivated, and executed with precision, will factor into the rank in the round. It is helpful to memorize a scene at a time, building off of the previous scene. Partners need to remember that a character is responding to what a character said before. Conceptualize the lines as a conversation to help memorization.

Because Duo is a dialogue heavy, relationship focused performance, it's important for the characters to listen and react to each other. Notice how friends engage with each other when they talk. Facial reactions, gestures, and other nonverbal response are a huge part of

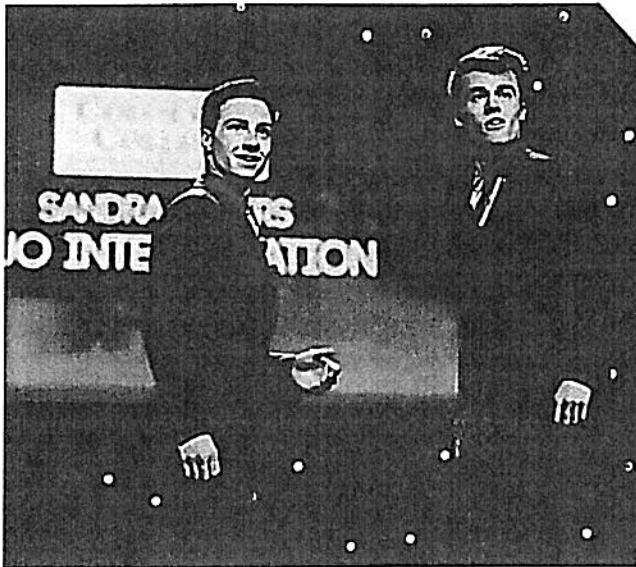
Competition Events Guide

Duo Interpretation



communication. Make sure that each character is engaged in the performance, even when they aren't speaking. Having well thought out, motivated reactions can bring a Duo to the next level.

Once memorized, the Duo students and their coach can then build off of the choices that've been made for characters. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made.



Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If the work has been put in, confidence is a natural product. Competitors should go into that round with heads held high, ready to show the world what they've got! Trust what has been created. Do what was practiced, and if feeling compelled to "try something new," the coach should be consulted. Consistency is key. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if the performance in the round is completely different than what was worked on for the past few weeks.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile, and be a warm, inviting audience member. Partners should not conspire with each other during the round! If there's something they need to tell each other, it can be said after the round in private. There is nothing worse than performing and

having an audience that either stone faces you, won't look you in the eye, or is clearly more concerned about talking to their partner than paying attention to the performance. Think of it this way: each round is about 60 minutes. Ten of those involve a Duo performing, the other 50 are for your Duo to listen, learn, and support your fellow competitors.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will be inspirational, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. It's also nice to know who your Duo competed against in each round. A Duo should review their ballots after the tournament, and then they can go back through their notebook and compare their ballots to their notes.

Between rounds, Duo students should figure out what room they will be performing in next. They should congratulate competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. They should be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to themselves, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, if this is your first time doing Duo Interpretation, go watch a final round of Duo! Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but be aware of effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what this Duo is doing? The best way to learn Duo, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

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Extemporaneous Speaking

Basic Understandings

Extemporaneous Speaking, typically called Extemp, is a speech on current events with limited preparation time. A student's understanding of important political, economic, and cultural issues is assessed along with critical thinking and analytical skills. Students report to a draw room (often referred to as Extemp prep) where all of the extempers gather at tables, set out their files, and await their turn to draw topics. A staff member in the prep room calls out student codes based upon a pre-assigned speaker order. When a student's code is called, the student will approach the draw table and take three questions from an envelope. The student will then select one of those questions and return the other two to the envelope, and prepare for thirty minutes to deliver a speech answering the chosen topic. When prep time is up, the student reports to the competition room to deliver a 7 minute speech.

Students may access research brought with them to the tournament during the 30-minute preparation period. We refer to these resources as files. Teams may bring their files in paper form, often print-outs of articles organized in hanging file folders by topic area in large plastic bins or totes, or electronic format on laptops or other portable devices such as tablets (for more information, see Research).

During preparation time, students review their files on the topic selected and outline arguments that will be made throughout the speech. Some students outline with notecards; others use legal pads. Students should document the source of their research on their notes so that they can cite the materials while they speak. Students have a lot to do in 30 minutes—they must select a question, review research, outline arguments with supporting materials, and practice at least part of the speech before time expires. Many tournaments prohibit the consultation of notes during the speech in which case speech structure and evidence need to be memorized during prep time as well.

After the 30-minute preparation time, students report to their competition rooms to deliver their speeches. Students must never watch the speakers before them, although students may watch those who speak after

them. Judges should give time signals to the competitors while they speak to indicate how much time remains of their 7 minutes.



Research

Students who compete in Extemp must keep up with current events. Students who do International Extemp must read articles concerning events of world-wide importance as they may draw questions regarding conflict among various countries, economic challenges experienced by third world countries, or new leadership in nations across the globe. US Extemp participants must understand political, social, and economic policies of the US and how the US relates to the rest of the world. Reading articles is a vital practice for keeping students informed on topics frequently asked at tournaments. It is also important because students may want to frame their analysis with historical context.

Students should read widely, both on topics of personal interest as well as on issues that they struggle to understand. Because the topics are so diverse and can change rapidly, students should keep up with current events by reading print or online versions of various newspapers, magazines, and journals. Students may want to file at least one US-oriented source and one international source to broaden their exposure to varied ideas and perspectives.

There are various methods to organizing team Extemp files depending upon the format chosen. Students should file articles from reputable newspapers, magazines, and

Competition Events Guide

Extemporaneous Speaking



electronic resources. Students may not access the internet while they are in Extemp prep; thus, all articles must be printed or stored on a laptop prior to entering the room. If a service such as Dropbox is used for digital files, all of the online files must be synced with the downloaded versions prior to the start of the tournament.

Students need to cite sources during their speeches. Typically, the name of the source and date are a minimal requirement, although sometimes speakers need to provide additional source credibility. For example, "As reported in the *New York Times* of September 4, 2014..." or, "Janet Yellen, chair of the Federal Reserve, is quoted in *The Economist* of September 6, 2014...."

