

# **Prose and Poetry Handbook**

**2024-25**

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**University Interscholastic League**

Prose and Poetry Interpretation Handbook

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# preface

UIL oral interpretation events are a favorite among students and coaches. Perhaps that is because the goal of oral interpretation is not only to discover, but then to share, and what joy comes from sharing literature with an audience! Those moments create a special bond between the literature, the reader, and the listener.

Since oral interpretation is an art of recreation, every piece of literature presents its own challenge. While there is no absolute “how-to-do-it” formula, I do believe that the basic principles of analysis and presentation included in this book will prove useful. As you will discover when you review different judges’ evaluations of your performance, each judge brings his or her own perspective about performance. My hope is that this handbook will help you ultimately achieve a balance between literary analysis and interpretative technique, which is essential to the art of oral interpretation, and that the information provided within its covers will equip you to make decisions about your approach to your own performance. Of course, no book can or should replace the teaching role, so I encourage you to review and evaluate the concepts in this publication with your UIL coach for application.

The growth you experience as you search for literature through extensive reading, as you analyze to comprehend the true essence of the literature, and as you prepare for the performance moment, will be incredibly meaningful. In the midst of working diligently to achieve goals as a UIL competitor, I hope you won’t forget to fall in love with literature, to find an affinity with gifted authors, to “feel” the words of the writers down deep in your soul, and to grow as an individual because of your encounter with oral interpretation as an art, not simply as a contest — in order that you may be forever changed by its magic.

Jana Riggins  
UIL State Speech Director



# about this edition

## **About the authors**

The latest edition of the UIL Prose and Poetry Handbook was written and edited by Jana Riggins, current UIL Speech Director. Additionally, the handbook includes valuable contributions from earlier directors and input from members of past and present State Prose and Poetry Advisory Committees whose contributions are greatly appreciated. This entire group is quite diverse in their philosophies of oral interpretation, which enhanced the variety and depth of this handbook. Special thanks to M'Liss Hindman, Director of Forensics at Tyler Junior College.

## **About the categories**

A committee of high school coaches and university faculty is formed to choose new prose and poetry categories each time they change. Serving on the latest committee were: Larry Bailey, Judson HS; Andrew Barrett, Cypress Creek HS; Gary Brister, Hico HS; Stef Cambra, presently at Drury College; Mellessa Denny, Amarillo HS; Shawn Duthie, Holliday HS; Emily King, Liberty Hill HS; Ann Shofner, retired, Amarillo; the late Johnny Trillayes formerly at PSJA Southwest HS; Martin Vela, Corpus Christi King HS; and M'Liss Hindman, Tyler Junior College, Director of Forensics. UIL State Speech Director Jana Riggins chaired the committee.

## **About the handbook**

This handbook is essential reading for both coach and contestant. It contains rules and contest procedures particular to UIL Prose and Poetry contests you must familiarize yourself with to be successful in UIL competition. It also includes theory and instruction on oral performance of literature.

## **About the future**

The interpretation categories will continue to change on a regular basis. Your opinion and suggestions are valuable. Visit our website to submit literature categories you believe would be educationally beneficial for our students. We would also welcome comments about this handbook, including what additional information you feel would be helpful. Specific category rulings are updated on the UIL website throughout the competition year.



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# 1

## Welcome to Oral Interpretation

I'm not my father's son. Well, I am, except you wouldn't know it. That's because my father is an athletic coach. I am not.

My dad coaches football, basketball, volleyball, and baseball. My hand-eye coordination is so bad, I'm not sure the two have actually met. So, instead of spending the majority of my childhood with some type of ball in my hand, I was always holding a book. Some of my earliest memories involve literature. I don't know what it feels like to hit a homerun, but if it's anything like what I felt upon receiving my first library card, I can understand why people love the sport so dearly.

Baseball may be America's favorite pastime, but reading has always been mine. The first time I read Pippi Longstocking, I neared the final chapter as my mom called out from the other room, "Bedtime! Lights out!" Instead of going to sleep after obediently flipping the switch, I used the glow of a Happy Meal toy I received earlier that day as a flashlight to read the last pages. Don't get me wrong. My interests may differ wildly from my father's, but our personalities are similar. My competitive nature just manifests itself differently. In elementary school, I would spend Saturdays sitting in my room with a Laura Ingalls Wilder book having "races" with myself to see how many pages I could read during specific increments of time. Little did I know, in high school I would discover an activity which allowed me to combine my love of poetry, performance, and a little competition.

When I first walked into Beth Huse's classroom, I told her I wanted to find out more about an event called Poetry Interpretation. By the end of that day, she had Ron Koertge's Shakespeare Bats Cleanup in my hands. I finished the book of poetry before I even made it home. The narrative poems tell the story of a teenage baseball player who was benched after contracting mononucleosis. During this time off, he discovers a poetry book in his dad's den as well as a new found love of verse. It was the mirror image of my own father-son story. A couple of weekends later, I walked onstage to accept my first medal for my performance of a cutting out of that book.

We all have our own origin story as we are. It is my hope on our journey that none of us forget where we started. I went from receiving awards for my performances to now standing behind my students on the UIL stage as they receive their own. Over the years, I've been fortunate enough to turn my love for this activity into a career.

It seems only fitting that my career started with a nod to my unexpected heritage when the principal who hired me announced to his administration that Mr. Fugler would be the new Speech and Debate teacher. One of the assistant principals--a former coach--asked "Fugler? What's he know about speech?" When she later retold that story and stressed her disbelief that I could be my father's son, I responded, "Sure, my dad may coach sports, but I coach speech. We have different interests, but share the same competitive nature."

Admittedly, I still correct students when they call me "Coach" Fulger, saying that's my dad. But when I think about it, this activity has helped me come to respect our similar personality traits while also celebrating our differences. To borrow a line from my poetry introduction for that very first program, "The apple may not fall from the tree, but that won't stop it from rolling down the hill and off the cliff." And that's okay.

*JP Fugler*  
*Lindale High School*

## How Did We Get To Here?

In the days of Vaudeville, a favorite act was the One Man Band, in which a musician appeared wearing a vast array of musical instruments — banjos, washboards, mouth organs, bugles, tambourines, and even cymbals attached to his knees — which he somehow managed to play, all at the same time, to the delight and amazement of his audience.

The oral interpreter does even more incredible things. He is a public speaker reciting introductions and transitions. He is a performer playing many roles, both male and female, as well as an occasional inanimate object. He is a critic, examining every word of the text and sub-text, sharing his own interpretation, always in search of the perfect performance. He is a narrator supplying the author’s thoughts, images, moods, and tones. He is the whole technical crew, providing settings, stage directions, and sound effects. At the same time, he is a part of the audience, observing, analyzing, and enjoying the author’s material. And all the while, *he must still maintain his own identity*. A formidable task, indeed!

Oral interpretation, the oldest of the speech arts, has roots and a history that go back to the beginnings of man, long before the written word. Undoubtedly, on long winter nights by the light of camp fires, early man told tales of his battles, his victories, his romances, entertaining and amazing his family and friends. After a while, these tales became the history of his tribe and were considered holy and revered by all, as was the teller.

In Greek times, this teller of tales was called by the name “rhapsode” (coming from the Greek root meaning “to sew” or “stitch,” no doubt referring to the numerous tales that were “stitched” together for his program). The rhapsode, carrying a lyre to accompany himself and a myrtle staff, made his living traveling from place to place, reciting Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, inspiring and moving his listeners with historical and religious tales. In time, these works were written down and became the Western World’s first literature.

The Romans, with poets such as Virgil, Horace, and Ovid continued the tradition, as did the Church during the Middle Ages. Outside the church, there were the troubadours and minstrels, traveling about singing and juggling, who spread their tales and histories across the centuries, leaving behind the great national epics such as *Beowulf*, *Cid*, *Nibelungenlied*, and *The Song of Roland*. When literacy increased as a result of the invention of the printing press, storytelling and reading were taken over by the common people. Thus we have Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, in which the characters themselves take turns telling stories. Offspring of these epics are the novel, poetry, and short stories of more recent times.

