BEFORE WE GET STARTED

Remember to register your attendance and complete session evaluations.

Session numbers are in the program.







BEFORE WE GET STARTED

Remember to register your attendance and complete session evaluations.



Session numbers are in the program. This session is 302.





9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Session 302



*** QR Codes are posted in each room and throughout the building for sign-in on your device.

Prose and Poetry: Let's Start at the Very Beginning

For novice competitors, starting at the very beginning is a very good place to start if you're new to oral performance in high school. *Includes student demonstration* ~

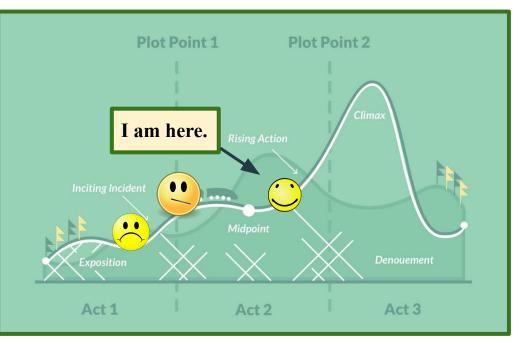
Emily King, Liberty Hill High School ROOM UTC 2.112A





Personal Parallel Plot Structure

23 District Champions 13 Region Champions 9 State Champions * 3 time Team Runners Up State UIL Meet



I am starting the second year at LHHS, and it's still overwhelming!

A look back at the State UIL Speech and Debate Championships

2009 - Silver Medalist - Wade King (prose) 2010 - Fourth Finalist - Kassidy Gandy (prose)

2011 - Fifth Finalist - Drew Dunn (poetry) 2012 - Bronze Medalist - Jessica Polson (poetry)

2012 - Biolize Medalist - Jessica Poison (poet) 2012 - State Qualifier - Collin Evans (prose)

2012 - State Qualifier - Comin Evans (prose) 2012 - State Qualifier - Drew Dunn (poetry)

2012 - Silver Medalist - Jessica Polson (poetry)

2014 - Silver Medalist - Jade Pool (poetry)

2014 - Gold Medalist - Drew Dunn (poetry)

2014 - State Alternate - Reis Smith (prose)

2015 - Silver Medalist - Wyatt King (poetry)

2015 - Gold Medalist - Jade Pool (poetry)

2015 - State Alternate - Reis Smith (prose)



2016 - Bronze Medalist - Abby Nichols (poetry)

2016 - Gold Medalist - Reis Smith (poetry)

2016 - Gold Medalist - Wyatt King (prose)

2017 - Gold Medalist - Reis Smith (poetry)

2017 - Gold Medalist - Wyatt King (prose)

2018 - State Alternate - Peyton Hastings (poetry)

2018 - Fifth Finalist - Abby Nichols (poetry)

2018 - Gold Medalist - Wyatt King (prose)

2019 - State Qualifier - Jonna Pool (prose)

2020 - Covid Reset - DNC

2021 - State Alternate - Watson Evans (poetry)

2021 - Fifth Finalist - Karolynn Torrez (poetry)

2021 - Bronze Medalist - Lexie Lee (prose)

2021 - Gold Medalist - Jonna Pool (prose)

2022 - State Alternate - Jonna Pool (prose)

2022 - Fourth Finalist - Hunter Russell (prose)

2022 - Silver Medalist - Watson Evans (poetry)

2022 - Gold Medalist - Karolynn Torrez (poetry)

2023 - State Alternate - Sahasra Gollapudi (poetry)

1) Speech and debate events are business contests *dress like it!*















Pearls or nothing at all!



Nothing but pearls...



Dress as though you are interviewing for a six figure business position. Stop it with the prom hair and nails.



2021 Prose Bronze Medalist

2021 Prose Champion -







Converse Judson

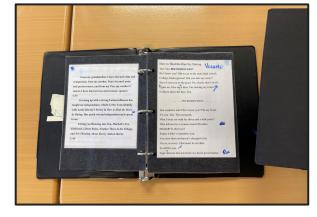


2) Constructing the Black Book

No page slicks. Cut 6 x 8 construction paper in black. Laminate those pages. Practice.



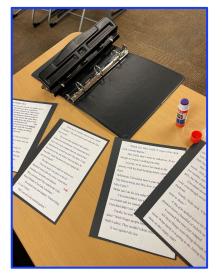
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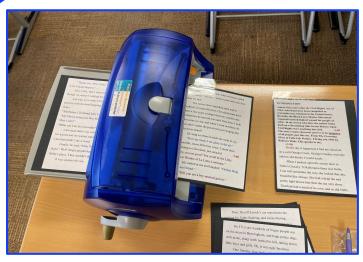


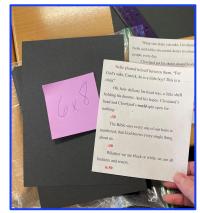
900 School EZ Laminator Two Sided Laminate 9" x 60' 145612 \$25.99





