

RULES ARE RULES!

...EXCEPT WHEN THEY'RE NOT!

**EXPLORING THE MYTHS AND REALITIES OF RULES IN
UIL INTERPRETATION AND EXTEMPORANEOUS EVENTS**

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PREP ROOM MYTHS

#1. Speakers may plug computers in while in the prep room as long as draw has not begun.

MYTH BUSTED!

CHARGING MUST HAPPEN OUTSIDE THE PREP ROOM.

The rule says:

“Power plugs or outlets may not be used in the preparation room at any time.”

No host site can be expected to provide power for all speakers.

Not fair for some to be allowed to plug and others not have the ability.

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#2. Speakers may use cellphones to time their preparation period as long as they are on airplane mode.

MYTH BUSTED!

COACHES SHOULD REMIND SPEAKERS TO LEAVE THEIR CELL PHONES OUTSIDE THE PREP ROOM.

- While the UIL has ruled that cellphones on airplane mode are allowable for timing in debate events, this rule does NOT apply in extemp.
- The rule says:
 - “Cell phones or smart phones are not allowed during the contest.”
- Prep room staff will be reading a statement to remind students that cell phones are not allowed, but it is a coach’s duty to ensure that speakers know and follow this rule.

It would create a hardship on prep room monitors to check airplane mode on all phones.

Sanction: Disqualification

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#3. Speakers may prepare speeches in an app on their computers.

MYTH BUSTED!

NOTES MUST BE ON PAPER.

- This rule does not address storage apps like Dropbox, Prepd, Extemp Genie, etc.
- The rule says:
 - Contestants may utilize allowable devices for the purpose of accessing stored files, but shall not use them to outline their speech or otherwise organize their thoughts.

Prep room monitors would not be able to differentiate between a speech that was written before the contest and a speech that was written during the contest.

Sanction: Disqualification

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#4. The URL must be visible on the article.

MYTH BUSTED!

SHOULD VERSUS SHALL

- The rule says:
 - “The URL source of the published downloaded material should be included.”

Having the URL on the file or the printed article makes it clear that the article was not modified or created by the speaker...but it's not automatically a disqualifiable offense.

But it could lead to a protest and it raises a red flag to monitors when it is not present.

Bottom line – always including the URL on a printed article or a digital file protects your speakers.

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#5. Articles must always be saved in PDF format.

MYTH BUSTED!

[WHY WOULD YOU SAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY, THOUGH?]

- The rule says:
 - “There shall be no modification. Each document shall be a single, complete source in and of itself. Indexing without annotation is allowed.”

There is NO rule that requires files to be saved as PDFs.

You may not combine multiple articles into a single document. (remember that should versus shall thing?)

If there is a question about whether a document has been modified, prep room monitors may access the original document and compare what the speaker has used to the original. Modification of documents is cause for disqualification.

But seriously – how many steps does it take to copy an article and paste it into a word document?
WHY????

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#6. Speakers will be disqualified for playing games on their computers or listening to music during prep time.

AUTOMATICALLY

BUT DON'T LET THEM DO IT.

- The rule says:
 - “Devices must be muted in the preparation room during the contest. Contestants should not play games or engage in other distracting activities on their electronic devices. Tournament officials may ask a contestant to power off the device if it becomes distracting.”
- There's another rule that says:
 - “Contestants may not access audio, video or other active multi-media files during the contest.”

Games often require lots of clicking of the mouse – even if the volume is muted, the clicking would be distracting.

The second rule above would prohibit listening to music during prep (audio files).

Students should be reading articles anyway – or at least focusing on the round to come!

So while it's possible that a student could be disqualified for violating these rules, a contest director should never allow it to go that far.

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#7. Before the round begins, prep room monitors should check both paper files and online files to make sure speakers are not using illegal materials.