The Nineteenth Century made “super stars” out of such authors as Charles Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Mark Twain, who toured and “won” the West, doing what people have always done, reading to others.

In our own century, the radio, that tiny little electronic rhapsode, captured imaginations around the world, teaching us once again that suggestion can create anything and everything in the mind. More recently, London and Broadway have mounted critically acclaimed productions — *Don Juan in Hell*, *John Brown’s Body*, and the eight hour *Nicholas Nicholby*.

It is not surprising that students in Texas high schools are so fascinated with the oral interpretation of prose and poetry. The rhapsode is very much still with us. Audiences are waiting. Long may the interpreters continue!

## Where Are We Today?

While oral interpretation of literature finds its roots in the traditions of storytelling, it has emerged as a distinct art form. And like other forms of art, it continues to evolve in both the material that is used and the manner in which that material is presented. Oral interpretation can be defined as the art of sharing literature from the author through the performer to the audience. Each of these elements is crucial to the final product of oral interpretation as a UIL contest activity.

There remain wide differences in philosophies of “the right way” to perform oral interpretation of literature. In the 1950s and continuing into the 70s, educators were often taught that oral interpretation should be limited entirely to the use of the voice and facial expression, and that any use of the body was inappropriate, as it constituted “acting.” Then in the 90s and earlier this decade, many educators still taught that interpreters shouldn’t move out of the imaginary ‘box’ that was around them and that interpreters should never move their feet. More recently, colleges and universities have favored the “performance” approach, where almost anything goes, so many younger teachers and others who work closely with collegiate faculty and workshops have a different perspective. You may have already heard professionals speak of “crossing the line” between interp and acting, or you may find comments on your performance critiques that deal with this issue. Many coaches and competitors are asking: “Where is the line? What does it mean, and how does anyone know when they’ve crossed it?”

There are several elements of the contest rules which should help in answering these questions for UIL competition. First, the *Constitution & Contest Rules* clearly defines the goals of the oral interpretation contests in UIL as “literature in performance through expressive oral reading.” While actors have the use of the full stage space, costumes, settings and props, and other characters on stage, the interpreter is required to provide all these elements through suggestion. The essential role of the narrative in prose or poetry means an interpreter has a unique communicative role with the audience that is not present in stage productions. The key is “believability.” An audience (which includes judges) can imagine several different characters, established through the use of voice, focus, and posture to distinguish individuals, and settings that could seldom if ever be accomplished on stage, established through narration. When exaggeration leads them to focus on the technique you use rather than the material you are conveying, often believability is lost.

A second element of UIL competition in oral interpretation is the required use of a physical manuscript, intended to keep the focus of the performance on the literature itself. Actors memorize their lines, and “become another person” while they are on stage. Interpreters use a script (even if they are so familiar with it that it isn’t necessary) to portray a number of diverse characters, often including a narrator who communicates directly with the audience. Probably nothing interferes with believability more than watching someone who holds a script but never uses it, or someone who uses that script in a way that blatantly contradicts the fact that it contains the literature that is being performed. Again, suggestion works, exaggeration seldom does. But there are no rules that say how many times a contestant must look down at each page. The best advice is for performers to look down at their pages ‘in character’ and at appropriate times (for instance NOT in the middle of a description of some specific action.) During rehearsals, plan when you look down and also plan when each page should be turned. Again use judgement and avoid turning pages in the middle of sentences or in the middle of describing some action/scene, etc.



A third consideration is the guidelines for use of the body and movement in these UIL contest activities are provided. The contest rules indicate: “Responsive use of the body (i.e. spontaneous changes in posture, gesture, and place-to-place movement) is permissible. However, this active use of the body should: (A) be appropriate to the demands of the selection, (B) be a natural outgrowth from the literature to be performed, and (C) be limited in scope.” Coaches and contestants should realize that judges will apply their own opinions to what they value in style and delivery and that these opinions will vary from judge to judge. This doesn’t mean that an interpreter can’t do some limited movements suggesting larger concepts being described; it just means that it is one of the difficult choices an interpreter must make. Judges are never going to agree totally with every performance. That is why the majority of contests require at least three judges for finals.

This doesn’t mean that interpreters are restricted to a mechanical presentation of literature, where the emotional texture of the material cannot be experienced through performance. The vast majority of successful competitive performances are those which fall into the middle realm between little physical involvement with the presentation of literature, and contestants who act as though they were “on stage,” when everybody in the audience knows they are not. Most UIL judges recognize and maintain a real distinction between acting events and interpretation events, and appreciate contestants who truly “share literature from an author through the performer to the audience.” Actors “become” a character completely with their voice, posture, walk and more, while interpreters suggest by using their voice and posture and, only when appropriate, other movements. Actors talk to other characters on stage, while interpreters create the sense that the other character or characters are there. Audiences share in the experience if they can see *in their minds* what you are creating. As for “Where is the line? What does it mean, and how does anyone know when they’ve crossed it?” That is totally opinion. And current performance theory indicates that a contestant shouldn’t be concerned about the “line” so much as that their performance is realistic and true to the literature.

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The bottom line? Make the literature come to life with the words you are speaking. Embrace the power inherent in the words themselves. Your analysis and understanding of the literature should be your guide as you make performance decisions about how to share the selection with an audience in a way that keeps the focus on the author’s work rather than on performance technique. Work with your coach to understand the various philosophies of oral interpretation that are generally accepted in your area. The subjective nature of performance of literature means that opinions about performance styles will vary from region to region and even from one district to another. That should not discourage you but should motivate you to become the best interpreter you can be and to make each of your performances believable so that you will move your audience. In learning these skills you will become more confident in your abilities which will only benefit you in the future. Enjoy learning.

# 2

## Getting Started

As you begin to immerse yourself in oral interpretation not only as an art form but also as a forensic activity, the most important initial step is gaining knowledge of the contest rules and procedures. It is critical to read the UIL rules carefully because adherence to the details is essential for success in competition. They are provided in this chapter for you to study carefully and completely.

### Section 1000: SPEECH

(a) **EVENTS AND ENTRIES.** The UIL speech program shall consist of events divided into three basic skill categories: debate, oral interpretation and extemporaneous speaking. Students are permitted to enter two events in speech, and Cross-Examination Team Debate (see [b] Scheduling). The eligibility section requirements of each contest shall be met and no more than one event shall be selected from each of the following categories:

(1) *Debate.*

(A) Cross-Examination Team Debate

(B) Lincoln-Douglas

(2) *Interpretation.*

(A) Prose Interpretation

(B) Poetry Interpretation

(3) *Extemporaneous Speaking.*

(A) Informative Speaking

(B) Persuasive Speaking

(4) *Prohibited Double Entries.*

If You Enter:

Team Debate

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Prose Interpretation

Poetry Interpretation

Informative Speaking

Persuasive Speaking

You May Not Enter These Contests:

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Team Debate, Prose Interpretation,  
Poetry Interpretation

Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Poetry  
Interpretation

Lincoln-Douglas Debate,  
Prose Interpretation

Persuasive Speaking

Informative Speaking

**Note.** There is no restriction on entering Congress in addition to other speech or academic events.

(b) **SCHEDULING.** In addition to restrictions of individual contest plans, it is imperative that students and academic coaches become familiar with the Academic Conflict Pattern when selecting contests for competition. This pattern is provided on the UIL website. Students who want to double enter may request that they be allowed to speak first or second in a section but may not request to be placed in the bottom one-half of the section. If the double entry is not prohibited above, contest directors may allow the double entry if the necessary accommodations do not inconvenience other contestants. Contest directors are to use their best judgment in the matter. There shall be no protest of their decisions.

(c) **RECORDING.** Schools and/or individuals are prohibited from recording (audio and/or video) speech contests. The UIL reserves the right to record for educational purposes.