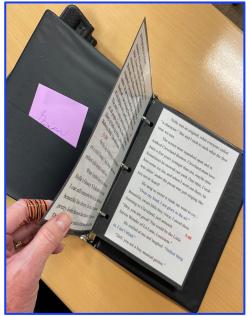












3) Bookwork

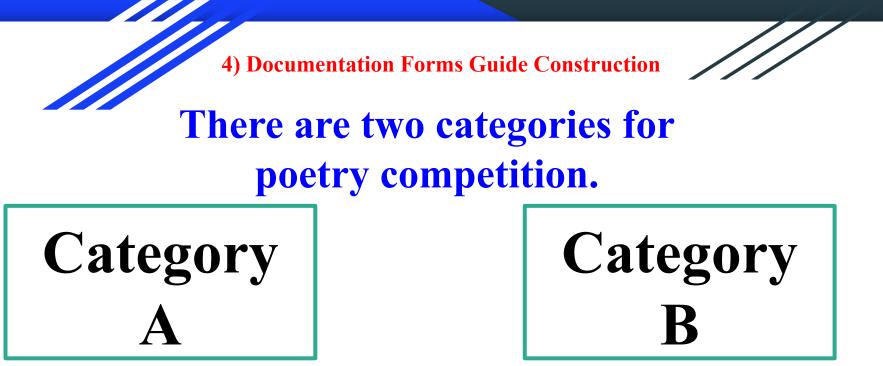


- Judges should not "see" the black book. Judges should see the performance.
- No page slicks. Cut 6 x 8 construction paper in black. Laminate those pages.
- Learn to turn pages without looking: with your eyes shut. Don't watch page turns.
- Place a piece of paper on the inside of the front cover. Make sure the coach cannot see it.
- Opening the book should be natural, not fancy.
- Use one holder hand, typically left, and one working hand, typically right.
- Turn pages by the bottom right corner.
- Keep book in a V and "heart high"

(This is new for me because we've always been centered.)

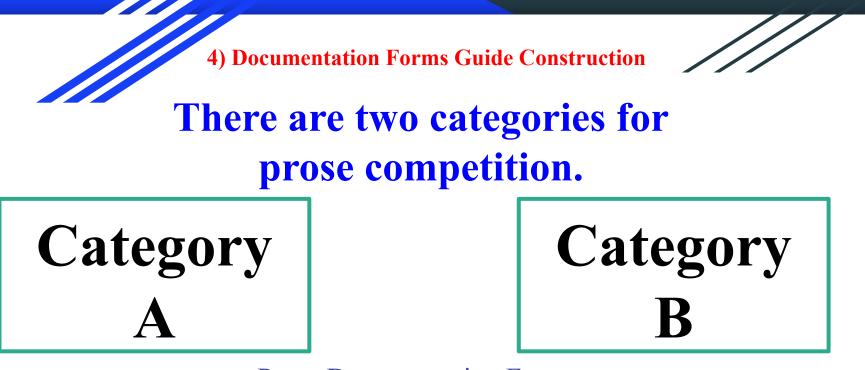
- Avoid "Lazy L" positioning. Read your manuscript even though you have it memorized.
- It's okay to occasionally use the book, but in general it's not a prop.
- Practice. Practice. Clean. Clean. Clean.
 - There are practices where I have said, "book, book, Book, BOOK, BOOK," while my

speaker is trying desperately to perform.



Poetry Documentation Forms





Prose Documentation Forms



Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things

5) Restrictions are a thing - know them!"

Poetry Category A Restrictions

Material chosen for use in Category A of Poetry Interpretation shall meet the following restrictions:

(A) One to six poems may be used.

- (B) If performing a single selection, the poem shall be published, printed material; internet material shall be poetry published concurrently in hard copy.
- (C) If multiple poems are used, one poem may be unpublished.
- (D) Selections from plays or screenplays, movies, and monologues shall not be used.
- (E) Song lyrics published as music only and not as poetry may be used, but their use shall be limited to transitions between the poems.
- (F) No contestant shall use the same poet in more than one category in the contest.
- (G) No contestant shall use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet.
- (H) Selections shall be read in the English translation; however, incidental use of foreign language words

and phrases in any selection may be used as in the original.

Poetry Categories A and B

Category A: Recognizing Joy Focusing on the Little Things



The goal of this category is to recognize joy in even the simplest of things.

In this category, the contestant may read one single poem, an excerpt of a poem or poems, or may create a program containing no more than six literary works of poetry. If a program is used, one poem from an unpublished source is allowed to be included in the program. The majority of the performance must be *published* poetry. The intent of this category is not to encourage an entirely originally-authored program.

For Category A, co-authored and anonymous works are permissible. The poet(s) used in this category shall not be used in Category B of poetry. When using copyrighted material each member school is responsible for obtaining permission from the publisher for their participant to use the material. UIL assumes no responsibilities for copyright permission to perform material.

Unless published as poetry, song lyrics may be used only as transitions between poems. Although these shall not count as poems in the six allowed in this category, lyrics used as transitions should not be excessive, with the focus placed on the poetry itself. If transitions are sung, the singing should be limited in scope. The introduction and/or transitions shall include all titles and poets read and should connect the literature to the goal of the category. If the program is woven, it shall be stated in the introduction, and the different poems should be distinguishable through interpretation. If song lyrics are used as transitions between poems, it shall be stated in the introduction.

Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

5) Restrictions are a thing - know them!

Poetry Category B Restrictions

- (A) Two to six selections of poetry may be used.
- (B) All poetry may be published, printed material, internet material or transcribed material but must be poetry.
- (C) No contestant shall use the same poets in more than one category in the contest.
- (D) Selections from plays or screenplays, movies, and monologues shall not be used.
- (E) Song lyrics published as music only and not as poetry may be used, but their use shall be limited to transitions between the poems.
- (F) Anonymous works may be used.
- (G) No contestant shall use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet.
- (H) Selections shall be read in the English translation; however, incidental use of foreign language words and phrases in any selection may be used as in the original.



