



NATIONAL
SPEECH & DEBATE
ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

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High School Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

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The purpose of the Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide is to assist members in learning about the events the Association offers. It provides insights into how to get started in each event. The guide is not a rules document, but, instead, a tool for understanding the fundamentals of events. There is no document that could adequately explain the in's and out's of every event. Getting to tournaments is the best way to learn about the intricacies of an event. Therefore, this guide is intended to help members get a performance up on its feet and to its first set of tournaments.

The guide is not an authoritative source on how speech and debate events should be done. Rather, the materials offered are suggestions for how to get started. The ideas presented are offered by past competitors and coaches to orient members to the events. While the suggestions offered are well thought out and tested, there are innumerable ways people may begin a speech, case, or interpretation.

The most important advice we can offer is simple. Do your best! This means that you should do your best to practice, get to a tournament, and reflect upon your experiences. Speech and debate is a journey. Enjoy the process!

Table of Contents

Expository Speaking

At a Glance	1
Competition Guide	2

Extemporaneous Commentary

At a Glance	5
Competition Guide	6

Poetry

At a Glance	9
Competition Guide	10

Prose

At a Glance	14
Competition Guide	15

Storytelling

At a Glance	19
Competition Guide	20

Extemporaneous Debate

At a Glance	24
Competition Guide	25



An Introduction to 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 Speaking 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.

Considerations for Selecting a Topic

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 of 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'?

Traits of Successful Expository Speakers

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

- Articulate
- Process oriented
- Inquisitive
- Engaging
- Personable
- Enjoys research
- Passionate about writing
- Creative

Examples of Past Expository Topics

- Fibonacci
- Roller coaster design
- Concussions
- AED
- Lipitor
- Fitbit
- Corinthians

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive & educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Expository, we have videos of past national final round performances. We produce many other general public speaking resources, such as webinars, activities for class or practice, and more! 

Find Your Voice

"I enjoyed Expository because it didn't require the speaker to convince the audience of anything other than how exciting their topic was. Any speech that explores implications usually involves some level of individualized analysis, which keeps topics that are otherwise redundant fresh."

— Josh Planos, Association Alum

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Expository



Basic Understandings

Expository speaking is an informative speech that is five minutes long without the use of a visual aid (note: some tournaments permit the use of visual aids but at Nationals none are used). 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 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 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. To do this 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 introductions, 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 speaking 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.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Expository



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

INTRO • 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 your 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. Here are a couple of specific examples using the same topic:

Let's say that a student wants to tell us about one of the many popular products to help us manage our health, such as Fitbit's Activity Tracker. The student's thesis might suggest that these health products have a tremendous impact on an individual's own health as well as impacting societal awareness of health care. The first point may be what it is and how it is used so that we understand the specific product better. The student may then tell us about how the technology itself works, such as how it measures and reports vital health statistics. The third point might be how these health products are impacting society.

This is just one way of organizing a speech like this. The student might want to put more emphasis on the impact on society. Thus, the student might choose to use one point to note the impact of these products (sales numbers and projections, for example), another to explain how our healthcare costs may go down as a result of using these products, and a third point might be to explain what will happen with these products in the future. As you can see,

the topic might be the same, but these two speeches will be quite different from each other because of the choices made in the body of the speech.



Standing it Up/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 a muscle and the more that a muscle is used stronger it becomes. Likewise, the more time memorizing is practiced, the better the student becomes.

Here are some thoughts for the student regarding memorization: The more cues you give your brain to aid memorization the better. Sitting down 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. You can include notes on gestures and movement. Then, tape it to a wall and actively memorize. Read the lines aloud moving with them as indicated by your notes. Sometimes, it's helpful to do this in front of a mirror, so you can evaluate the effectiveness of your choices. It is helpful to memorize a paragraph at a time, building from the previous paragraph. 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 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

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Expository



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 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. 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.

Even the most talented of performers need practice! Remind students to respect the time and resources of coaches and the school. If they give it their best effort every day, they will be successful no matter the tournament outcome.



Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If you've put the legwork in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Walk into the 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 getting up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: if your round is 45 minutes long, you are only speaking for 5 of those minutes. The remaining minutes are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

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

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

Resources

Many resources can be found on your dashboard at www.speechanddebate.org. For Expository speaking we have final round videos from Nationals, as well as an informative article by Connie Link. Additionally, the textbook on *Original Oratory*, by Ashley Mack, has a number of useful resources that would help expository students.

An Introduction to Extemporaneous Commentary



Event Description

Extemporaneous Commentary is a public speaking event where students draw topics on a range of societal, political, historic, or popular interest and in 20 minutes prepare a five minute speech which responds to the selected prompt. Students may consult articles and evidence during their preparation time. During the speech itself students are seated behind a desk or table and provide perspective on the given topic. Typically students advocate for a particular position, argument, or opinion during their five minutes, citing sources in the development of the speech for support.

Considerations for Commentary

While most students in Commentary are interested in current events, often the topics have a unique twist or perspective based upon the wording or phrasing. Participants in this event may exhibit creativity or exercise their sense of humor as a result. A prompt could be a question, such as “Who’s afraid of the big bad unions?”, or a single word, such as “Oprah.” Students in Commentary should read widely, from news articles to editorials and columns, with a variety of different sources expressing a range of opinions. In addition to current events, Commentary students often enjoy history, philosophy, popular culture, and discussing social issues.

Traits of Successful Commentators

When considering what event you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an

event, here are some traits of successful Commentary students to keep in mind:

- Enjoys discussion of current events
- Willing to argue a range of social and political issues
- Dynamic verbal delivery skills
- Passionate in expressing opinions
- Open-minded
- Confident
- Engages an audience

Samples of Past Commentary Prompts

- The Final Glass Ceiling
- World War I, Meet The Year 2014
- Talented People or Talentless Pretenders
- The Rogue States and Their Leaders
- Education...Schmeducation
- The Wild, Wild World of Sports
- Shhh! Mother Earth Speaks!
- Political blunders, bleeps, and boo-boos

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive & educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Extemp Commentary, we have videos of past national final round performances. We have a full-length textbook on Extemporaneous Speaking with many exercises and practices that can be cross-applied to Commentary. We also have a webinar specifically designed for comparing Commentary and Extemporaneous Speaking, in addition to many other general competition and coaching resources, such as webinars, activities for class or practice, and more! 

Find Your Voice

Through extemporaneous commentary, I was provided an experience that taught artful presentation and intense competition, and introduced me to countless brilliant individuals - an experience that culminated in one of the grandest moments of my life, a national championship.”

— Will Thompson, Association Alum

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Extemporaneous Commentary



Basic Understandings

Extemp Commentary, often simply called Commentary, is an original speech created as a result of a prompt such as a question, statement, or single word/short phrase. Topics for the prompt are drawn from historic, social, political, and popular contexts. Students report to a preparation room where all of the Commentators gather at tables, set out their files, and await their turn to draw prompts. 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 prompts. The student will then select one of those, return the other two, and prepare for 20 minutes to deliver a speech responding to the chosen prompt. When prep time is up, the student reports to the competition room to deliver a 5 minute speech.

Students may access research brought with them to the tournament during the preparation period. Research may take paper or electronic form. During preparation time, students review their files on the prompt 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 must present from a seated position and typically speak with a table or desk in front of them. The emphasis of Commentary is centered upon advocacy and argumentation. Much like a TV news commentary or editorial, students present an opinion or viewpoint which takes a position on the topic presented and defends that position with analysis and supporting material. The speech is presented from memory.

Research

Students should read widely and file articles frequently, both on topics of personal interest as well as on issues that they struggle to understand. Because the topics are so diverse and can be framed in many ways, students should keep up the news by reading print or online versions of various newspapers and magazines. Commentators should spend considerable time reviewing



both editorials (position of a publication, editor, or editorial board) and columns (opinion pieces written by columnists). Students may encounter the phrase “op-ed” for opinion or editorial sections of websites and print material. Columnists in particular often focus their writing on specific issues such as education, the environment, or government policy. Students not only learn a lot about issues but also identify effective means of establishing an opinion and supporting it. Students should take care to read international sources from all parts of the globe to examine a wide array of perspectives and ideas.

