Manual for Coaches Of Speech & Debate

MHSAA Coordinator: Rachel Clapper-Davis
Revised August 2023

Table of Contents

Mississippi High School Activities Association Mission Statement

The mission of the Mississippi High School Activities Association is to serve its schools by providing leadership and coordination of interscholastic activities that will enhance the educational experiences of secondary students and reduce risks of the participation. The MHSAA will promote participation and sportsmanship to develop good citizens through interscholastic activities that provide equitable opportunities, positive recognition, and learning experiences to students while maximizing the achievement of educational goals.

Welcome to the World of MHSAA Speech & Debate

For both coaches and students, beginning a career in speech and debate can be overwhelming. Preparing for and attending tournaments, facing opportunities of great growth in critical thinking skills, and exciting challenges in competition are all challenges that can be turned into positives with the proper preparation.

Following standard procedures established for competition in your geographical area and being informed about workable procedures for preparation can make the transition into this activity a smooth one. As a coach, you are expected to read and use the material in this manual and to contact the identified people who will be great assistance for you.

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ELIGIBILITY RULES

*All Eligibility Rules for Speech & Debate Competitors are the same for all MHSAA sports and activities. Therefore, the following is a direct copy from the rules and regulations from the **MHSAA Handbook***

Eligibility

2.2.1   Eligibility rules shall apply to all students participating in interscholastic athletic competition in all activities/athletics at all levels of play, including middle schools.

Registration and Submission of Students

2.4.2.   No students shall be eligible for interscholastic competition until his/her name with all required information has been submitted to the MHSAA each school year.

2.4.3   It shall be the school's responsibility to verify and certify that each student is eligible under all MHSAA's eligibility rules and should keep a filed copy of eligibility documents.

Enrollment Requirements

2.5.1   If a school or student chooses to be 100% virtual only – this is considered being home schooled and no participation will be allowed in athletics or activities.

Age and Entry Requirements

2.6.1   A student becomes ineligible for interscholastic participation if he/she has reached his/her 19th birthday before August 1st of that school year.

2.6.3   If a student becomes 19 on or after August 1st, he/she shall be eligible for the Remainder of the school year, if he/she meets all other eligibility rules.

2.6.4   A seventh grader must not have reached 14 years of age prior to August 1st.

2.6.5   An eighth grader must not have reached 15 years of age prior to August 1st.

2.6.6   A ninth grader must not have reached 16 years of age prior to August 1st.

Scholastic Requirements

2.10.2   According to Mississippi law, a student must maintain a grade point average of at least a 2.0 or "C" average in order to participate in interscholastic sports/activities. Grade point averages will be calculated at the conclusion of the first semester using the semester averages of all courses the student is taking. Students who do not have a 2.0 or "C" average for the first semester will be ineligible for the second semester.

2.10.3   At the end of the school year, each student's grade point average for the year will be assessed. This assessment will reflect the average for the entire year using the final grades for each course. A student who does not have a grade point average of at least a 2.0 or "C" average, will be ineligible for fall semester

DragonFly Eligibility Information

Eligibility for students participating in athletics and activities must be submitted to the Mississippi High School Activities Association electronically via DragonFly software program. All students must be updated at the beginning of each school year and at the end of the first semester. All participants in athletics and activities must be on a DragonFly roster prior to playing in a sport or participating in an activity.

- **SEE APPENDIX FOR HANDOUT TO HELP STUDENTS/PARENTS**
- **The MHSAA Speech and Debate State Coordinator is the Mississippi High Schools Activities Association Official at all MHSAA-sanctioned tournaments.**
- **MHSAA Speech and Debate follows the rules for Activities in the Mississippi High Schools Activities Association Manual. Any eligibility, sportsmanship, or other team issues will be governed by the manual.**

The MHSAA Speech & Debate Coordinating Committee

Nine coaches comprise the seven seats and two alternate positions on the committee. All new ideas are run through the committee for consideration before the general population of state coaches or to the MHSAA Executive Board.

The following list indicates how the members of the Coordinating Committee are chosen.

1. The **MHSAA Coordinator of Speech and Debate** chairs the committee.
2. The vice-chair of the committee will be the **NSDA Magnolia District Chairperson.**
3. The current **Moderator of the Biloxi Catholic Forensic League (BCFL).**
4. The current **Moderator of the Jackson Catholic Forensic League (JCFL).**
5. A coach from the BCFL region chosen by the MHSAA Coordinator.
6. A coach from the JCFL region chosen by the MHSAA Coordinator
7. A coach from a school with a program younger than five years old OR a coach who has been coaching less than five years.
8. An alternate from BCFL chosen by the BCFL Moderator.
9. An alternate from JCFL chosen by the JCFL Moderator.

> ***The alternates will vote if his/her Moderator or voting member is not present.***
> ***The Vice-Chair will run committee talks if the Coordinator is unable to be present –OR– if the conversation concerns a student from the Coordinator's school.***
> ***Coordinating Committee members serve a term of two years.***
> ***There should never be two members of the Coordinating Committee from the same school.***

Choosing A School's MHSAA Competition Season (if over 8 MHSAA Tournaments)

- A school may compete in up to 8 MHSAA-qualifying tournaments during one season
- On **February 1st**, of each year the MHSAA Coordinator will begin creation of the next year's competition calendar. Weekend Preference will be given to schools who already host in order of seniority (the number of years they have hosted).
- By **April 1st**, schools that did not host a tournament during the current season may contact the MHSAA Coordinator to have their school added to the schedule.
- By May 1st, MHSAA Coordinator will send out a form to all MHSAA Schools with all eligible MHSAA state qualifying tournaments. Each school should indicate which 8 (or less) tournaments they intend to compete in during the next season.
  - A school SHOULD ONLY indicate 8 tournaments or less.
  - If a tournament is canceled because of natural disaster and/or hosting school issue, schools that indicating plans to compete at that tournament will be allowed to add another tournament as long as a school does not compete in more than 8 in-state MHSAA Qualifying Tournaments.
  - **MHSAA In-State Qualifying Tournaments does not include:**
    - Stennis Novice Tournament
    - BCFL, JCFL Tournaments
    - NSDA Qualifying Tournaments
    - Out-of-State Tournaments
- By **July 1st**, a calendar including out-of-state tournaments MHSAA has approved Mississippi teams to travel to will be sent out to all schools.
- By August 31st, all schools should indicate what tournaments they are going to via the MHSAA State Coordinator.

2023-2024 MHSAA Coordinating Committee

Rachel Clapper-Davis (Madison Central)
Committee Chair
Mississippi High Schools Activities Association Speech and Debate State
Coordinator

Micah Everson (Murrah)
Committee Vice-Chair
NSDA Magnolia District Committee Chair

Kelly Garner (Petal)
BCFL Moderator

Shane Cole (Oak Grove)
BCFL Member

Jessica Wilkinson (Pascagoula)
BCFL Alternate

Richard Younce (Jackson Prep)- Non-Voting Member
JCFL Moderator

Darin Maier (St. Andrew's)
JCFL Member

Sonya Harvey (Starkville)
JCFL Alternate

Conner Daniels (Jim Hill)
New School Representative

We Are an Honor Society

The National Speech & Debate Association's Honor Society is our parent organization. It recognized middle school and high school students for participation in speech and debate activities. Students earn distinction through speech and debate competition, as well as community service, public speaking, and leadership activities. Members are eligible to join the Honor Society once they have earned the required number of points.

Members of the Honor Society are held to the Code of Honor, the highest standards of integrity, humility, respect, leadership, and service. These standards have been valued by our organization since its founding in 1925 and we're officially adopted as the Code of Honor in 2007.

The NSDA Student Code of Honor

"As a member of the National Speech & Debate Association, I pledge to uphold the highest standards of integrity, humility, respect, leadership, and service in the pursuit of excellence."

INTEGRITY: An Honor Society member obeys the highest ethical standards and adheres to the rules of the organization, Members recognize that integrity is central to earning the trust, respect, and support of one's peers. Integrity encompasses the highest regard for honesty, civility, justice, and fairness.

HUMILITY: A member does not regard oneself more highly than others. Regardless of a person's level of success, an individual always looks beyond oneself to appreciate the inherent value of others.

RESPECT: A member respects individual differences and fosters diversity. They promote tolerance, inclusion, and empowerment for people from a variety of backgrounds, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

LEADERSHIP: A member influences others to take positive action toward productive change. Members commit to thoughtful and responsible leadership that promotes the other core values in the Code of Honor.

SERVICE: A member exercises their talents to provide service to peers, community, and the activity. At all times a member is prepared to work constructively to improve the lives of others.

EQUITY: A member respects individuals and their individual differences as well as fosters equity, diversity, and inclusion. A member promotes empowerment for people from all backgrounds, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

Adopted September 23, 2007 – Updated December 16, 2020
National Speech & Debate Association

The NSDA Coaches Code of Ethics

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in speech and debate. Students should be treated with the utmost respect, and their welfare should be considered in decisions by coaches at all times.

- **Coaches** shall be aware that they have a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of their students and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

- **Coaches** shall practice integrity by upholding the honor and dignity of our profession. In all personal contact with students, judges, tournament officials, activities directors, school administrators, other coaches, the media, and the public, coaches shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

- **Coaches** shall take an active role in the prevention of student drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse.

- **Coaches** shall be expected to uphold their school's policy in regards to drug, alcohol, and tobacco use when in contact with students.

- **Coaches** shall strive to understand the contest rules and to teach them to their students. Coaches shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.

- **Coaches** shall exert their influence to enhance sportsmanship and fair play by competitors and other coaches.

- **Coaches** shall respect and support tournament officials. Coaches shall not indulge in conduct that would incite other coaches or students against tournament officials. Public criticism of tournament officials, other coaches, or students is unethical.

- **Coaches** shall set the correct tone for a tournament or competition.

Adopted December 14, 2016
National Speech & Debate Association

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Equity Statement

The National Speech & Debate Association is committed to modeling and fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion for all speech and debate communities.

We are continuously transforming our organization to reflect and operationalize the values of equity, integrity, respect, leadership, and service.

We will take responsibility.

We will heed, learn, and evolve.

We will work conscientiously to model and foster an inclusive and equitable speech and debate experience for all.

General Rules for School Participation in Speech and Debate

The following rules have been compiled by MHSAA over the years. These rules are specific to competition in speech and debate. All coaches, students, and parent judges/chaperones are responsible for understanding the following set of rules.

■ Schools hosting tournaments may invite and accept entries from out-of-state schools, but they must seek the approval of the MHSAA Executive Director in order to do so.

■ Coaches are reminded of the importance of the eligibility lists since they determine coverage for the catastrophic insurance provided by the association. No coach should travel with a student that is not approved through their eligibility list with the state office. This is now officiated through the DragonFly website and/or app.

■ **SUPERVISION:** The adult supervisor of a team must be the coach, a full-time employee of the school district approved by the principal.
   o **The supervising adult must stay at the tournament site with his/her students for the duration of the tournament.**
   o Students without an accredited supervisor will not be permitted to participate in the tournament.
   o In **LIMITED** situations, a principal may obtain, *in advance*, permission for a responsible adult to chaperone students. This permission is obtained through the filing of an official request form signed by the principal, the coach, and the Speech & Debate Coordinator who would then determine whether or not the approval is justified:
      ▪ The Speech & Debate Coordinator can approve the first two uses of this form.
      ▪ Any attempts to use the form after the initial two will be sent to the MHSAA Coordinator who will them present it to the MHSAA Director for approval.
   o In using this form, **a parent may only supervise his/her own child, not the entire team or a group of students.**
   o All Supervision forms must be sent to the MHSAA Coordinator more than 1 full week before the tournament in question. **Should an emergency arise keeping the coach on file from attending a tournament, it is the school/coach's responsibility to assign another school employee as supervising adult through MHSAA or cancel the tournament through the tournament director and MHSAA Coordinator.**
   o If approved, the form will be signed and returned by email to the sponsoring coach. The adult providing supervision must take a copy of the form with them to the tournament in question giving them the authority to guarantee the ethical/safe behavior of the students.

■ Team coaches must accept the responsibility for all communication of the entries, drops, and judge registration for each tournament attended.

- A coach and/or member of his/her team will be found in violation of the standards for good sportsmanship established by the MHSAA if they do any of the following:
  - Making degrading/critical remarks about officials, other coaches or competitors during or after a contest; or
  - Arguing with officials or going through motions indicating dislike or disdain for a decision; or
  - Detaining the official following the contest to request a ruling or explanation of actions taken by the official; or
  - Damaging school property or being in unauthorized locations or not abiding by the school's policies, (i.e. non-smoking campuses).

- The coach, or assigned adult, must monitor the behavior of all individuals connected to his/her school and maintain the ethical, professional behavior of all individuals involved.
  - Incidents brought to the attention of the coach or responsible adult, but not corrected, shall result in an official complaint to the MHSAA Executive Director who shall review the situation and assess a minimum fine of $100 plus all damages if applicable in situations where the coach or responsible adult could have corrected the behavior.
  - A second infraction shall result in a fine of $250.
  - A third infraction shall result in the school's suspension from all Speech and Debate competition until the Executive Director deems the correct steps have been taken to guarantee ethical, professional participation.

- It is the responsibility of the coach of each team to train all judges who accompany their team in the following categories:
  - Event Rules
  - Ethical Behavior
  - Judge Sign-In Procedures
  - Procedure for ballot pickup and return
  - Importance for being available for all assignments
  - Time involved in the commitment to serve as a judge, which begins 15 minutes before the first round and concludes with the end of the final round.
  - School's responsibility to pay fines for judges not reporting to assigned rounds if they are not in a delayed round (penalty is $15 per round). The required penalty must be paid before a school can enter another MHSAA Speech and Debate event.

- Each participant must follow both the Decency Clause requirement and the Royalty Responsibility explained in the Speech & Debate Tournament rules.

- **Novice Rules:** Novice in Speech and Debate Competition is defined as the following:
  - **Speech and Debate Events:** Students in their first year of competition.
  - Students that competed in middle school are still considered a novice competitor during their ninth-grade year if they only competed against middle school students while in middle school.

Creating A Tournament on Tabroom

***All Mississippi tournaments will now be held on Tabroom.com. Setup of tournaments can be copied from a "Default" tournament that the MHSAA State Coordinator will send to tournament hosts.

Tournament hosts need to attempt to make most balloting online but still provide the option of paper ballots for those judges without devices/in case of Wi-Fi issues.

Tournament hosts should plan to add the State Coordinator as an admin to their Tabroom site.

Tournament hosts should organize a tab staff for their tournament at least a month before the tournament begins.

Tournament directors should plan on recruiting at least 50 judges for their tournament on either day. Failure to provide enough judges (especially if the tournament is charging judge fees), will result in an inquiry into the tournament procedure.

MHSAA STATE TOURNAMENT
RULES AND REGULATIONS

EVENT SETUP FOR STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
- **WEEKEND ONE –** Congressional Debate
- **WEEKEND TWO** – Consists of the following . . .
    - **DEBATE**
        - Policy Debate
        - Lincoln-Douglas Debate
        - Public Forum Debate
    - **FLIGHT A EVENTS**
        - Dramatic Interpretation
        - Duet Acting
        - Impromptu Speaking
        - Original Oratory
        - Program of Oral Interpretation
        - Prose Interpretation
    - **FLIGHT B EVENTS**
        - Declamation (9th & 10th grade only)
        - Duo Interpretation
        - Extemporaneous Speaking
        - Humorous Interpretation
        - Informative Speaking
        - Poetry Interpretation
    - **SUPPLEMENTAL EVENTS**
        - Flight A – Expository Speaking (9th & 10 grade; 4 entries per school)
        - Flight B – Storytelling (9th & 10th grade; 4 entries per school)

BASIC RULES FOR THE STATE TOURNAMENT
Each student participating in the State Championship Tournament must complete the entry requirements of eligibility as well as the qualification process before the deadline. That deadline is at midnight on the Monday before the weekend of the tournament. No additions or substitutions of any kind will be made after that time. Drops will incur fees that must be paid at registration.

1. **Round Set-Up**
    A. **Platform Events –** 2 preliminary rounds of competition with the top twelve students advancing to semifinals then the top six advancing to finals.
    B. **Lincoln-Douglas Debate/Public Forum Debate –** 5 preliminary round, quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals.
    C. **Policy Debate –** 4 preliminary rounds, semifinals, and finals
    D. **Congressional Debate –** competitors compete in two three-hour preliminary sessions and a three-hour Super Session final including the top 24 competitors in the competition.

2. **Advancement in Tournament**

    A.   Advancement in Platform Events shall be determined by:
        1.   Total Ranks from Round 1, Round 2, and Semifinals
        2.   Total Speaker Points from all Rounds
        3.   Sum of the Inverse Reciprocals
        4.   Total # of 1's, total # of 2's, 3's, etc.
    B.   Advancement in Debate Events shall be determined by:
        1.   Win/Loss Record
        2.   Total Speaker Points
        3.   Opponent Win/Loss Record
        4.   Adjusted Win/Loss Record
        5.   Adjusted Speaker Points

3.   The top six students/teams in **Platform Events** shall receive awards. In Debate Events, the finalists, semifinalists, and quarterfinalists will receive awards. In Congressional Debate, the top eight competitors and all presiding officers will be recognized.