Poetry Categories A and B

Category B: Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow



The goal of this category is to celebrate positive change over time. Students will explore developments that enhance our world. In this category, the contestant shall read a minimum of two selections. The contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two poetry selections and no more than six. Students should consider using poetry that spans different time periods. Students may use poems from one or more poets.

Poetry Category B may include traditional and contemporary poetry and novels-in-verse. Co-authored and anonymous works are permissible. The poet(s) used in this category shall not be used in Category A of Poetry.

When using copyrighted material, each member school is responsible for obtaining permission from the publisher for their participant to use the material. UIL assumes no responsibilities for copyright permission to perform material.

Songs lyrics published as music only and not as poetry may be used but only as transitions between the poems. Although these shall not count as poems in the six allowed in this category, lyrics used as transitions should not be excessive, with the focus placed on the poetry itself. If transitions are sung, the singing should be limited in scope.

The introduction and/or transitions shall include all titles and poets read and should connect the poetry to the goal of the category. If the program is woven, it shall be stated in the introduction, and the different poems should be distinguishable through interpretation. If song lyrics are used as transitions between poems, it shall be stated in the introduction.

Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things

5) Restrictions are a thing - know them!

Prose Category A Restrictions

(A) One to four selections of prose may be used.

- (B) If performing a single selection, the prose shall be published, printed material; internet material shall be prose published concurrently in hard copy.
- (C) If multiple prose selections are used, one prose selection may be unpublished.
- (D) Selections from plays, screenplays, movies, and monologues shall not be used.
- (E) Speeches shall not be used in this category.
- (F) No contestant shall use the same writer in more than one category in the contest.
- (G) No contestant shall use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet.
- (H) Selections shall be read in the English translation; however, incidental use of foreign language words and phrases in any selection may be used as in the original.



Prose Category Restrictions

Prose Category A

Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things

The goal of this category is to recognize joy in even the simplest of things.

In this category, the contestant may read a single literary work of prose, an excerpt of a work of prose or may create a program containing no more than four literary works of prose. If a program is used, one prose selection from an unpublished source is allowed in the program. The majority of the performance must be *published* prose. The intent of this category is not to encourage an entirely originally-authored program.

The performance may be fiction or nonfiction. Examples may include, *but are not limited to* oral histories, testimonies, interviews, and letters. For Category A, co-authored and anonymous works of prose are permissible. The author(s) used in this category shall not be used in Category B of prose.

When using copyrighted material, each member school is responsible for obtaining permission from the publisher for their participant to use the material. UIL assumes no responsibilities for copyright permission to perform material.

The introduction and/or transitions shall include all titles and authors read and should connect the literature to the goal of the category. If the program is woven, it shall be stated in the introduction, and the different literary works should be distinguishable through interpretation.

Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

5) Restrictions are a thing - know them!

Prose Category B Restrictions

- (A) Two to four selections of prose may be used.
- (B) All selections may be published, printed material, internet material or transcribed material but must be prose.
- (C) No contestant shall use the same author in more than one category in the contest.
- (D) Selections from plays, screenplays, movies, and monologues shall not be used.
- (E) Anonymous works may be used.
- (F) No contestant shall use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet.
- (G) Selections shall be read in the English translation; however, incidental use of foreign language

words and phrases in any selection may be used as in the original.

Prose Category Restrictions

Prose Category B

Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

The goal of this category is to celebrate positive change over time. Students will explore developments that enhance our world.

In this category, the contestant shall read a minimum of two selections. The contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two prose selections and no more than four selections. Students should consider using prose that spans different time periods. **Students may use prose selections from one or more authors.** Prose Category B includes fiction, nonfiction, news sources, speeches, essays, letters and diaries. Co-authored and anonymous works of prose are permissible. The author(s) used in this category shall not be used in Category A of prose.

When using copyrighted material, each member school is responsible for obtaining permission from the publisher for their participant to use the material. UIL assumes no responsibilities for copyright permission to perform material.

The introduction and/or transitions shall include all titles and authors read and should connect the prose to the goal of the category. If the program is woven, the contestant shall state it in the introduction, and the different prose works should be distinguishable through interpretation.



6) Meaningful Introductions



INTRO

Peggy Sue Gerron was a teenager in Lubbock, Texas with Buddy Holly when his hit song, "Peggy Sue," made her an iconic part of Rock 'n Roll history. And it was through her tireless efforts the Buddy Holly Museum was founded, drawing thousands from around the world to Lubbock.

Not only did Buddy Holly create a template for change and engage in musical experiments, but posthumously, he inspired musicians to create better tomorrows for rock and roll. Who knows what else his template will produce. His legacy lives.

I bring you *Whatever Happened to Peggy Sue?* by Peggy Sue Gerron and Glenda Cameron, and *The Day the Music Died* by Alexandra Pollard. In the award-winning memoir, *Burn Down the Ground*, the author looks back on an unconventional life as the child of deaf parents.

As the lifelong friend of a deaf woman, I can relate to the story of Kambri Crews and her challenges with her father. This semester I continue my sign language education which will enhance years of communication with my friend. *Burn Down the Ground* by Kambri Crews

INTRODUCTION

After my grandfather's bout with cancer, I began to study the particulars of the disease thinking I might have inherited an increased risk for certain types of cancer. I've become increasingly aware and sensitive to those who had been diagnosed. While Pop eventually would succumb to the horrific disease, he kept a sense of humor about his fight. In fact, he was downright sarcastic about it. I get my humor and sarcasm from Pop.

Rob Ballister humorously describes his experience with cancer and the removal of his cancerous "issue" in Cancer Hits and I Hit Back."

Here's to ya, Pop!