# Prose and Poetry Interpretation Handbook

## Section 1003: INDIVIDUAL SPEECH CONTESTS

(a) **PURPOSE.** The purpose of each of the individual speech contests is to stimulate the student's ability to communicate ideas and information to an audience. In the extemporaneous informative speaking and extemporaneous persuasive speaking contests, these ideas are essentially those of the speaker, derived from the speaker's background of research on current events. In poetry interpretation and prose interpretation, the student is challenged to ascertain and communicate the ideas of an author through a literary selection, based on the student's understanding and research.

### (b) GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.

(1) **Sections.** A section shall consist of no more than eight contestants. If nine or more students enter a single contest, preliminary and final rounds shall be held. Preliminary round sections shall be divided as equally as possible. The following chart shall be used to determine the number of sections and finalists in each section:

No. Entries	Preliminaries	Participants Advancing to Final Round
1- 8	None*	Final Round
9-16	2 Sections	1st, 2nd, 3rd from each section
15-24	3 Sections	1st, 2nd from each section
20-32	4 Sections	1st, 2nd from each section
32-39	8 Sections	1st from each section

\* If desired, a preliminary round may be held.

Contestants should be entered on the district online entry form according to strength. Contest directors should section by distributing first, second and third place district entries as equally as possible, avoiding when possible, placing contestants from the same school in the same section. At the regional level, first, second and third place district winners should be distributed as equally as possible throughout the sections.

## INDIVIDUAL SPEECH CONTESTS, GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- (2) *Judging All Individual Speech Contests.* Judging shall be by an odd number of judges or by one judge. In any event, the contest director should make every attempt to secure competent judges who have had training in the field of speech. At minimum, judges should be high school graduates. In so far as possible, the judges should not know which school contestants represent. A copy of the judging instructions provided by the League office should be given to each judge. Prose and poetry judges for high school oral interpretation should be given literary categories prior to the meet. Contest directors are responsible for explaining these instructions and categories to the judges. Judges should be instructed not to discuss their decisions with other individuals or judges while judging a given contest. The responsibility of the judge is to rank the speaker, evaluate the performance, and give constructive suggestions for the benefit of the speaker. Written evaluations are encouraged.
- (3) *Timekeeper and Signal Standards.*
- (A) A timekeeper should be provided for each contest to notify the contestant of the amount of time remaining from the total allotted time. The timekeeper should sit in front of the judges and where they can be seen by contestants and should demonstrate before each contestant begins the type of time signals to be used. The time cards are a much preferred method of signal.
- (B) A timekeeper should use timecards to indicate to the speaker the remaining time. When the speaker begins to talk, the card marked "7" should be held so that the speaker can see it. When the speaker has talked for one minute, the card marked "6", should be held so the speaker can see it, which indicates six minutes remaining, etc. When the speaker has talked for six minutes the timekeeper should raise the card marked "1" above his/her head. When only 30 seconds remain, the timekeeper should raise the "1/2" card (preferably a yellow card) above the head. At the end of the full seven minutes, the timekeeper should hold the "stop" card (preferably a red card) above the head. An interpretative contestant who is still speaking as the "stop" card has been raised is deemed to have gone over seven minutes. Prose and poetry contestants may not go over seven minutes without disqualification. 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.
- (4) *Ranking the Contestants.*
- (A) At the close of the contest, the judges shall rank all speakers by numbers: 1, 2, 3, etc. The contest director will supervise tabulation of contest results, using the official UIL Talktab speech tabulation software. Points are to be awarded through sixth place in accordance with Section 902.
- (B) In the case of panel judging, the following criteria, in the following order, shall be used to determine all ranks: (1) majority or BETTER; (2) lowest sum; (3) judges' preference; (4) decimal equivalent; (5) judges' preference to break decimal ties; (6) lowest sum of all tournament ballots (7) blind draw, except

at state finals. When a place has been determined, the contest director shall revert back to the first criteria (majority or BETTER) to determine the next rank, unless there is a tie, whereupon all contestants who are tied shall be awarded a place before going on to another contestant or place. NOTE: At no time during tabulation should judges discuss their ranks or confer with one another regarding ranks - item (iii) below, "Judges' Preference" is a method of tabulation and does NOT infer that judges confer to reach a preference. See \* in (C) below for instructions on tabulating judges' preference.

- (i) Any contestant who receives a majority of firsts shall be awarded first place.
  - (ii) In the event that no contestant receives a majority of firsts, the contestant with the lowest sum of total ranks shall be awarded first place.
  - (iii) If, at this point, two or more contestants tie with the same low sum of total ranks, the tie shall be broken by the use of judges' preference. See (C) \* below for instructions on determining judges' preference.)
  - (iv) In any case where there is a tie, all contestants who are tied shall be awarded a place before going on to another contestant or place.
  - (v) Should a tie occur at this point among three or more contestants which cannot be broken by judges' preference, the ranks of only the tied contestants shall be converted to decimal equivalents on the following scale:  
 Rank of first = 1.00  
 Rank of second = .50  
 Rank of third = .33  
 Rank of fourth = .25  
 Rank of fifth = .20  
 Rank of sixth = .17  
 Rank of seventh = .14  
 Rank of eighth = .13  
 The contestant with the highest sum total of the decimal value of ranks shall be awarded first place.
  - (vi) If after converting to decimal values two contestants remain tied with equal sums of decimal values, this tie shall be broken by judges' preference.
  - (vii) 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.
  - (viii) Should a tie among three or more contestants occur which cannot be broken by these methods, it shall be broken by a blind draw, except for state finals.
- (C) Second place shall be determined next. If a tie existed for first place, after breaking the tie by the above methods, the person who was tied with the first place winner is automatically given second place. If no tie existed, revert to the first ranking criteria (majority or BETTER.) A contestant (not already awarded a place) ranked second OR BETTER by a majority of the judges shall be awarded second place. If, however, no contestant receives a majority of seconds OR BETTER or if two unranked contestants receive a majority of seconds OR BETTER. (i.e., ranks of 1 and 2, or 2 and 2), then the contestant with the lowest sum of total ranks shall be awarded second. In the following example, both unranked contestants have a majority of seconds OR BETTER, so contestant #2, whose sum of total ranks is lower, is ranked second. Contestant #1 is then awarded third before any other contestant or place is considered, and the next place to be awarded is fourth.

Contestant	Judge A	Judge B	Judge C	Total	Rank
One	3	2	2	7	3rd
Two	2	1	3	6	2nd
Three	1	5	1	N/A	1st

\*In the next example, first place was awarded to a contestant with a majority of firsts, and no contestant had a majority of seconds OR BETTER. Contestants 1 and 2 have the same sum of total ranks, so the tie for second shall be determined by judges' preference.

Contestant	Judge A	Judge B	Judge C	Total	Preference	Rank
One	2	5	3	10	+	2nd
Two	4	2	4	10	-	3rd

Contestant 1 is ranked higher (or receives higher preference) than contestant 2 by two of the three judges (A & C), and is awarded second place. Contestant 2 shall be awarded third place before any other contestant or place is considered. Any tie between only two contestants can be broken by judges' preference.