4.   **Judges in Tournament**
    A.   In Platform Events:
        1.   Rounds 1 and 2 will have one judge.
        2.   Semifinals may have 1 or 2 judges depending on the number of entries in the events (less than 15 requires only one).
        3.   Finals will always have three judges.
    B.   In Debate Events:
        1.   Preliminary Rounds will have 1 judge
        2.   Quarterfinals will have 1 or 3 judges (depending on judge availability).
        3.   Semifinals and Finals will always have 3 judges.
    C.   A School must provide judges for:
        1.   1 qualified judge for every 10 entries (or fraction of) in Platform Events; or pay a judge fee of $10.00 per entry not covered.
        2.   1 qualified judge for every two Lincoln-Douglas Debaters.
        3.   1 qualified judges for every 2 Public Forum Debate Teams.
        4.   1 qualified judge for every 2 Policy Debate Teams
        5.   For every debate entry not covered, there is a fee of $25.00
        6.   A judge can only cover 1 Debate or 1 Platform Event judging position.
        7.   Schools must provide one qualified judge in each category entered. Schools that do not provide the required judge(s) will not be permitted to compete in those divisions. Schools may hire additional judges as described above if they cannot provide other judges. The hiring of judges must be done on or before the registration deadline.
    D.   Judges shall use the MHSAA ballots in Platform Events. The judge's rank and rating of individual participants should reflect rule violations and severity of offenses but not disqualify the participation of the individual.

5.   **Students in Tournament**

A. A student may enter one of the following combinations (if qualified):
   1. 1 Debate + 1 Flight A Event + 2 Flight B Events
   2. 2 Flight A Events + 2 Flight B Events
B. The tournament will offer Debate and Platform Events in a two-day Competition with Debate beginning on Friday evening and concluding Saturday; and Platform Events taking place all day on Saturday.
C. **Decency Clause.** Students participating in any interpretation event involving MHSAA member schools must have in his/her possession in each round a copy of the exact manuscript to be used with a cover sheet that contains the clause *"The decency standards reflected in the piece uphold the values and morals of the student's school, community, and family."*
   1. The student's coach and at least one of the student's parents/guardians must sign the statement.
   2. Failure to comply with this rule will result in disqualification of the student for that event. Forged signatures will result in the student being placed on probation for the remainder of the semester. A second forged incident will result in the student being denied entry to any tournament for the rest of the semester.

6. **Royalties.** MHSAA assumes no responsibilities for the payments of royalties or other fees connected with the performance of any material at a speech, debate, or other platform event competition. In the event a challenge by a representative or holder of copyrighted material is filed regarding whether the material has received proper clearance for performance, the performing school shall be required to verify payment of royalty or clearance for use. Failure to provide such verification will result in disqualification of the school in the event(s).

QUALIFYING RULES FOR THE MHSAA STATE TOURNAMENT
Platform Events
1. Students will automatically qualify in a specific event for the MHSAA State Championship Tournament by making finals in the previous year's State Tournament.
2. Students will automatically qualify in a specific event for the MHSAA State Championship Tournament who place first in that event at an MHSAA-recognized tournament.
3. Students may qualify in a specific event who place in the finals (2nd – 6th place) and/or semifinals (7th – 12th) in that event a combination of two (2) times at a MHSAA-recognized tournament.
4. Students **do not** have to use the same cutting of a literary work in order to qualify for the MHSAA State Championship Tournament in Interpretation events (including Declamation). If a student changes cuttings they **do not** have to begin the qualifying process again when using the piece.
5. In partnered events (Duo Interpretation, Duet Acting), partners must qualify together. If a student changes partners, the new partnership must re-qualify.
6. If an individual student qualifies in more than two events in one flight that student will be given the choice of which qualified events he/she will enter.

Debate Events

1. Students will automatically qualify in a specific event for the MHSAA State Championship Tournament by making finals, semifinals, or quarterfinals in the previous year's State Tournament.
2. In two-person events, partners must qualify as a team. Competitors automatically qualify by placing in finals or semifinals at a MHSAA-sanctioned event.
3. Policy teams or Public Forum Debate teams, which reach or are named to quarterfinals at an MHSAA-recognized tournament twice will qualify the team for the MHSAA State Championship Tournament.
4. Lincoln-Douglas Debaters who reach or are named to quarterfinals in an MHSAA-recognized tournament twice will qualify for the MHSAA State Championship Tournament.
5. If an individual student qualified in more than one debate event, he/she will be given the choice of which event he/she will enter.

Congressional Debate

1. Currently, MHSAA does not require a specific qualification process for the MHSAA State Congress.
2. Coaches may register between 1 – 10 competitors to the MHSAA State Congress Competition at his/her own discretion.

Designated Wild-Card Entries

Any MHSAA Member School may have a total of five (5) entries in the MHSAA State Championship Tournament that have not qualified according to any of the previously-listed requirements. At the sole discretion of the school's coach(es), the five (5) entries may be devided amongas many as five (5) students or as few as two (2) students with one receiving four and the second receiving one. These entries will be designated as *Wild-Card Entries.*

Novice Events

Students must place in the top six in any novice division platform event twice to qualify to State Champs or win the event once. All other platform rules apply. In debate events, rules are the same as varsity division.

SWEEPSTAKES SCORES AND PLACEMENTS

State Championship Team

The top three (3) teams at the MHSAA State Championship Tournament, as well as the top three (3) teams in Debate Events and the top three (3) teams in Speech Events, will be determined by the sweepstakes formula outlined below. The team accumulating the most points from their top 25 entries will be declared the **MHSAA Speech and Debate State Champion Team**. This rule is only for the state championship.

State Championship Individual Performer

The top six (6) Individual Performers will be determined by the sweepstakes formula outlined below. Competitors will receive points in his/her best four (4) events. No student may count all five events if they are also entered in MHSAA State Congress. The individual student performer accumulating the most points will be declared the **MHSAA Top Individual Performer State Champion.**

Sweepstakes Formula

Platform Events
- First Place Finalist = 5 points
- Second Place Finalist = 4 points
- Third Place Finalist = 3 points
- Fourth, Fifth, Sixth Place Finalists = 2 points
- Non-Advancing Semifinalists = 1 point

Debate Events
- First Place Finalist = 8 points
- Second Place Finalist = 6 points
- Non-Advancing Semifinalists = 4 points
- Non-Advancing Quarterfinalists = 3 points

Congressional Debate
- First Place Finalist = 8 points
- Second Place Finalist = 6 points
- 3rd and 4th Place Finalists = 4 points
- 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Finalists = 2 points
- Finalists = 1 point

Ties
Counting the number of First Places each team has earned will break ties; a tie will be broken in favor of the team with the greater number of First Places. If the teams have an equal number of First Places, then the number of Second Places will be counted and used as a tiebreaker. Placings through Sixth Place will be used in turn as tiebreakers. If the teams remain tied after counting all of the First Place through Sixth Place finishes that each team has earned, the tie shall be declared unbreakable, and two trophies will be awarded.

Cost Per Event
*Single-Entry Events (DI, HI, PR, PO, POI, Info, OO, LD, Congress, Dec, Expos, ST, EXT, IMP)- $13 per event entry

*Double-Entry Events (PF, CX, Duo, Duet)- $16 per event entry

EVENT RULES & Descriptions
Debate Events
Individual Events
(Speech and Interpretation)

Event Descriptions are copied from the NSDA Competition Events Guide or based on the NCFL rules.

In the event of lack of clarification in the manual on a rule, all events will refer to NSDA's rules OR NCFL in the case of Prose, Poetry, and Declamation

Debate Events

(Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, Public Forum, Congressional Debate)

POLICY DEBATE

Policy Debate- RULES

1. Resolution: The resolution will be one requiring a policy judgment. The current national question will be used. Refer to www.speechanddebate.org/topics for the current topic.

2. Entries: An entry is comprised of two students from the same school; each debating both sides of the resolution and advancing on its own record. No substitution is permitted once the tournament has begun.

3. Order of Speeches: Each debater must give one and only one constructive speech, one period of questioning, one period of answering, and one rebuttal speech, times are listed below.

4. Prompting Philosophy: Oral prompting, except time signals, either by the speaker's colleague or by any other person while the debater has the floor, is discouraged though not prohibited and may be penalized by some judges. Debaters may, however, refer to their notes and materials and may consult with their teammate while they do not have the floor.

5. Use of Electronic Devices: The use of internet-enabled devices and internet is permitted. Laptop use must comply with the "Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate Events."

6. Timing: Timekeepers are an option but not required. If no timekeeper is present, debaters may time for their partners or the judge may keep time. Prep time for each team is eight minutes.

How to do Policy

Event Description

A two-on-two debate that focuses on a policy question for the duration of the academic year, this format tests a student's research, analytical, and delivery skills. Policy Debate involves the proposal of a plan by the affirmative team to enact a policy, while the negative team offers reasons to reject that proposal. Throughout the debate, students have the opportunity to cross-examine one another. A judge or panel of judges determines the winner based on the arguments presented.

Students who do Policy Debate must be able to work well with a partner. Balanced teams, both in terms of preparation before debates and contributions within a debate, helps provide a competitive advantage during tournaments. Policy debaters are interested in examining specific policies in an intricate and detailed manner. Depth of research is a common trait of successful Policy debaters. Policy Debate is commonly viewed as the most technical debate event within the Association.

Basic Understandings

Policy debate is a two-on-two debate where an affirmative team proposes a plan and the negative team proposes a plan and the negative team argues why that plan should not be adopted. The topic for policy debate changes annually, so debaters throughout the course of the year will debate the same topic.

The debate unfolds throughout a series of speeches as outlined below:

1st Affirmative Constructive	**1AC**	8	minutes
Negative Cross-Examination of Affirmative		3 minutes	**1st**
Negative Constructive	**1NC**	8	minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination of Negative		3 minutes	**2nd**
Affirmative Constructive	**2AC**	8	minutes
Negative Cross-Examination of Affirmative		3 minutes	**2nd**
Negative Constructive	**2NC**	8	minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination of Negative		3 minutes	**1st**
Negative Rebuttal	**1NR**	5 minutes	
1st Affirmative Rebuttal	**1AR**	5 minutes	
2nd Negative Rebuttal	**2NR**	5 minutes	
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal	**2NR**	5 minutes	
Prep Time (each team)		8 minutes	

One member of each team will perform the first speeches, the other performs the second speeches. So the person who reads the 1AC will also perform the 1AR, for example. Note that the debate begins with the affirmative speaking first, and then switches midway through the debate where the negative speaks first, thus giving the affirmative the ability to speak last.

Research

Policy Debate is a research-intensive activity. Unlike traditional writing where the author may briefly quote or even paraphrase evidence, Policy Debate relies on the use of cards, or pieces of evidence directly quoted word-for-word from the source.

A typical piece of evidence consists of three parts: the tagline, the citation, and the evidence. The **tagline** is the argument or claim that either the evidence asserts or that the debater is asserting based on the evidence. For example, if the Department of Labor had produced a report saying that more people have left the workforce, the tagline might be *The number of discouraged workers are on the rise* or *The number of discouraged workers are on the rise* or *The federal government must respond to the growing number of people leaving the workforce.*
The **citation** provides the information necessary to track down the source, similar to an MLA/APA citation. The author, the title, the publication, the source, the page, etc. This information will not be read aloud in the round except for the author and the year (or more specific date if necessary).
Finally, a piece of **evidence** consists of the text of the evidence itself. The expectation in Policy Debate is that cards are read verbatim so the paraphrasing of evidence as it is being read for the first time is discouraged. Instead, the debater should underline or bold the parts of the text of the evidence they deem most necessary. The Association offers a starter pack of affirmative and negative evidence as well as biweekly updates of evidence research for resource package members. Other resources available include the National Debate Coaches Open Evidence Project.

Structural Components

Affirmative

The affirmative begins the debate by offering a plan, a specific example of the year's topic or resolution, and arguing that it is a good idea, in many circumstances, they will address the "stock issues" of a case in Policy Debate; in other instances, they may use a more advanced format of simply discussing advantages to the plan. The ultimate goal of the affirmative is to advocate for the passage of a plan that falls under the resolution. The presumption is that the status quo, or the way things are in the world without the passage of the plan, is worth rejecting in favor of living in a world with the plan adopted. Thankfully for the affirmative, they do not have to demonstrate that the plan would pass in the real world, only that it should. Policy proposals that may never survive the political climate of Congress are still fair game under the presumption of fiat – or the ability of the affirmative to will their plan into existence without having to worry about whether or not it would actually be adopted. To convince audiences to adopt their plan, affirmative cases directly or indirectly address the stock issues of significance, harms, inherency, topicality, and solvency. The NSDA Policy 1010 Debate Textbook covers these issues in greater detail.

Negative

The negative has a wide variety of strategies available to respond to the affirmative case. The presumption in policy debate is that if the negative can win one of the aforementioned stock issues, the win the debate. Alternatively, the negative can demonstrate that the harms of the plan outweigh the benefits. These strategies are divided into two broad types: on-case and off-case.

On-case responses to the affirmative position clash directly with arguments posed by the plan's advocates and generally focus on the stock issues. If the affirmative says the plan will save 500,000 lives, the negative may attempt to demonstrate why that claim is untrue. If the affirmative says we are wasting billions of dollars in the status quo on inefficient research, the negative may demonstrate why that research is necessary.

Off-case responses are positions developed that do not directly respond to the arguments posed by the affirmative. This can consist of a variety of positions. First, the negative may offer a disadvantage, a harm, or a problem that will be caused when the plan is passed. Disadvantages must generally prove that a harm is brewing in the status quo, something about the passage of this plan will bring that harm into reality or intensify it, and then discuss the impacts of those harms. Second, the negative may propose a counter-plan, or a competitive, non-topical, mutually exclusive plan proposal compared to the affirmative. Third, the negative may directly address the topicality of the affirmative position, arguing that the affirmative's plan is not an example of the resolution by providing definitions for the words of the resolution showing how the affirmative fails to meet those definitions, and then discussing why the affirmative case ought to lose for violating this debate rule.

Organizing

Keeping track of the arguments during the debate can be challenging, but most debaters flow arguments separately. The different components of the affirmative case (significance, harms, inherency, etc.) can be flowed on one sheet of paper or each position may be tracked separately.

The negative will typically keep track of arguments on separate pieces of paper (the first disadvantage on one, the topicality on a second, a counterplan on the third, etc.). Arguments are listed shorthand on one side of the page. Each response is flowed in a different color ink next to it representing the two sides of the debate – affirmative arguments may be listed in black while negative arguments are listed in red, for example.

Practicing

Policy debate can be a fast-talking event! With strict time limits and the need to present arguments supported by well-articulated research. Students will speak as efficiently as possible. Your first foray into performance practice should be reading your case and your positions out loud with a stop-watch. See how long it takes for you to read your case (and make sure your affirmative constructive is in time!). Focus on enunciation and pronunciation as you go. Remember, fewer and better-explained arguments will often win more debates. Ultimately, your judges set the pace for the round and so you should be prepared to speak at the speed they prefer.

It is always helpful to have practice debates before your first contest, against either teammates or even teams from other schools. These debates should be instructional in nature, and it should not jusb be about winning.

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

Public Forum Rules

1. Resolution: Specific resolutions for district tournaments held during certain months and the National Tournament topic are available online at www.speechanddebate.org/topics. Public Forum Debate focuses on advocacy of a position derived from the issues presented in the resolution, not a prescribed set of burdens.

2. Entries: An entry is comprised of two students from the same school; each debating both sides of the resolution and advancing on its own record. No substitution is permitted once the tournament has begun.

3. Procedure and Order of Speeches: Prior to EVERY round and in the presence of the judge(s), a coin is tossed by one team and called by the other team. The team that wins the flip may choose one of two options: EITHER the SIDE of the topic they wish to defend (pro or con) OR the SPEAKING POSITION they wish to have (begin the debate or end the debate). The remaining option (SIDE OR SPEAKING POSITION) is the choice of the team that loses the flip. Once speaking positions and sides has been determined, the debate begins (the con team may lead, depending on the coin flip results). Following the first two constructive speeches, the two debaters who have just given speeches will stand and participate in a three-minute "crossfire". In "crossfire" both debaters "hold the floor." However, the speaker who spoke first must ask the first question. After that question, either debater may question and/or answer at will. At the conclusion of the summary speeches, all four debaters will remain seated and participate in a three-minute "Grand Crossfire" in which all four debaters are allowed to cross-examine one another. The speaker who gave the first summary speech must ask the first question. The speakers from each team will continue to ask and answer questions. Teams should alternate asking and answering questions rather than allowing one team to dominate so that a balance between teams is achieved. All speakers are encouraged to participate in the Grand Crossfire. Speakers should listen respectfully to opponents' questions and answers.

4. Plans/Counterplans: In Public Forum Debate, the Association defines a plan or counterplan as a formalized, comprehensive proposal for implementation. Neither the pro or con side is permitted to offer a plan or counterplan; rather, they should offer reasoning to support a position of advocacy. Debaters may offer generalized, practical solutions.