Intros

Before my freshman year, my lung collapsed four times and I endured four surgeries. This situation caused a great deal of disappointment because I missed fun activities. Not only did I miss athletic events for months, but also summer camps that I generally attended. I went to theater camp, got the lead male role, and then had to drop out the night before the performance because my lung collapsed, again. (Pause) The constant sense of impending doom that something tragic would happen was overwhelming and it made me overly sensitive.

This is why Jack McCarthy's poem speaks to me. However, my experience has helped me become more supportive of others and to take nothing for granted. *Careful What You Ask For* by Jack McCarthy (PAUSE) In 1883, Emma Lazarus penned the famous words emblazoned on the base of the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

The immigration crisis has been a major source of interest for me, the grandson of courageous Latino immigrants. Without the bold actions of my grandparents, I would not be standing here now; I would not be an honors student, a member of the theater, or a speech and debate competitor. From crossing to citizenship, Mexican Americans strive for a better tomorrow. In my selection, I celebrate positive change over time for my people. I am descended from immigrants, and this is my home.

I bring you, *Dear America*, by Sholeh Wolpe, *Undocumented Joy* by Yosimar Reyes, *Mexicans Begin Jogging* by Gary Soto, *Self-Portrait with no Flag* by Safia Ehillo, *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus, and *The Pledge of Allegiance* by Francis Bellamy.



INTRODUCTION

The music of the Andrews' Sisters has been a part of my life since my sisters and I began performing as a trio of small children. We've sung for jamborees and entertained at barn dances, or what some folks in the south call, "hootenannies." And like the Andrews' sisters, we sing vocal harmonies and tap dance.

In a unique chapter in American History, the Andrews sisters responded to the war effort in the best way they knew how: as American patriots.

My sisters and I have also attempted to preserve that patriotic spirit during Veteran's Day and Fourth of July celebrations for more than a decade, with the songs of the Andrews sisters.

I bring you a woven presentation of *The Andrews Sisters* by Arlo Nimmo, *Swing It!* by John Forza, and *Over Here Over There* by Maxene Andrews and Bill Gilbert. (pause) This is me.

Intros

From my Nana, I've learned what a wonderful grandparent looks like. Nana has directed my efforts in baking, my relationship with my parents and siblings, and even my attempts at tooth extraction. The simplest interaction with her is delightful. She is the maker of sweet tea and sweet dreams: completely southern and gracious. She represents every little thing that is joyful about spending time with a grandparent. 6:00 In my woven selection, we meet

seven-year-old Augusten, who vividly describes his anticipation of waiting on the tooth fairy. From Possible Side Effect by Augusten Burroughs, I bring you "Pest Control."

INTRO

As a ten-year-old, I wrote a play that was awarded a performance at the Lubbock Community Theater where I portrayed the lead character. I guess you could say that I am an award-winning playwright.

I have always enjoyed writing and performing, which is why I can identify with Tina Fey's comedic performances on Saturday Night Live. 6:00 In my woven selection from *Bossypants*, Tina Fey who was the head writer for *Saturday Night Live* for many years - performs her most memorable character: Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska. Both Ms. Fey and I put our *Bossypants* on - one leg at a time. 5:30



The Vietnam War had an indelible historical impact on the United States. An entire generation of Americans was captivated by the endless replaying of the war on their television screens. 6:00

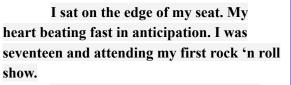
Those horrific scenes that played out in living rooms across the country could not prepare our citizens for the reality of suffering endured by our armed forces.

I have become increasingly interested in the Vietnam conflict after my uncle's tour in 1970 which brought him in contact with Agent Orange. While he was compensated by the U.S. Government, he would eventually succumb to the effects of the deadly chemical. My thematic selection follows the perspective of soldiers who survived the Vietnam Era and like my uncle, have a story. A story that affected my family while he was alive and beyond. On the day it happened, I had my mind set on a cold Orange Crush. Orange Crushes were the onliest cold drinks I would touch.

When I pushed open the screen door to Nelle's Grocery 'N Rollerama there was Nelle.

I can still remember the way she looked that day, beautiful like always. She had a deep tan and pretty light brown hair that she cut very short. That hair had a mind of its own, and so did Nelle.

7) The Importance of a TEASER (It's an art, y'all.)



My friends from Lubbock, Texas, had a hit record - a rock 'n roll hit at that!

The house lights dimmed, and a hush swept across the audience - a calm before the storm. The Master of Ceremonies appeared... "They've taken the charts by storm. All the way from Lubbock, Texas, Ladies and Gentlemen, ... *The Crickets!*"

"That'll be the Day."



"From the beginning, we were the girls next door, the kid sisters. We were never glamorous, never great beauties, but we had a wonderful thing about us: *we were adorable*."

"We wanted to please people and we wanted people to like us. We were never considered sex symbols."

"We had the girl-next-door image and that suited us just fine. Our mother told us, choosing her words the only way a mother can, "Girls, never let it bother you that you're not beautiful. You all have," then she'd pause, "wonderful personalities." What an exciting time to be alive! The Democrats are in Los Angeles to choose their candidate for president, and they chose Jack, of course. It was the most triumphant time of his life ... and he wanted to see me!

I watched him give his acceptance speech, "We're standing today on the edge of a new frontier."

I said to myself, "This man has power. The power to change lives. I could be worthwhile if only he would love me."

7) The Importance of a TEASER (It's an art, y'all.)

