

PROSE & POETRY

FROM THE GROUND UP

The basics of UIL Prose and Poetry Interpretation
and the categories that we follow

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Helpful Resources- UIL

- ▣ UIL Constitution and Contest Rules
 - All rules/descriptors in it are binding
- ▣ UIL Prose & Poetry Handbook
 - Anything in it is considered as binding as the C&CR
- ▣ UIL Speech Site Online
 - Anything on it is considered as binding as the C&CR
 - THE LEAGUER (UIL online magazine/newsletter)
 - Jana Riggins- UIL State Speech Director
 - UIL State Prose/Poetry Advisory Committee Members
 - Interp FAQ's online and in the handbook
 - www.uiltexas.org

Other Helpful Resources

- ▣ Veteran Interp Coaches
- ▣ Your School Librarian
- ▣ Your Local Town Librarian
- ▣ College and University Librarians
- ▣ Brick-and-Mortar Book Stores
- ▣ Amazon.com
- ▣ PoetryFoundation.org
- ▣ Library of Congress Online www.loc.org
- ▣ Other Online Sources

CATEGORIES & RULES

In UIL Prose and Poetry interpretation, there are certain rules that apply to both genres:

- ▣ You MUST choose EITHER poetry or prose but not both.
- ▣ You MUST prepare BOTH an A and a B Category selection.
- ▣ You MUST follow EXACTLY what the category descriptors and rules say to use/do for the various categories.
- ▣ You MUST understand and provide required documentation to be able to compete.
- ▣ You MUST have the selections formatted and in a separate folder/binder from the original source
- ▣ You MUST have a memorized introduction for each category.
- ▣ You MUST complete the intro and literature within 7 minutes with NO grace period.
- ▣ You MUST be academically eligible to participate.
- ▣ You MUST NOT use the same author/poet in both categories.
- ▣ You MUST NOT use props or costumes.

Category A Prose

“Inspiring My Journey”

- ▣ Heroes/heroines or survivors
- ▣ PROSE ONLY- Any type of traditional prose (fiction or non-fiction) NO POETRY
- ▣ DOCUMENTATION- Published, printed material
 - Original Source
 - Copies
 - ▣ Book Cover
 - ▣ Publication Pages
 - ▣ Table of Contents (if available)
 - ▣ First Page of the Selection
 - ▣ Online Printout From a UIL-Approved Site With URL
 - Social Media is NOT UIL-Approved
 - Wikipedia and the like ARE NOT ALLOWED
 - Check online sources for THEIR sources to make sure they are allowable. If not, then the site is not, either.
 - ▣ Online Printout of LOC with URL in the header or footer
- ▣ A SINGLE WORK written by one or more authors or by an anonymous author
 - Complete shorter selection or excerpts (cuttings) of a longer selection
- ▣ No speeches, plays, or screenplays, or material not documentable as prose
- ▣ Only incidental use of foreign language, if used at all
- ▣ Introduction explains how the reader defines hero/heroine/survivor and how this piece applies to that definition
 - Introduction states author(s)
 - Introduction state title
- ▣ No use of this selection’s author(s) in Category B

Category B Prose

“Expanding the Journey”

- A program of AT LEAST 2 and UP TO 4 *different* traditional and nontraditional prose sources based on a THEME of the reader’s choice (NO POETRY)
- FOR THIS CATEGORY ONLY, “traditional “ prose can be defined as fiction, non-fiction, news, speeches, and essays, but students may use A SINGLE “nontraditional prose source” as well.
 - Sources may be a complete shorter selections or excerpts from longer selections
 - Sources MUST be of a variety of types, but only one “non-traditional” script source may be used.
 - Sources may be printed/published, online, or transcribed speeches, plays, radio shows, and screenplays, but the majority of the piece should be from at least one “traditional” fiction and/or nonfiction prose source.
- Verbal transitions may be used.
- Anonymous authors are allowed.
- Intro must state the theme.
- No form of poetry, song lyrics, musicals, jokes, commercials, or plays /novels in verse may be used as a source.
- Weaving (must be stated in the intro) or stacking are both acceptable forms of organization of the literature.
- Original verbal transitions may be used but SHOULD NOT be the majority of the piece.
- Intro states titles and authors (if available) of EACH piece of literature used.
- DOCUMENTATION- A list of each source and the author (s) if available, provided for the contest director and each judge ... PLAN AHEAD AND BE PREPARED!!!!
- No use of this selection’s authors in Category A