5. Prompting Philosophy: Oral prompting, except time signals, either by the speaker's colleague or by any other person while the debater has the floor, is discouraged though not prohibited and may be penalized by some judges. Debaters may, however, refer to their notes and materials and may consult with their teammate while they do not have the floor and during the Grand Crossfire.

6. Use of Electronic Devices: The use of internet-enabled devices and internet is permitted.

7. Timing: Timekeepers are an option but not required. If no timekeeper is used, debaters may time for their partners or the judge may keep time. Prep time for each team is three minutes.

How to do Public Forum Debate

Public Forum Debate (PF) is a two-on-two event where teams argue each other on a specified resolution. Therefore, it is imperative that when students begin PF they know the resolution being debated. The topic changes each month. It is important to note that not all tournaments use the topic suggested due to the timing of their tournament. Therefore, be sure to check the tournament invitation for complete information.

Once a debate knows the resolution, they should begin brainstorming potential arguments on the topic. An argument's basic structure is referred to as a **claim**, **warrant**, and **impact**. A debater will also construct their positions, referred to as cases. Finally, they should think through potential arguments by their opponent and brainstorm responses. As the round progresses, a team should also offer reasons why they should win the round to the judge.

Research

After students do an initial brainstorm session, they should conduct research. Evidence can come from anywhere – newspapers, journal articles, studies, books, primary documents, etc. When gathering research, a student should ask four questions.

1. *Is the source reputable?* Sources should have a good reputation for "getting it right" – newswires such as the AP and Reuters tend to be less credible than newspapers.
2. *Is the source verifiable?* This refers to the ability to verify the data and claims made by the source. If a source is based on a personal interview or some other insider knowledge, that generally cannot be verified through independent means.
3. *Is the source authoritative?* Different sources are expert at different fields. The Office of Budget and Management is an authority on budget policy on the US, but may not be the ideal source for a resolution about foreign policy in the Middle East.
4. *Is the source recent?* While not every source must be up-to-the-minute, generally, a more recent source is better.

Structural Components

One team advocates for the resolution, known as the PRO, and one team advocates against the resolution, known as the CON. Before the debate begins, the teams conduct a coin flip. The winner of the flip chooses either the side of the debate OR the speaking order. The team losing the flip makes the other choice.

        EXAMPLE:

        Jonesville High school wins coin flip and chooses CON.

        Smithtown High School, who lost the flip, chooses the speaking order.

            If they choose 2nd, Jonesville would speak 1st on CON and Smithville 2nd on PRO.

            ***Unlike other forms of debate, the CON may speak first.

MHSAA also allows a Mississippi host school to eliminate the coin flip using the Public Forum rules of the National Catholic Forensic League. **Schools wishing to do this must ask the Coordinator for permission before doing so.**

Speech Times and Descriptions

SPEECH	TIME LIMIT	RESPONSIBILITY OF DEBATER
Team A Speaker 1 – Constructive	4 minutes	Present the team's case
Team B Speaker 1 – Constructive	4 minutes	Present the team's case
Crossfire (1st Speakers)	3 minutes	Speaker 1 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions
Team A Speaker 2 – Rebuttal	4 minutes	Refute the opposing side's arguments
Team B Speaker 2 – Rebuttal	4 minutes	Refute the opposing side's arguments
Crossfire (2nd speakers)	3 minutes	Speaker 2 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions
Team A Speaker 1 – Summary	3 minutes	Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round
Team B Speaker 1 – Summary	3 minutes	Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round
Grand Crossfire	3 minutes	All four debaters involved in a crossfire at once
Team A Speaker 2 – Final Focus	2 minutes	Explain reasons that your team wins the round
Team B Speaker 2 – Final Focus	2 minutes	Explain reasons that your team wins the round

Each team is entitled to three minutes of prep time during the round

Organizing
Argumentation
First, a debater must clearly establish a **claim.** This is generally a declarative statement establishing the point they are setting out to justify. Second, a debater must clearly establish why their argument is valid. This is known as the **warrant** for an argument. Debaters need to go beyond asserting their claims and back them up with analysis. The warrant can come in many forms, but is necessary for the development of the argument. Debaters may use logic or research to back up their claims. It is important to note that having an author make an assertion about a topic is not on its own a warrant. Third, a debater must provide an **impact** for their argument. This means the debater establishes why the argument is significant in the round.

Casing
After students have brainstormed arguments, it is time to construct cases. While there is no rule requiring a specific structure, there is a traditional approach to constructing a case. Often, a case starts with a well thought out thesis statement as an introductory lead-in to the position. Next, the case would define key terms. Following this introduction, the debater would offer contentions, or main arguments.

Refutations
But, PF is more than just cases! After presenting cases, students engage in refuting each other's arguments. Students commonly refute cases by denying the validity of the argument. Additional strategies include, but are not limited to, justifying the reverse of the argument,

showing the opponent's arguments so not carry as much weight as their arguments, or taking out the link between the opponent's argument and the priority they establish in the round. Students can pre-write their answers to arguments they expect their opponents to make. These are commonly known as "blocks."

Flowing

It is important for debaters to learn how to keep track of arguments in the round. Typically, debaters "flow" the debate round – making note of the arguments presented and refuted in the round. This note-taking approach requires students to abbreviate terms, phrases, and ideas so they can get as much of the debate notated as possible. Here are some tips:

- **Two sheets of paper**. One page will be for anything said about the affirmative, the other for anything said about the negative, regardless of which debater is saying it. Each speech in the round will receive its own column on these pages.
- At least one pen, **but we recommend two**, in different colors.
- If the opponent is speaking, write. **Don't try to determine what's important at the outset** – just write as much as you can.
- **Orient both pieces of paper vertically**, like a book. Columns will be narrow, which will increase the need for accurate/efficient abbreviations.

Practicing

It is a great idea to do practice rounds before going to your first tournament. At first, it may seem you do not have enough to say to fill up the speech times. However, that will change with practice. The first round could be a stop and go round where a coach stops you when there's a missed opportunity or confusion about what to do during the speech.

During these rounds, you may re-give speeches until you or the coach are satisfied with the speech. Additionally, students should practice delivering prepared speeches focusing on emphasis, eye contact, and fluidity.

Performance Tips

When at your first tournament it is important to keep in mind that it gets easier with more practice. The goal is not about where you begin, but where you end. Improving from round to round, and tournament to tournament, is the true mark of success. Focus not only on what you could enhance, but also on what you did well. Take feedback from judges as opportunities to improve. If they provide oral feedback, take notes on what they share to review with your coach. Finally, do not fixate on the wins and losses – it won't lead to greater success!

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

Lincoln-Douglas Debate Rules

1. Resolution: The resolution will be one requiring a value judgment. Districts must use the current Lincoln-Douglas topic for the month in which the competition occurs. Refer to www.speechanddebate.org/topics for the current topic.

2. Entries: Each contestant will debate both sides. No substitution is permitted once the tournament has begun.

3. Order of Speeches: See below

4. Timing: A timekeeper is an option but isn't required. If no timekeeper is used, debaters may time for their opponent or the judge may keep time. Prep time for each debater is four minutes.

5. Use of Electronic Devices: The use of internet-enabled devices and internet is permitted. Laptop use must comply with the "Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate Events."

How to Do Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Event Description

In this one-on-one format, students debate a topic provided by the Association. Lincoln-Douglas Debate topics range from individual freedom versus the collective good to economic development versus environmental protection. Students may consult evidence gathered prior to the debate but may not use the internet in round. An entire debate is roughly 45 minutes and consists of constructive speeches, rebuttals, and cross-examination.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate typically appeals to individuals who like to debate, but prefer a one-on-one format as opposed to a team or group setting. Additionally, individuals who enjoy LD like exploring questions of how society ought to be. Many people refer to LD Debate as a "values" debate, as questions of morality and justice are commonly examined. Students prepare cases and then engage in an exchange of cross-examinations and rebuttals in an attempt to convince a judge they are the better debater in the round.

It is imperative when students begin LD, they know the resolution being debated. The topic changes every two months. Additionally, the NSDA specifies a separate topic for the first two months of a novice season. It is important to note that not all tournaments use the topic suggested for their competition. Therefore, be sure to check the invitation for complete information.

Once a debater knows the resolution, the student should begin brainstorming arguments on the topic. An argument's basic structure is referred to as claim, warrant, and impact. The debater should also construct their cases. Finally, they should consider their opponent's arguments and brainstorm responses. At the end of the round, a debater should also offer summary reasons as to why they should win, which are commonly referred to as "voting issues."

Research

After students do an initial brainstorm session, conduct research. Look in reputable journals for articles written by experts in the field and texts written by philosophers. Additional sources include, but are not limited to, newspaper articles, think tanks, and credible websites. Check with your school's Media Center/Library Services Department for research tips and information on what you have access to through your school.

Novice Topic

Schools hosting Lincoln-Douglas in the fall (September-December) may use the novice topic from the National Speech and Debate Association: **Resolved: In the United States, national service ought to be mandatory.** Coaches should ALWAYS check with the tournament director or tournament website about topic areas before attending a tournament.

Structural Components

The structure of the round, and corresponding speaker responsibilities, can be found below:

SPEECH	TIME LIMIT	RESPONSIBILITY OF DEBATER
Affirmative Constructive	6 minutes	Present the affirmative case
Negative Cross-Examination	3 minutes	Negative asks questions of the affirmative
Negative Constructive/Negative Rebuttal	7 minutes	Present the negative case and refute the affirmative case
Affirmative Cross-Examination	3 minutes	Affirmative asks questions of the negative
First Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes	Refute the negative case and rebuild the affirmative case
2nd Negative Rebuttal	6 minutes	Refute the affirmative case, rebuild the negative case, and offer reasons that negative should win the round, commonly referred to as voting issues
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal	3 minutes	Address negative voting issues and offer crystallization for why the affirmative should win

Each debater is also entitled to four minutes of prep time during the round

Organizing

Argumentation

First, a debater must clearly establish their **claim**. This is generally a declarative statement that establishes the point they are setting out to justify. Next, a debater must clearly establish why their argument is valid. This is known as the **warrant** for an argument. Debaters need to go beyond asserting their claims by backing them up with analysis explaining why the argument is true. The warrant can come in many forms, but is necessary for the development of the argument. It is important to note that having an author simply make an assertion about a topic is not a warrant. Finally, a debater must provide an impact for their argument. This means the debater establishes why the argument is significant in the round.

Casing

After students brainstorm arguments, it is time to construct cases. While there is no rule requiring a specific structure, there is a traditional approach to constructing a case. Most commonly, LD debaters use a **value and criterion model** to structure their case. Under this model, the students propose a specific value they feel is the ultimate goal debaters should be striving for in the round. Subsequently, they offer a criterion which offers a specific mechanism to determine if the value is being achieved by either debater in the round.

> EXAMPLE
> A debater offers a value of JUSTICE with a criterion of RIGHTS PROTECTION. A debater should offer definitions of these terms, as well as explain how the value best measures if the value is achieved. After they establish their value and criterion, they would offer contentions. These are the main arguments of the affirmative or

negative and would strive to assert that the value/criterion is being achieved. When developing arguments each argument should link back to the value/criterion.

Refutations

Debaters engage in refuting each other's arguments. Students may refute cases by denying the validity of the argument, which is most common. Additional strategies include, but are not limited to, asserting the reverse of the argument, showing the opponent's arguments do not carry as much weight as their arguments, or taking out the link between the opponent's argument or taking out the link between the opponent's arguments and the value/criterion being used in the round. Students can pre-write their answers to arguments they expect their opponents to make. These are commonly known as "blocks."

Flowing

It is important for debaters to learn how to keep track of arguments in the round. Typically, debaters "flow" the debate round – making note of the arguments presented and refuted in the round. This note-taking approach requires students to abbreviate terms, phrases, and ideas so they can get as much of the debate notated as possible. Here are some tips:

- **Two sheets of paper**. One page will be for anything said about the affirmative, the other for anything said about the negative, regardless of which debater is saying it. Each speech in the round will receive its own column on these pages.
- At least one pen, **but we recommend two**, in different colors.
- If the opponent is speaking, write. **Don't try to determine what's important at the outset** – just write as much as you can.
- **Orient both pieces of paper vertically**, like a book. Fold (or draw lines) on the sheet of paper into 5 columns of equal width. This can be achieved by folding an initial 1.5" column from either side. Flip the paper and fold in another column to match; continue until the piece of paper has 4 folds to produce 5 columns. This is your affirmative flow.
- Fold the other sheet of paper into 4 columns of equal width. This is your negative flow.
- Label the top of each column on the affirmative flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.
- Label the top of each column on the negative flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.

Practicing

It is great idea to do practice rounds before going to your first tournament. At first, it may seem that you do not have enough to say to fill up the speech times. However, that will change with practice. The first round could be a stop and go round where a coach or observer stops you when there's a missed opportunity or confusion about what you are saying. During these rounds, you may re-give speeches until you or the observer/coach are satisfied with the speech that is delivered. Additionally, since your cases are prepared in advance, students should spend time working on the delivery of that speech. A student should work on emphasis, eye contact, and fluidity.

Performance Tips

It is important to remember that you are communicating to your judge. The decision rests solely in the hands of the judge. You must focus on persuading them, which means that you should be directing your speeches and cross-examination questions and answers to the judge, and not to your opponent.

When at your first tournament it is important to keep in mind that it gets easier with more practice. The goal is not about where you begin, but where you end. If you get better from round to round or tournament to tournament – you're successful. Focus not only on what you could improve upon, but also on what you did well. Celebrate what worked and try and emulate that in future rounds or tournaments. Take feedback from judges as opportunities to improve. Do not fixate on the outcome of a round – focusing on wins and losses won't lead to greater success!

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

Congressional Debate Rules

MHSAA follows the typical guidelines of the NSDA Congressional Debate rules. A few clarifications will be made as listed below:

Congressional Debate

1. 1. A session is defined as including:
   a. A. Minimum of two hours.
   b. B. 18-20 students as the optimum number for a three-hour session; Chambers may not be larger than 30 students.
   c. C. Election of a presiding officer. The presiding officer must be elected with a majority of the vote. If one candidate does not receive a majority of votes, eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and vote again. If candidates are tied for the fewest number of votes, vote to determine which of the tied candidates should remain in contention. Repeat this process until one candidate receives a majority of votes.
   d. D. New seating chart (necessary accommodations for students with special needs may be made).
   e. E. Resetting of precedence/recency. See 'Recognizing Speakers' below.
   f. F. New legislation that has not been debated in a previous session at that tournament.
2. Recognizing Speakers
   a. A. When more than one speaker seeks the floor, the presiding officer must follow the precedence/recency method: 1) First recognize students who have not spoken during the session. 2) Next recognize students who have spoken fewer times. 3) Then recognize students who spoke earlier (least recently).
   b. B. If a tournament is not using preset recency, before recency is established, the presiding officer should recognize speakers fairly and consistently. They may not link recognition of speakers to previous recognition of students asking questions, moving motions, or longest standing (standing time). Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should explain their recognition process and it must be fair, consistent and justifiable.
   c. C. Preset, randomized recency will be used in every round of Congressional Debate.
   d. D. During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a chamber have an equal opportunity to speak and receive evaluation from scorers. When a new session begins, precedence/recency will be reset along with a new seating chart, and election of a presiding officer.
   e. E. Scorers will include answers to questions when evaluating speeches.
   f. F. A speaker may yield time on the floor during debate (for questions or clarifications) but that speaker will remain in control of their three minutes (see #6 below regarding questioning).
3. Speeches introducing legislation are allotted up to three minutes, followed by two minutes of questioning by other delegates. A student from the school (or at the national level, the district) who wrote the legislation gets the privilege of recognition (called authorship), regardless of precedence; otherwise the presiding officer may recognize a "sponsor" from the chamber, provided this recognition follows the precedence guidelines above. Regardless, this speech of introduction must be followed by two minutes of questions. Should no student seek recognition for the authorship/sponsorship, the chamber will move to lay the legislation on the table until such time that a student is prepared to introduce it.

4. The first negative speech must be followed by two minutes of questions.

5. Following the first two speeches on legislation, the presiding officer will alternately recognize affirmative and negative speakers, who will address the chamber for up to three minutes, followed by one minute of questioning by other delegates. If no one wishes to oppose the preceding speaker, the presiding officer may recognize a speaker upholding the same side. When no one seeks the floor for debate, the presiding officer may ask the chamber if they are "ready for the question," at which point, if there is no objection, voting may commence on the legislation itself. There is no "minimum cycle" rule; however, if debate gets "one-sided," the chamber may decide to move the previous question.

    a. A. In the event a student speaks on the wrong side called for by the presiding officer and the error is not caught, the speaker shall be scored and the speech shall count in precedence, but the speaker must be penalized at least three points for not paying close attention to the flow of debate.

    b. B. In the event a student speaks on an item of legislation not currently being debated, said speech shall count in precedence, but zero points shall be awarded.