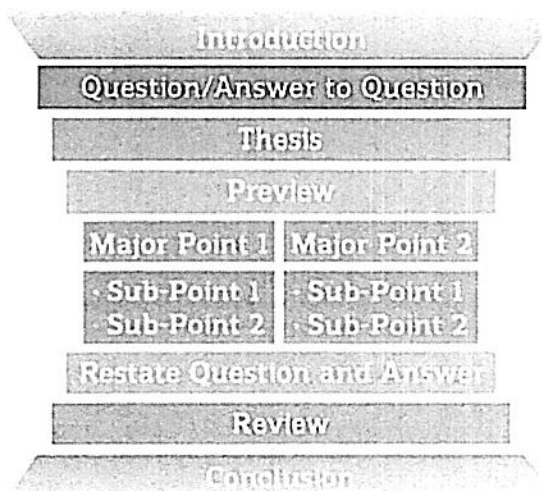
Structural Components

Overall, an excellent extemporaneous speech is one that provides critical thinking and perspective on an issue of contemporary significance. Extempers must address the question as worded on the draw slip and support their positions with analysis and evidence. Extempers who can provide a clear explanation of what is taking place, and why, will be particularly favored by judges. This is important for those judges who have limited experience with Extemp or who are not as well versed in current events. Students must remember that they sometimes know more about certain parts of the world or specific aspects of our economy than a number of their judges or the observers in the round. Clarity is vitally important. Extempers should not use specialized terms or phrases unless they are placed in context. For example, an International Extemp might discuss a recent development in the currency valuation of a specific country by referencing the name of the currency. A US extemp might analyze the impact of Super PACs (Political Action Committees) by explaining what a PAC is, how Super PACs differ from historical notions of PACs, and how federal and Supreme Court decisions changed the political landscape. It is possible that the judge or observers in the round may not know the value of another nation's currency, or how corporations can donate to political campaigns, unless the extemp provides that information.

Organizing

Most speeches feature an introduction that gains the audience's attention, sets up the speech, and transitions to recitation of the question and the student's answer to the question. This is followed by a thesis statement for the speech as a whole. Extemp speeches typically have a preview statement after the introduction that summarizes the key points the student will make in the body of the speech. Students then organize the body of the speech with major points and sub-points. Students might choose three major points of analysis, for example, or perhaps two major points with two sub-points under each. Speeches also typically feature a review of the major points, a restatement of the question and student response to the question, and a conclusion. Students should practice with a stopwatch to determine how long they should speak on each section. Each major point should be roughly equal to another to keep the speech balanced.

Here is a sample outline:



Practicing

Extempers need to start with the basics. Beginning extempers should spend considerable time reading credible news sources on a range of topics. Beginners should receive practice questions and take the time to review them, talk through answers to the questions, and focus on creating excellent thesis statements. Beginners

Competition Events Guide

Extemporaneous Speaking



could start practices with a notecard and perhaps focus on one major point of analysis instead of two or three. A great beginning strategy for extempers is to deliver their first speech with unlimited prep time. Following this performance, gradually reduce the amount of prep time used until the speaker reaches 30 minutes. It is easy for students to be intimidated by Extemp. As with any skill, practicing will take some of the anxiety out of approaching the event. Students should not wait to practice—if the student knows a lot about a particular topic of interest, practices can take place right away. Students do not have to know everything about every country, world leader, or U.S. policy in order to practice. After a number of Extemp practices, students can spend time working on language selection, smoothing out the verbal and physical delivery, and filling in the gaps of their knowledge base.



Performance Tips

Due to the nature of Extemp, competitors will find that each round is unique. Some questions are incredibly challenging, either due to the specific wording or lack of background knowledge of the topic for the extemper, and others seem incredibly easy. Every Extemp competitor will encounter a round where there simply are no files on a given topic. Extempers need to accept that some rounds are excellent and others are not and to learn from every speech. There are ways extempers can better prepare for Extemp and put their best foot forward every time. Some advice for students:

Ask questions. If you don't understand an economic principle or can't explain why a particular country's actions are significant, be sure to ask coaches, teachers, and teammates.

Take notes. If your files are missing something important, make a note of it and either fill the gaps or talk to your teammates so that everyone is on the same page.

Practice language. Extempers often use the same types of language for transitional material. Practice with this language so that you aren't struggling to come up with something fresh in every speech. As you gain experience, you can mix it up, but at the outset, just get comfortable with the format of the speech and the language to get you from point A to point B.

Line-by-line. Save your notes from your speeches and revisit them. Give sections of speeches, or entire speeches, over and over again to improve argument quality and language considerations. If you struggle with vocalized pauses and fillers, such as uhms and likes, you can redo lines of your speech repeatedly.

Resources

Keeping up with the news, while very rewarding, can also feel very overwhelming. Students can take advantage of a number of free electronic resources to keep up-to-date. For example, students might use an RSS reader (which is a news aggregator, bringing news to the student in one website on a continual basis), such as Feedly, to keep up with news. Students can choose to follow particular types of news or specific news outlets. Students can also keep up with current events by following news organizations or analysts on Twitter. Flipboard is a service that brings students the news in a visually appealing format, similar to flipping through the pages of a magazine. Students can also have news updates pushed to them through individual emails or news digests offered by services such as Google News or Yahoo!

The National Speech & Debate Association has many resources specific to Extemporaneous Speaking, including sample Extemp questions, videos of Extemp speeches, a textbook, helpful webinars, and more! Member students and coaches at NSDA schools can access these materials and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find more Extemp related materials. ✎

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to United States Extemporaneous Speaking (USX)



Event Description

In United States Extemporaneous Speaking, students are presented with a choice of three questions related to current events in the U.S. and, in 30 minutes, prepare a seven-minute speech answering the selected question. 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.

Considerations for United States Extemp

Students who do USX are typically very curious about matters of domestic interest. Students should be well read and understand current events within the U.S. To learn more about domestic issues, students should spend significant time reading from a variety of news sources. Recommended reading lists include, but are not limited to: *New York Times*, *Brookings Institute*, *Economist*, *Bloomberg Business Weekly*, *The Guardian*, *Congressional Research Committee*, *The Financial Times*, and more.

Traits of Successful USX Speakers

When considering what event you should choose, or in which direction to point a student when selecting an event, below are some general traits of successful Extempers to keep in mind:

- Enjoys reading
- Naturally curious or inquisitive
- Passionate about domestic issues
- Determined
- Reflective
- Quick thinker

Examples of Past USX Questions

- Does the United States' alliance with Israel harm its strategic interest in the Middle East?
- What is the future of legal abortion in the United States?