There are various methods to organizing team Commentary files depending upon the format chosen. Students should file news articles and opinion pieces from reputable newspapers, magazines, and electronic resources. Students may not access the Internet while they are in 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 should cite sources during their speeches. Typically, the name of the source and date are a minimal requirement, although sometimes speakers may want to provide additional source credibility. For example, “I agree with Janet Yellen, chair of the Federal Reserve, who argues in a column in *The New York Times* of September 6, 2014, that even more job creation is needed to....”

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Extemporaneous Commentary



Structural Components

As there is such a range of prompts used in Commentary, students have a great degree of freedom in terms of choices they may make for a given speech. Although sources are used to support the students' ideas, the focus is on advancing a perspective and providing strong arguments for that point of view.

Let's look at an example to see how we might be able to structure a Commentary. We'll use the prompt of "France and Germany: BFFs." This prompt clearly wants the student to examine the relationship between the two countries. However, within that prompt there are many different perspectives that could be forwarded. A student might look at their political impact on Europe and argue that, indeed, these two countries are destined to be best friends forever. Another student might argue that they have not been best friends in the past and that their relationship will eventually dissolve. Still another might argue that they are really "frenemies" based upon a need to appear as friends in public but in fact many of their economic policies are not in alignment with each other.

Any of these perspectives can be advanced provided students provide arguments in support of their position. Let's take the "frenemies" response. A student might argue in the first point that France needs to be friends with Germany due to Germany's powerful economy and political clout. The student might argue in the second point that they will in reality be enemies as long as they take opposing views on so many economic and foreign policy issues, such as austerity measures and Europe's role in conflicts such as those in the Middle East.

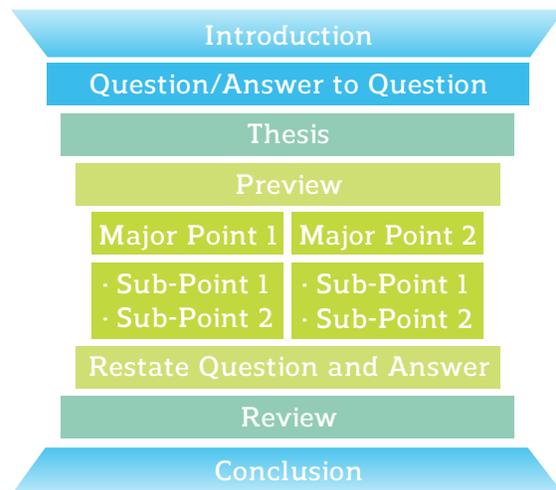
Students are not judged on how "right" their perspectives are; instead, students are evaluated based upon their ability to create a strong thesis with appropriate arguments in their sub-points and sufficient evidence to back up their claims.

Organizing

Most Commentary speeches feature an introduction that gains the audience's attention, sets up the speech, and transitions to the prompt the student selected.

This is followed by a thesis statement for the speech which expresses the opinion being advanced by the Commentator. 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. Speeches also typically feature a review of the major points, a restatement of the prompt and thesis, 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:



Standing it Up/Practicing

Commentators need to start with the basics. Beginners should spend considerable time reading credible news sources on a range of topics. Beginners should receive practice prompts and take the time to review them, talk through potential responses, and focus on creating excellent thesis statements.

Beginners could start practices with a notecard and perhaps focus on one major point. A great beginning strategy for Commentary speakers is to deliver their first speech with unlimited prep time. Following this presentation, coaches can gradually reduce the amount of prep time used until the speaker reaches 20 minutes.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Extemporaneous Commentary



It is easy for students to be intimidated by Commentary. As with any skill, practicing will take some of the anxiety out of approaching the event. Students should not wait to stand it up (or, in the case of Commentary, sit it down) -- if the student knows a lot about a particular topic of interest, speech practices can take place right away. Students do not have to know everything about every possible prompt to get started. After a number of practices, students can spend time working on language selection, smoothing out their verbal delivery, and filling in the gaps of their knowledge base.