6. The presiding officer fairly and equitably recognizes members to ask questions following each speech. The presiding officer starts timing questioning periods when they have recognized the first questioner, and keeps the clock running continuously until the time has lapsed. There are two different questioning methods.

    a. Direct questioning: The presiding officer will open the floor for questions following each speech. The presiding officer will recognize questioners for a cross-examination period of no more than 30 seconds. Questioners will be chosen according to a separate questioning recency.

    b. Direct questioning will be used in every round of Congressional Debate.

7. The presiding officer will pause briefly between speeches to recognize any motions from the floor; however, they should not call for motions (at the beginning of a session, the presiding officer should remind members to seek their attention between speeches).

8. Amendments must be presented to the presiding officer in writing with specific references to lines and clauses that change. This must be done in advance of moving to amend.

    a. A. The parliamentarian will recommend whether the amendment is "germane"—that is, it upholds the original intent of the legislation—otherwise, it is considered "dilatory." The title of the legislation may be changed.

    b. B. A legislator may move to amend between floor speeches. Once that motion is made, the presiding officer will read the proposed amendment aloud and call for a second by one-third of those members present, unless they rule it dilatory.

    c. C. Should students wish to speak on the proposed amendment, the presiding officer will recognize them as per the standing precedence and recency, and the speech will be counted toward their totals, accordingly.

    d. D. Simply proposing an amendment does not guarantee an "author/sponsor" speech, and any speeches on amendments are followed by the normal one minute of questioning.

    e. E. Amendments are considered neutral and do not constitute an affirmative or negative speech on the original legislation.

    f. F. If there are no speakers or the previous question is moved, the chamber may vote on a proposed amendment without debating it.

9. All major voting (such as the main motion/legislation) which a congressperson's constituents should have a record of, shall be done with a counted vote. Secret balloting is used when voting for presiding officer.

10. Students should ask permission to leave and enter the chamber when it is in session (move a personal privilege). However, do not interrupt a speaker who is addressing the chamber.

11. Use of Evidence (also see the section on Congressional Debate Evidence Rules in the NSDA Manual)

    a.   Visual aids are permitted in Congressional Debate, provided they do not require electronic retrieval devices in the chamber.

    b.   All evidence used is subject to verification. Honesty and integrity are of utmost importance in legislative debate. Falsification or deliberate misuse of evidence may result in the legislator being suspended by tournament officials.

12. Since the rules above ensure fairness for competition, they may not be suspended; the presiding officer should rule such motions out of order; except to extend questioning and allow for open chambers **provided the tournament staff permits doing so**.

13. CURRENT GUIDELINES for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Congressional Debate will be used at MHSAA Tournaments. Please see NSDA manual for more information.

Electronic device use must comply with the "Current Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate Events." The rules regarding use of generative artificial intelligence can be found in the National Tournament manual on page 107.

14. Direct Questioning should be used in all in-person preliminary and final sessions. See NSDA manual for more information on Direct Questioning.

15. "Suspension of the Rules" in traditional Congressional Debate sessions is highly discouraged.

16. Students should not decide before the tournament on any "base" amount of speeches to be given. Establishing a "base" for speeches is not allowed.

17. Any interscholastic student "chats" or conversations about Congressional Debate are considered part of the activity and issues resulting from those chats will be dealt with by the MHSAA Coordinator; this includes, but is not limited to discrimination based on identity, poor sportsmanship, bullying, etc.

18. Tournament directors are encouraged to use preset recency for preliminary sessions- using a randomized recency for Session 1 and the inverse for Session 2. Additionally, preset recency is also encouraged for final rounds.

19. The MHSAA Congressional Debate Bill Book will provide four preliminary bills and four finals bills per session to be available for debate.

20. Any school wishing not to use the MHSAA Bill Book MUST let the coordinator know before the release of the bill book.

21. A separate MHSAA Bill Book will be released for the MHSAA Congressional Debate State Championship Tournament allowing for two bills to be submitted per MHSAA school.

How to Do Congressional Debate

Event Description

A simulation of the U.S. legislative process in the Senate and the House, students generate a series of bills and resolutions for debate in Congressional Debate. Debaters (also referred to as Senators and Representatives) alternate delivering speeches for and against the topic in a group setting. An elected student serves as a presiding officer to ensure debate flows smoothly. Students are assessed on their research, argumentation, and delivery skills, as well as their knowledge and use of parliamentary procedure.

Students who do Congressional Debate are typically interested in learning about issues that are significant to the legislative process within the United States. Students are exposed to a deeper application of *Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure*. Students must prepare for debate on numerous topics in any given competition and be able to extend a long-lasting debate with unique and fresh ideas, as well as by refuting previous speakers on a specific topic.

Basic Understandings

Congressional Debate is like a simulation of the real United States legislature. A group of 10-25 students, called a Chamber, will compete in a legislative session. A series of bills and resolutions will be proposed by students from various schools. Students in turn will be selected by a presiding officer – a student elected to conduct the business of the round – to give speeches both advocating for and encouraging the defeat of the measure in front of them. Following each speech, competitors will be able to pose questions of the speaker. Once debate is exhausted on a particular item, the chamber will vote either to pass or fail the legislation, and debate moves on to the next item.

Legislation comes in two types – a bill and a resolution. A **bill** is a plan of action, detailing how a particular policy proposal will be implemented. A **resolution**, meanwhile, is a statement expressing the opinion of the chamber. Passing the resolution does not change anything about the world around us, it merely states the preference of the chamber. For example, let's say a school had a dress code. The student body may pass a piece of legislation expressing their displeasure with the dress code (a resolution) or legislation modifying the colors and styles of the school uniform (a bill).

At the beginning of the session, the students will elect a presiding officer, otherwise known as the PO. The PO's job is to select speakers to give speeches, select questioners, maintain decorum in the chamber, and facilitate a fast and smooth debate for all.

Typically, one session of Congress lasts about 2-3 hours. During that time, students typically give speeches 3 minutes in length. The first two speeches on a piece of legislation are known as the first advocacy, or first pro, and the first rejection, or first con. These speeches are followed by 2 minutes of cross-examination. After the first pro and con speech are established, each additional speaker is subject to one minute of cross-examination of the chamber to ask the questions of the speaker.

Research

Congress arguments generally have solid evidence supporting their claims. Evidence can come from anywhere – newspapers, journal articles, studies, books, primary documents, etc. The type of evidence varies based on the topic being debate, but when gathering research, you want to ask yourself four questions:

1. *Is the source reputable?* Sources should have a good reputation for "getting it right" – newswires such as the AP and Reuters tend to be less credible than newspapers.
2. *Is the source verifiable?* This refers to the ability to verify the data and claims made by the source. If a source is based on a personal interview or some other insider knowledge, that generally cannot be verified through independent means.
3. *Is the source authoritative?* Different sources are expert at different fields. The Office of Budget and Management is an authority on budget policy on the US, but may not be the ideal source for a resolution about foreign policy in the Middle East.
4. *Is the source recent?* While not every source must be up-to-the-minute, generally, a more recent source is better.

When presenting the evidence to support your claims in the round, students may read the evidence verbatim, or paraphrase. Students would be wise to keep copies of the original source for all evidence used in a speech, including that evidence which is paraphrased. Since paraphrasing is common in Congressional Debate, backing up the paraphrasing with the original source will help eliminate any question that may arise. Oral source citations should also be provided – state the name of the source and the date of publication.

> *EXAMPLE – The* **New York Times** *claims on* **August 15, 2014** *that malnourishment is plaguing the nation of Sudan.*

Structural Components

A Congress speech typically consists of an introduction, a series of arguments and a conclusion. The introduction should be a succinct overview of what is to come in the speech – an attention getter to get the audience focused, a clear thesis statement, and a preview of the arguments to come. Try to contain the introduction to about 30 seconds – anything longer than that eats up valuable time for content.

Each argument consists of a **claim**, backing to support that claim, a **warrant**, and one or more **impacts**. The claim is simply the argument being made – without support though, the claim is not inherently valid. Thus, it needs backing, or logic and evidence to support why the claim is true. The warrant connects the backing to the claim – it serves as support for why the backing is relevant to the claim. This may be an unstated assumption.

> EXAMPLE: *Claim – Program X is a waste of money; backing Program X costs ten billion Dollars.*
>
> *Warrant – That's too much money to spend on this program.*
>
> *Impact – By spending too much money on Program X, we won't have the money to spend on some other initiative that would be good.*
>
> *Impact – By spending this much money on Program X, certain harms will be generated that we want to avoid.*

The arguments in a Congress speech can either be constructive in nature or they can serve as refutations to arguments posed by the other side. **Constructive arguments** build up support for one side of the debate; **rebuttals** tend to refute arguments on the opposite side. As debate progresses, it is important to avoid rehash, or the mere repeating of previous arguments. Generally speaking, the later the speech is on a given topic, the higher expectation there is to refute and debate previous arguments. After all, **refutation** is an essential element in any debate event.

Congress speeches end with a conclusion that recaps the main points, repeats the introduction, and ties the speech together thematically.

Organizing

When preparing your Congress materials, organize research by legislation. It helps to tag your evidence by indicating what claim or arguments that evidence supports. Include a full citation in your notes so you can refer to the original source should you need to.

You can even organize responses to potential arguments that may be raised throughout the course of debate. If you encounter the same piece of legislation at multiple tournaments, it helps to keep track of the arguments made by other speakers and prepare responses to those claims in advance. Organize your research in a way that will make it easily accessible to you during the session.

Be prepared to debate both sides of the legislation – some topics may encourage many advocacy speeches, so giving a speech opposing the legislation will be more advantageous. Be mindful of the balance of speeches in the chamber and adjust accordingly.

Speech Organization
The following is an example of how congressional speeches should be organized.

      I.   **INTRODUCTION** (30 seconds)
          A.   Attention-getter
          B.   A clear thesis statement
          C.   Preview of points to come.
      II.   **BODY** (approximately 2 minutes) – Repeat process for each point made.
          A.   Claim – issue of debate; point or points that are in conflict
          B.   Warrant – evidence and reasoning to support the argument
          C.   Impact – why the argument is important/significant; challenge the
                    Opposition to respond to an issue.
      III.   **CONCLUSION** (30 seconds)
          A.   State primary points and issues
          B.   Summarize key arguments

USE OF EVIDENCE

Evidence Rules for Policy, Public Forum, Lincoln-Douglas, and Congressional Debate

Evidence is one of the important components of arguments in debate rounds. All debaters involved are expected to act in an ethical manner that is in accordance with the rules. In keeping with the National Speech & Debate Association Code of Honor, all participants are expected to use and interpret evidence, evidence rules, and procedures in good faith.

***Specific rules of evidence are listed in the NSDA Unified Manual. Listed below are simplified examples of how the rules can be used during a competition.**

1. **Scenario #1**
   A. If a debater or judge asks to see something read and/or the original source of something read . . .
   B. Then the opposing debater should provide this information promptly.
2. **Scenario #2**
   A. A debater questions the oral source citation of the opponent . . .
   B. When debaters read evidence, they are required to provide the author's last name and the year of publication. If duplicating the same source, only the author's name is needed.
3. **Scenario #3**
   A. A debater questions the written source citation of the opponent . . .
   B. You are required to provide a full written situation to the extent provided by the original source.
4. **Scenario #4**
   A. A debater questions paraphrased evidence . . .
   B. If you summarize what an authoritative source says you must have the original source available.
5. **Scenario #5**
   A. A debater questions the use of ellipses in evidence read . . .
   B. The use of internal ellipses is prohibited unless it is a replication of the original document.
1. **Scenario #6**
   A. A debater reads part of the quotation but not the entirety of the quotation.
   B. A debater can select which parts of a quote are read and not read, however, the entire text must be present so a debater and/or judge can examine the quotation in full context.
2. **Scenario #7**
   A. A debater claims the opponent doesn't make it clear she s/he is delivering a piece of evidence orally.
   B. Debaters must clearly indicate what was read in the debate. It is up to the judge to determine if the marking is clear.
3. **Scenario #8**
   A. A debater questions the use of private communication.
   B. Private, personal communication between an author and a debater is inadmissible as evidence.
4. **Scenario #9**
   A. A debater claims a straw argument violation.
   B. **Straw argument** – a position of argumentative claim introduced by an author for the purpose of refuting, discrediting, or characterizing it.
   C. When not verbally acknowledged when first reading evidence in the round, it is Inadmissible.

Scenario #10

A debater makes formal allegations during a round.

    i. The team/individual alleging the violation must clearly indicate a formal protest of distortion, non-existent evidence, or clipping.

    ii. The judge should **STOP THE ROUND** at the time of a **FORMAL PROTEST IN-ROUND** to examine the evidence from both team/individuals and render a decision as to whether or not a violation occurred.

    iii. **If the alleged violation is legitimate, the judge should vote against the debater Who violated the rules. If the alleged violation is not legitimate, the judge Should vote against the team/individual who alleged the violation and NOTIFY THE TAB ROOM IMMEDIATELY.**

b. **Distortion** – A judge should look at the evidence in question to determine if it was distorted by adding or deleting words which significantly alter the conclusion of the author. A failure to bracket added words would be considered distortion.

c. **Non-Existent Evidence –**

    i. If a debater is unable to provide the original source or copy of the relevant pages, the evidence is considered non-existent.

    ii. If the original source does not provide the evidence cited, it is considered non-existent.

    iii. If the evidence is paraphrased but lacks an original source to verify, it is considered non-existent.

    iv. If the debater has the original source but declines to provide it to his/her opponent, upon request, it is considered non-existent.

d. **Clipping** – occurs when the debater claims to have read the complete text of highlighted and/or underlined evidence, when in fact he/she skips or omit

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DEBATE EVENTS

CURRENT GUIDELINES for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate Events These rules apply to Policy Debate, Public Forum Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and Big Questions Debate.

B. Contestants may use electronic devices (including laptop computers, tablets, and/or cell phones) to access the internet during debate rounds with the following conditions:

C. 1. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information for competitive advantage from non-competitors (coaches, assistant coaches, other non-competing students) inside or outside of the room in which the competition occurs. Information that would be restricted would include but not be limited to coach/non-participating competitor generated arguments, advice on arguments to run, questions to ask during cross examination, and other information not generated by the participating competitors in your round.

D. 2. Internet access may be used to retrieve files, exchange evidence and/or arguments, research arguments, and partner to partner communication, and communication between other participants in the round. These electronic device guidelines do not limit communication between debate partners during the debate round.

E. B. Penalty: Contestants found to have violated these provisions will be disqualified from the tournament and will forfeit all rounds and merit points in that event.

F. C. Availability of Evidence: Contestants electing to use computers have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. Printers may be used. Evidence may be printed in the round or produced electronically but must be provided in a format readable by the opposing team and the judge.

G. D. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords, and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts will not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants. Host schools may provide wireless internet access, but will not guarantee that contestants will be able to gain access when needed.

H. E. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and/or related devices accept the risk of equipment failure. Judges and/or contest directors will give no special consideration or accommodation, including no additional speech time or prep time, should equipment failure occur.

I. F. By choosing to use electronic devices in the round, debaters and other relevant parties are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their devices in the event of a protest. The device may only be searched by tournament officials and must be restricted to files and/or electronic exchanges relevant to the protest. Failure to comply would result in the upholding of the protest. Debaters and coaches should be present as their device is searched. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use electronic devices in the round.

Individual Events

(Speech and Interpretive Events)

Interpretation Event Rules

(See Program Oral Interpretation, Storytelling, Prose Interpretation, and Poetry Interpretation for their individual Requirements)

This includes categories of individual (solo) performance of dramatic (serious) and humorous literature, as well as duo performance of either emotive appeal, with selections drawn from published, printed: novels, short stories, plays, poetry, or other printed, published works, PDFs, e-books, as well as limited online and recorded works as provided for in the rules below.

1. Divisions. Contests are conducted in Duet Acting, Dramatic, Humorous, Duo, and Program Oral Interpretation. See individual rules for the interpretation events of Poetry, Prose, and Storytelling.

2. Length: The time limit in Interpretation Events (Dramatic, Humorous, Duo, and Program Oral Interpretation) is ten minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

3. Material: Selections used in the oral interpretation main events of Dramatic, Humorous, and Duo Interpretation must be cuttings from a single work of literature (one short story, play, or novel), unless poetry is used, in which case cuttings may come from one or more poems from a single source. If the source is an anthology collection of short stories, plays, or novels, each selection of literature is independent and only one selection can be used, even if it is from the same author. If the source is an anthology which includes poetry, multiple poems may be used from this single source by one or a variety of authors. Unlike the other oral interpretation main events, Program Oral Interpretation may use multiple sources for the program. Song lyrics may be used if the performer has an original, hard copy of the lyrics such as sheet music or a CD jacket or if they can be found from online sources that meet the digital source rules below. See specific rules for Program Oral Interpretation.

Materials Used in Interpretation Events

Any source material is permitted as long as it meets the standards outlined below:

A. Original source material must not be written by the competitor who is performing it.

B. Original source material must be publicly accessible throughout the duration of the tournament.

Digital printed publications such as web pages and PDFs retrieved or purchased from web pages are permitted as long as the web page is publicly accessible throughout the duration of the tournament. Digital unprinted publications such as videos, audio files, and films are permitted as long as the original source is publicly accessible throughout the duration of the tournament and the competitor can obtain an official transcript of the original source.