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For United States Extemporaneous Speaking, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Extemp; access to Extemp final round videos; an Extemp textbook for Resource Package subscribers; practice questions; topic analysis; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. ✨

Find Your Voice

Extemp made me the poised, organized, and strong woman I am today. It taught me how to be myself in front of a room full of strangers, to break down complex theories so they are easily accessible, to quickly problem solve, and, most importantly, that I never need to apologize for being a girl who wants to talk about labor market policies more than celebrity drama.

—Talan Tyminski, Association Alum

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to International Extemporaneous Speaking (IX)



Event Description

In International Extemporaneous Speaking, students are presented with a choice of three questions related to international current events and, in 30 minutes, prepare a seven-minute speech answering the selected question. Students may consult articles and evidence they gather prior to the contest, but may not use the internet during preparation. Topics range from country-specific issues to regional concerns to foreign policy. The speech is delivered from memory.

Considerations for International Extemp

Students who do IX are typically very curious about matters of a global interest. Students should be well read and understand current events outside the U.S. To learn more about international issues, students should spend significant time reading from a variety of news sources. Recommended reading lists include, but are not limited to: *Council on Foreign Relations, New York Times, Asia Times, Jerusalem Post, Wall Street Journal, BBC, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs*, and more.


Traits of Successful IX Speakers

When considering what event you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, below are some general traits of successful Extempers to keep in mind:

- Enjoys reading
- Naturally curious or inquisitive
- Concerned with the global society in which they live
- Sees interconnectedness of concepts and events
- Reflective
- Focused

Examples of Past IX Questions

- Will international trade be stronger or weaker in one year?
- Which is more politically viable right now: right-wing nationalism or liberal globalism?

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For International Extemporaneous Speaking, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Extemp; access to Extemp final round videos; an Extemp textbook for Resource Package subscribers; practice questions; topic analysis; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. 

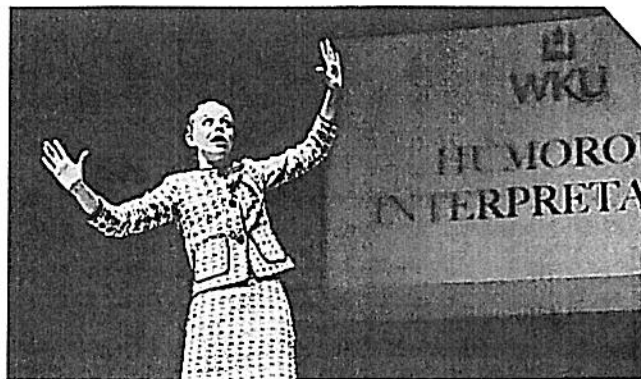
Find Your Voice

The fast-paced nature of Extemp quickly cultivated my speaking skills, while the never-ending subject matter of current events provided an outlet for my intense curiosity. On its most fundamental level, Extemp gave me a microphone to address the world, imbued eloquence into my voice and ideas, and taught me to make concise arguments.

— Dylan Adelman, Association Alum

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to Humorous Interpretation (HI)



Event Description

Using a play, short story, or other published work, students perform a selection of one or more portions of a piece up to ten minutes in length. Humorous Interpretation is designed to test a student's comedic skills through script analysis, delivery, timing, and character development. Competitors may portray one or multiple characters. No props or costumes may be used. Performances can also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the title and author.

Considerations for Selecting HI Literature

When searching for literature, a student should look for more than one-liner jokes. Humor can be created through strategic choreography, creative characterization, and dynamic non-verbal reactions. Typical selection topics range from light-hearted material including interpretations of comics, children's literature, plays, short stories, and more. Considerations for selecting an HI topic should include the student's age, maturity, and school standards.

Traits of Successful HI Performers

When considering what event you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, here are some traits of successful HIers to keep in mind:

- Creative
- Physical control
- Bold/high energy
- Ability to think outside the box
- Dynamic physical and vocal techniques
- Risk taker

Examples of Past HI Titles

- *Avenue Q* by Robert Lopez
- *Batboy* by Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming
- *Bobby Wilson Can Eat His Own Face* by Don Zolidis
- *Disney Mom Group Therapy* by Mo Gaffney
- *Drugs are Bad* by Jonathan Rand
- *Junie B. Jones is (Almost) a Flower Girl* by Barbara Parks
- *Law & Order - Fairy Tale Unit* by Jonathan Rand
- *Legally Blonde the Musical* by Laurence O'Keefe
- *Ruthless* by Joel Paley
- *The Hunger Pains: A Parody* by The Harvard Lampoon

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Humorous Interpretation, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Interp; access to HI final round videos; an interpretation textbook for Resource Package Subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. ✨

Find Your Voice

Robin Williams said, "You're only given a little spark of madness. You mustn't lose it." HI was my way of keeping and exercising my madness muscle, because we all need a little madness to keep the insanity away. HI, and speech in general, helped to cultivate a sense of fearlessness, not only in my performances, but also in my life."

— Dan Johnson, Association Alum

Competition Events Guide

Humorous Interpretation



Basic Understandings

Humorous Interpretation, as its name indicates, is humorous. Competitors often use multi-character selections to tell relatable stories using humor as a device to connect with the audience. Think about your favorite comedian's latest stand up routine, or something funny that recently happened. Ask yourself why it's funny. Then ask yourself if that joke would be funny to, say, your mom, or great-great Uncle Joe. Humor is a complex human quirk. Each individual's sense of humor is unique. However, other aspects of humor are more universal in nature. So, when choosing an HI, it is imperative to consider not only the humorous elements of the selection, but also to keep in mind how the story itself will appeal to the audience. Not everyone will laugh at the same joke, but if a character's plight is relatable, the audience will identify with them. Humor in a Humorous Interpretation should be tasteful and motivated.

Research

Finding an HI that's right for you may seem a little daunting. Go to your local library, visit the biographies section of a bookstore, or visit Play Scripts, Dramatists, or Samuel French online. These are just a few of the places you may find material. There are a few things to keep in mind when questing for a script.

Strengths and limitations. HI often requires a performer to manipulate their voice, move quickly in and out of different characters, and have a strong sense of comedic timing. Think about your vocal register when looking at a cutting. Would you be required to play characters with voices in your upper register? What characters would be played using your lower register? How many ways can you manipulate your voice? How well can you manipulate your body and facial expression to create distinct, unique characters? If you have limited physical or vocal control, it might be beneficial to choose a selection with fewer characters. Think about your abilities outside of acting: can you sing, dance, stand on your head? Could those skills be utilized in your performance? Be aware of how you can showcase your unique skill set.