- (D) Many three-way ties, where three contestants have the same sum of total ranks, can also be broken by determining judges' preference, as in the following example:

Contestant	Judge A	Judge B	Judge C	Total	Preference	Rank
One	1	4	4	9	--	3rd
Two	4	3	2	9	++	1st
Three	5	1	3	9	+ -	2nd
Four	3	5	5	13		5th
Five	2	2	6	10		4th
Six	6	6	1	13		6th

No speaker has a majority of firsts, and three speakers are tied with a rank sum of 9. Compare speaker #1 to speaker #2, and two of three judges (B & C) ranked #2 higher. A (+) beside speaker #2 in the preference column, and a (-) beside #1 indicate the judges' preference. Now compare speaker #1 to the other contestant involved in the tie, speaker #3. Two judges (B & C) ranked #3 higher than #1, indicated by a (+) in the preference column for speaker #3, and a (-) in the preference column for #1. Now compare speaker #2 to speaker #3, and note that two of the three judges (A & C) ranked speaker #2 higher, as indicated by a (+) in the preference column for speaker #2, and a (-) for speaker #3. The two (+)'s for speaker #2 in the judges' preference column indicate that speaker #2 was preferred over both other contestants, so this speaker is awarded first place. Speaker #3 was ranked higher than speaker #1 by two of the three judges, so contestant #3 is awarded second place. Contestant #1 is then awarded third place. Please note that although speaker #5 has a majority of second place ranks, this contestant is not awarded second place, because all three contestants tied for first shall be ranked before considering other contestants or places. The next place to be determined is fourth place, and speaker #5 is the only unranked contestant with a majority of fourths OR BETTER (two second place ranks). Therefore contestant #5 is awarded fourth place. The next place to be determined is fifth, and speaker #4 is the only unranked contestant with a majority of fifths or better. Therefore, contestant #4 is awarded fifth place, and speaker #6 is awarded sixth.

- (E) Should a tie occur at this point among three or more contestants which cannot be broken by judges' preference, the ranks of only those contestants involved in the tie shall be converted to their decimal equivalent. See Section 1003 (b) (3) (B) (v). In the following example, contestant #2 has a majority of firsts and is awarded first place. No unranked contestant has a majority of seconds or better, and contestants #1, #3, and #5 have the same total low sum of ranks.

Contestant	Judge A	Judge B	Judge C	Total	Preference
One	1	6	4	11	+ -
Two	2	1	1	N/A	
Three	3	2	6	11	- +
Four	6	3	5	14	
Five	4	5	2	11	- +
Six	5	4	3	12	

Judges' preference cannot be determined because no contestant is given preference over both others. Only the ranks of the tied contestants shall be converted to their decimal equivalent as follows:

Contestant #1	Contestant #3	Contestant #5
1st = 1.00	3rd = .33	4th = .25
6th = .17	2nd = .50	5th = .20
4th = <u>.25</u>	6th = <u>.17</u>	2nd = <u>.50</u>
1.42	1.00	.95

Contestant #1 has the highest sum total of decimal value, and is awarded second place. Contestant #3 has the next highest total, and is awarded third place, and contestant #5 is awarded fourth place. Both contestants remaining unranked have a majority of fifths OR BETTER. Therefore, contestant #6, with the lowest sum of total ranks, is awarded fifth place and contestant #4 is awarded sixth.

Contestant	Judge A	Judge B	Judge C	Total	Pref	Decimal Value	Rank
One	1	6	4	11	+ -	1.42	2nd
Two	2	1	1	N/A			1st
Three	3	2	6	11	- +	1.00	3rd
Four	6	3	5	14			6th
Five	4	5	2	11	- +	.95	4th
Six	5	4	3	12			5th

- (F) If after conversion to decimal values, two contestants remained tied, this tie shall be broken by judges' preference, as in the following example of three contestants tied for first:

Contestant	Judge			Total	Pref	Decimal	
	A	B	C			Value	Rank
One	1	5	2	8		1.70	1st
Two	3	1	4	8	+	1.58	2nd
Three	4	3	1	8	-	1.58	3rd

In this example, judges' preference cannot be determined among the three tied contestants. When ranks are converted to decimal value, contestant #1 has the highest total and is therefore awarded first place. Now judges' preference shall be used to break the simple two-way tie between contestants #2 and #3. Two of the three judges (A & B) ranked contestant #2 higher than #3, and contestant #2 is awarded second place. Contestant #3 shall be awarded third place before any other contestant is considered.

- (G) If, at this point, contestants remain tied, the sum 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.
- (H) If, at this point, should a tie still exist that cannot be broken by these methods, the tie shall be broken by a blind drawn, except at State Finals. All tied contestants shall be awarded ranks by a blind draw before any other contestant or place is considered. Points shall be divided equally in accordance with Section 902.
- (I) Contestants who are disqualified receive no place and no points.
- (5) *Unofficial Results.* Until students and/or coaches have had a chance to look at the rankings and at the individual evaluation sheets during the announced verification period, results should be announced as unofficial.
- (6) *Ballot Verification Period.* After the preliminary and final rounds (excluding final round at State) and the announcement of unofficial rankings, the individual evaluation sheets for each contestant shall be made available to the contestant and/or the coach. Unofficial rankings of each round should be available printed from the official UIL TalkTab software during this verification period. It then becomes the responsibility of the student and/or the coach to question any tabulation error before the official results of those advancing to the final round or being awarded medals is announced. Students and/or coaches who are not present for this announced ballot verification period forfeit their opportunity to verify tabulation. Approximately 15 minutes should be allotted for this verification period. This is designed as a time to verify tabulation, not a time to question the decision or ranking that a judge has given the student.
- (7) *Official Results.* At the end of the ballot verification period, rankings shall be read and posted as Official Results. No questions may be raised after this point.



# POETRY

## POETRY INTERPRETATION (Section 1006 of the C&CR)

- (a) THE CONTEST.
- (1) *Purpose.* The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to understand, experience and share poetry through the art of oral interpretation.
    - (A) Oral interpretation, or the study of literature through its performance, can be defined as a demonstration of analysis, performance and communication skills offered publicly on behalf of literature.
    - (B) Oral interpretation focuses on literature in performance through expressive oral reading. The goals of this contest are to encourage the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections, and to enhance the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's interpretation of the work.
  - (2) *Format.* Contestants shall prepare selections from both Categories A and B. The literary categories are designed to encourage students to explore the wide variety of feeling and form available in poetry. In any one contest round, the contestants shall be bound by the one selected category. Contestants who fail to read material from within the selected category shall be disqualified. Oral reading of the selection(s), including the introduction and transitions, shall not exceed seven minutes.
- (b) ENTRIES.
- (1) *Representation.* Each participant school in all conferences may enter three students in the contest.
  - (2) *Eligibility.* Only students in high school are eligible for this contest. Poetry contestants shall not compete at district in prose interpretation or in Lincoln-Douglas debate. See Section 1000 for specific speech eligibility requirements.
- (c) RESOURCES. The categories are discussed and defined in detail in the *UIL Prose and Poetry Handbook* and on the UIL website. Coaches are responsible for reviewing these publications in advance of the contest.
- (d) STANDARDS. In selecting material to be read in the contest, the coach and student are challenged to explore literature of high quality and are encouraged to prepare selections of literary merit that the same student has not performed in a previous year. Students shall not use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet and strongly are discouraged from repeating the same selection at district or regional contests that they performed in a previous year. Selections used by contestants should not offend the moral standards of the community nor be in bad taste. Academic coaches should revise or reject all selections that in any way fail to meet these qualifications, as not all material by an author is appropriate for contest material.
- (e) INTRODUCTIONS. An introduction is required in both categories. The introduction and/or transitions during the performance shall include the name of the writer(s) and the selection(s) to be performed and should prepare the audience to listen to the selection. The introduction should reflect spontaneity, though it should be prepared ahead of time.
- (f) MANUSCRIPTS OR COPIES. The contestant should perform the selections reading from manuscripts or copies of the selections that are in a binder. Students shall not read from books or magazines or perform without a manuscript or copy of the selection.
- (g) TIME LIMIT. The time limit for each performance including introduction and any transitional material may not exceed seven minutes. There is no grace period. The responsibility for keeping within the restricted time limit rests with the contestant. The penalty for exceeding seven minutes is disqualification from the round by the contest director, with the exception of the final round of State Meet when the contestant shall receive last in the round. The responsibility for keeping within the restricted time limit rests with the contestant.

## 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, but not self-authored.
- (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.

**Category A: Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things.** The goal of this category is to recognize joy in even the simplest of things. The overall tone of the performance should be joyful.

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, but it may not be self-authored. The majority of the performance must be *published* poetry. The performance should evoke an appreciation of finding joy.