1. For print publications such as novels, short stories, plays, or poetry, the original source is the physical book or e-book. Photocopies of original literature are not acceptable. Presenting the physical book or e-book is sufficient to prove that a printed publication is publicly accessible.

2. For digital printed publications such as web pages, original source material is no longer required to come from online publishing sources listed on the NSDA Approved Websites List. The original source must be publicly accessible for viewing or purchase by a simple internet search or by a URL not requiring passwords or access. The "Two-Click" Rule. Competitors must also present a printed manuscript to be used in the case of a protest, but presenting a printed copy of a website is not alone sufficient to prove that a digital printed publication is publicly accessible.

3. PDFs are permitted as long as the website from which the PDF is retrieved or purchased is publicly accessible for viewing or purchase by a simple internet search or by a URL not requiring passwords or access codes. Competitors must also present a printed copy of the PDF to be used in the case of a protest, but presenting a printed copy of the PDF is not alone sufficient to prove that a PDF is publicly accessible.

4. For non-English print material that a competitor will perform in English, the original source material in its original language must be publicly accessible. Competitors must present an official English translation to be used in the case of a protest. An official translation must be obtained in one of two ways:
    a. An official translation is obtained through the original source's producer, licensing agent, or copyright holder.
    b. Or, an official translation is obtained through a translation service which uses non-automated, manual translation. Then, the competitor receives approval to perform the translation by the original source's producer, licensing agent, or copyright holder.

5. For digital unprinted publications such as videos, audio files, and films, the original source must be publicly accessible for viewing or purchase by a simple internet search or by a URL not requiring passwords or access codes. Competitors must also present a printed official transcript of the original source to be used in the case of a protest, but presenting an official transcript is not alone sufficient to prove that the original source is publicly accessible. An official transcript must be obtained in one of two ways:
    a. An official transcript is obtained through the original source's producer, licensing agent, or copyright holder.
    b. Or, an official transcript is obtained through an official transcription service such as TranscribeMe, Scribie, or iScribed, which use non-automated, manual transcription. Then, the competitor receives approval to perform the transcription by the original source's producer, licensing agent, or copyright holder. If the digital unprinted source is not in English and the competitor wishes to perform it in English, an official transcription and an official translation of the transcription (see #4 above) are required.

C.   **Source Verification:** It is the affirmative duty of each coach and each student entered in Interpretation contests to determine absolutely that the cutting being performed meets all rules for material. Interp source material must be available at all tournament contests in the event of a protest.

1) *The original published source of any selection used must be immediately available at the tournament.* When requested by tournament officials, access to the source material upon demand, either in electronic or print form, must be presented.

a. For print publications, the original source is the physical book. Photocopies of original literature are not acceptable.

b. For PDFs, an original, unaltered PDF via flash drive, email, or on an electronic device (e.g., laptop) must be presented. Manipulation of a PDF script outside the scope of the rules will be subject to disqualification.

c. PDF publications from an online source that meets the above standards and e-books are permitted. Competitors may turn in an e-book via flashdrive, email, or e-reader. For e-books, an original, unaltered e-pub or other recognized e-book format via flash drive or email must be presented; however, as some e-book formats are exclusive to their specific apps or electronic readers, students must provide the required technology and/or internet access to verify the material performed for tournament officials.

d. For non-English publications that are being performed in English, both the original non-English source and the official English transcript must be provided.

e. For a digital publication, a printed manuscript will be turned in as the original source. Only the printed manuscript shall be considered adequate proof of authenticity.

i. The material the competitor performs must presently appear on the website if questions arise in competition. The website and online version of the digital publication need to be available for comparison if challenged. Online access is the fundamental responsibility of tournament officials and/or individual filing the protest. NOTE: If tournament officials cannot gain online access and the above requirements have been met, the piece is considered legal for use.

ii. Manuscript items to be printed directly from the screen for digital printed materials:

a. The first page in the website (the home page)

b. All other linked pages needed to navigate to the literary text selected for competition shall be printed out and the link must be highlighted in the manuscript

c. All web pages upon which the cutting appears

iii. Each page must have printed in the header and/or footer including:

a. Date the page was printed

b. Web address

2) *A photocopy or printed screenshot of every page of the original source from which any line of the cutting was taken.* The photocopy will be kept for evaluation during the semifinal round.

a. Pages are to be placed in the order in which they are performed (e.g., if text from one page is used more than once within the cutting, that page should be copied again with those words highlighted and reinserted where it is used in the cutting). Students are not required to photocopy or print pages that are not used in their cutting.

b. All words used from the script should be highlighted (any words/lines not used should be left unmarked).

c. Any word changes (to eliminate profane language) and/or additions (for transition) must be indicated clearly in ink. Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. Transitions may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature.

3) *A printed, typed copy of the cutting.* This must be the final cutting that the student is using for the tournament, and it must match the copy of the cutting uploaded during registration.

4) *Competitors in POI, OO, and INFO must have on hand a works cited page of all sources used. Please note that competitors in POI must turn in original sources and photocopies for every source used.*

5) *Performance: The presentation may not use physical objects or costuming (with the exception of Duet Acting).* During the presentation, the contestant/team must name the author and the book or magazine from which the cutting was made. Additionally:

A. Adaptations to material may only be used for the purpose of transition. Any word changes (to eliminate profane language) and/or additions (for transition) must be indicated clearly in ink. Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. The voice of a script may not be changed. For example, changing "She moved to California when she was 13" to "I moved to California when I was 13" is not permitted. Combining small fractions of sentences or singular words to create humorous or dramatic dialogue, scenes, moments, and/or plot lines not intended in the original literature is prohibited. For example, it is not permitted to take one word from page 13 (e.g. home), a phrase from page 211 (e.g. ran away from), and a name, (e.g. Tyler) from page 59 to create dialogue between characters or events that do not exist in the script. Example: adding "Tyler ran away from home." when this did not occur and was not said in the script is not permitted. Transitions only may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature.

B. Humorous, Dramatic, and Duo Interpretation selections must be presented from memory. Interpretation must use a manuscript.

C. In Duo Interpretation, each of the two performers may play one or more characters so long as performance responsibility in the cutting remains as balanced as possible.

D. Monologues, prose, and poetry selections are acceptable in Dramatic, Humorous, and Program Oral Interpretation. In Duo Interpretation, if the selection is prose or poetry and contains narration, either or both of the performers may present the narration.

E. Artistic Plagiarism: Videos of previous final round performances and/or other video media are intended to provide educational examples for coaches and students. They are not intended to serve as a model to directly imitate or duplicate in performance. Although universal human emotions may lead to similarities in portrayal of characters, wholesale impersonation, including cutting, blocking, and/or interpretation (verbal and/or nonverbal portrayal of characters and text) of material of previous semifinal round, final round, and other video media performances is prohibited and grounds for penalty. Given the extent of the artistic plagiarism, the performance penalty may range from lowering the ranking in the round to disqualification. It is the burden of proof of the individual filing the protest to provide documented evidence of the artistic plagiarism demonstrated in the performance.

This includes providing access to the plagiarized video material and written verification of examples to substantiate the complaint.

6. Focus: In Dramatic, Humorous, and Program Oral Interpretation, use of focal points and/or direct contact with the audience should be determined by the requirements of the literature being interpreted. In Duo Interpretation, focus may be direct during the introduction [the performers may look at each other] but must be indirect [off-stage] during the performance itself.

7. Re-Use: A student may not use a cutting from a work of literature the student used in National Speech & Debate Association district or national competition in any previous contest year. A student entered in two events may not use the same selection of literature in both events.

8. Suggested Websites List: The NSDA will maintain a list of websites as a resource for assisting coaches and students with finding materials for use in competition. Students are no longer required to use only digital sources found on this list. The list can be found at www.speechanddebate.org/suggested-source-material-for-interpretation-events/.

DECLAMATION

Declamation Rules

1) **Selection-**

   a. A selection used in Oratorical Declamation must have been originally delivered in the form a speech by its author, a person other than the present speaker.

   b. The speaker must have an introduction which is at most one minute and names the work, author, and describes the circumstances under which the speech was originally presented.

   c. The original speaker's words must not be altered for the presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted.

   d. Material being performed must match the student's original script.

   e. Selections may include professional speeches, public orations, eulogies, and sermons.

   f. Stand-up comedy routines are prohibited.

   g. Any non-speaking expressions such as singing or dancing should not be excessive or dominate the performance. Judges ranks may reflect if non-speaking expressions have dominated the performance.

2) The selection must be memorized. If the speaker refers to prepared notes of any kind or a script during the presentation, the speaker will be disqualified.

3) The speaker should develop the ability to convey the message in a sincere, honest, and realistic style. The mechanics of speech must be observed faithfully: poise, quality of voice, effectiveness and ease of gesture, emphasis, variety, and enunciation. In addition, the speaker must be able to interpret the meaning of the speech and be able to carry the interpretation over to the minds of the listeners. The speaker must be able to interest the listeners and to hold their attention. Positions other than standing should not be excessive in length or dominate the performance.

4) No particular style should be demanded of the speaker; rather, the contestant should be free to select and to develop a personal style and be judged according to the degree of perfection attained and the effectiveness in influencing the listeners. While the specifics of the speech and any style of delivery which the speaker adopts should be judged in light of the purpose of the speech, artificiality is to be discredited. This event is an interpretation, not an impersonation.

5) This event is limited to middle school, freshmen, and sophomore students.

6) Time limits: Maximum - 10 minutes, including at most a 60 second introduction to the selection. If the speaker goes over a 30 second grace period, that contestant may not be awarded first place. No minimum time.

7) 7) No properties or costumes of any kind may be used. Using "properties" means manipulating articles of clothing or objects to enhance the performance. Speakers using properties and/or wearing costumes will be disqualified.

How to do Declamation

Event Description

Declamation is a MHSAA Platform Event for students tenth grade or younger. The event requires students to select a speech that was delivered in public and perform an excerpt of that speech to an audience. Speeches are up to 10 minutes in length. As a result, students typically shorten the text of the speech to meet time requirements. The event is not designed for students to mimic the original author of the speech. Instead, speakers are to develop an oration that delivers the message of the author in an original and engaging manner.

Considerations for Selecting Literature

It is important for students to select a speech that is meaningful to them. The speech could be meaningful because of the style or the content of the speech. It is important that the student find a speech that they not only fully understand, but also, can effectively deliver both verbally and nonverbally. Students should consider more than their enjoyment of the speech, but also, whether or not the audience can connect to the speech as well. Finally, students should not pick a speech because they are impressed by the original speaker's delivery. They should select a speech that they are confident they can persuasively deliver.

Samples of Past Declamation Titles

- *Commencement Address to Tulane University* by Ellen DeGeneres
- *I Have a Dream* by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- *Farewell to Baseball* by Louis Gehring
- *Adopting the Declaration of Human Rights* by Eleanor Roosevelt
- *Commencement Address to University of Michigan* by Dick Costolo
- *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July* by Frederick Douglass
- *Quit India* by Mahatma Gandhi
- *Give me Liberty or Give me Death* by Patrick Henry
- *The Gettysburg Address* by Abraham Lincoln
- *Commencement Address to University of Virginia* by Stephen Colbert

Basic Understandings

Declamation is a public speaking event where students deliver a portion or portions of a speech previously delivered. The goal of a declamation is to convey a message with clarity, emotion, and persuasiveness. The speech the student delivers can be any publicly delivered speech. Commencement address, historical speeches, and celebrity speeches are common examples that students may use to select their declamation. Many speeches will be longer than ten minutes so the performance should be cut down to ten minutes with a 30-second grace period. An introduction is also required.

Research

Finding quality speeches to deliver in declamation is one of the easier things that students can research in competitive speech and debate. The full text of speeches, and videos or recordings of speeches, can be found online in simple searches.

Some common search terms:
- Political speeches/address
- Commencement speeches/address
- Historical speeches/address
- Social movement speeches/address
- Moving speeches

Often students find amazing speeches to deliver in other mediums beyond the internet. For instance, a student may find a great speech on music education in an educational magazine or journal, or a student may find a speech about a discovery in a scientific publication.

Structural Components
There are a couple of key components of DEC:

First, the *cutting*. Your cutting is the 10-minute portion of your selection you chose to perform. This is how you've arranged the performance, and what aspects of the speech you've decided to tell. It is okay for sections of the speech to be moved around to help make the ten-minute version you're delivering flow best.

Second, the *introduction*. After you have selected the portion of the text you want to deliver, and organized it, you need to write out an introduction. At a minimum, the introduction should establish the title of the speech, the author, and when it was delivered. Typically, students will do a short portion of the speech before delivering their intro. Some students do the introduction and then go into the speech.

The declamation could follow this general structure:
- *Teaser* – 30 to 40 seconds – student delivers a small portion of the speech to establish the mood and general theme.
- *Introduction* – 20 to 30 seconds – student delivers the introduction.
- *Main Body of Speech* – 7-8 minutes – student delivers the main points of the speech.
- *Conclusion of Speech* – 30 – 45 seconds – student wraps up the speech.

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 emotions behind each line. Ask yourself what the motivation for the speaker's words are. Use this to influence your own choices.

Indicate transitional movement and gesturing in the margins of your script. Typically, a declamation student will move during key transitions in the speech. For instance, after the "teaser" of the speech and introduction, the speaker may move to one side of the room to deliver the first main point, then move back to the middle for the second main point, before going to the other side of the room for the final main point. The speaker will end up in the same point they started when delivering the conclusion.

When considering gestures, the speaker needs to remember that this is a public speaking event. They are delivering the message of someone else; however, it is not full-on interpretation with excessive blocking. Gestures should not be a focal point of the declamation. Choose gestures that reflect the emotional state of the speaker. 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. A **psychological gesture** is one that is found in conversation.

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 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.

Next, memorization is a physical process. 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 movement/gesture notes. 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 from the choices you've made for your performance. Adjustment to movement, gestures, and delivery can be made.

DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

(See Interpretive Event Rules for Interp Regulations)

How to Do Dramatic Interpretation

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 30-second grace period. With a spotlight on character development and depth, **Dramatic Interpretation** focus on a student's ability to convey emotion through the use of 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.

Examples of Past Dramatic Interpretation 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 J.J. Jonas
- *The Women of Lockerbie* by Deborah Revoort

Basic Understandings

Dramatic Interpretation, contrary to its name, is not all about dram. 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 grade 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 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 housewife'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.

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
- *Introduction:* 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 … Send 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

There are a few key structural components of every DI:
1. *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.
2. *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.
3. *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)

4. ***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 emotions behind each line. Ask yourself what the motivation for the speaker's words are. Use this to influence your own 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. For example, if you were to shoe 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.

Read your script aloud. Eliminate any excess language that sounds awkward or is unnecessarily redundant. A DI script should be no more than 1200 words which required continuous cutting and 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:

1. **The brain is a muscle.** The more time you practice memorizing, the better you become. 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.
2. **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.
   a. Type up a clean version with only your finalized text and blocking.
   b. Tape it to the wall and actively memorize.
   c. Read the lines aloud moving with them as indicated by your cutting. Sometimes, it is helpful to do this in front of a mirror, so you can evaluate the effectiveness of your movements.
   d. Memorize one paragraph at a time, building off of the paragraph that came before. This significantly decreases the time it takes to memorize your performance.

DUET ACTING

How to do Duet Acting

Event Description

Duet Acting involves two people and two chairs. Host schools should supply the furniture in each competition room. The time limit is ten minutes with a 30-second grace period. Students are encouraged to incorporate elements of acting, therefore, student may make eye contact and physical touch during the performance. Occasionally the performers can change roles, but play one character per actor is encouraged to demonstrate skills of acting and not interpretation. The pieces may be either serious or funny and extensive movement is permitted.

Selection of Material

Selections used in Duet Acting shall be cuttings from a single source from a published printed novel, short story, play, poem, or screenplay. No contestant may use the same literary work that he/she used in previous competitive years. No contestant may enter the same selection in more than one event. The material may be humorous or dramatic, or combine both tones depending on the selected work. Contestants may not combine more two or more pieces of literature. A piece of literature shall be defined as one piece of writing which was written with the intent to be published as one work. Each of the two performers may play one ot more characters so long as performance responsibility in the cutting remains as balanced as possible. Introductory and/or transitional material may be presented by either or both contestants.

Performances shall be no more than ten (10) minutes including introductory and transitional materials. There is no minimum time limit.

Performance

The interpretation must be delivered from memory; no notes, prompting or scripts shall be permitted. No costumes or props shall be permitted. During the performance, on-stage focus (meaning contestants MAY look directly at each other) may and/or should be employed by both contestants. Contestants are encouraged to touch and make eye contact during any part of the performance. Two chairs will be allowed for use as props or to facilitate blocking and to create levels, atmosphere, and environment. Two standard classroom chairs will be provided, but performers may choose to bring their own chairs if they desire to do so.

DUO INTERPRETATION

How to do Duo Interpretation

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 should not include eye contact or physical contact outside of the introduction. Performances should 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.