What makes you laugh? This is your piece, your performance, and your interpretation. Find writing you think is hilarious. If it makes you laugh, and you enjoy performing it, then your audience will enjoy it, too.

Is it honest? Is it relatable? Pick a piece with meaning. No, you don't need to be performing Tolstoy's "Family Happiness" (and honestly, that's probably a bad idea); however, you should choose literature that speaks to a universal truth. As performers, we not only look to entertain our audience, but to engage them in meaningful communication through performance.



Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30

Previews the topic and mood of the selection

INTRO • 1:30 – 3:00

Explains the purpose of the performance

EXPOSITION • 3:00 – 3:30

Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00

Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30

Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30

Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30

Resolves the conflict

Humorous Interpretation

Cutting. As with any interp, it's important to cut for performance. Read the dialogue aloud, and remove excessive language that does not build toward the story you are trying to tell. Play with comedic elements, like three part jokes, or reviving jokes from earlier in the cutting. Think about how you will physically depict the story. The visual element of HI lends itself to great, creative jokes. Think about how you will use the imagined environment of your HI to tell a joke.

Blocking. The technical aspect of HI requires complete physical control. Transitioning, or "popping" between characters should be practiced. These transitions are fast paced, and require strong physical stamina. Consider how you can tell the story physically. Get in front of a mirror and break down the movements. Increase speed as you build muscle memory. Play with levels and focal points.

Characters. Each character should be uniquely distinct with vocal, physical, and emotional choices carefully thought out. Characters in HI tend to stretch the limits of reality. However, be careful to craft characters to which the audience can relate. One of the great challenges with HI is the ability to craft a performance with different levels. Remember that in all good comedy, there is the well-adjusted character who stands in stark contrast to the humorous characters. Find the balance in your selection. Think about the proximity characters would stand in relation to each other, and illustrate the difference by using various physical levels.

Introduction. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, in HI, the introduction will start off with a joke relevant to the theme of the piece. The performer will then relate the joke back to the theme, and why the piece is relevant to the audience before returning to the performance.

Organizing

You only have ten minutes in an HI to tell a story and make an audience laugh. Pick your moments accordingly. Decide what jokes you want to play up, and what parts of your story will contrast the humorous moments. As you finalize your cutting, read it aloud to help make informed decisions about characterization and blocking.

Beat out your script. This means reading the script aloud and making notes as you go. As you read aloud, use symbols to indicate shorter pauses "/" or longer pauses "//." Consider the emotionality behind each line. Ask yourself what the motivation for the characters' actions are. Use this to influence blocking choices. Make sure your choices are not just funny for the sake of funny, but make sense contextually in your script. Make sure you are listening for the reactions of the characters to the lines that came before. If you are doing a multi-character performance, remember that this is a dialogue, and should be treated as such.

Practicing



Often, you'll find that if you've spent the appropriate amount of time reading, cutting, and analyzing a script, memorization will be an easier process. Here are some things to keep in mind, to help simplify the process:

First, our brains are a muscle. The more time you practice memorizing, or simply memorize things, the better you become. Often, performers, take more time in the beginning of a season to commit a script to memory than they do at the end of the competitive season. Memorizing is a process.

Next, memorization is physical. Staring at a script, re-reading the lines in your head will not be beneficial. Memorize the script with the intent to perform it. Type up a clean version with only your finalized text and blocking. Then, tape it to the wall and actively memorize. Read the lines aloud moving with them as indicated by your cutting. It is helpful to memorize a scene at a time,

Humorous Interpretation

building off of the scene that came before. Remember that dialogue is motivated by the line that came before it. Everything is a response, or reaction. Conceptualize your script this way to decrease the time it takes to memorize your performance.

As you develop a physical sense of the piece, consider how you will express ideas without words. Much of communication is nonverbal; therefore, it makes sense that some of the funniest aspects of an HI are the non-verbal reactions of characters to the events happening in the performance.

Once memorized, you and your coach can then build off of the choices you've made for your characters. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made. Often, performing in front of a coach will help determine whether or not your jokes are landing, or getting a reaction from the audience. Practicing in front of a mirror or videotaping your performance is also a great way to 'see' what the audience sees when you perform. Play with characters. HI is all about experimenting with what makes your audience laugh. Don't be afraid to act ridiculous to get a laugh. Try something new until you get the desired reaction, and then solidify the joke through practice.

Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If you've put the work in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Go into that round with your head held high, ready to show the world what you've got! Trust what you and your coach created. Do what you practiced, and if you feel compelled to "try something new," review it with your coach beforehand. Consistency is also vital. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if your performance in the round is completely different than what you've been working on for the past few weeks.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile, and be a warm, inviting audience member. There is nothing worse than performing and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Each round is 60 minutes. Ten of those involve you performing, the other 50 are for you to listen and learn.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will inspire you, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. When you review your ballots after the tournament, you can go back through your notebook and compare your ballots to your notes.

Between rounds, figure out what room you will be performing in next. Congratulate your competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. Be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to yourself, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.

Resources



A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, if this is your first time doing Humorous Interpretation, go watch a final round of HI! Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but be aware of effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what this performer is doing? The best way to learn HI, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

Member students and coaches at NSDA schools can access these materials and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Interp and Humorous Interp. ✎

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to Informative Speaking



Event Description

Students deliver a self-written, ten-minute speech on a topic of their choosing. Limited in their ability to quote words directly, Informative Speaking competitors craft a speech using evidence, logic, and optional visual aids. All topics must be informative in nature; the goal is to educate, not to advocate. The speech is delivered from memory.

Considerations for Selecting an Informative Topic

Students who write Informatives should think seriously about a topic that is of personal interest to them. Given students may be doing Informative for the entirety of the school year, they will want to find a topic that they can keep fresh and engaging for extended periods of time. Additionally, Informative speakers should consider topics that are current and relatable to audience members. Informative is an ongoing process! The last speech that is performed will never be a “final” draft. There is always room for revision, so pick a topic that student’s will enthusiastically explore and reflect upon during the season.

Traits of Successful Informative Performers

When considering what topic students should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, here are some traits of successful Informative speakers to keep in mind:

- Driven
- Well-spoken
- Enthusiastic
- Logical
- Personable
- Curious

Examples of Potential Informative Topics

- Social Security
- Urban Agriculture
- Body Language
- New Medicines/Treatment Plans
- Holographic Technology
- Senses
- Gaslighting
- Exciting New Technologies

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Informative Speaking, we are developing a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in public speaking; videos from champion coaches; and much more more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. ✨

Find Your Voice

Informative helped me grow as both a writer and performer. The event allowed me to explore a diverse range of topics that would have never worked in Oratory. You'll learn how to discern the line between what is and is not persuasive - and focus solely on educating and entertaining the audience!