Performance Tips

Due to the nature of Commentary, competitors will find that each round is unique. Some questions are incredibly challenging, either due to the specific wording or lack of background knowledge of the topic for the extemper, and others seem incredibly easy. Every competitor will encounter a round where there simply are no files on a given topic. Commentary speakers need to accept that some rounds are excellent and others are not and to learn from every speech. Some advice for students:

Ask questions. If you don't understand a topic area or prompt, be sure to ask coaches, teachers, and teammates. The unique, often "tongue-in-cheek," phrasing of

Commentary prompts may lead to some interesting points of analysis. Ask if you are unsure!

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

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

Line-by-line. Save your notes from your speeches and revisit them. Give sections of speeches, or entire speeches, over and over again to improve argument quality and language considerations. If you struggle with vocalized pauses and fillers, such as uhms and likes, you can redo lines of your speech repeatedly. Memorize one point of your speech at a time so that you get comfortable with the process of memorizing both the argument as well as source citations.

Resources

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive & educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Extemp Commentary, we have videos of past national final round performances. We have a full-length textbook on Extemporaneous Speaking with many exercises and practices that can be cross-applied to Commentary. We also have a webinar specifically designed for comparing Commentary and Extemporaneous Speaking, in addition to many other general competition and coaching resources, such as webinars, activities for class or practice, and more! The webinar, textbook, final rounds, and more can be found on your dashboard at www.speechanddebate.org.

An Introduction to Poetry (POE)



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Event Description

Using a selection or selections of literature, students provide an interpretation of Poetry with a time limit of five 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, pattern, or structure, such as iambic pentameter). 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.

Considerations for Selecting Poetic Literature

Students in Poetry Interpretation may choose literature on topics that are serious, humorous, non-linear, ethereal, or thought-provoking -- the key is to choose Poetry that works 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

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive & educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Poetry Interpretation, we have videos of past national final round performances at the middle and high school levels. We have a full-length textbook on Oral Interpretation of Literature. We also have many other interpretation resources, such as webinars, activities for class or practice, and more!

Find Your Voice

When all words fail to express what you want to say, Poetry has the kind of language that can. It's a beautiful challenge that you can take in any direction, composing an arrangement that speaks to you yet also creates discussion among your audience. When you nail that performance, it's the best feeling in the world."

— Allison Macknick, Association Alum

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Poetry



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 a rhythmic flow but lacks formal rhyme or meter (examples include spoken word or slam Poetry).

As there are so many different types of Poetry that can be performed, it is important to observe rounds to see what other students and teams are using. The Association has final rounds of Poetry from both the high school and middle school level to review. Local and regional tournaments may vary in their selection of Poetry to perform.

Research

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. A very important question to ask: Is the content appropriate for general, middle school audiences?



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Poetry



Structural Components

Your **cutting** is the 5 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*). *Note that these times are approximations.

TEASER • 0:00 – 0:30

Previews the topic, theme, and mood through selected poems. Teasers are not required.

Example:

Poem #1 (15 seconds)

Poem #2 (15 seconds)

INTRO • 0:30-1:00

The student, in his/her own words, discusses the literature. Must be memorized and include titles and authors.

EXPOSITION • 1:00-2:30

Develops all of the pieces, themes, and ideas.

Example:

Poem #2 (20 seconds)

Poem #1 (25 seconds)

Poem #3 (20 seconds)

Poem #2 (15 seconds)

BUILD TO CLIMAX / CLIMAX • 3:30-4:30

Poetry changes pace, tone, volume as it builds. Creates emotional peak of the performance. Student continues to go from one poem to the next.

RESOLUTION • 4:30-5:00

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 Poetry 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

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Poetry



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!

Standing it Up/Practicing

You have done a lot of work to get to this point, but you are now ready for the reward -- stand it up! 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 it multiple times. 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 that you can make adjustments after the practice session.