Category A Poetry

“Journey Through Time”

- Thematic program examining a decade(s) and/or social or political movement through poetry (NO PROSE)
- Two or more poems or excerpts of two or more poems
- Two or more poets
- DOCUMENTATION- Published/printed in hardcopy *See Prose A for rules on what is/isn't considered acceptable. They cross-apply. Self-published poetry easily available to the public is acceptable as well, but do your homework.
- Woven or stacked organization
 - If weaving, state it in the intro
- Verbal or nonverbal transitions or both are acceptable
- Introduction MUST state the movement or time period.
 - Intro states poets
 - Intro states titles
- Song lyrics MAY ONLY be used as brief transitions, unless you can document that they have been published in hard copy and NOT explicitly as lyrics.
- Single, multiple, or anonymous poets are permissible
- No use of this selection's poets in Category B

Category B Poetry

“Journey With Poets”

- ❑ Source material MUST be from a poet (or poets) whose BIOGRAPHY (biographies) appear on PoetryFoundation.org.
- ❑ DOCUMENTATION- The printed *biography (biographies)* from PoetryFoundation.org with URL at header or footer
- ❑ Sources may be complete poem(s) or excerpts of poem(s) ONLY (NO PROSE)
- ❑ Woven or stacked organization
 - If weaving, state it in the intro
- ❑ Intro
 - Titles
 - Poet(s) Name(s)
- ❑ Poetry used in this category may appear on the PoetryFoundation.org website, or it may be found in a published/printed source, or it may be found online, as long as the poet has a biography on the site.
- ❑ No use of Category A poets in this category.

BIG RESTRICTION!!!

Looking ahead...

- ▣ Students may not perform the same literature more than once at the State Meet, so the best thing to do for rules and to grow a performer's abilities and talents is to find and perform new material each year.
 - Read, read, read
 - Listen, listen, listen
 - Cut, cut, cut
 - Collect, collect, collect

WHERE DO I FIND STUFF???

- ▣ Book Stores
- ▣ Used Book Stores
- ▣ Online Resources- MUCH more to come...
- ▣ Estate/Garage Sales
- ▣ City Libraries
- ▣ High School Libraries
- ▣ College Libraries
- ▣ College Book Stores
- ▣ College Libraries
- ▣ Audio Resources
- ▣ Newspaper
- ▣ Magazines
- ▣ Television- Talk Shows, News Shows, etc

Online Resources? WHAT???

- ▣ Amazon.com has “You may also like”
 - #addictive!
 - “Look Inside” Feature ☺
- ▣ Google Books Online
- ▣ Poetry Foundation Site and App
- ▣ Write Bloody Press
- ▣ PoetrySlam.com
- ▣ Top 10 Lists/Best Seller Lists Online & Hardcopy
- ▣ Author/Poet Official Sites
- ▣ Interp Sites
- ▣ Etc (I know! Right??)

Accessible Work & Ideas

Start your own library

- Buy books little by little
- Loan books out to kids
- Make books accessible in your classroom
- Judge a book by its cover at a store or online
- Amazon's used option makes books CHEAP!!!
- ▣ Encourage students to read and find their own interests with literature and writers that fit their own personalities and physicality.
- ▣ Students CAN DO THIS!!!