— Kevin King, Association Alum

Competition Events Guide

Informative Speaking



Basic Understandings

Informative is a speech written by the student with the intent to inform the audience on a topic of significance. Informative gives students the unique opportunity to showcase their personality while educating the audience.

An Informative is not simply an essay about the topic—it is a well researched and organized presentation with evidence, logic, and sometimes humor to convey a message. Topics are varied and interesting. Whether it be a new technological advance the audience is unaware of or a new take on a concept that everyone is familiar with, Informative is the students opportunity to teach the audience. Types of topics and structure vary greatly, so talk to your coach and work out what works best for you!

While content is very important, Informative requires students to balance that content with delivery and style. Informative speakers must be articulate, engaging, and smooth with their delivery at both a vocal and physical level. Students will want to watch some rounds of other public speaking events to determine what types of style, delivery, and content might work best for them.

The Informative speaker must also consider the audience as a vital component of the speech. What parts of the speech does the student want to spend the most time developing? Are there parts of the students topic that might take more time to explain? How does humor play a role with regard to the topic? As style and content go hand-in-hand, it's vital that students think carefully about their message, style, and composition of the audience as they construct the speech.



Research

Informative research is as diverse as the topics students select. Informative research might include newspaper and magazine articles, academic journals, non-fiction books, interviews, and credible digital content. Depending upon the topic, it might be possible that a student's own meaningful experiences may be in the speech.

The key to researching an effective Informative is to guide the audience through the topic. Find research that helps broadly define the topic and then begin narrowing the scope. Keep track of the questions that arise while researching; those are likely the same questions the audience will have, and finding those answers can help make the difference.

Source materials need to be incorporated throughout the speech with oral citation. The citation style varies with the type of source. For example, students should provide author and title of books, although some students will also provide the source credibility of the author. The name of the source and date may be sufficient for newspaper articles. It is important to recognize that whether the material is quoted directly from the source, or paraphrased, sources must be cited. When drafting the Informative, indicate direct quotations from sources using both quotation marks and some other marking such as highlighting or underlining in the script. Remember: only 150 directly quoted words may be used. Students, choose quoted text wisely. Once all of the research is gathered, the sources should be compiled into a works cited page.

Structural Components

After research has been conducted, the student can compose the speech. Let's go back to the idea of questions as the guide to the speech. Based upon the research and the student's own thoughts on the topic, the student needs to craft a thesis statement. The student should outline two to four major arguments to support the thesis. Arguments have a unique role in Informative Speaking. Since the speech is not persuasive the goal of the argument is not to advocate for change, instead, the goal is to inform the audience. Thus, arguments are used

Competition Events Guide

Informative Speaking



to establish the significance of the topic or to argue that the topic merits discussion.

Arguments are made up of three important components. First, a student must clearly establish a claim. This is a declarative statement that establishes the point the student sets out to justify in the speech. Next, the student must clearly establish why the argument is valid.

This is known as the warrant for an argument. This means that Informative speakers go beyond just asserting their claims to explaining why their claims should be accepted by the audience. Finally, the student must provide an impact for the argument. Why does the argument matter? Who is affected by this argument?

Now let's pull all of this together. Informative speeches consist of an introduction, body (with 2-4 major points), and a conclusion. Students can group their research to support each element of the speech. For example, if the student finds a great personal narrative from a source which might grab the audience's attention, it can be marked for the intro. The process continues until each portion of the speech has evidence that backs up the claim, warrant, and impacts for each argument.

Organizing

Students should start with the body of the speech which features the major arguments and ideas. Students should take their main points with supporting research and decide an order. Major points might inform the audience of an issue, challenge assumptions the audience may have, or encourage the audience to visualize what the world might be like. Some questions to consider: What argument or idea makes the most logical sense to start with? What does the audience need to know or understand before they can accept later arguments? Many students want to start by writing the introduction first, but the student can't introduce a speech without understanding what is in that speech and how the arguments will be organized.

After the body of the speech has been established, the student can outline an introduction and conclusion. The introduction should engage the audience, establish the significance of the topic, transition to a thesis statement,

and preview the major points that will be covered in the speech. After the body of the speech there is a conclusion which involves a restatement of the thesis, a review of the major points, and final thoughts that engage the audience and call them to action.

With a complete outline now developed, the student can write the speech section by section. It is important for the coach to review each part of the speech for consistency of style and approach. Although the speech needs to be conversational, some students will feature more formal language choices, or incorporate some type of humor throughout the speech, or take a more personal or narrative approach. There is no "right" or "wrong" voice but it needs to match the student's thoughts, ideas, and engagement with the audience.



Practicing

Students don't have to wait until the speech is completely written to practice. Students should take sections of the speech, such as the introduction and conclusion, or one of the major points in the speech, and talk it out. An effective writing technique is for students to verbalize their thoughts, record them, and then review those recordings to see how their language sounds to the human ear. This will help the student identify what style might be most appropriate for delivery of the message. Although not all students are comfortable being recorded, their ideas, expressions, and turns of phrase can be captured while experimenting with the content.

Competition Events Guide

Informative Speaking



Once the speech is written, many students struggle with memorization. This doesn't have to be the case! One effective practice technique is breaking the speech up by section or paragraph, such as their introduction, and practicing that section until it is solidly memorized. Once that section is memorized, they can move on to the next section and so on. Students can print out the speech in large type, tape it down a hallway, and read their speech aloud, complete with gestures, to reinforce memorization.

Team and family members are also extremely valuable when it comes to practicing the speech after it is memorized. Since the audience is such a vital component of Informative, it is important to perform in front of real and varied groups. Students may seek out community groups, such as a local Rotary club, or community centers, such as a senior living facility, and perform their speeches. Students should perform as often as possible in front of an audience to help them get more comfortable before their first tournament. This also provides an excellent opportunity to see how the speech sounds to an audience and test any humor that they might want to use.



Performance Tips

Students need to recognize that they spend only a small percentage of their time speaking and most of the tournament listening to others. While students watch the other speakers in rounds of Informative, they should take note of what is effective and what needs improvement in other students' speeches. Students can carry a notebook with them and write down thoughts about audience appeals, structure, and language used by other students. What works? What doesn't? They then can share comments with coaches after the tournament is complete

and talk about how adjustments might be made to their own speeches.