Students may want to practice one complete poem before going on to the next, even if it is split up in the actual script, so that the students have a clear understanding of each poem's vocal quality, intonation, and physical representations. After mastering each of the poems, the student can move on to the script. Keeping each poem consistent from page turn to page turn is a tremendous challenge but very rewarding when it all comes together!

Beginning interpers often struggle with bookwork. It can feel very 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.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

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 practices. Work on analysis of language, tone, mood, rhythm, and flow. 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 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.

The student is now ready to do some performances in front of other students, coaches, or even an audience. Attend tournaments and review ballots. 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.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Poetry



Even the most naturally talented of performers need 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.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If you've put the legwork in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Walk 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 getting up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: if your round is an hour long, you are only speaking for 5 of those minutes. The remaining minutes are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

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

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

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman.

They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Watch final round videos of Poetry Interpretation from past Middle School Nationals.

Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but keep your eyes peeled for effective bookwork, cutting, and performance techniques. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? The best way to learn Poetry Interpretation, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

The textbook, final rounds, and more can be found on www.speechanddebate.org.

An Introduction to Prose (PRO)



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Event Description

Using short story, parts of a novel, or other published work of prose, students provide an interpretation of one or more selections with a time limit of five minutes, including introduction. Typically a single piece of literature, Prose 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.

Considerations for Selecting Prose Literature

Students in Prose Interpretation may choose literature on topics that are serious, humorous, mysterious, thought-provoking -- the key is to choose Prose 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.

Traits of Successful Prose Performers

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

- Expressive
- Excellent verbal and physical control
- Emotional maturity
- Enjoys reading and performing
- Confident
- Engages an audience

Examples of Past Prose Titles

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

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive & educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Prose Interpretation, we have videos of past national final round performances at the middle and high school levels. We have a full-length textbook on Oral Interpretation of Literature. We also have many other interpretation resources, such as webinars, activities for class or practice, and more!

Find Your Voice

"I love Prose because it's all about connecting to the audience. I want them to care about a story and connect with it on a very emotional and personal level. A good Prose lets you suspend time for a few minutes and just enjoy the ride."

— Emily Anderson, Association Alum

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. 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, many 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 -- how many characters are there? Is an accent called for in the literature? Is it set in a place and time the 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 5 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 him or herself 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.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Prose



Structural Components

Your **cutting** is the 5 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*).

*Note that these times are approximations.

TEASER • 0:00 – 0:30

Previews the topic and mood of the selected literature. Teasers are not required.

INTRO • 0:30-1:00

The student, in his/her own words, discusses the literature. Must be memorized and include the title and author.

EXPOSITION & INCITING INCIDENT • 1:00 –2:30

Introduces characters and setting. Sends the conflict into motion.

RISING ACTION & CLIMAX • 2:30 – 4:30

Complicates the conflict. Creates emotional peak of the performance.

FALLING ACTION & RESOLUTION • 4:30-5:00

Resolves the conflict . Concludes the story.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

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.

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

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Prose



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.

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 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!

Standing it Up/Practicing

You have done a lot of work to get to this point, but you are now ready for the reward -- stand it up! 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 that you can make adjustments after the practice session.

Beginning interpers often struggle with bookwork. It can feel very 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 practices. 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, 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 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.

The student is now ready to do some performances in front of other students, coaches, or even an audience. Attend tournaments and review ballots. 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 need 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.



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Prose



photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If you've put the legwork in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Walk 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 getting up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: if your round is an hour long, you are only speaking for five of those minutes. The remaining minutes are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will inspire you, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new

ideas. It's also nice to know who you competed against in each round. This way, you have a better understanding of who your competition is. When you review your ballots after the tournament, you can go back through your notebook and compare your ballots to your notes.

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

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Watch final round videos of Prose Interpretation from past Middle School Nationals. Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but keep your eyes peeled for effective bookwork, cutting, and performance techniques. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? The best way to learn Prose Interpretation, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

The textbook, final rounds, and more can be found on www.speechanddebate.org.