ONLY WHAT IS BEING USED

- There is no procedure as part of the preparation process that would require a contest director to go through all of a school's files. This would be so time-consuming as to cause problems with scheduling and is not necessary.
- Walk around the room during prep, looking at the files that competitors **HAVE OPEN**.
- If there is a question, ask to see those files.
- Competitors' prep time should not suffer because of a question. (Maybe handle it **AFTER** they have spoken?)

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#8. Speakers can't take anything with them to the draft table.

MYTH BUSTED!

LEGAL BUT NOT ADVISABLE

- The rule says
 - “Typed or hand-written materials may not be taken into the preparation room, except in the form of an index file which has been prepared by the student for the sole purpose of convenience in finding references to specific topics.”
- The Extemporaneous Speaking Handbook has this to say
 - This is not prohibited but is not advisable because it conveys the appearance that you don’t know your own files and wastes your prep time.
- Remember that a speaker’s 30-minute preparation period begins when his/her name is called – going through an index would take considerable amount of time.
- My advice: don’t do it. An index can be valuable as a study guide or to teach novices how to use the files, but not for a prep room guide.

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#9. Speakers can be disqualified for having outlines from old speeches in the prep room.

THIS ONE'S TRUE!

- The rule says:
 - “Materials NOT allowed in the preparation room
 - I. Outlines. Examples: multi-colored highlighted articles that could be interpreted as an outline, outlines from previous speeches, debate briefs, pre-prepared outlines on possible topics.”
- Another rule says:
 - Typed or hand-written materials may not be taken into the preparation room, except in the form of an index file which has been prepared by the student for the sole purpose of convenience in finding references to specific topics.

So this rule would apply not only to outlines of old speeches, but things like class notes and love letters.

UIL Staff says the violation of this rule is responsible for around 80% of disqualifications.

Don't take a chance. Train your students to throw away old speeches but check their materials yourself.

Sanction: Disqualification

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#10. Speakers may not have debate materials on the computer they are using for extemp.

ALSO TRUE.

- The rule says:
 - “The presence of pre-written extemporaneous speeches, handbooks, briefs or outlines on electronic retrieval devices during the contest is prohibited. If the contestant also uses the device for the debate contest, debate materials including but not limited to cases, briefs, outlines and flows must be stored on a separate external retrieval device disconnected or otherwise inaccessible and shall not be accessed during the extemporaneous speaking contest.”
- They also cannot have flows or brief books **IN THE PREP ROOM**

PREP ROOM MYTHS

#11. Speakers may share computers during their preparation period.

OK, BUT...

- The rule says:
 - “Contestants from the same school may share computers during preparation. However, conversing among contestants is not allowed.”

Take, for example, two speakers from the same school who draw the same topic and are sharing a computer. The first speaker pulls up her files, uses them, leaves them open, and then hands the computer to her team mate.

This is a disqualifiable offense because it would be providing/receiving assistance during the preparation period.

Contest directors will not alter speaker order to allow speakers to share files.

PERFORMANCE MYTHS

#12. There is a grace period.

MYTH BUSTED!

UIL ALLOWS SPEAKERS TO FINISH THE SENTENCE THEY ARE ON

- The rule says
 - “In informative and persuasive speaking, the speaker may complete only the sentence in progress without disqualification.”

Judges **cannot hear punctuation**. Don't risk confusion on whether the student has started a new question! No compound complex sentences!!!

“Thank you” is not a new sentence. But don't teach your speakers to say it – it can cause confusion and undue stress on the speaker and the contest director, and it's just not necessary.

The decision rests with the contest director – don't take a chance.

PERFORMANCE MYTHS

#13. If there is no timekeeper (or the timekeeper makes a mistake), speakers cannot be disqualified.

MYTH BUSTED!

TIMING IS BLACK AND WHITE

- The rule says
 - “In informative and persuasive speaking, the speaker may complete only the sentence in progress without disqualification. The responsibility for keeping within restricted time limit rests with the contestant.”
 - This rule is pretty clear. **The speaker is responsible for staying within the time limits.**

PERFORMANCE MYTHS

#14. Speakers may not take anything out of the prep room.