Selecting Literature

Considerations

- ❑ Consider Capabilities
- ❑ Consider Physicality of Reader and Characters
- ❑ Consider Natural Talents
- ❑ Consider Literature's Personal Significance to the Reader
- ❑ Consider Literary Merit
- ❑ Consider Category Requirements
- ❑ Consider Story Arc
- ❑ Consider Audience
- ❑ Consider New Material
- ❑ Consider Old Classics (With Reservations)
- ❑ Consider Likes/Dislikes of the Reader
- ❑ Consider Cultural Significance and Relevance

Selecting Literature

Things to Avoid

- ❑ Avoid Selections “That Win” (Unless You Can Make It Your Own)
- ❑ Avoid Tired Old Pieces (See Above)
- ❑ Avoid Literature That Seems Too Juvenile
- ❑ Avoid Pieces That Are “Just Because My Coach Thinks It’s Good” (Unless You Truly Like It)
- ❑ Avoid Pieces You Cannot Understand
- ❑ Avoid Pieces You Don’t Relate To
- ❑ Avoid Pieces You “Just Don’t Like”

Understanding the Literature

- ▣ Read/know/understand the original source material.
 - Whole book
 - Whole story/chapter
 - Whole poem
- ▣ Know where, when, and how the character is talking.
- ▣ Know to whom the narrator is talking and why.
- ▣ Know details about the setting.
- ▣ Know that narration is as important or more important than the dialogue.
- ▣ Know how to pronounce words.
- ▣ Know what phrases, colloquialisms, and “sayings” mean.
- ▣ Know what action is happening.
- ▣ Know how character should sound.
- ▣ Know why this story is being told.
- ▣ Know author/poet intent.

INTRODUCTIONS

- ▣ The intro is more important now than almost any other time in the history of UIL interp.
- ▣ Significant amount of required information (See Category Restrictions/Descriptions)
- ▣ Should be 30 seconds to 1 minute(ish) but should be full of important info and “long enough”
- ▣ No spoilers, but enticing at the same time
- ▣ Closed-book
- ▣ Memorized
- ▣ Preferences for Style of Delivery:
 - Most prefer personal and spontaneous-feeling (Not “performancy”)
 - Some prefer more formal and instructional
- ▣ Preferences for Content:
 - Personal Application
 - Relevancy to Audience
 - Combination
 - Teachable Moment
 - Necessary Requirements

Example

- ▣ Please remember that each Category has its own required content, but in general, this is an example of a good intro in style and form. The category requirements for Prose Category B were chosen for this intro:

I sort of freak out a little bit when I see that car commercial with the lady who hugs the tree with her grandchild. It's supposed to be in memory of the little girl's grandfather and where he and her grandmother first met: at Woodstock. But... All I can think about is the reported half a million flower children, music lovers, and possibly drugged out crazies running around in the mud for the weekend. Not to use an unofficial term, but that just weirds me out. I don't know why it bothers me so much, but honestly, it fascinates me a little bit, too. Can you imagine where music would be today, were it not for that arguably rather insane but completely groundbreaking music festival? And no matter how hard they try, there will never be another one like it, so I think it's time for me to get over my fear of even dirtier-than-usual mud and spotlight what Woodstock meant to America and the world through this woven program featuring the memoir *TAKING WOODSTOCK* by Elliot Tiber, excerpts from the documentary "Woodstock" by Michael Wadleigh, and the novel *LOVE, DAD* by Evan Hunter.

TEASERS

To Tease, Or Not To Tease...

- ▣ Teasers are excerpts from the actual content of the selection that are read just before the memorized intro is delivered.
- ▣ Teasers are not necessary but may be an effective device for building interest.
- ▣ Teasers should appear to be read and not memorized.
- ▣ Teasers should not be too long, or judges will assume the reader has forgotten to deliver the memorized intro.