An Introduction to Storytelling (STO)



Event Description

Students select a published story that meets a specified theme and perform the story for no more than 5 minutes. 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.

Considerations for Selecting Stories

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. Considerations for an appropriate piece include the student's personality, physical and vocal performance range, and school standards.

Traits of Successful Storytellers

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

- Animated
- Outgoing
- High energy
- Captivating
- Enjoys performing
- Confident
- Engages an audience
- Enjoys working with children

Examples of Past Storytelling Themes

- Thriller and Mystery
- Americana
- Heroism
- Native American Tales
- Fairy Tales
- Tales of Adventure
- Campfire Stories

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive & educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Storytelling, we have videos of past national final round performances at the middle and high school levels. We have a webinar specifically designed for Storytelling competition. We have a full-length textbook on Oral Interpretation of Literature in addition to many other general interpretation resources, such as webinars, activities for class or practice, and more! 

Find Your Voice

What I love about storytelling is it lets a competitor be goofy. Not just funny but outlandishly goofy. There's seldom a moment where you have to worry if something 'makes sense.' Most of the stories used in competition have plot lines that suspend reality in the first place. So, if I have a script with a talking iguana and I want to make him Australian, it works. I love how crazy it can get."

— Emma Wilczynski, Association Alum

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Storytelling



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 and teams are using. The Association has final rounds of Storytelling from both the high school and middle school level to review. Local and regional tournaments may vary in the selection of stories performed.

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.

Often one of the most difficult tasks is finding a piece that fits the theme. 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 your research.



Structural Components

Your *cutting* is the 5 minute portion of the story you are performing. The cutting consists of your arrangement of 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*). *Note that these times are approximations.

TEASER • 0:00 – 0:30

Previews the story, characters, and style of the selected literature. Teasers are not required.

INTRO • 0:30 – 1:00

The student, in his/her own words, discusses the literature. Must be memorized and include the title and author.

EXPOSITION & INCITING INCIDENT • 1:00 – 2:30

Engages the audience in character, setting, and theme. Sends the conflict into motion.

RISING ACTION & CLIMAX • 2:30 – 4:15

Complicates the conflict. Creates emotional peak of the performance.

FALLING ACTION & RESOLUTION • 4:15 – 5:00

Resolves the conflict. Concludes the story.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Storytelling



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 derived from the telling of the story. Blocking for the sake of blocking is not necessary. Some stories call for the performers to have more limited movement as the emphasis is on 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 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 becomes 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 notes 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.



Standing it Up/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.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Storytelling



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. Sitting down 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. Sometimes, it's helpful to do this in front of a mirror, so you can evaluate the effectiveness of your movements. It is helpful to memorize a paragraph at a time, building off of the paragraph that came before. This will significantly decrease the time it takes to memorize your performance.

Once memorized, you and your coach can then build off of the choices you've made for your 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 timed 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 that moment. Make sure the performance is within the time limits.

The student is now ready to do some performances in front of other students, coaches, or even an audience. Attend tournaments and review ballots. 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 need 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.



Performance Tips

It may sound cliché, but confidence is key! If you've put the legwork in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Walk 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 getting up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: if your round is 45 minutes long, you are only speaking for 5 of those minutes. The remaining minutes are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Storytelling



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

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



Resources

We have many great resources for Storytelling, including a webinar specific to helping students in middle school select pieces, get ready for the tournament, and tips for competition. A great general source for interpretation strategies is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Watch final round videos of Storytelling from past Middle School Nationals. Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but keep your eyes peeled for effective blocking, cutting, and performance techniques. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? The best way to learn Storytelling, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

The textbook, final rounds, and more can be found on www.speechanddebate.org.

An Introduction to Extemporaneous Debate



Event Description

Extemporaneous Debate is a supplemental event at the National Speech & Debate Tournament. Students compete in a one-on-one format with limited prep time to prepare for the topic they are to debate. Students present arguments and engage in rebuttals, however, unlike other common debate events, students debate a number of topics, as opposed to a single topic for the entire tournament. Each round students are presented a unique resolution. They are given a minimum of thirty minutes to prepare for the round. The use of evidence is permitted, but not a focal point due to the limited time available to prepare a case for the round.

