**Public Speaking Events**

In these events, speeches are written by the students performing them. Judges should consider thought, supporting materials, analysis, composition, and delivery when evaluating these events. Speeches should be considered carefully for their rhetoric and diction. The language of the speech should exemplify the highest standards of usage, style, and vocabulary. They should be grammatically correct and reveal a discriminating choice of words. Rhetorical devices are encouraged and should be rewarded. The compositions should demonstrate effective audience analysis and should be adapted to oral presentation.

Delivery should be judged for mastery of the usual mechanics of speech – poise, quality and use of voice, bodily expressiveness, and for the qualities of directness and sincerity which impress the purpose upon the minds of the audience.

No particular style of delivery is to be set up as the one correct style to which all contestants must conform. Rather, each contestant is to be judged upon the effectiveness of his/her delivery, free to develop whatever style will best give him/her that effectiveness with his/her particular speech.

**Informative Speaking**

An informative speech is one that informs and educates the audience. The purpose of the informative speech is to provide interesting, relevant, useful, and unique information to the audience so that they understand the main points regarding this subject. The text of the speech should be well-developed, explain concepts and ideas clearly, and be well organized. The most important characteristic of informative topics is that the goal is to gain knowledge, not to encourage people to use that knowledge in any specific way. When a speaker starts encouraging people to use knowledge in a specific way, he or she is no longer informing but is persuading.

There are many ways to [inform](https://www.boundless.com/definition/inform/) an audience. The speech to inform may describe, clarify, illustrate, or define an object, person, idea, concept, or process. For example, the speech may:

-Describe something viable, tangible and stable in form;

-Explain a series of actions that leads to a specific result or product;

-Explain any kind of happening or occurrence; or,

-Convey information concerning beliefs, theories, principles or other abstract subjects.

Speakers should demonstrate effective research strategies and skills, and supporting materials should be credible, wide-ranging, and effectively documented. Although ***not required***, the speaker ***may*** incorporate purposeful audio or visual materials to illustrate concepts or ideas that are difficult or impossible to explain in words. Audio-visual material should enhance understanding, not distract from the primary focus of evaluation, which is the speech and its effective delivery.

**Persuasive Speaking**

A persuasive speech is written to persuade, or convince, the listeners of the validity of the speaker's argument. It is aimed at influencing the values, ideas, beliefs, and/or attitudes of the audience. This might involve persuading someone to change their opinion or at the very least take into account some elements that have not really been considered before. Pragmatically, the persuasive speech should encourage the audience to do something, whether that be taking a specific action or merely entertaining a new perspective.

Although many persuasive speeches deal with a current problem and propose a solution, the ***judge is expressly reminded that this is not the only acceptable form of persuasion.*** The speaker should not be expected to solve any of the great problems of the day. Rather, s/he should discuss intelligently, with a degree of originality, in an interesting manner, and with some profit to his/her audience the topic Hh/she has chosen. The speech may simply alert the audience to a threatening danger, strengthen its devotion to an accepted cause, or reinforce a previously-held belief. The speaker should be given free choice of subject and judged solely on the effectiveness of its development and presentation.

**Entertainment Speaking**

While it may implicitly inform or persuade, the primary purpose of a speech to entertain is to have the audience relax and enjoy the occasion. The speech should have a central theme or a focus, and speakers should avoid merely constructing a series of jokes. In other words, entertainment speeches have a real point to make and are not merely a comedy routine. Effective speeches to entertain typically mix humor with more serious morals, lessons learned, or experiences. They examine a familiar subject from a different and unexpected viewpoint or take a lighthearted look at a particular issue. The text of the speech should be well-developed, explain concepts and ideas clearly, and be well organized. A variety of humor styles (i.e. wordplay, jokes, visual and/or physical humor) is appropriate and encouraged, and the speaker should demonstrate effective audience analysis in their choice of humor strategies.

Although ***not required***, the speaker ***may*** incorporate audio or visual materials to illustrate concepts or enhance the humor. Audio-visual material should not distract from the primary focus of evaluation, which is the speech and its effective delivery.

**Extemporaneous Speaking**

The extemporaneous speech should not be regarded as a memory test of the material contained in any one magazine article, but rather as an original synthesis by the speaker of the current fact and opinion on the designated topic as presented by numerous sources. The speaker may (but is not required to) refer to one 4” x 6” notecard.

The contestant should be held accountable for strict adherence to the precise statement of the topic drawn and discounted for shifting to some other phase of the topic on which s/he might prefer to speak. The information presented should be well-chosen, pertinent, and sufficient to support the central thought of the topic.

The material should be organized according to some logical plan to produce a complete speech within the time allowed. Delivery should be demonstrate effective mechanics of speech -- poise, quality and use of voice, enunciation, fluency, bodily expressiveness -- and should be effective in enlisting and holding the interest of the audience.

The best extemporaneous speech combines clear thinking, good speaking, and interesting presentation to establish a definite thought with respect to the subject chosen.

Do not require a contestant speaking on a controversial subject to take a personal stand on that issue. He/she may do so, or he/she may elect to present both sides of the controversy as currently set forth in the public press. Evaluate the speaker on the effectiveness with which he/she develops the subject according to his/her own plan.

**Interpretation Events**

The art of interpretation is the process by which words are pulled from the page and given dimension in a reader’s voice and body. Practitioners of oral interpretation bring stories to life, serving as a vehicle for the messages of the text. Performers should aim to honor the integrity of a text, using logic, analysis, and research to investigate the literary text, and should embrace the creative and artistic ways they affect how texts are understood, adapted, embodied, and delivered to an audience.