MYTH BUSTED!

THERE ARE LIMITS

What they SHOULD take:

 Their topic slip (which should be given to the judges)

What they CAN take:

 ONE 3X5 notecard (the size is important)

What they CANNOT take:

 Computers

 Phones

 Legal pads

 Anything else

Speakers can retrieve their belongings from the prep room after the last speaker has left the room.

And NO TALKING to anyone on the way to their room.

This is a disqualifiable offense.

PERFORMANCE MYTHS

#15. Speakers who speak in the wrong room are disqualified.

RULE!!!

TRAIN STUDENTS TO DOUBLE CHECK EVERYTHING

- Listen to contest director's instructions.
- Double check postings.
- Double check room assignments.

PERFORMANCE MYTHS

#16. Speakers who do not go directly to their room when their speaker number is called can be disqualified.

THERE ARE TWO SITUATIONS

1. Speaker doesn't hear his number called.
 - It creates an unfair advantage because the speaker gets more prep time.
 - It could potentially throw off the schedule.
 2. The speaker doesn't go directly to his room.
 - What was the speaker doing? (Did s/he have access to coaching during that time?)
 - There are just too many temptations to do something unethical.
 - Judges could leave the room, thinking all speakers have performed.
- Train speakers to LISTEN TO THE CONTEST DIRECTOR every time speaker numbers are called and to go directly to their contest room.
 - The contest director has the final decision, but **this is a disqualifiable offense** that is so easily avoided.

TABULATION MYTHS

#17. Add all the ranks together; 1st goes to the speaker with the lowest cumulative score.

MYTH BUSTED!

THAT'S ACTUALLY THE SECOND STEP

- Step One: “Majority of” rule – the speaker with the majority of 1s gets 1st.
 - The speaker with the majority of 2s OR BETTER gets 2nd. Etc.
- If there is no “majority of...OR BETTER” go to the sum. The words OR BETTER are important. For example, a student with a 1 – 2 – 3 has a majority of 2 OR BETTER.
- Place all ties before moving on to the next rank.
- When ranking the next contestant, go back to the first criterion, which is majority of...OR BETTER.

- ALWAYS USE TALK TAB.

- Always start with 1st place, and always consider the entire round – you cannot look at one speaker in isolation. It is possible for a student to get all 3s and be ranked 4th, for example.

AN EXAMPLE TAB

<u>Placement</u>	<u>Contestant</u>	<u>Judge A</u>	<u>Judge B</u>	<u>Judge C</u>	<u>Sum</u>	<u>Diagnostics</u>
2 1st	One	2	2	1	5	1P-0T-S
2nd	Two	1	3	2	6	2P-0T-M
5th	Three	4	5	4	13	4P-2T-MS
4th	Four	3	4	5	12	4P-2T-MS
3rd	Five	5	1	3	9	3P-0T-M
6th	Six	6	6	6	18	6P-0T-M

NEW TAB RULE

- This rule affects what happens when, after following all the other tie-breaking procedures, two (or more) students remain tied.
- It says
 - “If, at this point, contestants remain tied, the sum of the ranks of all tournament ballots in the contest event of the tied contestants, including preliminary rounds, shall be taken. The contestant with the lowest sum shall be placed higher.”

TABULATION MYTHS

#18. Substituting is easy – just give the contest director the new name.

MYTH BUSTED!

THERE'S A SUB FORM!!!

- The official entry of contestants online is certification to the UIL that all students are academically eligible. Contest directors need proof of eligibility.
- Substitutes affect sectioning.
 - If you sub for your B, for example, the contest director doesn't just put the sub's name in the place of the B. S/he will move the C up to the B's slot and put the sub in the place of the C.
 - Seeding in speaking events is very important at district, regional, and state contests. Coaches and coordinators should be careful to enter contestants into the online system by strength – the strongest speaker should be entered as A, the second strongest as B, and the third strongest as C. If all the strong speakers are in the same room, they could knock each other out in prelims.
 - Remember that having to re-section creates lengthy delays and causes problems for the schedule. (Could also cause the contest director to make mistakes in the hurry to resection).
 - No-shows at regional are devastating and should be avoided at all costs.