Examples of Past Duo Titles

- *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* by Rachel Sheinkin
- *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

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 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
- *Introduction:* 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 … Send 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

There are a few key structural components of every DUO:

1. *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.
2. *Characterization.* All interpretation events require that strong character choice are made. Distinct physical, vocal, and emotional choices should be made for each character.
3. *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.
4. *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).

5. ***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:

1. ***Brains are a muscle.*** The more time a person practices memorizing, or simply memorize things, the better they become. Memorizing is a process.
2. ***Memorization is physical.*** Staring at a script, re-reading the lines will not be beneficial. Memorization 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 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.
3. ***Listen and react to each other.*** 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 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.
4. ***Build off of your choices.*** Once memorized, the partners and coach can build off of the choices that have been made for the characters. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made.

EXPOSITORY SPEAKING

1. Purpose: Expository speeches are original compositions of the contestant. The Expository speech is a speech to inform, not a performance. It should describe, clarify, illustrate, or define an object, idea, concept, or process. A fabricated topic/subject may not be used. In Expository, a student may not use any portion of their original oration or informative speech entered at any district or national Association tournament.

2. Time: The maximum time limit is 5 minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

3. Aids: No note cards, audio and/or visual aids are allowed. NO animals or other person(s) may be used as aids or aides. Items of dress put on and removed during the course of the presentation are considered visual aids and may not be part of the contestant's presentation.

How to do Expository Speaking

Event Description

Expository Speaking is a five-minute informative speech that introduces to the audience a topic of the student's choosing. The speaker should provide unique insights and explore interesting implications. At its core, Expository is an informative speech. Students doing Expository may cover topics ranging from an organization, to a product, a process, or concept. Effective speeches provide new information or perspectives on a topic, including those that are widely known.

When selecting a topic it is important for the student to find a subject that they are interested in learning about and discovering new insights. Since the student has to deliver the speech, it is important for them to find a topic that lends itself to engaging delivery for that student. A topic they are not interested in may lead to more static delivery. The topic should be avoided if the speech cannot impart new and unique information to the audience. Topics that are timely can be especially useful.

Students should also consider the relevance of the topic to the audience. While the student may be inspired by a subject they find intriguing, ultimately the goal for the speech is to provide information to an audience. Think about what the audience can do with this information. Why do they need it? Why is the topic important to them? What is the audience's need to know?

Basic Understandings

Expository is an informative speech that is five minutes long without the use of a visual aid. At MHSAA State Championship, the event is a supplemental event for 9th and 10th grade competitors who did not qualify in one of their main events of Flight A. Any in-state tournament may add the event. Students who participate in Expository provide unique and interesting information to the audience. An effective Expository introduces them to either a completely new topic or something new about a topic people may know a lot about. Students who do this event would need to be well researched and personally invested in the topic they are wanting to speak on. If the topic is not meaningful to the person it may become harder to deliver the speech to the audience effectively.

Research

Expository research is as diverse as the topics students select. Expository 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.

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 credentials 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 Expository speech, indicate direct quotations from sources using both quotation marks and some other marking such as highlighting or underlining. Choose your quoted text wisely as it should not be overwhelming in comparison to your own analysis. Once all the research is gathered, the sources should all be compiled into a works cited page.

Structural Components

When constructing an Expository speech, students need to be sure to have a well thought out introduction, body, and conclusion. As a five-minute speech it is necessary to succinctly express and develop ideas. Depth of information is still possible with efficient word economy in writing.

- *The Introduction –* would work to grab the audience's attention. The "attention grabbing device" should be related to the topic – shock strategies that are unrelated do not work. After this the introduction should provide sufficient context so that the audience understands what the topic is. While doing this the speaker should establish why the audience should care about the information that is going to be presented. The speaker should establish reasons why the information is serious as well as how it's directly related to the audience. As with any good introduction, the speaker should preview the points of the body of the speech.
- *The Body –* of the speech will likely be composed of two or three main points. The body would be the substance of the speech and will set up justifications for the impact of the topic as well as why it relates to the audience. Typical main points in Expository include the background of the topic, the pros and cons of the topic at hand, the development of the topic, and the implications of the analysis presented.
- *The Conclusion* – is going to wrap up the speech. It will tie back to the attention grabbing device from the introduction, as well as review the main points of the speech.

A general breakdown of the timing of an Expository speech could be done in this manner:

- **Introduction = 30 – 45 seconds**
- **Body = 3:00 – 3:15**
- **Conclusion = 15 – 30 seconds**

Organizing

When developing the ideas of the speech think about answering the questions how and why. How does our topic lend itself to what you are establishing? Why does it happen? To develop a sound position it's necessary to avoid assertions. Furthermore, it's important to ensure that you establish the importance of each point. Why should the audience care? Organizing your ideas around this premise will assist you in the development of the speech.

Organizing the body of a speech is a process impacted by the topic the student has selected. The key is to choose an organizational pattern that works well to support the thesis of the speech. The student also needs to consider what the audience may or may not know already about the topic.

Practicing

As Expository is delivered without notes, the first step for the student after drafting and revising the speech is memorization. Remind students that brains are like a muscle. The more a muscle is used, the stronger it becomes. Likewise, the more memorization is practiced, the better the student becomes.

Here are some thoughts for the student regarding memorization:
1. The more cues you give your brain to aid memorization the better.
2. Staring at a script, re-reading the lines in your head, will not be beneficial.
3. Memorize the story with the intent to perform it.
4. Type up a clean version with only your finalized text. Include notes on gestures and movement.
5. Sometimes, it is helpful to do this in front of a mirror, so you can evaluate the effectiveness of your choices.
6. Memorize a paragraph at a time, building from the previous paragraph. This significantly decreases the time it takes to memorize your performance.
7. Once memorized, you and your coach can then build from the choices you've made for your speech. Adjustments to gestures, movement, and line delivery can be made.

Once the student feels confident in their performance, the coach and student can begin practicing. Timing a run-through and critiquing the speech both orally and with written comments is a helpful method. Focus on the big picture in these early practices. Work on explanation of key concepts, engagement with the audience, and energy. Consider carefully how students are using their voice, including pause, pitch, tone, volume, diction, and inflection. Eventually the student will be ready for line-by-line practices. Line-by-line is characterized by intensive rehearsal of each section of the speech. This can be a paragraph, or working on individual line delivery. As the student makes adjustments, be conscious of staying within the time limits.

The student is now ready to perform in front of other students, coaches, or even an audience. Attend tournaments and review ballots or hold practice rounds with other members of your team. At this stage, feedback is incredibly important. Take note of all comments. A fresh perspective on a speech is vitally important! Students need to be willing to take feedback and make appropriate modifications.

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

Event Rules

1. Topics: The tournament host will obtain a list of questions phrased for contest use and based on subjects discussed in periodicals during the current school year. The contents of the list must not be disclosed except as contestants draw questions. A new subject area will be used for each round with no duplication of questions between the divisions.

2. Drawing: Thirty minutes before the contest is to begin, the first speaker draws three questions and chooses one. Depending on tournament policy, they may return the other two questions or they may have a unique set of questions for each speaker position. The other contestants draw in like manner, in the order of speaking, at intervals of seven minutes. A contestant drawing a question on which they have spoken previously in the tournament must return it and draw again.

3. Preparation: As soon as a question is chosen, the contestant will prepare a speech without consultation and without references to prepared notes. Students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals or articles, provided:

   A. They are originals or copies of whole pages.

   B. Provided those originals or copies are uncut.

   C. There is no written material on that original or copy other than citation information.

   D. Topical index without annotation may be present.

No other material will be allowed in the Extemp prep room other than stated above. Extemp speeches, handbooks, briefs and outlines are prohibited from the Extemp prep room. Underlining or highlighting in Extemp will be allowed if done in only one color on each article or copy. MHSAA permits use of internet during Extemp prep per the Current Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Extemporaneous Speaking. Printed copies of information from online computer services may be used. Electronically retrieved evidence used in any Association Extemp competition must conform to the citation standard of the Modern Language Association [consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th edition) or http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/].

4. Notes: Contestants may make notes during the preparation time, but the use of notes, cards, briefs or other aids is prohibited during the speech.

5. Time: The time limit in both Extemporaneous Speaking events is seven minutes with a 30-second "grace period. "If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

6. Recuse: Contestants may not leave the preparation area until dismissed by the Extemp proctor. Consultation with any person other than the Extemp proctor between the time of drawing and time of speaking is prohibited.

7. Observation: Students in Extemporaneous Speaking are encouraged, but not required, to stay and watch the remaining speakers after they deliver their speech. Students who are double entered may be able to observe as time permits.

How to do Extemp

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 envelop, 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 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.

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 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, 2004 …" or, "Janet Yellen, chair of the Federal Reserve, is quoted in *The Econimist* of September 6, 2014 …"

Structural Components

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 Extemper might discuss a recent development in the currency valuation of a specific country by referencing the name of the currency. A US Extemper 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 extemper 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 while. 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:

I.   **Introduction**
  A.   **Opening Attention Getter**
  B.   **Question/Answer to Question**
  C.   **Thesis**
  D.   **Preview/Forecast**
II.   **Body**
  A.   **Point 1**
    1.   **Sub-Point 1**
    2.   **Sub-Point 2**
  B.   **Point 2**
    1.   **Sub-Point 1**
    2.   **Sub-Point 2**
  C.   **Restate Question and Answer**

III.   Conclusion
      A.   Review/Summary
      B.   Clincher/Final Moment

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 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.

HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION

(See Interpretive Event Rules for Interp Regulations)

How to do Humorous Interpretation

Event Descriptions

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.

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.

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 Zolidas
- *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

Basic Understandings

Humorous Interpretation, as its 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.
  - o 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.
  - o Is it honest? Is it relatable? Pick a piece with meaning. No, you don't need to be performing Tolstoy's "Family Happiness", 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)*
  - o *Teaser:* 0:00 – 1:30 … Previews the topic and mood of the selection
  - o *Introduction:* 1:30 – 3:00 … Explains the purpose of the performance
  - o *Exposition:* 3:00 – 3:30 … Introduces characters and setting
  - o *Inciting Incident:* 3:30 – 4:00 … Send the conflict into motion
  - o *Rising Action:* 4:00 – 7:30 … Complicates the conflict
  - o *Climax:* 7:30 – 8:30 … Emotional peak of the performance
  - o *Falling Action:* 8:30 – 9:30 … Resolves the conflict
- *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.

- *<u>Characters</u>*: 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. 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.
- *<u>Introduction</u>*: 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:

1. ***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.
2. ***Memorization is Physical.*** Staring at a script, rereading 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, 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.

3. ***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 nonverbal reactions of characters to the events happening in the performance.

4. ***Build off 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.

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

1. Topics: Topics will include proverbs, abstract words, events, quotations, and famous people. Tournament directors may use pictures or other forms of prompts.

2. Drawing: A judge in each section/room shall be provided a uniform set of topics, with a different subject area(s) used for each round. Each speaker will be presented three topics and choose one.

3. Preparation and Delivery: The speaker has seven minutes in which to prepare a response and present a speech without consultation of prepared notes. Students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals or articles therefrom, provided.

4. Notes: No notes should be used during the presentation.

7. Time: The maximum time limit is 7 minutes with a 30-second "grace period," which includes both preparation and speaking. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

Event Description
Impromptu is a public speaking event where students have seven minutes to select a topic, brainstorm their ideas, outline, and deliver a speech. The speech is given without notes and uses an introduction, body, and conclusion. The speech can be lighthearted or serious. It can be based upon prompts that range from nursery rhymes, current events, celebrities, organizations, and more.

Impromptu tests a student's ability to analyze a prompt, process their thoughts, organize the points of the speech and deliver them in a clear, coherent manner. Students' logic is extremely important. They must be able to take an abstract idea, such as a fortune from a fortune cookie, and put together a speech that has a thesis and supporting information.

Basic Understandings
Impromptu Speaking is a limited preparation public speaking event that involves topics ranging from proverbs to abstract words to events to famous people. Each round, students will draw three topics from an envelope containing prompts that relate to a specific topic, and they will choose one prompt. Students will have a total of seven minutes to prepare, memorize, and perform their speech.

As there are so many different topic areas for Impromptu prompts that may be used, it is important to observe rounds to see what prompts have been used in the past. The NSDA has final round videos of Impromptu from both the high school and middle school level to review.

Preparation
Though Impromptu prompts rarely require vast amounts of research to understand, students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers, and journal articles that they bring with them to preparation. These materials must be originals or photocopies with no annotation, underlining, writing, or highlighting. Students may not bring outlines or pre-written speeches into the preparation room.

Students would benefit from keeping up with news and current events to maintain a level of background knowledge that may be useful on a variety of topics. Depending on the tournament, the topic areas for each round may be released prior to the competition. If so, students should work with their teammates to read and gather materials on those topics. Researching examples or brainstorming anecdotes that may be relevant for those topic areas can be a good way to prepare for potential Impromptu speeches.

Organizing

In an Impromptu round, the speaker draws three prompts from an envelope. After drawing the three prompts, the student must select one and begin brainstorming their ideas for the speech. In total, a student has seven minutes. This seven minutes may be divided up by the student however they see fit. For example, they could brainstorm and outline their ideas for

three minutes and then deliver a four-minute speech. Alternatively, they could brainstorm and outline for one minute and speak for six minutes. There is no minimum amount of time required for brainstorming and no minimum amount of time for speaking.

Students should work to develop the best possible structure and reasoning in as short amount of time as possible. While it may appear more impressive to speak longer, if the ideas aren't clear or well developed, it can detract from the overall performance. Conversely, a well-thought out but short speech restricts a student's ability to spend adequate time analyzing the prompt. Therefore, students should work to strike a balance between preparation and speaking.

Structural Components

An Impromptu speech typically follows a basic structure in which a student presents an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- o *The Introduction.* Should provide adequate context for the trajectory of the speech. If a student has illustrated an example, conveyed their chosen prompt, and provided a thesis statement for the speech, they have created a structurally sound introduction.
- o *The Body.* The speech commonly explores two or three areas of the prompt in greater depth. For example, if a student's thesis focuses on cultivating innovation, they would likely introduce two effective ways to do so and use examples to prove their point.
- o *The Conclusion.* Wraps up the speech. It will tie back to the attention grabbing device from the introduction, reiterate the prompt, and review the main points of the speech.

Impromptu speeches are unique in that they require effective organization in a short period of time. Make sure speeches have a clear structure, are using transitions between each part of the speech, and follow a logical trajectory. Additionally, judges will evaluate the quality of an Impromptu's speech's analysis. Does the student directly address the prompt? Does the student develop justifications for their ideas and establish significance to those points? Finally, though Impromptu is a test of a student's ability to think on their feet and present a logical, organized speech, delivery skills are still important! Students should continue to focus on their voice, movement, and expression.

At a tournament, 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 for organization or anecdotes. It's also nice to know who you competed aganst 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.

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

Informative Speaking Rules

1. Purpose: An informative speech is an original speech designed to explain, define, describe, or illustrate a particular subject. The general purpose of the speech is for the audience to gain understanding and/or knowledge of a topic. Any other purpose such as to entertain or to convince shall be secondary. The use of audio/visual aids is optional. (See # 4 on Aids.)

2. Contest: This contest comprises only memorized speeches composed by the contestants and not used by them during a previous contest season.

3. Subject: Effective speeches provide new information or perspectives on a topic, including those that are widely known. The responsibility for choosing a worthwhile topic rests with the contestant. A fabricated topic may not be used. Any non-factual reference, including a personal reference, must be so identified.

4. Aids: Audio/visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. If used, the audio/visual aids should enhance or support the message rather than distract from the overall effectiveness of the presentation. During the presentation, no electronic equipment is permitted. Electronic equipment is defined as any object requiring an electrical cord, battery, or solar power to operate it (projectors, cell phones, radios, iPads, computers, etc.). The use of live animals or any additional people as visual aids is not allowed during the speech. Items of dress put on and/or removed for illustration during the course of the presentation are considered costumes and may not be part of the contestant's presentation. Visual aids may not violate policies as dictated by local and state law (weapons, drugs, etc.) Contestants may not distribute items to the judges or audience before, during, or after the round. This includes but is not limited to food, objects, handouts, flyers, and promotional merchandise. The host school is not responsible for providing any facilities, equipment, including tables, chairs, or easels, or assistance in a contestant's use of visual aids. Expedient set up and take down of aids is expected. If a visual aid displays published pictorial material, the source must be included in the work-cited page but does not need to be cited orally.

5. Length: The time limit is 10 minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

6. Quotation: Not more than 150 words of the speech may be direct quotation and such quotations must be identified orally and in a printed copy of the speech supplied prior to registration.

7. Script: Manuscripts must be available at all tournament contests in the event of a protest. The script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work-cited page in APA or MLA format.

8. Re-Use: A student may not use an informative speech the student used in district or national competition in any previous contest year.

How to do 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.

Students who write Informative 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.

Examples of Potential Informative Topics

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

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 researches 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 student's 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 student's 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 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 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. Nest, 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 argument? 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 students 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.

ORIGINAL ORATORY

Original Oratory Rules

1. Purpose: The general purpose of the speech is to persuade. Any other purpose such as to inform or entertain shall be secondary.