Informative students need to make sure that they are excellent audience members. That means students are engaged in the round, taking notes, thinking about the arguments and analysis of others' speeches, and being responsive to the speakers. Students need to keep all of their comments about performances to themselves until after the tournament is complete as it is disrespectful to make comments with other students present, in particular critical comments about specific student performances.

After a period of time, students may become a bit bored with their speeches after delivering them over and over again. That is okay! Once the speech is written the student needs to recognize that it is not carved in stone. Making changes to the manuscript is a natural part of the process of speechwriting. After a tournament the students should take the comments on ballots and reflect upon how those comments can improve the speech content and style. Additionally, students need to be reminded that every performance is important, that there is always someone in the room who has never heard that speech before, and that they need to keep up their energy every round of every tournament. Perhaps the writing can be refreshed a bit or perhaps a section of the speech needs a bit more polish, but that should not deter student's performance for that particular audience. Every speech should be given with the same dedication and enthusiasm as the first.

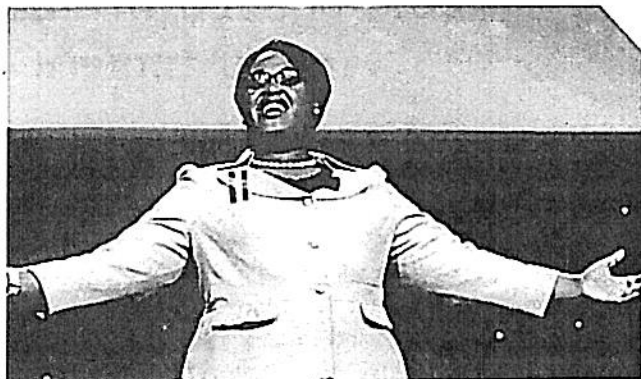
Resources

Our Intro to Public Speaking "Teacher in a Box" lessons are designed for the novice coach and students and include everything you need for a semester-long speech I course. Get started at www.speechanddebate.org/intro-to-public-speaking.

Member students and coaches at NSDA schools can access these materials and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Informative Speaking. ✨

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to Original Oratory (OO)



Event Description

Students deliver a self-written, ten-minute speech on a topic of their choosing. Limited in their ability to quote words directly, Original Oratory competitors craft an argument using evidence, logic, and emotional appeals. Topics range widely, and may be informative or persuasive in nature. The speech is delivered from memory.

Considerations for Selecting an OO Topic

Students who write orations should think seriously about a topic that is of personal interest and significance to them. Given the number of weeks students may be doing Oratory, they will want to find a topic that they can keep fresh and engaging for extended periods of time. Additionally, orators should consider topics that are current and relatable to audience members. Oratory is an ongoing process! The last speech that is performed will never be a “final” draft. There is always room for revision, so pick a topic that you will enthusiastically explore and reflect upon during the season.

Traits of Successful OO Performers

When considering what topic you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, here are some traits of successful Orators to keep in mind:

- Creative
- Unique
- Well-spoken
- Personable
- Enthusiastic
- Process-oriented

Examples of Past OO Topics

- Body Image
- Cultural Norms
- Distractions
- Face-to-Face Communication
- Motivation
- Negative Attention
- Over Commitment
- Sarcasm
- Self-confidence
- White Lies-

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Original Oratory, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Oratory; access to OO final round videos; an Oratory textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. ✨

Find Your Voice

The skills that I acquired from Oratory are skills most fundamental to the human condition. Oratory allowed me to advocate for what I believed in, in my words. It gave me the ability to tell my story from the stories and experiences of others. I learned the importance of organization, fact checking, word economy, along with innumerable other skills that form the foundation of great writing. Competing in Oratory gave me a unique opportunity to venture into elements of other events. Storytelling, humor, drama, spontaneity, argumentation, and research are all elements that are actively applied in Oratory. It's an event for anyone and everyone.

— Avijaggi, Association Alum

Competition Events Guide

Original Oratory



Basic Understandings

Original Oratory is a speech written by the student with the intent to inform or persuade the audience on a topic of significance. Oratory gives students the unique opportunity to showcase their voice and passion for their topic.

An Oratory is not simply an essay about the topic—it is a well researched and organized presentation with evidence, logic, emotional appeals, and sometimes humor to convey a message. Topics may be of a value orientation and affect people at a personal level, such as avoiding peer pressure, or they can be more of a policy orientation and ask an audience to enact particular policies or solve societal problems. As the types of structure vary widely across the country, it may be wise to ask coaches in your region what is common.



While content is very important, Oratory requires students to balance that content with delivery and style. Oratory speakers must be articulate, engaging, and smooth with their delivery at both a vocal and physical level. Students will want to watch some rounds of Oratory to determine what types of style, delivery, and content might work best for them.

The Oratory speaker must also consider the audience as a vital component of the speech. What does the student want the audience to think, feel, believe, or be motivated to accomplish? Some students want the judges and fellow students to change attitudes. Others may simply want the audience to think about ideas through a different lens by challenging norms. As style and content go hand-in-hand, it's vital that students think carefully about their message, style, and composition of the audience as they construct the speech.

Research

Oratory research is as diverse as the topics students select. Oratory research might include newspaper and magazine articles, academic journals, non-fiction books, interviews, and credible digital content. Depending upon the topic, it might be possible that a student's own meaningful experiences may be in the speech.

The key to researching a powerful Oratory is to start with the message the student wants to deliver. Students will look to more personal and emotional styles to motivate the audience in a values based Oratory. Policy oratories may do more research related to government and policy, as well as organizational and community perspectives.

Source materials need to be incorporated throughout the speech with oral citation. The citation style varies with the type of source. For example, students should provide author and title of books, although some students will also provide the source credibility of the author. The name of the source and date may be sufficient for newspaper articles. It is important to recognize that whether the material is quoted directly from the source or paraphrased, sources must be cited. When drafting the Oratory, indicate direct quotations from sources using both quotation marks and some other marking such as highlighting or underlining. Remember: only 150 directly quoted words may be used. Choose your quoted text wisely. Once all the research is gathered, the sources should all be compiled into a works cited page.

Structural Components

After research has been conducted, the student can develop the composition of the speech. Let's go back to the idea of a message as the guide to the speech. Based upon the research and the student's own thoughts on the topic, the student needs to craft a thesis statement. The student should outline two to four major arguments to support the thesis.