The congregation of the First Assembly of God would be his first audience. He loved the choir and - *he* - could carry a tune. As a child of the South, he was steeped in gospel music, and he loved the four-part harmony style sung by gospel quartets. They weren't afraid to move with the music. His 1967 album, How Great Thou Art, reveals his lifelong passion for gospel music and reflects the influence of this music on his career.

HOW GREAT THOU ART



Most of the boys in my graduating class were drafted to go to Vietnam. I felt it was my duty to be at their side and serve my country.

I trudged through nursing school in a weary, uphill dream. At graduation, I smiled for pictures. (pause) I awoke in another dream, high above an exquisite tropical landscape in

a troop plane approaching Saigon. We descended from naïve purity forever.

8) What in the Cat Hair are you doing with your hands?

Rule of "thumb" and arm and hand... Do only what is necessary. Be natural. Avoid air quotes, numbers, harsh gestures.

This is not theater! Use an "interpretive reach" only, unless the material calls for physical movements. Dad had climbed up onto the stage and was now doing his best gyrating Elvis impersonation into a microphone. Swinging his arm in wild, giant moves to strum his imaginary guitar, "You ain't nothing but a hound dog."

Only make one big gesture. I thought *Gee What happened?* This thing I created, this persona, this Marilyn Monroe, has somehow become a phenomenon. Holding the book is okay. Let your voice and facial expressions do most of the work.



9) Performance - POISE POISE POISE

The PERFORMANCE begins before the actual performance and after the performance.

- Place characters but never go profile.
- Character voices do not have to drop low for a guy or high for a girl
- Establish characters change inflection not necessarily a lower voice. Your demeanor can establish the character.
- Eye contact Start with the center judge and hold that gaze.
- Look at your book. Everyone knows you have memorized the piece.
- Learn to use silence because it is powerful (Cutting must make room.)
- Know your audience; Tremendously foul language serves no purpose...
- Clean performances win in the long run



10) Practice Practice Practice

- Schedule speakers for 45 minutes each week
- Specific speech issues
 - Any, many, get, again, hard T's, the not thee Combinations like "is the" (slow down) Difficult words and phrases like
- Practice or *perfect* one page at a time
- Delivery of the INTRODUCTION is crucial
- Practice "the look" and owning the room (not smugness)
- Practice "looking" at judges

- Establish reasonable goals, *not state championships* Speak with confidence Clean up speech patterns
 - Use silence in everyday conversations



11a) Cutting Poetry



Envious? Are you? As you sit behind your desk with your healthcare, and your 401Ks, and your 'guaranteed' paychecks and your ability to tell your parents what you do for a living without 'apologizing'?

Well, you shouldn't have fucked with me. Suckers, I wanted to go corporate. I did.

I spent 4 months of my life-this whole summerin a computer lab, in a basement, doing research to find jobs, to perfect the language in my resume and cover letters, and not writing poetry.

peccably clothed, coifed and caffeinated elf for your interviews: sharpening my wit the spike that would eventually nail the decision hire me into your brain, making you think I'm perfect or this job, that you couldn't live without me.

But like the Backstreet Boys, you kept playing games with my heart.

And four months later, with my entire life savings in the tank, I began to think that you were trying to teach me a lesson. And corporate world, you made me sad. Very sad.

You made

t my life had been a mistake. idied writing. That my working class believed in me, let me think I could be It least four generations not to work for the government. Made me think it was ke to even assume I could live in this city oth only words and heart and elbow grease. No rich parents, no doting boyfriends, no MBA as a safety net.

61

You made me buy pantyhose!

Cristin Aptowicz wrote this poem and suggested the Backstreet Boys' song directly in her

poem To Whom It May Concern

11b) Cutting Poetry



I impeccably clothed, coiffed, and caffeinated myself for your interviews: sharpening my wit into the spike that would eventually nail the decision into your brain to hire me, making you think I'm perfect for this job, that you couldn't live without me.

But like the Backstreet Boys, you

"Kept playing games with my heart ..." I should've known from the start You know you got to stop

(page turn)

Quit playin' games with my heart

Cristin Aptowicz wrote this poem and suggested the Backstreet Boys' song directly in the poetry.

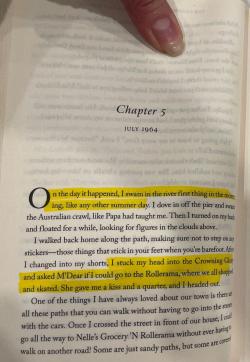
Yep, I took advantage of that and incorporated the song, "Quit Playing Games," by the Backstreet Boys, which is used at the page turn in transition.

12a) Cutting Prose - READ THE BOOK!

This cutting came from Chapter 5 of *The Crowning Glory of Calla Lily Ponder*.

This is what a real prose cutting looks like.

These are the first two pages of Chapter 5, 42 & 43.



THE CROWNING GLORY OF CALLA LILY PONDER

with pine straw, which smells so good on a hot day. When you walk on the paths, you pass other people's backyards and vegetable gardens. And if they're outside I always wave and they wave back and we talk and visit a while. That's how it is in La Luna. Thad my mind set on a cold Orange Crush when I pushed open the

screen door to Nelle's. Orange Crush when I pushed open the screen door to Nelle's. Orange Crushes were the onliest cold drinks I would touch because I'd read in *Teen* magazine that anything brown and there are Nelle's.

And there was Nelle. I can still remember the way she looked that day, beautiful like always, sitting on her swivel stool behind the counter, wearing a blue cotton short-sleeve shirt tied up over a pair of faded yellow shorts. She loved color, and it showed all over. She had a deep tan all year and pretty light brown hair that she cut very short with fingernail scissors. It looked kind of sophisticated in what M'Dear calls a Bohemian way. That hair had a mind of its own, and so did Nelle. She was an original, what everyone called "a character." She and I took to each other the first time we met, which would have been when I was three months old. M'Dear was about six years older than Nelle, and had watched her grow up.