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.

## DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS.

1. If performing a single literary work, it shall be published printed poetry.
2. If performing a program, all selections shall be published, printed poetry with the exception that one poem may be unpublished, but not self-authored.
3. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Poetry A Documentation online form.
4. The contestant shall provide proof the selection(s) are published.

Examples of acceptable proof of published include:

- the original published source
- a photocopy of the copyright of the original source
- online printout of Library of Congress cataloging information
- If a poem is drawn from a literary collection (anthology), the contestant shall supply the original source or a photo copy of the table of contents that designates the title of the book and proof the poem is included in that book
- A printout from an online source proving the poem is included in the published collection. Printouts of online documentation shall include the URL of the website downloaded in the header or footer
- If a poetry selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is poetry

Examples of unacceptable forms of formal documentation include:

- Social media
- Copying and pasting into a word processing document

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.



**POETRY CATEGORY B RESTRICTIONS**

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

- (A) A minimum of two selections of poetry with a maximum of six selections of poetry shall be used in this program
- (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.

**Category B: Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow:** The goal of this category is to explore developments that have enhanced our world and to celebrate the positive change over time that has led to a better future. For this reason, students should consider using poetry that spans different time periods.

In this category, the contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two poetry selections and no more than six poems that shines a light on how our world has evolved for the better, empowering us to move toward a better tomorrow. The program may, *but is not limited to*, examine progress in medicine, mental health, women’s suffrage, technology, family relations, science, education, societal roles..

**Students may use poems from one or more poets.** Co-authored and anonymous works are permissible, but self-authored pieces shall not be used unless published in hard copy. 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.

**DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. All poems may be published, printed material, online material or transcribed material.
2. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Poetry B Documentation online form.
3. No proof of publication for Category B is required.
4. If a poetry selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is poetry.

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.

**STANDARDS.** In selecting material to be read in the contest, the coach and student are challenged to explore literature of high quality and are encouraged to prepare selections of literary merit that the same student has not performed in a previous year. Students shall not use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet and strongly are discouraged from repeating the same selection at district or regional contests that they performed in a previous year. Selections used by contestants should not offend the moral standards of the community nor be in bad taste. Academic coaches and students should revise or reject all selections that in any way fail to meet these qualifications.

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original published source of the selection.

INTRODUCTIONS, An introduction is required in both categories. The introduction and/or transitions during the performance shall include the name of the poet(s) and the selection(s) to be performed and should prepare the audience to listen to the selection(s). The introduction should reflect spontaneity, though it should be prepared ahead of time.

MANUSCRIPTS OR COPIES.. The contestant should perform the selections reading from manuscripts or copies of the selections that are in a binder. Students shall not read from books or magazines or perform without a manuscript or copy of the selection.

#### STYLE AND DELIVERY

Contestants should not use costumes or props. Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture, gesture and place-to-place movement) is permissible. However, this active use of the body should:

- (i) be appropriate to the demands of the selection;
- (ii) be a natural outgrowth from the literature to be performed, and
- (iii) be limited in scope.

Only incidental singing in the introduction, transitions, commentary and/or selection may be included. The judge's opinion regarding style and delivery is final. Coaches are encouraged to prepare contestants for the fact that perceptions of style and delivery will vary from judge to judge.

TIME LIMIT.. The time limit for each performance including introduction and any transitional material may not exceed seven minutes. There is no grace period. The penalty for exceeding seven minutes is disqualification from the round by the contest director, with the exception of the final round of State Meet when the contestant shall receive last in the round. The responsibility for keeping within the restricted time limit rests with the contestant.

# PROSE

## PROSE INTERPRETATION (Section 1007 of the C&CR)

### (a) THE CONTEST.

- (1) *Purpose.* The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to understand, experience and share prose through the art of oral interpretation.
  - (A) Oral interpretation, or the study of literature through its performance, can be defined as a demonstration of analysis, performance and communication skills offered publicly on behalf of literature.
  - (B) Oral interpretation focuses on literature in performance through expressive oral reading. The goals of this contest are to encourage the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections, and to enhance the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's interpretation of the work.
- (2) *Format.* Contestants shall prepare selections from both Categories A and B. The literary categories are designed to encourage students to explore the wide variety of points of view and feeling available in prose. In any one contest round, the contestants shall be bound by the one selected category. Contestants who fail to read material from within the selected category shall be disqualified. Oral reading of the selection(s), including the introduction and transitions, shall not exceed seven minutes.

### (b) ENTRIES.

- (1) *Representation.* Each participant school in all conferences may enter three students in the contest.
- (2) *Eligibility.* Prose contestants shall not compete at district in poetry interpretation or in Lincoln-Douglas debate. See Speech Plan, Section 1000 for specific speech eligibility rules.

(c) **RESOURCES.** The categories are discussed and defined in detail in the *UIL Prose and Poetry Handbook* and on the UIL website. Coaches are responsible for reviewing these publications in advance of the contest.

(d) **STANDARDS.** In selecting material to be read in the contest, the coach and student are challenged to explore literature of high quality and are encouraged to prepare selections of literary merit that the same student has not performed in a previous year. Students shall not use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet and strongly are discouraged from repeating the same selection at district or regional contests that they performed in a previous year. Selections used by contestants should not offend the moral standards of the community nor be in bad taste. Academic coaches should revise or reject all selections that in any way fail to meet these qualifications, as not all material by an author is appropriate for contest material.

- (e) **INTRODUCTIONS.** An introduction is required in both categories. The introduction and/or transitions during the performance shall include the name of the writer(s) and the selection(s) to be performed and should prepare the audience to listen to the selection. The introduction should reflect spontaneity, though it should be prepared ahead of time.
- (f) **MANUSCRIPTS OR COPIES.** The contestant should perform the selections reading from manuscripts or copies of the selections that are in a binder. Students shall not read from books or magazines or perform without a manuscript or copy of the selection.
- (g) **TIME LIMIT.** The time limit for each performance including introduction and any transitional material may not exceed seven minutes. There is no grace period. The responsibility for keeping within the restricted time limit rests with the contestant. The penalty for exceeding seven minutes is disqualification from the round by the contest director, with the exception of the final round of State Meet when the contestant shall receive last in the round. The responsibility for keeping within the restricted time limit rests with the contestant.

### PROSE CATEGORY A RESTRICTIONS

Material chosen for use in Category A of Prose Interpretation shall meet the following 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, but not self-authored.
- (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.

**Category A: Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things:** The goal of this category is to recognize joy in even the simplest of things. The overall tone of the performance should be joyful.

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 but may not be self-authored. The majority of the performance must be *published* prose. The performance should evoke *an appreciation of finding joy*.

For Category A, the performance may be fiction or non-fiction. 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.

### DOCUMENTATION

1. If performing a single literary work, it shall be published printed prose.
2. If performing a program, all selections shall be published, printed prose, with the exception that one prose selection may be unpublished, but not self-authored.
3. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Prose A Documentation online form.
4. The contestant shall provide proof the selection(s) are published prose. Examples of acceptable proof of publication include:
  - the original published source
  - a photocopy of the copyright of the original source
  - online printout of Library of Congress cataloguing information
  - If a prose selection is drawn from a literary collection, the contestant shall supply the original source or a photocopy of the table of contents that designates the title of the book and proof the prose selection is included in that book
    - A printout from an online source proving the selection is included in the published collection. Printouts of online documentation shall include the URL of the website downloaded in the header or footer
  - If a prose selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is prose

Examples of unacceptable forms of formal documentation include:

- Social media
- Copying and pasting into a word processing document

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.

### PROSE CATEGORY B RESTRICTIONS

Material chosen for use in Category B of Prose Interpretation shall meet the following restrictions:

- (A) A minimum of two prose selections with a maximum of four prose selections shall be used in this program.
- (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) Songs lyrics shall not be used as selections or transitions in this performance.
- (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.