CONTEST DIRECTION

- Rooms should be balanced for power – don't put all the As in one room.
- Put one set of topics in each envelope. (This is a very common error, especially at practice tournaments).
- Speakers draw FIVE topics, select one, and put the others back. (They can't look at all the topics before they draw five).
- Prep time begins when the speakers are called to draw.

PROSE AND POETRY ISSUES

- Some of the info from Extemp Cross-Applies:
 - Know your constitutional language and how it applies
 - Know your time limits and how they apply
 - Tabulation
 - Substitutions

MANUSCRIPT SET-UP MYTHS

- There is a rule that governs how manuscripts are formatted
 - You MUST have a matte black, smooth-textured, 6”x 9” binder with a 1-inch spine and 3-ring mechanism
 - You MUST have pages mounted on black card stock
 - You MUST have card stock pages inserted in “slicks”
 - You MUST NOT have anything on or in the binder other than the piece you are performing at the time
 - You MUST have the script formatted in beats that inform page turns

MANUSCRIPT SET-UP MYTHS BUSTED

- The truth is that the only true RULE is that the reader may NOT read directly from the original source material.
 - The perception and expectation that the binders and their contents should look a certain way is actually only a stylistic expectation of coaches and judges that has developed over the years.
 - A reader MUST have the script in a “secondary” form that allows him/her to read but is not the original publication.
 - Realize making a different choice may affect the judge’s choices.

MANUSCRIPT USE MYTHS

- People think there are many specific rules on manuscript use that are disqualification issues:
 - Page turns must be “invisible.”
 - The manuscript cannot move during the performance.
 - The manuscript may be used as a prop.
 - The manuscript must be closed during verbal transitions.
 - The manuscript must be held at heart height and in a “V.”

MANUSCRIPT USE MYTHS BUSTED

- The only true rule about manuscript use is that the performer may not use props during the performance.
 - The performer may technically move around or keep the binder as still as they feel is appropriate to the piece.
 - There is no rule on technique as far as holding, opening, and closing the binder. Rather, it is a stylistic choice that has grown to be more of an expectation of most coaches/judges.
 - Page turns may be as obtrusive or unobtrusive as the performer and coach wants them to be.

DOCUMENTATION MYTHS

- Documentation rules interpretations have caused many issues in the past:
 - Documentation on electronic devices is legal, as long as it is a photograph of original source or legitimate website or email material.
 - Documentation at lower levels is not necessary to advance as long as the performer and coach know the problems and will correct them before the next level of competition.
 - Documentation that was errantly okay in earlier levels should be considered valid at higher levels.
 - Documentation **MUST** be in the form of original source material.
 - Documentation checked early for competitions suffice, no matter whether the student changes selections or not.

DOCUMENTATION RULE MYTHS BUSTED

- The rules for documentation are detailed, thorough, and not up for contest manager or coach interpretation and flexibility. In addition, it is a potential DQ issue:
 - Legal documentation MAY NOT be retrieved and shown on an electronic device for official documentation check purposes.
 - Students without proper documentation or the ability to find it in time for the contest's start time is a DEFINITE disqualification issue and cannot be usurped by the contest manager or designee at any level.
 - Documentation check occurs and must be complete and correct at EACH level of UIL competition, with no exceptions, even if a mistake was made at earlier levels.
 - The handbook SUGGESTS using original source material at documentation check, but there are a series of rules that allow for proper printed and photocopied documentation where original material is not available.
 - All selections that require proof must be checked, even if a selection changes after an arbitrary time-limit.