Arguments are made up of three important components. First, a student must clearly establish a claim. This is a declarative statement that establishes the point the student sets out to justify in the speech. Next, the student must clearly establish why the argument is valid.

Competition Events Guide

Original Oratory



This is known as the warrant for an argument. This means that Oratory speakers go beyond just asserting their claims to explaining why their claims should be accepted by the audience. Finally, the student must provide an impact for the argument. Why does the argument matter? Who is affected by this argument?

Now let's pull all of this together. Oratory speeches consist of an introduction, body (with 2-4 major points), and a conclusion. Students can group their research to support each element of the speech. For example, if the student finds a great personal narrative from a source which might grab the audience's attention, it can be marked for the intro. The process continues until each portion of the speech has evidence that backs up the claim, warrant, and impacts for each argument.

Organizing

Students should start with the body of the speech which features the major arguments and ideas. Students should take their main points with supporting research and decide an order. Major points might inform the audience of an issue, challenge assumptions the audience may have, compel the audience to make a personal change, or encourage the audience to visualize what the world might be like. Some questions to consider: What argument or idea makes the most logical sense to start with? What does the audience need to know or understand before they can accept later arguments? Which point most persuasively calls the audience to action? Many students want to start by writing the introduction first, but the student can't introduce a speech without understanding what is in that speech and how the arguments will be organized.

After the body of the speech has been established, the student can outline an introduction and conclusion. The introduction should engage the audience, establish the significance of the topic, transition to a thesis statement, and preview the major points that will be covered in the speech. After the body of the speech there is a conclusion which involves a restatement of the thesis, a review of the major points, and final thoughts that engage the audience and call them to action.

With a complete outline now developed, the student can write the speech section by section. It is important for the coach to review each part of the speech for consistency of style and approach. Although the speech needs to be conversational, some students will feature more formal language choices, or incorporate some type of humor throughout the speech, or take a more personal or narrative approach. There is no "right" or "wrong" voice but it needs to match the student's thoughts, ideas, and engagement with the audience.



Practicing

Students don't have to wait until the speech is completely written to practice. Students should take sections of the speech, such as the introduction and conclusion, or one of the major points in the speech, and talk it out. An effective writing technique is for students to verbalize their thoughts, record them, and then review those recordings to see how their language sounds to the human ear. This will help the student identify what style might be most appropriate for delivery of the message. Although not all students are comfortable being recorded, their ideas, expressions, and turns of phrase can be captured while experimenting with the content.

Once the speech is written, many students struggle with memorization. This doesn't have to be the case! One effective practice technique is breaking the speech up by section or paragraph, such as their introduction, and practicing that section until it is solidly memorized. Once that section is memorized, they can move on to the next section and so on. Students can print out the speech in

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large type, tape it down a hallway, and read their speech aloud, complete with gestures, to reinforce memorization. Team and family members are also extremely valuable when it comes to practicing the speech after it is memorized. Since the audience is such a vital component of Oratory, it is important to perform in front of real and varied groups. Students may seek out community groups, such as a local Rotary club, or community centers, such as a senior living facility, and perform their speeches. Students should perform as often as possible in front of an audience to help them get more comfortable before their first tournament. This also provides an excellent opportunity to see how the speech sounds to an audience and test any humor that they might want to use.



Performance Tips

Students need to recognize that they spend only a small percentage of their time speaking and most of the tournament listening to others. While students watch the other speakers in rounds of Oratory, they should take note of what is effective and what needs improvement in other students' speeches. Students can carry a notebook with them and write down thoughts about audience appeals, structure, and language used by other students. What works? What doesn't? They then can share comments with coaches after the tournament is complete and talk about how adjustments might be made to their own speeches.


Oratory students need to make sure that they are excellent audience members. That means students are

engaged in the round, taking notes, thinking about the arguments and analysis of others' speeches, and being responsive to the speakers. Students need to keep all of their comments about performances to themselves until after the tournament is complete as it is disrespectful to make comments with other students present, in particular critical comments about specific student performances.

After a period of time, students may become a bit bored with their speeches after delivering them over and over again. That is okay! Once the speech is written the student needs to recognize that it is not carved in stone. Making changes to the manuscript is a natural part of the process of speechwriting. After a tournament the students should take the comments on ballots and reflect upon how those comments can improve the speech content and style. Additionally, students need to be reminded that every performance is important, that there is always someone in the room who has never heard that speech before, and that they need to keep up their energy every round of every tournament. Perhaps the writing can be refreshed a bit or perhaps a section of the speech needs a bit more polish, but that should not deter your performance for that particular audience. Every speech should be given with the same dedication and enthusiasm as the first.

Resources

Our Intro to Public Speaking "Teacher in a Box" lessons are designed for the novice coach and students and include everything you need for a semester-long speech 1 course. Get started at www.speechanddebate.org/intro-to-public-speaking. Also, the Association provides members with access to past national finals rounds as well as top notch webinars to provide coaches and students alike with ideas and tips on how to make their orations the best they can be.

Member students and coaches at NSDA schools can access these materials and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Original Oratory. 

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to Program Oral Interpretation (POI)



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Event Description

Using a combination of Prose, Poetry, and Drama, students construct a program up to ten minutes in length using at least two out of the three genres. With a spotlight on argumentation and performative range, Program Oral Interpretation focuses on a student's ability to combine multiple genres of literature centered around a single theme. Competitors are expected to portray multiple characters. No props or costumes may be used except for the manuscript. Performances also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the titles and authors used in the program.

Considerations for Selecting POI Literature

Students who do POI are expected to bring together a wide variety of literature for their program. Students should select pieces that are appropriate for them and that create a well-balanced program which may incorporate humor and drama. Considerations for selecting a POI topic should include the student's age, maturity, and school/team/coach standards.

Traits of Successful POI Performers

When considering what event you should choose, or in which direction to point a student when selecting an event, below are some general traits of successful POI performers to keep in mind:

- Ability to characterize multiple perspectives
- Strong argumentation skills
- Controlled performance
- Depth/breadth of emotion
- Knowledge of poetic, prosaic and dramatic convention

Sample literature for a POI:

TOPIC: *Magical Realism*

DRAMA:


- *Lily Plants a Garden* by Jose Cruz Gonzalez
- *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* by August Wilson

POETRY:

- *The Rusted Door* by Stephan Delbos
- *Write about an Empty Birdcage* by Elaina M. Ellis
- *The Giant Golden Boy of Biology* by Anis Mojgani

PROSE:

- *The People of Paper* by Salvador Plascencia
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- *The Great Divorce* by Kelly Link

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Program Oral Interpretation, we are developing a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Interp; an interpretation textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. 