**Category B: Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow:** The goal of this category is to explore developments that have enhanced our world and to celebrate the positive change over time that has led to a better future. For this reason, students should consider using prose that spans different time periods.

In this category, the contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two prose selections and no more than four prose selections that shines a light on how our world has evolved for the better, empowering us to move toward a better tomorrow. The program may, *but is not limited to*, examine progress in medicine, mental health, women's suffrage, technology, family relations, science, education, societal roles.

**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, but self-authored pieces shall not be used unless published in hard copy. 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.

### DOCUMENTATION

1. All selections may be published, printed material, online material, or transcribed material from literary sources.
2. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Prose B Documentation online form.
3. No proof of publication for Category B is required.
4. If a prose selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is prose.

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.

**STANDARDS.** In selecting material to be read in the contest, the coach and student are challenged to explore literature of high quality and are encouraged to prepare selections of literary merit that the same student has not performed in a previous year. Students shall not use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet and strongly are discour-

aged from repeating the same selection at district or regional contests that they performed in a previous year. Selections used by contestants should not offend the moral standards of the community nor be in bad taste. Academic coaches and students should revise or reject all selections that in any way fail to meet these qualifications.

### BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original published source of the selection.

**INTRODUCTIONS.** An introduction is required in both categories. The introduction and/or transitions during the performance shall include the name of the poet(s) and the selection(s) to be performed and should prepare the audience to listen to the selection(s). The introduction should reflect spontaneity, though it should be prepared ahead of time.

**MANUSCRIPTS OR COPIES.** The contestant should perform the selections reading from manuscripts or copies of the selections that are in a binder. Students shall not read from books or magazines or perform without a manuscript or copy of the selection.

### STYLE AND DELIVERY

Contestants should not use costumes or props. Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture, gesture and place-to-place movement) is permissible. However, this active use of the body should:

- (i) be appropriate to the demands of the selection;
- (ii) be a natural outgrowth from the literature to be performed, and
- (iii) be limited in scope.

Only incidental singing in the introduction, transitions, commentary and/or selection may be included. The judge's opinion regarding style and delivery is final. Coaches are encouraged to prepare contestants for the fact that perceptions of style and delivery will vary from judge to judge.

**TIME LIMIT.** The time limit for each performance including introduction and any transitional material may not exceed seven minutes. There is no grace period. The penalty for exceeding seven minutes is disqualification from the round by the contest director, with the exception of the final round of State Meet when the contestant shall receive last in the round. The responsibility for keeping within the restricted time limit rests with the contestant.

## Finding Literature

Possibly the most critical part of preparing for the UIL prose or poetry interpretation events is that of selecting the “perfect” literature as your tool of performance. Because the right selection can provide limitless horizons for your talent and the wrong piece can confine the very best of performers, investing time in finding the right literature is essential.

The students who are the most successful are those who begin searching for literature that will qualify under each category several months in advance of the contest date. Starting early prevents them from having to “settle” for a piece with which they are not completely comfortable, one that lacks audience appeal or one that does not fit them as a reader, and frantically grabbing an overused cutting from their coach’s file. Nothing proves more beneficial than investing time in reading all kinds of literature. Before you lies the entire field of literary experience — explore it! Because such a vast quantity of literature exists, where does the dedicated interper begin to look?

### The Competitor’s Edge

Finding literature means read read read read. Before you begin to look for literature, take time to really know the categories and the intent of the category. Then find your own literature because you’ll take more ownership in your performance. A sense of pride also comes with finding unique pieces.

*Phyllis Tucker, retired, Guyer HS*

## Where to Look

### Libraries

Become great friends with your high school librarian, who can help in locating materials or even in ordering special books for you. The library contains volumes of works by individual writers and poets, but young readers will find anthologies of literature helpful, since you may not have enough experience to know which authors you find most interesting or what type of literature you enjoy most. Utilize your local public library. A library card is a very inexpensive investment, and will be a resource for those who love reading long beyond the limited time that you’ll be searching for selections that work for “competition.”

### Technology

Consult your librarian about software available in your particular district that can put you online, accessing holdings to public library systems as well as college libraries. Many public libraries have Online Catalog, Info-Tract (indexing periodicals), databases and products that can open a wealth of books to you through your school’s computer system. Access the UIL Speech Website for links to literary sources.

### College libraries

These are a fascinating storehouse of truly great literature. Even if your town or city isn’t a “college town”, it’s worth the investment to plan a day-long trip to a university library. Take several students along and make it a fun adventure. There is nothing that will build enthusiasm or an affinity with an author more than browsing through books yourself.



## College book stores

While you're on campus researching in the university library, make time to visit the campus bookstore. Incredible literature will be at your fingertips: never mind that it will get you a head start on what to expect in a college literature course!

## Used books

Second-hand book stores can be found in almost any small town, and they provide a wealth of inexpensive material to explore! If you've never read a particular author, but the book jacket grabs your attention, you can afford to take the plunge. Most of these businesses take your books as returns toward your next purchase, so unsuccessful explorations don't have to stack up in your closet. Garage sales are often another gold mine, where you can spend just a little to sample a lot.

### The Competitor's Edge

If you find a book that works well for competition, research the publisher. Publishing companies often specialize in certain types of literature, so they likely publish other titles with writings similar to the one you're reading.

*JP Fugler, Lindale HS*

## Audio resources

There are a growing number of resources that provide literature on audio recordings, both for sale and rent. Although a majority of the literature you wish to perform in Category A must be published in hard copy, these audio books provide a great opportunity to use travel time to listen to selections, and have the added benefit of giving you the chance to hear someone else read aloud for an audience. It's not the same as a physical performance of literature, but it can provide wonderful examples of variety in tone, pace, dialects, use of pauses and silence, etc. National Public Radio, available in most places, airs a weekly edition of *Selected Shorts*. This program includes some of the best stage and television actors and actresses reading short stories that range from classic favorites to the newest writers from across the globe. National Public Radio usually broadcasts on a station located on or near the 90 frequency on your FM dial. Check your local radio broadcast listings.

## Newspapers

Lists of best-sellers appear regularly in most newspapers. Also, search for reviews of current books. Many Texas papers include reviews of books endemic to our state. If your school library doesn't subscribe to the *New York Times*, see if someone in your community does. The Sunday edition contains *The New York Times Review of Books*, which contains wonderful information and reviews of current books and poetry.

## The Internet

The Internet has made the search for "that perfect piece" much more expansive. It certainly can provide students access to more nontraditional material. A word of caution: just about anyone may create and load web pages containing poems or stories. UIL rules for Category A of Prose and Poetry require that the majority of the material be published, printed material for the purpose of professional editor review. Therefore, if the selection is taken from the Internet, you must have proof that the material has also been published concurrently in print form. Category B in both contests allows online literature. See Chapter 4 for resources.

## Testimony

Ask others what they have been reading. The reading experiences of teachers, family and friends can often give you a lead to a great cutting. Check with those who belong to book clubs; they stay informed about quality literature.

### The Competitor's Edge

Make yourself a list of the top 10 best books you have ever read. Ask yourself: Is there a story in one of these that I can tell?

*Katrese Skinner, El Campo HS*

## Selecting Literature for Performance

### Consider yourself and what you find interesting

The first test of your selection will be your own appreciation. You must please yourself in reading before you can hope to please an audience! Just as the more a speaker feels personally interested in his topic, the more effective his speech will be, so it is true that the more you appreciate a piece of literature, and the connection it makes to you as an individual, the more you will enjoy sharing it with an audience. Seek a selection that fits you.

### Consider your capabilities

Another test is: will this selection allow you to demonstrate your range of talents? Can you portray these characters as believable? If the piece demands a certain dialect that you find impossible to master, perhaps it would be wise to keep searching. Some pieces will not work effectively for some performers. If the person speaking is an older Jewish woman, can you be convincing in this role to your audience? Consider gender. As a female performer, can you create believable male characters? To change a persona would violate the literature. Of course males can portray female characters and vice versa, and many selections contain characters of both genders. You should evaluate your ability to create believable characters through interpretation.