2. Contest: This contest comprises only memorized orations actually composed by the contestants and not used by them during a previous contest season. No visual aids are permitted.

3. Subject: Any appropriate subject may be used, but the orator must be truthful. Any non-factual reference, especially a personal one, must be so identified.

4. Length: The time limit in Original Oratory is ten minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

5. Quotation: Not more than 150 words of the oration may be direct quotation from any other speech or writing and such quotations must be identified in a printed copy of the oration supplied prior to registration. Extensive paraphrasing from other sources is prohibited.

6. Script: The orator's script must identify the quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work cited page in APA or MLA format, and both the orator and the coach must attest by signature that the oration is the original work of the contestant. It is the responsibility of the contestant to have a script ready upon request should the speech be challenged. 7. Re-Use: A student may not use an oration the student used in district or national competition in any previous contest year.

How to do Original Oratory

Event Description

Students deliver a self-written, ten-minute speech on a topic of their choosing. Limited in their ability 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.

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.

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 that 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 though a different lends 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 a 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 s 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. 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 involved 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 large type, tape it down a hallway, and read their speech aloud, complete with gestures, to reinforce memorization.

Team and family members are 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 and test any humor that they might want to use.

POETRY INTERPRETATION

Poetry Interpretation Rules

1) If questioned, the genre of the selection must be specified in the original manuscript or must be verifiable by a simple Internet search. If using a series of pieces, all titles and authors must be cited. The performer has the burden to be clear at all times which piece is being used. In the prepared script, the pieces should be clearly delineated via highlighting or font style and spacing to enable review in case of a protest. It is the affirmative obligation of all coaches to ensure that all materials presented in interpretation events must be available and readily accessible. Each program must contain an introduction for purposes of explication, setting, or selection transitions. Lines attributed to one character in the published source must not be attributed to another character in the performance. The author's words as published in the literature must not be altered for the presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. Material being performed at the tournament must match the student's original script.

2) The literature chosen may include any form poetry. Drama, including theatrical monologues, is prohibited. Speeches written to be delivered in real-life are prohibited.

3) No properties except a manuscript or binder may be used. Using "properties" means manipulating articles of clothing or objects to enhance the performance. Speakers using properties and/or wearing costumes will be disqualified.

4) Speakers should keep eye contact between audience and manuscript in reasonable balance. Speakers who fail to maintain the illusion of reading from the manuscript must not be ranked first.

5) Speakers should keep gesture and bodily movement to a minimum. The selection should be delivered from center stage. Movement and gestures, if used, should be appropriate to the selection. Speakers should not walk during performances. They should emphasize vocal variety and facial expression to enhance the literary interpretation. While singing is permitted, it should not be excessive or dominate the performance. Judges' ranks may reflect if singing has dominated the performance. Only the performers' feet may touch the ground.

6) Speakers may use a persona, and they may use character voices, but they are not necessary.

7) Important consideration should be given to the quality of the selection.

8) Time limits: Maximum - 10 minutes. This includes at most 1 minute of introductory and transition material other than the author's words. If the speaker goes over a 30 second grace period, that contestant must not be awarded first place. No minimum time.

How to do Poetry Interpretation

Event Description

Using a selection or selections of literature, students provide an interpretation of **Poetry** with a time limit of ten minutes including introduction. Poetry is characterized by writing that conveys ideas, experiences, and emotions through language and expression. Students may choose traditional poetry, often characterized by rhyme or rhythm, or nontraditional poetry, which often has a rhythmic flow but is not necessarily structured by formal meter (meter is a beat, patter, or structure, such as iambic pentameter). Students may not use prose, nor drama (plays), in this category. Students may not use prose, nor drama (plays), in this category.

Students must use a manuscript in Poetry, which typically consists of a small three-ring binder with page protectors. Reading from a book or magazine is prohibited. Binders are available for purchase in the NSDA Store.

Students in Poetry Interpretation may choose literature on topics that are serious, humorous, non-linear, ethereal, or thought-provoking. The key is to choose poems that work for the individual student. Poetry collections, often referred to as anthologies, or a single long-form poem may be selected. Considerations for an appropriate piece include the student's personality, maturity, physical and vocal performance range, and school standards.

Traits of Successful Poetry Performers
When considering what event you should choose, or which direction to point a student, here are some traits of successful Poetry students to keep in mind:
- Expressive and artistic
- Appreciates language
- Excellent verbal and physical control
- Emotional maturity
- Enjoys reading and performing
- Confident
- Engages an audience

Examples of Past Poetry Titles
- *Revolting Rhymes* by Roald Dahl
- *Soda Jerk* by Cynthia Rylant
- *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein
- *Prince Charming* by Cris Gibson
- *Season of Tears* by Adonis
- *Blood Dazzler* by Patricia Smith

Basic Understandings

Poetry is characterized by writing that conveys ideas, experiences, and emotions through language and expression. Often poetry is very creative in terms of vocabulary and composition. While poetry may tell a story or develop a character, more often poetry's focus on language and form are designed to elicit critical thought, reflection, or emotion. Students may choose what the National Speech & Debate Association refers to as traditional poetry, which often has a formal meter or rhyme scheme, or nontraditional poetry, which often has rhythmic flow but lacks formal rhyme or meter (examples include spoken word or slam poetry).

Research
Begin by looking for a source. In Poetry, poems must come from a single source, but that source may be a collection of poetry by one or multiple authors. When looking for Poetry Interpretation, start with what the student knows – what types of literature do they enjoy? What types of themes or ideas can they relate to? Poetry collections, often called anthologies, are very prominent in bookstores or libraries. There are so many to choose from that a student can feel overwhelmed with the abundance of options. Thus, having an idea of themes or topics of interest might lead students to choose a specific collection to review. For example, if the student enjoys learning about cultures and customs, there are many poetry anthologies from various parts of the world that communicate a wide range of experiences.

Other collections include themes on motherhood, love, loss – there is even a collection of outlaw poetry!

In addition, many prominent authors who write books or essays may also have written poetry on a range of topics or issues of interest. Thus, conducting a search for authors in addition to specific topics, themes, or pieces is advisable. Many online reading sites offer suggestions for authors or pieces based upon interests. Enter poems the students like and other recommendations will appear. The opportunities truly are limitless!

Read reviews of potential poetry pieces to help narrow the choices. Scanning poetry collections quickly and efficiently is often the best way to process significant amounts of material. Read a few poems aloud to get a feel for how the poetry sounds. Ask the student the following questions:

* *Is an accent or specific vocal quality called for in the literature?*
* *Is the theme something a student can relate to?*
* *Is the language accessible to the student?*
* *Is the language appropriate for oral interpretation?*

Some poetry is meant to be read or visualized instead of being performed. Also keep in mind that some poetry collections contain very vivid material that may not be appropriate for all ages.

In addition to the above considerations, remember that it is important for the student to perform material that they connect with and is a match for their style and personality. Some students and coaches might want the student to challenge their weaknesses, but in competitive speech activities it is often best to focus on the students' strengths at a young age, especially as they learn the creative process of selecting, cutting, and performing literature. If a student identifies good poetry that isn't a match for that particular student, consider setting it to the side to help out a teammate who might be better suited to the material.

Structural Components

Your **cutting** is the ten-minute collection of poems or a single poem you are performing. The cutting is how the student has arranged the poem(s) based upon the themes/ideas expressed. Your cutting may look something like this (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

o **Teaser: 0:00 – 1:00** Previews the topic, theme, and mood through selected poems. Teasers are not required.
o **Intro: 1:00 – 2:00**   The student, in their own words, discusses the literature. Must be memorized and include titles and authors.
o **Exposition: 2:00 – 5:00** Develops all the pieces, themes, and ideas
o **Build to Climax/Climax: 5:00 – 9:00**   Poetry changes pace, tone, volume as it builds. Creates emotional peak of the performance. Student continues to go from one poem to the next.
o **Resolution: 9:00 – 10:00**   Poetry changes pace, tone, volume as it pulls back. Concludes the major themes and ideas with the end of one or more poems.

Blocking is a term used to describe movement in a performance. Sometimes blocking is expressive in nature, symbolizing how a character is feeling emotionally, while at other times blocking denotes events that are occurring in the imagined space. Keep in mind that movement should always be motivated by elements in the text or found within a poem.

Blocking for the sake of blocking is not necessary, and in many tournaments there are specific rules for how much movement, if any, is allowed. Those performances emphasize vocal or other nonverbal forms of communication.

Blocking is one type of **Nonverbal Communication**, which may also include gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact. Much of oral interpretation is contained in the nonverbal elements of performance as tone, setting, mood, and character all can be established through various physical representations.

Organizing

Cutting Poetry is a challenging process as many poets compose their material with language and style in which cutting one part of a poem affects the entire piece. Poetry that is organized by verse or stanza with clear patterns of language and style should be carefully considered. Poetry participants may cut out an entire section of a poem for time limitations, for example, but will not want to modify the words within a stanza nor eliminate individual lines that affect the rhythm or meter.

Once you have your cutting, 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 emotional qualities behind each line. Consider how the lines affect your verbal and nonverbal communication.

Whether the poem has a formal structure and rhyme pattern or is free verse, it is important to examine the conventions within the poetry selections and determine what to emphasize during the performance. For example, rhyme patterns provide flow for the poetry, but can also call attention to themselves, as students anticipate the rhyme and hit the beat hard.

Performances may fall into predictable patterns as a result. Students should pay special attention to repetition and decide whether to repeat the words in the same fashion each time or vary their vocal qualities.

Bookwork is the use of the manuscript within oral interpretation. The bookwork can be very basic, such as closing the book during the introduction and conclusion, as well as turning pages with each change of poem. Other students will have more extensive bookwork, including page turns to express dramatic moments or changes in tone, or holding the script to represent an imaginary property, such as a photo album.

Indicate potential choices for blocking, bookwork, and rhythm/meter of your script, as needed, while developing the Poetry Interpretation.

Read your script aloud. Eliminate any excess language that sounds awkward or is unnecessarily redundant. After organizing, some students will consider cutting the poetry differently as a result of choices that are made. As a final step, make sure that the introduction successfully represents the script and performance choices. Cut your script into segments which match the page turns, put it in the book, and let's get practicing!

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PROGRAM ORAL INTERPRETATION

Event Rules

1. Purpose: POI is a program of oral interpretation of thematically-linked selections chosen from two or three genres: prose, poetry, drama (plays). At least two pieces of literature that represent at least two separate genres must be used. Unlike the other interpretation events, Program Oral Interpretation may use multiple sources for the program. The title or author of all selections must be verbally identified in either the introduction and/or transitional phrases. The title may identify the primary source (e.g., book, anthology, journal, magazine, newspaper, approved website, etc.) or the specific title within the primary source (e.g., a poem, a play, a short story, a journal/magazine article, a newspaper article, etc.). If more than one author is attributed to the source, at a minimum, the primary author should be verbally cited. A Works Cited of all sources must be available to tournament officials upon request. Competitors are encouraged to devote approximately equal times to each of the genres used in the program. This distinction pertains to these two or three genres as a whole, not types of literature within a genre (such as fiction/nonfiction). Prose expresses thought through language recorded in sentences and paragraphs: fiction (short stories, novels) and non-fiction (articles, essays, journals, biographies). Poetry is writing which expresses ideas, experience, or emotion through the creative arrangement of words according to their sound, their rhythm, their meaning. Poetry may rely on verse and stanza form.

2. Contest: The use of a manuscript during the performance is required. Common practices include the use of a binder or folder. Reading from a book or magazine is not permitted. The intact manuscript may be used by the contestant as a prop, so long as it is in the contestant's control by remaining in contact with the body at all times. No costumes or props other than the manuscript are permitted. Pictures, graphics, and/or illustrations are considered a visual aid, even if included in the original manuscript, and may not be displayed. The contestant must address the script; however, introduction and transitional material may be memorized.

3. Length: The time limit is 10 minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

4. Publication Rules: All literature performed must meet the publication rules of the Association. 5. Adaptations to material may only be used for the purpose of transition. Any word changes (to eliminate profane language) and/or additions (for transition) must be indicated clearly in ink. Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. The voice of a script may not be changed. For example, changing "She moved to California when she was 13" to "I moved to California when I was 13" is not permitted.

Combining small fractions of sentences or singular words to create humorous or dramatic dialogue, scenes, moments, and/or plot lines not intended in the original literature is prohibited. For example, it is not permitted to take one word from page 13 (e.g. home), a phrase from page 211 (e.g. ran away from), and a name, (e.g. Tyler) from page 59 to create dialogue between characters or events that do not exist in the script. Example: adding "Tyler ran away from home." when this did not occur and was not said in the script is not permitted. Transitions only may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature.

How to Do Program Oral Interpretation

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.

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.

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**

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 tie 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.

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
- *Introduction:* 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 … Send 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

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.

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 organized 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). 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, 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 thy 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, 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 wither 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.

PROSE INTERPRETATION

Prose Interpretation Rules

1) If questioned, the genre of the selection must be specified in the original manuscript or must be verifiable by a simple Internet search. If using a series of pieces, all titles and authors must be cited. The performer has the burden to be clear at all times which piece is being used. In the prepared script, the pieces should be clearly delineated via highlighting or font style and spacing to enable review in case of a protest. It is the affirmative obligation of all coaches to ensure that all materials presented in interpretation events must be available and readily accessible. Each program must contain an introduction for purposes of explication, setting, or selection transitions. Lines attributed to one character in the published source must not be attributed to another character in the performance. The author's words as published in the literature must not be altered for the presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. Material being performed at the tournament must match the student's original script.

2) The literature chosen may include any form prose. Drama, including theatrical monologues, is prohibited. Speeches written to be delivered in real-life are prohibited.

3) No properties except a manuscript or binder may be used. Using "properties" means manipulating articles of clothing or objects to enhance the performance. Speakers using properties and/or wearing costumes will be disqualified.

4) Speakers should keep eye contact between audience and manuscript in reasonable balance. Speakers who fail to maintain the illusion of reading from the manuscript must not be ranked first.

5) Speakers should keep gesture and bodily movement to a minimum. The selection should be delivered from center stage. Movement and gestures, if used, should be appropriate to the selection. Speakers should not walk during performances. They should emphasize vocal variety and facial expression to enhance the literary interpretation. While singing is permitted, it should not be excessive or dominate the performance. Judges' ranks may reflect if singing has dominated the performance. Only the performers' feet may touch the ground.

6) Speakers may use a persona, and they may use character voices, but they are not necessary.

7) Important consideration should be given to the quality of the selection.

8) Time limits: Maximum - 10 minutes. This includes at most 1 minute of introductory and transition material other than the author's words. If the speaker goes over a 30 second grace period, that contestant must not be awarded first place. No minimum time.

How to do Prose Interpretation

Event Description

Using a short story, parts of a novel, or another published work of prose, students provide an interpretation of one selection with a time limit of ten minutes including introduction. Utilizing a single piece of literature, **Prose Interpretation** can be drawn from works of fiction or non-fiction. Prose corresponds to usual (ordinary/common) patterns of speech and may combine elements of narration and dialogue. Students may not use poetry, nor drama (plays), in this category. Students must use a manuscript in Prose, which typically consists of a small three-ring binder with page protectors. Reading from a book or magazine is prohibited.

Students in Prose Interpretation may choose literature on topics that are serious, humorous, mysterious, thought-provoking. The key is to choose a piece that works for the individual student. Non-fiction publications, such as essays, articles, and biographies, or works of fiction, such as short stories and books, may be sources for Prose Interpretation. Considerations for an appropriate piece include the student's personality, maturity, physical and vocal performance range, and school standards.

Examples of Past Prose Titles
- o *Imagination: A Memoir* by Elizabeth McCracken
- o *Long Shadow of Little Rock* by Daisy Bates
- o *The Fault in our Stars* by John Green
- o *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key* by Jack Gantos
- o *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll
- o *The Elizabeth Stories* by Isabel Huggan

Basic Understandings
Prose is often classified as the "other" category of interpretation. It's not poetry. It's not drama. It's not storytelling. So what is prose? Prose combines multiple elements of oral interpretation of literature. Prose corresponds to usual patterns of speech – that which you would find most every day in a particular space and time (in contrast to poetic form and language). Prose typically has a narrative with its related rises and falls, much like Storytelling. Prose may also feature character development and dialogue, much like Dramatic Interpretation. Prose may have humorous elements embedded, much like Humorous Interpretation. In short, while many categories have specific interpretation focal points, Prose Interpretation is very wide open, and choices of material may vary from region to region or even tournament to tournament.

Research
When looking for Prose Interpretation, start with what the student knows – what types of literature do they enjoy? What types of themes or ideas can they relate to? Short story collections, often called anthologies, are very prominent in bookstores or libraries. Unlike

Poetry Interpretation, if you find an anthology collection of short stories or novels, you may only perform one selection in Prose. There are so many to choose from that a student can feel overwhelmed with the abundance of options. Thus, having an idea of themes, ideas, or authors might lead students to choose a specific collection to review. For example, if the student enjoys learning about cultures and customs, there are many anthologies from various parts of the world. If the student enjoys reading detective stories, there are many collections focused on mystery and suspense.