Cutting Literature

- ▣ 7 minute time period = 700 to 800 words for the ENTIRE selection, including intro and any part of the literature being read.
- ▣ Don't ruin pacing by having too much content left in the cutting.
- ▣ Make a copy of the section(s) of the literature you want to use so you can mark all over it.
- ▣ Cut the literature down to about 5:30 or 6:00 so you have time for a good intro and taking "moments" in the performance
- ▣ Know the piece well enough to do your own cutting.
- ▣ Don't dice and slice all of the narration.
- ▣ Use the story/poem's natural arc...Don't "force it."
- ▣ Don't cut JUST for comedic moments or dramatic situations. Respect the story/poem.
- ▣ Cut "Tag Lines." (He said, she said, they said, etc)
- ▣ Cut unnecessary sub-plots.
- ▣ Read and re-read your cutting as you "shave time" from the piece to make sure it makes sense.
- ▣ Love it, but cut what needs to be cut!

Beats, Scoring, and Page Turning

- ❑ Beats are units of thought (sort of like paragraphs) that help to organize the cutting and formatting for the manuscript. You can have more than one beat per page, but you should not turn the page in the middle of a beat.
- ❑ Scoring is marking the manuscript with notes, symbols, and marks to help the reader know what to do vocally and physically in the performance.
- ❑ Page turns should be unobtrusive, unless you are trying to make them stand out for a technique reason or to underscore an emotion or thought.

Formatting

The “Little Black Book”

- ▣ BlackBookDepot.com or Flatt Stationers, etc
- ▣ Clean and Clear of “Extras”
- ▣ Manuscript
 - 14 to 18 Font
 - Double Spaced
 - Legible font style
 - In “Beats “
 - Landscape Layout & 2-Column Printing
- ▣ Black Binder
 - 6”x9” Size
 - 1” spine with 3 ring mechanisms
 - Slicks/Page Protectors (C-line or LBB)
 - Black card stock cut to fit
 - Beats glued on ONE SIDE ONLY

Characterization

- ▣ Know the Who
 - Age
 - Looks
 - Physicality
 - Back Story
 - Protagonist/ Antagonist/ Supporting Character
- ▣ Know the Objectives (What they WANT)
- ▣ Know the Obstacles (What stand in the way)
- ▣ Know the Tactics (What they will do to get it)
- ▣ Know the Stakes (What the “value” of it is)
- ▣ Know the Subtext (What are they REALLY saying?)

REHEARSING

- ▣ Practice a lot, but don't let it get "stale"
- ▣ Read for lots of different people/audiences
- ▣ Be prepared to read spontaneously
- ▣ Time it, and time it again and again
- ▣ Read in good acoustics (bathrooms work well)
- ▣ Read in front of a mirror (again with bathrooms)
- ▣ Figure out your pacing (Time per page)
- ▣ Lean on your rehearsal techniques and training
- ▣ Mix it up by trying different styles
- ▣ Practice page turns

WHAT TO WEAR

- ▣ Dress to Impress
- ▣ No big/ distracting jewelry, tattoos, nail art, hats, bows, etc
- ▣ Females- Think Power Colors (Black, Navy, Gray, Deep Red, etc)
 - Make up (Classic and not over-the-top)
 - Tailored/Simple/Classic One-Color Dress
 - Skirt Suit
 - Pant Suit
 - Panty Hose (Nude or black, but not tights)- Carry 2 pairs , just in case...
 - Closed-Toed Shoes (Clean and polished, if applicable)
 - Hair pulled/pinned back out of the face
 - Pearls/Pearl Stud Earrings ONLY
- ▣ Males- Think Power Colors
 - Suit
 - Slacks and Jacket
 - Button-Down Solid Dress Shirt
 - Tie (simple, classic color) with tie tack or bar
 - Dress shoes (Leather) & matching belt (Not cowboy boots) Clean and polished
 - Dark Socks