### The Competitor's Edge

It is tempting to exclude what has been done in the past. After all, everyone wants to be the first to perform the newest thing. Choose literature that means something to you. Story should always lead the choice. *Magda Mirelez, Bay City HS*

### Consider your audience

You are wise to select material that can be easily followed by the ear. Vivid and emotional action will hold the attention, abstract philosophical thought will not. The ear cannot listen again as the eye can reread, so you must consider that the ear prefers simplicity to complexity, the concrete to the abstract, and vivid imagery to vague generality. Since most of us are visual learners, imagery within literature enhances oral performance. Ask yourself: Will this material give intellectual and sensory pleasure?



## Consider literary value

Students often remain puzzled by what is considered to have literary merit. Charlotte Lee, in her book, *Oral Interpretation*, clarifies this illusive, confusing element by providing three factors as touchstones: **universality**, **individuality**, and **suggestion**. As you search for a selection, examine the literature in terms of the following standards:

- 1) Does it have universal appeal? Is the idea expressed by the literature potentially interesting to all people because the emotional response it draws from the audience is probably one they have felt at one time or another (i.e. fear, rejection, hope, compassion)?
- 2) Does it show individuality in the way it addresses this common experience? A writer can bring a fresh approach to a universal subject by his/her choice of images, words, organization.
- 3) Does it provide suggestion to the reader? Does the writing cause the reader to question, to wonder, to ponder things?

Selections may not be equally strong in all three touchstones, but all should be evident in the piece. If one is missing, you would do well to keep looking. Remember, too, that good writing should have something significant to say not necessarily earth-shattering, but significant.

## Consider appropriateness

There are always risks involved as you make conscious decisions about your performance. Do I read with a dialect? How much movement is too much? Here's the first crucial question you should ask yourself: Is this literature appropriate for contest performance? Does it contain elements that could be offensive to my judge? Would it offend my parents, my principal, my teachers, my community? Would I be comfortable performing it for them? Does it contain language not allowed in my classroom? With the wealth of literature before you, why risk having your talent ignored because of offensive language or subject matter. There is simply too much good literature available to have you sacrifice your many hours of hard work, analysis, and practice. This is not to say that current social issues are off-limits. What it does mean is that you should consider the language, the nature of descriptive passages, and their potential impact on an audience or your judge, who are a vital part of the performance experience.

Many coaches follow the standard: "If it is inappropriate in my classroom, then it's inappropriate as an oral reading for competition." When you compete in a tournament, you represent your school and community. Work with your coach to reach decisions that are suitable for you and acceptable to the school and community that you are representing. Contest rules address standards when selecting material to be read in contest. "Selections should not offend the moral standards of the community nor be in bad taste." If you are successful in competition, you'll be performing for a myriad of communities and your judges will represent different areas of the state.

UIL does not condone profanity or obscenity. Contest rules direct coaches and competitors to revise or reject all selections that in any way fail to meet the standards of decency. The latest documentation forms require signatures from both coach and contestant confirming that you have made your administration aware of your performances and also that your performances reflect the moral standards of your community and are not in bad taste. Your signature attests the performances reflect your school standards in terms of subject matter, language and use of gesture.

Remember that not all literature is appropriate for public performance in contest.

## Consider the Required Categories

Most importantly, before making your final selection of contest literature and certainly before beginning the analysis/rehearsal process, be sure that your literature appropriately fits the UIL category under which you wish to read it. Examine the piece for the following:

- 1) Is the literary work the correct genre for the contest?  
Just because it “looks like” prose or poetry doesn’t mean it is. Many contemporary writings can be confusing, especially if they are a mixture. If necessary, could you provide proof?
- 2) Does the literary work meet the specified category requirements and restrictions?  
(See Chapter 3 for assistance and clarification.)
- 3) Does the literary work fulfill the “spirit” of the category description paragraph?
- 4) Can you secure proper documentation required for the literary work?  
(See Chapter 4 for assistance and clarification.)

It is the responsibility of you and your coach to select only literature appropriate to the contest rules. Although you may have performed a poem successfully at invitational speech tournaments during the school year, if it does not meet the requirements for competition in League-standing contests, do not use it. Never violate the UIL Academic Ethics Code by attempting to skirt the rules in an effort to perform a literary work that does not meet UIL category restrictions and requirements. If not immediately, it eventually may place you in a disqualification situation.

## Further Considerations for Selecting Literature

Do Explore:

- **GROWING AND MATURING.** Different literature every year you compete in UIL prose and poetry so you grow as a performer. Rules prohibit using the piece you performed at UIL State Meet more than once.
- **THE CONTEMPORARY.** Literature which examines contemporary issues. Judges love a refreshing change, especially one that examines realities within our society today.
- **THE UNIQUE.** Literature that contains a fresh, unique approach toward a subject to which everyone relates.
- **EMBRACING WRITERS.** Works by an author that you find intriguing. If you relate to one story or poem by a writer, you may be equally impressed by other things they have written. Expand your reading horizons.
- **DIFFERENT CULTURES.** The wealth of multicultural literature that is now being recognized and given due respect in literary circles. Ask your librarian to point out the newest Latin American, African, Canadian, Asian, Middle East and other authors. You can sample more and more of this material in high school literature texts, and college book stores and libraries are full of anthologies of contemporary multicultural literature.
- **WHO YOU ARE.** Read all kinds of literature that has a personal meaning for you. In doing so, you’ll not only enjoy some great reading experiences, but you’ll learn more about yourself and the world around you!

### **The Competitor’s Edge**

What speaks to your soul? Search for something that makes you proud or happy to share.  
*M’Liss Hindman, Tyler Junior College*

- **DOING YOUR OWN THING!** Avoid selecting something simply because you have heard it win before. This is probably the worst rationale for selecting material. Just because it worked for one performer doesn't mean it is a piece suitable for you. Judges can tell who has analyzed and taken the special care to do a personal cutting and who really loves what they are doing! And more often than you realize, they can recognize an *identical* cutting or introduction - a sure sign that the performance script is not your personal work. This will work against you on the ballot.

### The Competitor's Edge

*The literature needs to be absolutely appropriate for YOU, the performer, rather than be the best cutting you heard at last weekend's tournament. Aimee Kasprzyk, Corsicana Fine Arts*

- **AVOIDING THE OVERUSED.** Be cautious about using pieces that have appeared on the competition circuit for years and years. If you don't know, ask your coach or someone with contest experience. However, if the piece is new to you and you truly have a great desire to perform it in spite of the fact that it is "time-worn", then be prepared for the extra burden you create for yourself. Judges will do their very best to evaluate only what is presented in a round, but it isn't possible to somehow "forget" that they have seen a selection performed many times before. You will have to overcome this prior experience by insuring that *your* rendition is exceptional!
- **CHOOSING AGE-APPROPRIATE WORKS.** Avoid literature that is too juvenile for your age. What works well for a junior high oral reading contest often does not work in high school competition. Even though you may occasionally hear this type of literature in a round, it will rarely stand up against quality literature that provides a performer with a greater range of possibilities. (Remember the three touchstones!)
- **AVOIDING BACK FILES.** Avoid relying exclusively on your coach and/or your squad files for material. These can be good springboards for ideas, but should only be the beginning of your search. If your coach selects and cuts your material, will the material reflect you or your coach? Do you like the material or does your coach? And finally, what will you have learned if you take this approach?

## Understanding the Text

After you have found selections that you would like to work with, the next step is understanding the text. You should be fully aware of what the author has provided you to work with so that you remain true to the intent of the literature. Only when you completely understand the writer's achievement can you determine how to incorporate your personal technique to recreate the experience for an audience.

The first questions you should ask are simple ones:

- Who is talking?
- Where and when is the person talking?
- To whom is the person talking?
- What is happening?
- How does this person speak?
- Why is this person saying this?