"Nelle," I said, "if it was any hotter, I'd have to crawl up under the porch with the yard dogs!"

"Well, come on in, girl," she told me. "You're smart to have your hair up in pigtails like that—keeps your head from getting too hot. Get yourself a cold drink out of the cooler."

The heat never did seem to bother Nelle like it did the rest of us. She was always cool and slow, like she and the store's old ceiling fan were on the same speed.

Nelle was the proprietor of Nelle's Grocery 'N Rollerama rollerskating rink. After her daddy died and left her the family place and some good-size acreage, Nelle shocked everyone by up and buying the old La Luna grocery and fixing it up.

12b) Cutting Prose - There are no shortcuts

I found nothing that would advance the theme of Chapter 5 in the next two pages, 44 & 45.



She fixed herself up a little apartn behind it. Everyone had just assumed she would settle down et married, but now folks said she was "not the marrying kind." Sukey, Renée, and I suspected Nelle had a secret boyfriend who she went to see when she went away for three or four days every month and closed the store but we never told anyone, because we didn't have evidence that Nancy Drew would approve of.

Besides the grocery and roller rink, Nelle kept horses in her own barn and gave lessons to Renée and me, along with a few other girls. Both M'Dear and Papa loved Nelle. Sonny Boy said he wanted to be like her because "she comes when she wants to come, and goes when she wants to go. She's got her business set up good, and she has time to no fishing." I guess that described Nelle pretty well. That, along with the fact that, along with M'Dear and Papa, she was one of the best dans ers in La Luna. Folks just liked it when Nelle liked them, because she sure didn't like everybody. When Nelle decided she liked someone M'Dear called it a "Nelle Endorsement." Mama knew who liked who because of being in the position she was in, both a dance teacher and beautician. A whole lot of town "information" came to my mother, but vou'd have to put bamboo shoots under M'Dear's fingernails to get it out of her.

Nelle added the skating rink about two years after she took over the grocery. Papa says he remembers coming in and seeing her in there hammering right along with the builders. Even back then she had a sign in the grocery like she does now, that read, "Help yourself. Leave your money on the counter. Honor system."

Nelle was petite, maybe about five-feet-one at the most, and what little there was of her was muscle. She was a fine horse lady, and I only wished I could someday be as good as she was. She taught me how to ride, and from the minute I got my own horse, she helped me learn

THE CROWNING GLORY OF CALLA LILY PONDER

good horsemanship. She was good to our town, too. Always donating good and goods for our Christmas food drives and opening up the skating rink for special causes. I looked up to her-well, I actually looked down to her, since I was already taller than she was. But I was still a kid, and she was a grown-up. She could have been my mother, agewise. But no one else in the universe could be my mother but M'Dear, I hopped up on the big red Coke cooler, which is where I liked to sit.

to sip my Orange Crush and watch Nelle zero in on a fruit fly. Nelle was still as a turtle for a second or two and then she whomped that flyswatter down so fast it made my head spin. Then she reached for a clean rag and slowly wiped her counter clean. Nelle always had that old wooden counter polished to a shine.

I loved to just sit and look around Nelle's place. The store had wide old pine plank floors that Nelle kept glearning. On one side of the store Nelle had her food aisles-mostly canned goods and what have you. Then there were the stacks of empty soda bottles in wooden racks and Nelle's big shiner box for folks who liked to use live bait. I mean, that shiner box had some of the biggest worms you'd ever see in your life! Next to that was a big bright yellow display card of all kinds of fancy fishing lures. On the walls were old painted metal signs to advertise things like Holsum bread, Viceroy cigarettes, and Coca-Cola. Nelle also had this great rack of used paperbacks. They cost a nickel, but if you brought in a paperback to exchange, they

I would have to say, though, that my favorite part of Nelle'sbesides the rink, of course-was the magazine rack. Nelle had all these magazines from all over the place, always displayed so nice and neat. She let me look through them if I was real careful not to bend To get to the rink you had to go beyond Nelle's counter, sitting

12c) Cutting Prose - There are no shortcuts

The information on page 47 developed Cleveland's character from a flat character to a lovable personality.



first at a long wooden bench to puty. see on. There was a small room there where the skates were stored on all sizes—black for boys, white for girls, and little bitty red ones, cute as could be, for the small kids. Rows and rows of skates on physood helves, skates with wooden wheels. Nelle paid me a nickel a pair for polising those skates every month or so. She had an old carpenetr tray filled with tubs of every month or so. She had an old carpenetr tray filled with tubs of the skates wouldn't stink. Skaters had to provide their own socks, but the skates wouldn't stink. Skaters had to provide their own socks, but helle always had a few clean pairs lying around for people who forgon Nelle always had a few clean pairs lying around for people who forgon and came in barefoot.

I was staring at the cover of the new *Lije* magazine that had a lady with a swirly hairdo swept high on her head when Nelle broke me our of my daydreaming.