DOCUMENTATION MYTH SPECIFIC ISSUE

- A poem is a poem and a piece of prose is a piece of prose, whether it is in a genre-specific book or not:
 - MYTH BUSTED: If a piece of poetry is found in a book of prose, or a piece of prose is found in a book of poetry OR either is found in a mixed-genre anthology, the reader must prove genre as an additional layer of documentation
 - Find the piece published in a genre-specific book elsewhere and use that as documentation.
 - Find proof within the book, itself, that terms it as such for proof, and have that approved by Jana Riggins.
 - Print out and present the email from Jana Riggins as part of your proof for official documentation.

TIME RULE MYTHS FOR INTERP

- Few things cause as much consternation as time issues:
 - The time starts and stops as a student takes “the stance” and only after the binder is closed.
 - Thanking the audience is part of the performance and counts in the time.
 - The timekeeper is responsible for the performer’s official time and can be used as an excuse NOT to DQ a performer if they didn’t do a good job of getting the performer’s attention to stop.
 - There is a “grace period” at the end of 7 minutes for a student to complete a sentence, action, or thought.
 - There is a minimum time requirement as well as maximum time requirement.

TIME RULE MYTHS BUSTED

- Time in interp is one of the potential DQ issues with no recourse:
 - Time begins as soon as the official actual performance begins, not when the person goes to the front of the room or even as they are taking command of the room.
 - Time ends at the end of the performance, not as the performer relinquishes command or even says anything else like “Thank you.”
 - The performer has a responsibility for his/her own time and SHOULD try to cut the piece to where running up to the 7-minute wall isn’t a problem.
 - There is NO grace period in prose. 7 minutes is the absolute deadline. Period.
 - There is no minimum time limit, but a short piece may very well enter into judging decisions.

CONTENT RULE MYTHS

- There is a specific set of rules for what is appropriate in interp:
 - Cursing is a DQ issue.
 - Sex is a DQ issue.
 - Violence is a DQ issue.
 - Racism/terminology/colloquialism is a DQ issue.
 - Males must do “male” pieces and females must do “female” pieces.
 - Races must do pieces from within their own races.
 - Pieces MUST have a balance of narration and dialogue.
 - Pieces must have a preponderance of drama or poignancy.
 - Pieces may not use a foreign language.

CONTENT RULE MYTHS BUSTED

- The truth about content in interp is that there is no specific disqualification rule, EXCEPT that pieces must fit genre restrictions per the category descriptors, that authors, poets, and subject-matter cannot be repeated in both Category A and B, and that the content of a performer's State literature cannot be repeated at subsequent State Meets:
 - There is an expectation that students will do age, sex, content, and experience-appropriate literature.
 - There is an expectation of “Community Standards,” though there is no actual rule in interp.
 - There is no formulaic rule for narration and dialogue in a piece.
 - There is no rule that says a piece has to have drama or poignancy, though the expectation is for a piece to have “heart.”
 - The rule on foreign language is “incidental,” which means it has to be a small percentage of the performance.
 - The “expectations” are merely stylistic choices for most judges and not disqualification issues, but students and coaches should know that making choices that are controversial or out of the norm could inform a judge's decisions.

SINGING/SONG RULES MYTHS

- Use of singing or of song lyrics in an interp piece is against the rules
 - Students may not sing at all in a performance.
 - Use of lyrics to songs is illegal.

SINGING/SONG RULE MYTHS BUSTED

- Songs and song lyrics can be used in performances, depending on the category descriptions of each category in each genre:
 - Singing can occur, if it is “incidental” in nature, depending on the category restrictions.
 - Song lyrics can be used in Poetry A, if found published concurrently in a book as poetry.
 - Song lyrics can be used in Poetry B. See the category descriptors.