Performance Hints

- Character Focus
 - Narrator Scans
 - Each Character Focused Consistently
 - Use the Spine of the Folder as an “Anchor” and Upper Corners as “Barriers”
- Silence is Golden
- “Coloring” Words and Phrases
- Dialects and Accents
- Showing Age
- Levels
 - Volume
 - Intensity
- Variety
- Pulling the Audience Into the Performance
- Using Audience Members
- Comedic Rule of Three
- Facial Expressions
- Sound Effects
- Gimmicks/Techniques/Singing/Explicit or Offensive Language
- Body Position/Gestures
 - 9 or fewer major gestures
 - Clear body position changes
 - Clear but spontaneous-feeling gestures and positions

Command of the Room

- ❑ Be poised and confident in performance
- ❑ Understand you are being judged inadvertently before you ever stand up or open your mouth to read.
- ❑ Wait for judge(s) to complete remarks on their ballots prior to walking to the front of the room.
- ❑ Take your place, get set, and scan the room with a friendly facial expression.
- ❑ Begin the performance
 - If performing a teaser first, open the binder, look down, and then begin.
 - If giving a memorized intro first, hold the folder in “Diamond Formation.”
 - At the end of either, hold a beat before proceeding.
- ❑ At the end, take a beat or two, and then close the book
- ❑ Take three beats to allow the performance to settle in
- ❑ THEN AND ONLY THEN do you go and sit down!

Manuscript Technique

- ▣ During intro, hold in “Diamond Formation”
- ▣ Smooth Opening Technique
- ▣ Heart-level hold
- ▣ Same hand holds the manuscript, but “loose hand” stays on the manuscript until gesturing.
- ▣ Manuscript stays in place while body moves behind it
- ▣ Manuscript as “prop” - Risky but sometimes done

Acting vs. Interp

The age-old conflict

- ▣ The line between Acting and Interp is sort of like what the Supreme Court Justice said about how to identify inappropriate literature and posting on the web... It is impossible to define clearly, but I know it when I see it.
- ▣ How to help with NOT getting the “you’re acting” note on a ballot:
 - Hold the manuscript still and at a height that allows you to “look” as though you are reading.
 - 80/20 = Ratio of time looking away from the manuscript to create characters and setting, making eye contact with the audience, etc (80%) to time looking down to make it appear as though you truly are reading (20%)
 - Don’t over-gesture and physicalize
 - Be honest, sincere, and natural with characterization
 - Don’t have too many characters (Usually aim for 4 or less...)
 - Watch over-the-top vocalization
 - Even if/when it is memorized, choreograph definite moments in the literature where you look down at the script

At the Tournament...

- ▣ Act confident
- ▣ Look confident
- ▣ Talk confidently
- ▣ ...but don't be a jerk 😊
- ▣ Realize judges are always around, so watch what you say at all times
- ▣ Warm up before going into the room
- ▣ Check to make sure you are “put together” and that your folder is clean and has the correct piece in place before entering the room
- ▣ IN THE ROOM-
 - Be there early, and if cross-entered, be polite about letting judges know and entering and exiting the room
 - Do not chit-chat while in the room, but don't be aloof and rude
 - Write your selection information on the board legibly
 - NO PHONES IN THE ROOM... EVER...

Coaches Advice...

- ▣ Recruit a lot and early
 - Kids with awesome voices
 - Kids who are in-class story tellers and jokesters
 - Kids who have a natural theatricality about them
 - Kids who truly love literature
 - Kids of varying ages
- ▣ Find all necessary documentation BEFORE falling in love with a piece
- ▣ Compete as often as possible at practice meets
- ▣ Don't do this alone, if at all possible... Find other coaches and directors who can help you

WRAPPING IT ALL UP

- ▣ Go for it!
- ▣ Don't be afraid to make a mistake... You will, and that's ok! Sometimes the best stuff comes from the "mistakes."
- ▣ Not all sources produce usable work; not all cut pieces win; not all talented kids compete well every time. IT'S OK!!! Try, try again... 😊
- ▣ PRACTICE!!!
- ▣ Love your literature
- ▣ Have fun, but stay on top of it.