In addition, may prominent authors who write novels may also have written short stories or essays on a range of topics or issues of interest. Thus, conducting a search for authors in addition to specific topics, themes, or pieces is advisable. Many online reading sites offer suggestions for authors or pieces based upon interests. Plus, there is a host of young adult literature that may be appropriate for interpretation as well. The opportunities truly are limitless!

Read reviews of potential Prose pieces to help narrow the choices. Read summaries to find out the basic plotline before diving into the literature. And do a quick scan of any short story or book to see if it is a good match for the student:

* *Is an accent or specific vocal quality called for in the literature?*
* *Is the theme something a student can relate to?*
* *Is the language accessible to the student?*
* *Is the language appropriate for oral interpretation?*
* *Can the essence of the scene or plot be conveyed in less than ten minutes?*

Asking these questions while scanning the literature will help certain pieces rise to the top of the list. Ultimately, the student needs to know themselves enough to know what can and cannot be performed. If the student cannot perform a southern accent, for example, consistently and authentically, then the student either needs to work very, very hard on that vocal ability or choose another piece. Some students and coaches might want the student to challenge their weaknesses, but in competitive speech activities it is often best to focus on the students' strengths at a young age, especially as they learn the creative process of selecting, cutting, and performing literature.

Structural Components

Your **cutting** is the ten-minute portion of the selection you are performing. This is how you've arranged the narrative and what aspects of the story you've decided to tell. Your cutting may look something like this (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life)*

o **Teaser: 0:00 – 1:00** Previews the topic and mood of the selected literature. Teasers are not required
o **Intro: 1:00 – 2:00**   The student, in their own words, discusses the literature. Must be memorized and include titles and authors.
o **Exposition & Inciting Incident: 2:00 – 5:00** Introduces characters and setting. Sends the conflict into motion.
o **Rising Action/Climax: 5:00 – 9:00** Complicates the conflict. Creates emotional peak of the performance.
o **Falling Action & Resolution: 9:00 – 10:00** Resolves the conflict. Concludes the story.
o **Blocking** is a term used to describe movement in a performance. Sometimes blocking is expressive in nature, symbolizing how a character is feeling emotionally, while at other times blocking denotes events that are occurring in the imagined space. Keep in mind that movement should always be motivated by elements in the text or found within a character. Blocking for the sake of blocking is not necessary, and in many tournaments there are specific rules for how much movement, if any, is allowed. Those performances emphasize vocal or other nonverbal forms of communication.
o Blocking is one type of **nonverbal communication**, which may also include gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact. Much of oral interpretation is contained in the nonverbal elements of performance as tone, setting, mood, and character all can be established through various physical representations.

Organizing

* Once you have your cutting, 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 narrative and emotional qualities behind each line. Consider how the lines affect your verbal and nonverbal communication.

- **Bookwork** is the use of the manuscript within oral interpretation. The bookwork can be very basic, such as closing the book during the introduction and conclusion, as well as turning pages with scene changes. Other students will have more extensive bookwork, including page turns to express dramatic moments or changes in tone, or holding the script to represent an imaginary property such as a photo album.

- If the Prose selection has characters speaking to each other, students can mark focal points in their script. Focal points (sometimes referred to as offstage focus) are used when a character is speaking to another character. Instead of turning their head dramatically back and forth, students can pick a point in front of them to represent the placement of the character. For example, a mother speaking to her daughter might be positioned with a lower focal point to indicate that she is taller than her daughter. When in the voice of the daughter, the focal point might be higher to represent her looking up to an authority figure.

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- Indicate potential choices for blocking, bookwork, and focal points in the margins of your script, as needed.

- Read your script aloud. Eliminate any excess language that sounds awkward or is unnecessarily redundant. After organizing, some students will consider cutting the piece differently as a result of choices that are made. As a final step, make sure the introduction successfully represents the script and performance choices. Cut your script into segments which match the page turns, put it in the book, and let's get practicing!

- **Practicing**
- You will want to start by familiarizing yourself with your script. Although you are not required to be memorized, successful interpers have mastered their script so that they know not only what they are saying in the moment, but also know what is coming up next. You can gain familiarity with the script by reading several times in a row. Start by reading each page several times. As you learn the script, make notes about which words you might want to cut, or what is not flowing smoothly from one section to another, so you can make adjustments after the practice session.

- Beginning interpers often struggle with bookwork. It can feel awkward holding the book comfortably and turning pages naturally. Recognize that it takes time and lots of practice. Watch how other performers conduct their bookwork. Ask for help. Whatever you do, don't rush the bookwork. It is jarring to watch interpers rapidly opening and closing books and zipping through page turns. Even basic bookwork is a part of the performance and establishes an important connection between the student and the script.

- Once the student has a solid grasp of the script, the coach and student can do some timed run-throughs with both oral and written comments for the student. Focus on the big picture in these early pictures. Work on analysis of scenes, characters, language, and the overall impact of the story. Consider carefully how students are using their voice, including pause, pitch, tone, diction, and inflection. Eventually the student will be ready for line-by-line practices. Line-by-line is characterized by

- o intensive rehearsal on each and every page and, at times, on every line, until the best possible interpretation is achieved at that moment. Make sure the performance is within the time limits.

- o The student is now ready to do some performances in front of other students, coaches, or even an audience. Attend tournaments and review ballots or hold practice rounds with other members of your team. At this stage, feedback is incredibly important. Take note of all comments, as having a fresh perspective on an interpretation is vitally important. Students must be willing to take that feedback and make modifications.

Even the most naturally talented of performers needs practice. Respect the time and resources of your coach and school. Be sure to give it your best effort every day and you will be successful no matter the tournament outcome.

STORYTELLING

1. A single published, printed story, anecdote, tale, myth, or legend must be retold without notes or props. Any theme/topic area may be used.

2. Time: The maximum time limit is 5 minutes with a 30-second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

3. The student may not tell a story they have used previously.

4. The delivery must be extempore, not read. No book or script may be used. The story may be delivered standing or seated. If a chair is used, students may choose the original position of the chair. Use of the chair is not considered a prop as long as:

> 1) Once the performance begins, all legs of the chair remain stationary on the ground and do not move from their original position, and

> 2) Competitors do not kneel or stand on the chair.

5. Gestures, pantomime and characterization, may be used with restraint but the focus must be on the narrative.

6. The retelling must be true to the original tale. The contestant may not add original material or materially change the content of the story

How to do Storytelling

Event Description
Students select a published story that meets a specified theme and perform the story for no more than five minutes. Some tournaments may ask **Storytelling** performers to follow a theme, though the National Tournament does not. Storytelling themes range widely and may include mysteries, heroism, or fairy tales. Students select a story that would be appropriate for young children and tell the story as if presenting to that audience. Students may use a chair. Manuscripts are not permitted.

Students in Storytelling select material based upon the theme and the audience. Children's books are commonly chosen as material. Students can also look for collections of stories on various themes, though only one story from a collection may be performed. Considerations for an appropriate piece include the student's personality, physical and vocal performance range, and school standards.

Basic Understandings
Storytelling consists of sharing a story with an audience, performed as if the audience were a group of young children. The story must meet the theme of the tournament and not exceed five minutes. Students may use a full range of movement to express themselves and may incorporate a chair in a variety of different ways. Students may be seated but most commonly performers use a full range of stage space available to them.

As there are so many different types of stories that can be performed, it is important to observe rounds to see what other students are using.

Research

Storytelling research involves going to libraries and bookstores and enjoying their vast collections of children's books. Keep in mind that five minutes includes an introduction. Thus, the story must be fully conveyed in a very limited frame of time. Students should choose stories that are not only fun but have a story with sufficient plot and character development to keep the audience entertained and engaged.

If a tournament requires that your Storytelling performance fits a theme, it can be difficult to find a piece. Before going to the bookstore or library, take a moment to look for lists of stories online. A simple Google keyword search will net many results. Students may also want to go to sources such as Amazon that provide recommendations on related books to get some additional ideas.

Another strategy is to search by author instead of themes or titles of specific pieces. Children's authors typically produce a large volume of work. By choosing favorite authors and writing styles, students can narrow their choices considerably. Many children's books become part of a larger series. By looking to online reviews or summaries, students can quickly find out what themes emerge from an entire set of books. Finally, keep in mind that

many children's stories are produced by more than one individual, such as an illustrator. Be sure to search for the names of all major contributors when doing research.

Structural Components

Your **cutting** is the ten-minute portion of the selection you are performing. This is how you've arranged the narrative and what aspects of the story you've decided to tell. Your cutting may look something like this (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life)*

- o **Teaser: 0:00 – 1:00** Previews the topic and mood of the selected literature. Teasers are not required
- o **Intro: 1:00 – 2:00**   The student, in their own words, discusses the literature. Must be memorized and include titles and authors.
- o **Exposition & Inciting Incident: 2:00 – 5:00** Introduces characters and setting. Sends the conflict into motion.
- o **Rising Action/Climax: 5:00 – 9:00** Complicates the conflict. Creates emotional peak of the performance.
- o **Falling Action & Resolution: 9:00 – 10:00** Resolves the conflict. Concludes the story.

Blocking is a term used to describe movement in a performance. Sometimes blocking is expressive in nature, symbolizing how a character is feeling emotionally, while at other times blocking denotes events that are occurring in the imagined space. Keep in mind that movement should always be motivated by elements in the text or found within a character. Blocking for the sake of blocking is not necessary, and in many tournaments there are specific rules for how much movement, if any, is allowed. Those performances emphasize vocal or other nonverbal forms of communication.

One unique element of blocking in Storytelling is the presence of the chair. Some competitors sit down to chat with the audience as if they were children. Others will stand on the chair briefly for effect while others will use it to create a stage space, such as tipping it on its side and hiding behind it as if it were a protective wall. Students need to take care with the use of the chair, both in terms of their personal safety as well as overdoing it, to the extent the chair become the focal point of the story instead of a compliment to the blocking.

Blocking is one type of **nonverbal communication**, which may also include gestures, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact. Much of oral interpretation is contained in the nonverbal elements of performance as tone, setting, mood, and character all can be established through various physical representations.

Organizing
Students should map out all of the activities of the story. This outline provides a snapshot of what takes place and allows for easy review when deciding what to cut or keep in the performance. In addition to maintaining any major plot points in the story, students will want to select the funniest and most dramatic parts of the storyline to draw in the audience.

Students can then choose the most relevant sections of the story and include those in the master manuscript. Once you have your cutting, take the time to "beat out" your

manuscript. 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 emotional qualities behind each line. Consider how the lines affect your verbal and nonverbal communication.

Indicate potential choices for blocking, nonverbal expressions, and audience engagement in the manuscript. Taking noted in the preparatory stages is very important for any type of performance.

Read your script aloud. Eliminate any excess language that sounds awkward or is unnecessarily redundant. After organizing, some students will consider cutting the piece differently as a result of choices that are made. As a final step, make sure that the introduction successfully represents the manuscript and performance choices.

Practicing
As Storytelling must be memorized, the first step after cutting and analyzing your piece is to memorize it. As it is a short event with simplified language, many competitors might find that memorizing a story is very easy. Other students struggle to memorize even short performances. Here are some things to keep in mind as you memorize your story.

Our brains are a muscle. The more time you practice memorizing, the better you become. The more cues that you can give your brain to aid memorization the better. Staring at a script, re-reading the lines in your head, will not be beneficial. Memorize the story 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. Sometime, 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 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 story. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made.

Once the student has a solid grasp of the story, the coach and student can do some times run-throughs with both oral and written comments. Focus on the big picture in early practices. Work on analysis of blocking, engagement with the audience and energy. Consider carefully how students are using their voice, including pause, pitch, tone, volume, diction, and inflection. Eventually the student will be ready for line-by-line practices. Line-by-line is characterized by intensive rehearsal on each section of the story, at times on every line, until the best possible interpretation is achieved at the moment. Make sure the performance is within the time limits

*All interp pieces must have scripts on-hand or available with "two clicks" from an online source.

FORMS

MHSAA EXEMPTION FORM FOR SPEECH AND DEBATE
COACH SUPERVISION FOR TOURNAMENTS

NOTE: THIS FORM DOES NOT OVERRIDE YOUR SCHOOL BOARD'S POLICIES

This supervision of a speech and debate team should be done by the coach who must be a full-time employee of the school. If the coach makes all arrangements, but cannot attend the tournament, students may attend if a parent or guardian accompanies each individual students or the school provides a supervising adult who is a full-time employee of the school. **The Supervising Adult is in charge of all team members for the duration of the competition and must remain on campus throughout the entire tournament.** All forms should be sent directly to the MHSAA Coordinator of Speech and Debate via email. The Coordinator can approve this exemption two times for any given school. Any more than two exemptions must be sent to the Coordinator who will forward them to the MHSAA Executive Director for consideration. *NOTE: This permission is not in effect until the faxed form is in the hands of the supervising adult bringing the students to the tournament. The form must be present during the competition.*

Date of the Request: _____   **School:** _____

Coach: _____   **School Phone:** _____

Tournament in Question: _____

Location: _____

Reason for Request: _____

_____

_____

Name of Supervising Adult Seeking Approval: _____

Job Title/Relationship of Supervising Adult to Student(s): _____

Signature of Principal Making the Request: _____

Signature of Coach Making the Request: _____

(Information Below This Line Filled Out By MHSAA Officials Only)

This Request Has Been (circle one):   **APPROVED**   **DENIED**

Signature of MHSAA Official for this Request: _____

MHSAA DECENCY CLAUSE
(Required for all Interpretation Events at Mississippi Tournaments)

Students participating in any Interpretation Event at an MHSAA-school tournament in Mississippi must have in their possession in each round a copy of the exact manuscript to be used with this cover sheet that contains the clause *"The decency standards reflected in this piece uphold the value and morals of the student's school, community, and family."* The student's coach and at least one of his/her parents/guardians must sign this statement. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in disqualification for that event. Forged signatures will result in the student being placed on probation for the remainder of the semester. A second forged incident will result in the student being denied entry to a tournament for the remainder of the semester. The complaint procedure will involve the copying of the script in question, the mailing of a copy of that script to the principal of the school involved, and his/her parent/guardian attesting to the signatures and approvals indicated on the cover sheet.

DECENCY CLAUSE
(For all Interpretation Events)

"The decency standards reflected in this piece uphold the values and morals of the student's school, community, and family."

Title of Selection: _____

Author: _____

Student Performer's Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Coach's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

MHSAA STATEMENT OF MEDIA PERMISSION AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

School Affiliation: _____

I hereby grant to the MHSAA and school in which my student/child compete, and its affiliates and designees the irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide right and permission to record my student/child's participation in any association events and activities in which he/she participates and to use any such video, audio, visual and/or audio recordings in which I am included as well as any materials I create, submit, or use in connections with or related to the Association or its events or activities or any portion of the recordings and materials, with or without alteration, alone or in conjunction with other images or elements of any type, in any manner, whether now known or later invented, by any means, whether now known or later invented, and in any and all media, whether now known or later invented, without restriction.

I acknowledge that the Association has no financial commitment or obligation to me as a result of this Statement of Permission and release Agreement or the use of the right granted in the Agreement.

I understand and agree that the Association and/or its authorized representatives shall have the exclusive right, title, and interest, including copyright, in and to the Recordings.

I hereby release and hold harmless the Association and its authorized representatives from any and all actions, claims, damages, costs, or expenses, including attorney's fees, which relate to or arise out of any development or use of these recordings and materials.

My signature shows that I have read and understand the release and I agree to accept its provisions. I have full right to give this release.

Student Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Student Signature: _____

***

I am the parent/legal guardian of the person signing the release and I hereby ratify it and release all claims whatsoever which either I or the minor may have with respect to the matters covered by the release.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____   **Date:** _____

***

I am the coach of the person signing the release and I hereby ratify it as being appropriate for the standards set by my school and community.

Coach's Signature: _____

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PARENTS & STUDENTS

1. Download the DragonFly MAX app from the App Store or Google Play.

2. Tap 'Get Started' and 'Sign Up for Free' then follow the prompts to create your Parent account with your own email address. *Note: please do not create an account with your child's name or contact information — you will get the chance to add your child soon!*

3. Verify your account with the verification ID sent to your email address.

4. Tap 'Connect to your school' to select 'Parent' as your role and search for your child's school.

5. After selecting your child's school, tap 'Join' to request access. An administrator at your school will approve your request.

6. Tap 'Set up your children' and follow the prompts to add your kid(s) and fill out their participation forms.

ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, COACHES & SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. Visit dragonflymax.com and click the 'Log In/Sign Up' button.

2. Click 'Sign Up for Free' to create your account with your school email address.

3. Verify your account with the verification ID sent to your email address.

4. Click the 'Get Started' button to select your role and search for your school.

5. After selecting your school, tap 'Join' to request access. You will see a list of administrators at your school who can approve your request. If you're the first person to request access to your school, a member of the DragonFly team will verify your role and approve your request.

PREFER TO DO THIS ON YOUR COMPUTER?
Visit dragonflymax.com and click 'Log In/Sign Up' to get started.