"Calla, girl," she said, "Ruth Ellen Ronson came in here yesterday after you did her hair. Looked like movie star hair—even on Ruh, after you did her hair. Looked like movie star hair—even on Ruh, I suspect you have the gift of beauty, honey. Anyone that can make Ruth Ellen Ronson look that good has got to have the divine grae. You ought to get yourself some training, sweetheart. Start up a *ame*. You ought to get yourself some training, sweetheart. Start up a *ame*. You ought to get yourself some training, sweetheart. Start up a *ame*. You ought to get yourself some training. A career's something to got your own place and your own possibilities.' A career's something to hold on to, Calla. Look at your mama. She's got a career, and I suspen hold on to, Calla. Look at your some pixes."

that she gets almost as much as she gives." Well, it was true. I *was* getting pretty well known around La Lua

for doing hair. When Mariane Trichelle got married—a huge wedding, ewn single soul in the parish of Tallabena was there—I helped MDæ do the entire bridal party's hair. After that, word just spread thei was good with hair. And I was. I had flips down cold by the end that wedding, and I could tease a head into a smooth bubble in not ing flat. Later, I told M'Dear that I wanted to learn a French we THE CROWNING GLORY OF CALLA LILY PONDER

and she said, "Calla, I think you might just be what we call a beauty prodigy."

produy. But until that day, talking to Nelle in the shop, I had never thought about beauty as a career. I was still thinking about beauty as a career when the screen door squeaked open and in walked Cleveland Bonton.

Now, Cleveland's mother was Bertha Bonton, Olivia's daughter, who had been ironing over at Aunt Helen's house forever since I could remember. Cleveland must have been a few years younger than me, maybe nine. Sometimes he mowed our yard when my brothers couldn' get to it. I will never forget one time M'Deat had me take him some ice tea out to the yard, and when I went back out three to get the pitcher, he was sitting under the pecan tree just singing like you never heard! He sang so sweet it made me want to cry—some gopel song. I can't remember exactly what, but it was something like. "Over my head, I see glory in the air." Beautiful, high, sweet little-boy voice. I stood there listening to Cleveland, just amazed. When he finished, I told him, "Hey, you are good. You could be the Little Stevie Wonder of La Luna, Louisiana."

He smiled at me and laughed. "Onliest thing is, I ain't blind!" "Still," I said, "you are a boy musical genius like Little Stevie Wonder."

"Thank you, Miss Calla," he said. "I sings in the choir at St. Claude AME Baptist." Then he finished up the rest of that ice tea in one gulp.

Miss Calla, that's what he called me. Even though we weren't nothing but kids, both of us.

When I went back in the house, I told M'Dear about Cleveland's singing. She said, "Lord, yes, Negro people are blessed with a good ear. You should have heard Cleveland's grandfather sing! Played guitar,

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12d) Cutting Prose - There are no shortcuts

REBECCA WELLS

The information in pages 48 & 49 had to be cut further after timing the piece, which was difficult because the material that was cut advanced the theme.

M'Dear and Papa raught us to always say "Negro" because they M'Dear and the second s thought it was not it was not permitted in our household. rhan nigger. The Cleveland to the grocery, Pair of long black Anyway, so means the from under his cutoffs, his head hanging skinny lege sticking out from under his cutoffs, his head hanging down, staring at the root. "Afternoon, Cleveland," Nelle said. "How's your mama doing?" down, staring at the floor. "Arternoon, Gregorian Gring, How you, Miss Nelle? Miss Calla?" "My mana sources and the set of t like it was going to look up and tell him what to do next. "What can I do for you today?" Nelle asked him. Cleveland didn't say a thing. We waited and we waited and we waited some more, but Cleveland didn't say a word. Finally, he said, "Miss Nelle, I wants to skate." Whoa! Negro people had never skated in Nelle's place. Oh, Nelle served them, sold them bread, shiners, Coca-Colas, and all. But they didn't use the bathroom there, they didn't drink from the fountain, and they didn't-couldn't-skate in the rink. But there was Cleveland Bonton, standing there and asking if he could skate! I'd known Bertha and her boys all my life, and I never thought that one of them would up and do something like this. It was wild, It was sticky. It was against the law. I had been seeing so much on TV. In Birmingham, hundreds of Negro people out in the street, and huge police dogs with mean, sharp teeth. Dogs trained to kill, taking down little boys, girls, and old women. Fire hoses forcing regular everyday Negro people down on the ground, up against trees, with force so strong that M'Dear said, with tears in her eyes, "You know it must have ruptured kidneys and torn apart spleens." Oh, it was ugly business. The Sunday those four land girls were killed by a bomb, little girls in their best Sunday dress Papa cried when he saw the news with Walter Cronkite. Will, South

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Boy, and me, we were all so sad and confused. M'Dear lit a sanctu-Boy, and everyone was asked to join in prayers. For ary cannot my dreams were all full of those little girls, the whiteness of their church dresses flying apart like burned feathers. But we hadn't ever seen anything like that around La Luna. The danger seemed far away. But when Cleveland asked to skate, though, is made my stomach start to hurt. What kind of mess was Cleveland fring to get into? Did he want to skate so bad that he was willing to take this chance? Or was he just a little kid who wasn't stopping to think?

Nelle didn't answer Cleveland right away. The longer she didn't say anything, the hotter it got, like that ceiling fan was somehow slowing down. Cleveland stood there, his knobby knees shaking like he was cold, even though sweat was dripping off his forehead.

Finally Nelle said, "Cleveland, it costs fifty cents to rent you a pair of skates. Two quarters."

A big old grin spilled across his face. "Yas'm," he said, "I got me the tore of the proverse following our basy of he sould money."

Then he reached down into his pockets, pulled out a handful of nickels and pennies, and plunked all the change down on the counter. It seemed like time just stopped then. Nobody moved a musclenot me, not Nelle, not Cleveland. I could still hear fruit flies buzzing over by the bait stand, the hum of the big red Coca-Cola cooler below me, the ticking of the clock with the Dr Pepper boy on it behind the counter.