Contestants should be evaluated on poise, quality and use of voice, inflections, emphasis, pronunciation, enunciation, physical expression, and especially the ability to interpret literature correctly and consistently.

The selection should be judged for its appropriateness as contest material and its suitability to the particular contestant using it. The use of good literature should be noted favorably and a selection devoid of literary merit rated lowest.

Allowing for the demonstration of excellence in public speaking as well as interpretive skills, the performance should include an introduction composed by the student, in accordance with the standards of good public speaking. Any transitions should be smooth and add clarity and coherence. The introduction should set the stage, enhancing the interpretation by relating the literature to the audience, providing necessary information about the genesis or the theme of the drama. The use of alternative performance or interpretation styles should be justified, and multiple characters and any use of multiple selections or authors should be clarified.

The final test of good interpretation is the ability to use all these factors so successfully and unobtrusively that the audience forgets that this is a contest in a contrived atmosphere and is carried away to the time and place of the story being told.

**Interpretation of Poetry**

Poetry is writing which expresses ideas, experience, or emotion through the creative arrangement of words according to their sound, their rhythm, and their meaning. Traditional poetry relies on verse and stanza form. It generally has a somewhat regular rhythm, often with a definite--sometimes repeated--rhyme scheme. Nontraditional poetry may do away with regular rhythm and rhyme, but rhythmic flow of the individual line remains an integral part of the structure. The speaker should be given free choice of style and material and should be judged solely on the effectiveness of its presentation.

The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to find, understand, experience, and share a poetic work through the art of oral reading. The presentation may be of an entire work, a cutting of a single longer work, or a collection of shorter works or short cuttings of longer works by one poet or several poets arranged in a program. The use of written transitions between selections is not required. However, the speaker should seek to clearly delineate the selections, and the audience should be able to distinguish one from another.

The contestant must perform the interpretation using a manuscript (which may be in a binder or on separate sheets). ***Since the contestant must hold a manuscript***, use of that manuscript should be an integral part of the performance.

Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture and gesture) is permissible so long as this active use of the body is appropriate to the demands of the selection and a natural outgrowth from the literature being performed.

Along with appropriate, effective physical presentation, the contestant will also be evaluated in terms of technique (breathing, tone, pitch, enunciation, phrasing, pace, etc.) and artistry (presentation of mood and imagery, vocal characterization – if required, creation of unifying effect, etc.).

**Humorous and Serious Prose**

Prose is writing which corresponds to usual patterns of speech. Unlike poetry, which emphasizes emotions and/or ideas expressed through figurative language recorded in verse and stanza, prose expresses thought through language recorded in sentences and paragraphs: fiction (short stories, novels), non‐fiction (articles, essays, journals, biographies), or drama (plays or monologues).

Multiple characters may be represented and used to aid plot and action. Characterizations should be consistent with performance theme and style, and should be distinct from each other, embodying distinguishing characteristics (gender, age, height, etc.) which enliven characterizations. Caricatures or stereotypes should not be penalized if appropriate to the literature. Delivery should be unaffected, fluent and create a sense of presence for the audience.

The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to find, understand, experience, and share a prose work through the art of oral reading. All selections should be of literary merit and suitable to the performer and the audience. The cutting should develop some relevant and significant theme, conveying a spectrum of emotion, conflict and resolution through multiple levels of thought and interpretation.

Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture and gesture) is permissible so long as this active use of the body is appropriate to the demands of the selection and a natural outgrowth from the literature being performed.

Along with appropriate, effective physical presentation, the contestant will also be evaluated in terms of technique (breathing, tone, pitch, enunciation, phrasing, pace, etc.) and artistry (presentation of mood, vocal characterization, flow of narration, etc.).

**Duet Acting**

The purpose of Duet Acting is to have two actors exercise creativity and imagination in choosing an appropriate script of theatrical value, adapting the script to the situation and time limits, and presenting the memorized scene to a contest audience.

The script may be a scene or a sequence of material. The actor may create one or more characters, and this may include a narrator/s. The characters must be developed physically and vocally.

Two classroom chairs and one table may be used to create the setting for the performance.

The scene will be judged equally on the actor's understanding of the material, focus, stage movement, character development, and the interaction between the characters.

The performance value shall finally be determined by the believability of the actors and the performance.

**Oral Interpretation of Drama**

The purpose of Oral Interpretation of Drama is for ***at least three and no more than five*** students to interpret a play for an audience through the scene or scenes being presented. As the name implies, this event involves interpreting a script as opposed to acting it out. Performers bring the text alive by using voice, facial expressions, and gesture, developing the characters through physical and vocal interpretation

The performers may portray one or more characters. An introduction should be provided to give the audience information needed for understanding the performance. The contestants must perform the interpretation using a manuscript (which may be in a binder or on separate sheets). Each member of the group must possess a copy of the script/cutting being performed. ***Since each performer must hold their manuscript***, use of manuscripts should be considered an integral part of the performance.

While no sets, props, or costumes are allowed, staging may be created with chairs, blocks, stools, or other staging devices. Movement is allowed in this event.

Judges shall take into consideration literary merit, quality of the cutting, suitability of the performance to the group and to the event, and the overall effect of the ensemble.

The performance value shall finally be determined by the ability of the performers to vividly create the characters through vocal and physical interpretation, and to bring the play to life with believability.