INTRO RULES MYTHS

- Intros don't have a specified set of rules but do have a specified style that they must be delivered in:
 - If a student forgets to give an introduction or doesn't have it memorized, it is up to the judge whether to DQ.
 - It is legal for a student to give the name of the book rather than the names of the specific selections in the intro.
 - It is legal for the performer to refer to “a collection of” or “program on” or a program by “various authors” rather than specifically naming the pieces and the authors/poets.
 - Intros must be within a certain amount of time, and neither too long, nor too short.
 - There is a rule about intro style and placement.

INTRO RULE MYTHS BUSTED

- Rules on content/placement of information in the intro exist, but the style of delivery varies:
 - ALL piece titles and author/poet names must be mentioned **IN THE PERFORMANCE**, according to category descriptions. If the student wants to use internal verbal transitions for this purpose rather than the in the intro, that is legal, but it is risky.
 - The book title, alone, is **NOT ENOUGH** if there are multiple pieces.
 - The style of delivery and whether there is a personal anecdote is up to the performer, but some judges will use these issues in their decisions.
 - The intro may follow a teaser but **MUST** come in a memorized form **BEFORE** the “meat” of the piece.
 - There is no rule on the length of an intro; **HOWEVER**, the information required by each category descriptor must appear, and the length of the intro, whether short or long, can become a part of the judge’s decision.

CLOTHING RULE MYTHS

- Students competing in Interp **MUST** have **SPECIFIC** clothing choices on to be allowed to advance.
- Students **MAY NOT** wear anything that approaches a costume.
- Students **MAY NOT** use clothing or accessories as props.

CLOTHING RULE MYTHS BUSTED

- There is no specific or definable dress code in the UIL rules that can result in a DQ for NOT wearing it, but not dressing professionally can affect judging decisions.
- Students MAY NOT use costumes or props in interp.
 - However, sometimes, a clothing choice or referencing a piece of clothing or accessory is done during the performance.
 - Such choices are risky and may become a part of the judge's decisions.

BLOG RULE MYTH

- Online-only Blogs can be used in the categories that allow “non-traditional” material.

BLOG RULE MYTH BUSTED

- Blogs that are ONLY found online are NOT legal to use. If a student is doing a piece from a published book of prose or poetry that was taken from the content of a blog, then that is permissible if the source material is officially listed as either a fiction, nonfiction, or poetry classification.

OTHER DQ MYTHS

- Reading out of the category or in the wrong room is okay as long as you quickly alert the contest officials and mitigate the mistake.
- DQ only means that you are not allowed to read again that tournament or in subsequent levels of UIL competition, but if in finals, you can be ranked down and your team can be rewarded with the points.

OTHER DQ MYTHS BUSTED

- If you read out of the category, you are officially disqualified without recourse. Period.
- Check your room assignment in postings and room number you enter before, so that you don't throw off the tournament timing and structure. UIL judges SHOULD have a pre-compiled list of competitors (see substitution rules)
- In high school, there is NO point reward or alternative ranking system for a student who is DQed for any reason at District or Region, except in the case of State FINALS ONLY. If a student goes over time in State Finals, that student is listed as 6th place.

“RULES” RULES MYTH

- The only document that holds power in terms of what is and is not a DQ issue is the C&CR:
 - The Prose/Poetry Handbook is just a guide and holds no constitutional weight.
 - Online information on the website is just a guide and holds no constitutional weight.
 - Direct decisions from Jana Riggins are just suggestions.
 - Contest managers may adjust rules according to their own philosophies.

“RULES” RULES MYTHS BUSTED

- Any official UIL publication, whether hard-copy or online, and any correspondence from the UIL Speech Office via Jana Riggins hold the weight of official rules, and if violated, can lead to disqualification:
 - Contest Managers’ philosophies and decisions may not, under any circumstance, usurp or violate specific and official rules and policies of UIL.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- There are a lot of rules and even more myths people assume incorrectly are rules. Whether in extemp or in interp, it is **NECESSARY** to read and understand the rules and any information online or in hard-copy thoroughly and be truly **INFORMED** rather than assuming you know the rules as a performer, coach, or contest manager.
- Don't be “that wrong guy or gal!”