All these things were flying through my mind: What barm is it going to do, letting him skate on the empty rink? I wanted Cleveland to skate, and at the same time I didn't.

What did I see but Nelle picking up the change from the counter! She put it all in the register and asked, "What size skate you take, Cleveland?" She said it like she rented skates to colored people every day.

12e) Cutting Prose - There are no shortcuts

Finally, page 50 offered one beautiful concluding idea for the entire piece.



REBECCA WELLS Cleveland said, "I take a size nine, please, m Negroes, people say, all of them, got big t running through my mind.

"Go on over to the rink side," Nelle told Cleveland. She went to the little room and brought out the skates, and I watched while Cleveland sat on the long wooden bench and bent over to lace them up over his bare feet. He didn't ask for socks, and Nelle didn't offer. It took him a long time to get them laced up because his hands were shaking.

nat was

But I could not take my eyes away from his hair. So black and kinky but soft-looking, like lamb's wool. How does it stay so tight like that, I wondered, those curls like little springs ready to pop out at you? The Bible says every one of our hairs is numbered, that God knows every single thing about us, whether we're black or white.

Cleveland finally got his skates on and headed out to the rink. He fell down twice even before getting there. I thought, *Well, where's all* that natural rhythm they are supposed to have?

Nelle got out the broom without a word and started sweeping the floor of the grocery. Oh, she sure got busy all of a sudden. But every once in a while, I could see her steal a look at the rink.

Cleveland had not let go of the railing. Matter of fact, he was holding on to it with the grip of death while slowly walking himself around the circle. But just when I was thinking he'd stay glued to that railing forever, he shoved off. Just a little ways, but still, he got moving le got about five, six feet out onto the rink floor, then started to lose his balance. He almost fell down, but he caught himself.

Watching him, it seemed like I could feel every move he made in my own body, like something in me was leaning out to him, like my muscles were straining to help him stay up on those skates. He stopped for a minute to get his balance, then he pushed of again. One wobbly leg in front of the other, the blackness of his sim blending with the black of the leather, so that those skates looked us

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extensions of his legs. He sailed for just a minute. And I knew that feeling—that a little minute of flying is worth almost anything. But then he fell, and fell hard, like the floor suddenly yanked him down.

"Cleve!" I yelled out. "I don't care how hot it is, you don't get out on a roller rink your first time in cutoffs! You need you some long pants!" His knees were bleeding. He brushed himself off and worked his way back to the railing. Then he just stood there, looking out at the rink Jike a sailor looking out to sea. Or a bull rider who'd just been bucked. Nelle stepped back into the rink from the grocery.

"Nelle," I said, "he is gonna bust himself wide open."

"Naw," she said, flipping the switch on the jukebox like only she knew how to do, to make music play without even putting in a dime. "Boy's been dreaming about this. Been coming in here all summer, acting like he just wants to buy a Coca-Cola, but eyeing that rink like it was Christmas. Let him go,"

"Ramblin' Rose" came on the jukebox and flooded the rink with Nat King Cole, that old silky voice of his making the hot air feel softer. "Go over there and turn on the big fan," Nelle said, surprising me. She never turned on the huge industrial fan at the end of the rink for just one person. It cost too much money. When you're in business for yourself, you watch your expenses, she told me.

I did like she said, then followed her back into the grocery. I took a sip of my Crush and asked, "Nelle, aren't you a little scared of what might happen?"

Nelle leaned on the broom handle, lit a Pall Mall with one of her kitchen matches, and told me, "Calla, girl, comes a time when you run your own business, you got to make your own decisions. This grocery, this rink—they're my career. A career's a whole lot bigger than nickel-and-diming your whole life long. And you're damn right, I am teared."





Emerson Curtis Converse: Judson High School Coached by Larry Bailey







Thank you so much for allowing me to present this morning!

Questions?

Emily King, Liberty Hill High School emilytexas512@gmail.com



Amazing students who brought me to Austin, Texas.



2009 - Wade King (prose)
2010 - David McVey (poetry)
2011 - Drew Dunn (poetry)
2012 - Collin Evans (prose)
2012 - Jessica Polson (poetry)
2013 - Drew Dunn (prose)
2013 - Jessica Polson (poetry)
2014 - Reis Smith (prose)
2014 - Drew Dunn (poetry)
2015 - Reis Smith (prose)
2015 - Jade Pool (poetry)

2016 - Wyatt King (prose) 2016 - Reis Smith (poetry) 2017 - Jade Pool (prose) 2017 - Reis Smith (poetry) 2018 - Wyatt King (prose) 2018 - Abby Nichols (poetry) 2019 - Karli Torrez (poetry) 2020 - COVID/DNC 2021 - Jonna Pool (prose) 2022 - Jonna Pool (prose) 2022 - Karli Torrez (poetry) 2023 - Hailey Torno (prose)

Region UIL Interpretation Champions

- 2009 Wade King (prose)
- 2010 Kassidy Gandy (prose)
- 2012 Jessica Polson (poetry)
- 2012 Collin Evans (prose)
- 2013 Jessica Polson (poetry)
- 2014 Drew Dunn (poetry)
- 2016 Wyatt King (prose)
- 2016 Reis Smith (poetry)
- 2017 Wyatt King (prose)
- 2018 Wyatt King (prose)
- 2020 COVID/DNC
- 2021 Jonna Pool (prose)
- 2021 Karli Torrez (poetry)
- 2022 Watson Evans (poetry)