Considerations for Extemporaneous Debate

Students who are interested in doing Extemporaneous Debate should be well versed in various topics since the resolutions for the debate change round to round. Students should be able to think quickly on their feet and work under time restrictions. Any student who does debate or extemp is naturally drawn to Extemporaneous Debate. However, the event is not something that other public speakers or interpers should shy away from. Students who are knowledgeable, thoughtful, and able to process ideas quickly to formulate positions would find the event to be challenging and rewarding.

Traits of Successful Extemp Debaters

When considering what event to choose, or which direction to point a student selecting an event, here are some traits of successful Extemp Debate students to keep in mind:

- Analytical
- Broad knowledge base
- Confident
- Persuasive speaker
- Quick thinker
- Independent
- Logical thinker

Examples of Past Extemp Debate Topics

- Resolved that the Affordable Care Act should be repealed.
- Resolved that marijuana use should be decriminalized.
- Resolved that the US should execute its planned troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- Resolved that Congress should have the right to limit freedom of expression by corporations, associations, and unions.
- Resolved that the implementation of the Common Core will improve public education in the US.
- Resolved that the deal to free Bowe Bergdahl was unjustified.
- Resolved that Congress should include a “pathway to citizenship” as part of immigration reform.
- Resolved that American businesses should have the right to deny workers the right to unionize.
- Resolved that the US federal government should increase regulations on GMOs.
- Resolved that the US federal government should stop providing loans for college tuition.

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive & educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. The Association provides webinars and final round recordings specific to Extemporaneous Debate. 

Find Your Voice

Extemp debate imparted onto me, the importance of having to be well read, and open minded about a wide variety of topics. The event also helped me work on my word economy and efficiency when discussing important points in every day conversation. Finally, the compressed format, and scope of the topics also gave me an opportunity to engage in really enjoyable debate on topics that I would never have been able to without it.”

— James Stage, Association Alum

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Extemporaneous Debate



Basic Understandings

Extemporaneous Debate is a one-on-one format that is unique from other events offered by the National Speech & Debate Association. During this limited prep debate event, students are only guaranteed thirty minutes to prepare for their round once the topic is released. There are instances when debaters may get more than thirty minutes, but never less. Debaters are either in favor of the resolution or against the resolution and will be assigned to a particular side by a computer. The debater affirming the topic is known as the proposition debater, where the debater negating the topic is known as the opposition debater. Debaters present their positions on the topic and engage in cross-examination and rebuttals.

Research

Since students have limited time to prepare for a topic, it is important that they are efficient with any research they wish to conduct prior to the round beginning. Students should keep copies of any of the research they use in rounds and be sure to have proper citations with the evidence used. While debaters may look at journals or peer reviewed studies, a limited prep event would make that type of research more difficult. Newspaper articles, think tanks, or credible websites may be the most efficient means of conducting your research. Since time is limited it would make sense that the focus would be less on research and more on brainstorming and generating ideas. Students may consider filing some research in advance, similar to an extemper, so that they would already have reputable research on hand for various topics that could be addressed. Students are expected to act in accordance with the Association's LD, PF, and Policy rules on evidence in debate if they elect to use authoritative sources in the round.

Structural Components

All speeches are two minutes in length and all speech times are protected (a speaker may not be interrupted by the other speaker or by the judge). The proposition debater must affirm the resolution by presenting and defending a sufficient case for the resolution. The opposition debater must oppose the resolution and/

or the proposition debater's case. The round will have constructives, rebuttals, cross examination, and built in prep time.