Find Your Voice

POI challenged me to construct my own unique message in a creative yet purposeful way. Piecing together multiple genres of literature not only exposed me to the different styles in which we can voice our ideas, but to the importance of amplifying and unifying these voices fighting for a collective cause"

— Kenny Lau, Association Alum

Basic Understandings

Program Oral Interpretation relies on the performer's ability to portray a wide range of characters and literature all held together under a common theme. Each program must contain at least two of the three genres and students are encouraged to include all three. There is a set time limit of ten minutes, with a 30-second grace period. Students who choose to compete in POI should focus on making an interesting argument that is supported in different ways by each piece of literature they select.

Research

When looking for a Program Oral Interpretation topic, it's important to know your limitations, and your strengths. Students with a background in Humorous Interpretation may find they have a greater ability to portray multiple characters within the program and choose to include more literature than a student who has a background in Dramatic Interpretation. Conversely, a student with a background in DI may choose to devote more time in the program to a select few pieces of literature, developing each character with greater depth.

What makes POI unique is the performer's ability to choose what kinds of stories they want to tell and the way those stories are told. When deciding on a topic, think about what motivates you. What do you want to change about the world? Whom do you want to lend your voice to? By answering questions like this performers are given a strong sense of potential topics.

Searching for literature in POI can seem intimidating, since you have more scripts to find than the other interpretation events. However, keep in mind that POI allows for the most freedom when searching for literature. As long as it follows the publishing guidelines of the National Speech and Debate Association, and it meets team and coach standards for appropriateness, you can use it!

To start, think about why you wanted to speak about your topic. Then, think about any books, plays or poetry you have encountered that relate to the topic. Find that literature and include it in your POI.

Then, broaden your search. Start researching online, at local libraries and bookstores, and begin piecing together enough literature for a program.

Not only will you be finding different genres of literature, you will also encounter different tones, perspectives and length. Good POI's will include longer narratives for the audience to relate to, short snippets packed with information and literature that lets the audience laugh. Finding a diverse set of literature enables a more dynamic performance.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30

Previews the topic and mood of the selection

INTRO • 1:30 – 3:00

Explains the purpose of the performance

EXPOSITION • 3:00 – 3:30

Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00

Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30

Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30

Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30

Resolves the conflict

Program Oral Interpretation

Program Oral Interpretation

There are a few key structural components of every POI:

Programming is the process of cutting your literature and threading it together throughout the performance. That does not mean that your POI will consist of performing a poem in full, then reading a short story and closing with a monologue from a play. Instead, break your literature down into pages and build a program that follows the structure of interp. For example, introduce the compelling character from your Prose in the intro, and then dedicate time later on in the performance to that same character.

Each selection of literature should be distinct in your performance. Perhaps the non-fiction book you use is performed by characterizing the literature as a lecturer, whereas a poem is performed with a great attention to vocal meter, rhythm and pace. In short, each piece of literature in your POI should have a distinct feel to it.

Blocking or tech, is how the character(s) moves in the space you've created for them. In POI, the manuscript may be used as a prop as long as you stay in control of it throughout the entirety of the performance. For example, if you are using a black binder for a manuscript it would be appropriate to mimic using a laptop with your binder.

Introduction. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, after the teaser, a performer will give a brief explanation of the program's relevance, then give the title and author of each piece used during the performance.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Organizing

Each POI will be organized in a unique way. However, there are some guidelines that create a memorable performance.

Pay attention to balance among genres in the program. Eight minutes from the same play with a little time devoted to a poem at the end is not the recipe for a strong program. Instead, try to devote time to each genre. It is not necessary to carve out exactly three minutes for each, but make sure that each genre is present throughout the program.

Look for thread pieces to help you along. A thread is a piece of literature that tells a complete story throughout the program. This is generally a character that the audience can relate to which helps contextualize your argument in the program. Include a page that introduces the character, another that outlines the conflict, a climax page and resolution. There can be more than one thread piece in a program, (there is no one right answer for how to organize POI), but, make sure the audience has a character they can connect to.

Not all pieces of literature have to be prominently featured in the program. There will likely be pieces that only have one page dedicated to them. Whether it be a funny punchline, an emotionally powerful stanza from a poem, or a short excerpt from a non-fiction book, don't be afraid to include a piece that is short if it adds to your program's theme or argument

Practicing

After you have finished cutting and organizing your program, it's time to start constructing your performance. The first thing you need to do is put together the manuscript you will be using. The most common manuscript is a small black binder with page protectors (often referred to as slicks), which can be found in our online store and most office supply stores. Type up your cutting, format it into two columns and print the document. Then, simply cut out each specific page and place it in your page slicks. Some people like to put black cardstock in each page slick and glue or tape the cutting to the cardstock. Your cutting should read like a book,

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Program Oral Interpretation



meaning, a peer or coach could pick up your manuscript and read your program from beginning to end.

Once you have put the manuscript together, it's time to start creating distinct characters for each piece of literature. Think about different mannerisms, voices and postures each character might have. What kind of environment are they in? Do you have some characters that need to have a lot of blocking? Find a way to make each piece distinct.

Don't be afraid to use your manuscript as a tool in the performance. As a general rule, make sure that all of the words from each section (or scene) of your cutting fit onto one page. In this way, each time you turn the page, the audience knows that you are transitioning between pieces of literature. Think of each page turn as a pop in and out of the different parts of your program.

Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If you've put the work in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Go into that round with your head held high ready to show the world what you've got! Trust what you and your coach created. Do what you practiced, and if you feel compelled to "try something new," review it with your coach beforehand. Consistency is key. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if your performance in the round is completely different than what you've been working on.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile. Be a warm, inviting audience member. There is nothing worse than performing and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: each round is about 60 minutes. Ten of those involve you performing, the other 50 are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will inspire you, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. It's also nice to know who you competed against in each round. This way, you have a better understanding of who your competition is. When you review your ballots after the tournament, you can go back through your notebook and compare your ballots to your notes.

Between rounds, figure out what room you will be performing in next. Congratulate your competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. Be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to yourself, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, pay special attention to how others in your community are doing POI. Be aware of effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what that POI is doing? The best way to learn POI, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

Member students and coaches at NSDA schools can access these materials and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Interp and Program Oral Interp. 