Speech	Time Limit	Responsibility of Debater
Proposition Constructive	2 min	The debater in favor of the resolution presents his or her case/position in support of the topic.
Cross Examination of Proposition	1 min	The opposition debater asks the proposition questions.
Opposition Constructive	2 min	The debater against the resolution or the proposition's case presents his or her case/position.
Cross Examination of Opposition	1 min	The proposition debater asks the opposition questions.
Mandatory Prep Time	1 min	Both debaters have one minute to prepare their rebuttals.
Proposition Rebuttal	2 min	The proposition debater refutes the main idea of the opposition and supports their main ideas.
Opposition Rebuttal	2 min	The opposition debater refutes the main idea of the proposition and supports their main ideas.
Mandatory Prep Time	1 min	Both debaters have one minute to prepare their rebuttals.
Proposition Rebuttal	2 min	In this final speech the proposition crystallizes the round for the judge and tries to establish sufficient reason for a vote in favor of the resolution.
Opposition Rebuttal	2 min	In this final speech the opposition crystallizes the round for the judge and tries to establish sufficient reason for a vote against the proposition's case and/or the resolution.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Extemporaneous Debate



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. Many students in extemporaneous debate will outline a position, as opposed to writing out a case verbatim. Since the case being read is only two minutes it is important for the debater to efficiently develop their ideas. A thesis statement may be appropriate at the start of a case with well structured and signposted arguments that directly link back to said thesis. Similar to contentions in other debate events or main points in extemp, each main point in the case should be clearly indicated and organized.

Refutations

Extemporaneous debate is more than just cases! 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 and the thesis they presented.

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 that are presented and refuted in the round. This note-taking approach requires students to abbreviate terms, phrases, and ideas so that they can get as much of the debate written down as possible. Here are some tips:



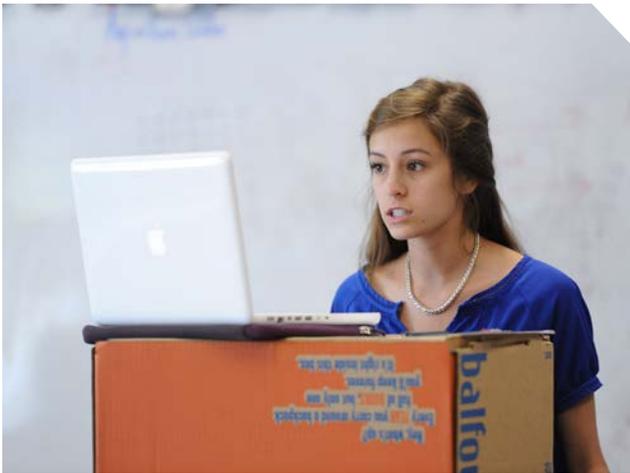
- Two sheets of paper. One page will be for anything said about the proposition, the other for anything said about the opposition. Each speech in the round will receive its own column on these pages.
- At least one pen, but we recommend two, in different colors, one for each side.

Supplemental and Consolation Events Guide

Extemporaneous Debate



- If your opponent is speaking, you should be writing (initially, do not try and determine what is or isn't important - just get as much down as possible)
- Label the top of each column on the proposition flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.
- Label the top of each column on the opposition flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.



Standing it Up/Practicing

It is a great idea to do practice rounds before going to your first tournament. As these are such short speeches, it might appear at first that there will not be enough time to develop arguments. You will discover that you can be very efficient and focused with your language to make every second count. This is a skill that must be practiced to be fully developed. The first round could be a stop and go round where a coach or observer stops you when there's a missed opportunity for a strong argument 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. This is a great time to work on language choices and time management. Additionally, since the tournament only guarantees thirty minutes of prep time, students should practice under those conditions. A student should work on vocal 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.

Take feedback from judges as opportunities to improve. If judges provide oral feedback, take notes on what they share to review with your coach. Finally, do not fixate on the outcome of a round - focusing on wins and losses won't lead to greater success!

Resources

Many resources can be found on your dashboard at www.speechanddebate.org. For Extemporaneous Debate we have webinars and final round performances. As a debate event many of the resources for LD, PF, Policy, or Congress would also apply. Textbooks for the various events go through argumentation practices that would be effective in Extemporaneous Debate. The topic analysis that is provided on current events or debate topics would be worthwhile as well for Extemporaneous Debate. Take advantage of the myriad of resources available through the Association.