The answers to these six questions are the beginning of understanding a text in order to perform it.

## Speaker

The “who” in a poem is called the **speaker**, and the people in poems can be male or female, young or old, rich or poor, intelligent or not, and all the other characteristics that make them real. Speakers give us clues to this information in the words they say. In “Her Story” by Naomi Long Madgett, the speaker gives us many of these clues:

They gave me the wrong name, in the first place.  
They named me Grace and waited for a light and agile dancer.  
But some trick of the genes mixed me up  
And instead I turned out big and black and burly.  
In the second place, I fashioned the wrong dreams.  
I wanted to dress like Juliet and act  
Before applauding audiences on Broadway.  
I learned more about Shakespeare than he knew about himself.  
But, of course, all that was impossible.  
“Talent, yes,” they would tell me.  
“But an actress has to look the part.”  
So I ended up waiting on tables in Harlem . . .

From these few lines, we know the speaker is a black woman, intelligent, educated, and poor.

In prose, the “who” is called the **narrator**, the person telling the story. Narrators usually have much more space and time to give the reader information about themselves, but occasionally they begin their stories by introducing themselves. Listen to Huck Finn introduce himself:

You don’t know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, but that ain’t no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly or the widow, or maybe Mary. Aunt Polly—Tom’s Aunt Polly, she is—and Mary and the Widow Douglas is all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers as I said before.

We learn a great deal about Huck as the novel progresses: he is a young boy living on the Mississippi River; he hates school, church, and anything “civilized;” and he is uneducated and poor.

## Scene

The “where” and “when” of a text is called the **scene**. Just as it is important to know who is talking, the given scene will influence what is happening. See how easy it is to imagine you are actually there in Truman Capote’s *A Christmas Memory*:

Imagine a morning in late November. A coming of winter morning more than twenty years ago. Consider the kitchen of a spreading old house in a country town. A great black stove is the main feature; but there is also a big round table and a fireplace with two rocking chairs placed in front of it. Just today the fireplace commenced its seasonal roar.

The scene, where the speaker is and what time of day or night, season, etc., is important to consider because it establishes mood, influences characters' behavior, and provides necessary background information for the audience.

## Audience

Speakers and narrators in literature address someone, and this “someone” is called the **audience**. The words of the literature will give you clues to the audience. Speakers usually address a group of people, another individual, or to themselves. “Ordinance on Enrollment” by Naomi Lazard features the speaker before a group of people:

The group in process of being formed  
will be something you have always wanted  
to be a part of but never, heretofore,  
imagined possible. Its composition  
will be strictly regulated:  
only those who qualify will be admitted.  
All others will be rejected. . . .

In poetic monologues, the speaker is usually speaking to another individual in the scene. Robert Frost is well known for his dramatic monologues. In “A Servant to Servants,” the woman of the house talks to a hired hand:

I didn't make you know how glad I was  
To have you come and camp here on our land.  
I promised myself to get down some day  
And see the way you lived, but I don't know!  
With a houseful of hungry men to feed  
I guess you'd find. . . . It seems to me  
I can't express my feelings any more  
Than I can raise my voice or want to lift  
My hand (oh, I can lift it when I have to). . . .

You probably are familiar with narrators who talk directly to us and tell us their story. Listen to Cynthia Rich's narrator, Sarah Ann, in the short story “My Sister's Marriage”:

When my mother died she left just Olive and me to take care of Father. Yesterday when I burned the package of Olive's letters, that left only me. I know that you'll side with my sister in all of this because you're only outsiders, and strangers can afford to sympathize with young love, and with whatever sounds daring and romantic, without thinking what it does to all the other people involved. I don't want you to hate my sister—I don't hate her—but I do want you to see that we're happier this way, Father and I, and as for Olive, she made her choice. . . .

The narrator in Donald Barthelme's “The School” is talking to someone—a close friend, the school's principal, or is it a psychiatrist?

Well, we had all these children out planting trees, see, because we figured that . . . that was part of their education, to see how, you know, the root systems . . . and also the sense of responsibility, taking care of things, being individually responsible. You know what I mean. And the trees all died. They were orange trees. I don't know why they died, they just died. Something wrong with the soil possibly or maybe the stuff we got from the nursery wasn't the best. We complained about it. So we've got thirty kids there, each kid had his or her own little tree to plant, and we've got these thirty dead trees. All these kids looking at these little brown sticks, it was depressing. . . .

Narrators in journals and diaries most often talk to themselves, and the writing becomes a very personal way of understanding conflicts and situations. Anne Franke addressed her diary to “Kitty,” but in it she tried to console her own loneliness and understand herself:

“Little bundles of contradictions.” That’s how I ended my last letter and that’s how I’m going to begin this one. “A little bundle of contradictions,” can you tell me exactly what it is? What does contradiction mean? Like so many words, it can mean two things, contradiction from without and contradiction from within.

In each literary work, authors create a persona that has feelings, characteristics, and certain perspectives. Performers would do well to spend time studying people wherever they happen to be. Restaurants, schools, airport terminals, libraries, the shopping malls, even television shows and movies can be useful laboratories for discovering how human beings naturally act and react

### The Competitor’s Edge

Analyze the story through an intersectional lens. Consider how your story will impact a person of a different background or ethnicity, gender or experience. An effective storyteller understands the power of their words and makes intentional choices to elicit a desired response. *Magda Mirelez, Bay City HS.*

## Act

The “what” of a literary text is called the **act**. More simply, the act is what happens in the poem or story. Acts can be physical, mental, emotional, but are most often a combination of all three. In Edwin Hooey’s poem “Foul Shot,” the title explains the act of the poem:

With two 60’s stuck on the scoreboard  
And two seconds hanging on the clock,  
The solemn boy in the center of eyes,  
Squeezed by silence,  
Seeks out the line with his feet,  
Smooths his hands along his uniform,  
Gently drums the ball against the floor,  
Then measures the waiting net,  
Raises the ball on his right hand,  
Balances it with his left,  
Calms it with fingertips,

Breathes,  
Crouches,  
Waits,  
And then through a stretching of stillness,  
Nudges it upward. . . .

Still another physical act is explained in Lauren Gilpen's poem "The Bath."

I stand here bathing her  
while she sleeps  
in a far place beyond my reaching.

I bathe her  
as I have been taught to do:  
first the eyes, then the forehead,  
the face, the neck.

And as I work  
I talk to her—in case she hears me  
(believing that hearing is the last to go). . . .

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Mental acts in poems and prose abound: the act can be a discovery, a fright, a lesson, a caress all bound up in the physical and emotional acts of talking to ourselves or to someone else.

### The Competitor's Edge

Dig for subtext. Find the motivation behind the action and the dialogue.

*M'Liss Hindman, Tyler Junior College*

## Agency

The "how" of a text is called the **agency**, the way in which a speaker or narrator talks. This is the material, the language and structure, of the piece. Some speakers talk in very definite rhythm and rhyme, others use dialect to indicate ethnic or geographic traits. Compare, for instance, the different language and style of Huck Finn you read earlier in this chapter, to that of David Copperfield (below) as he introduces himself:

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

## Purpose

The "why" of the text is called the **purpose**. Whenever we speak, we speak to some purpose: to persuade, to



inform, to entertain, to inspire, and to convince are the traditional purposes offered in rhetoric. Even when singing in the shower, our purpose is to enjoy the sound bouncing off the tile. Speakers and narrators in literature always speak to some purpose.

Gwendolyn Brooks's poem "To Be in Love," shows a speaker trying to define love: "To be in love/Is to touch things with a lighter hand." Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Russian dissident, explains his notion of freedom: "This, I believe, is the single most precious freedom that prison takes away from us: the freedom to breathe freely, as I now can. No food on earth, no wine, not even a woman's kiss is sweeter to me than this air steeped in the fragrance of flowers, of moistures and freshness. . . . As long as there is fresh air to breathe under an apple tree after a shower, we may survive a little longer."

These five elements, speaker/narrator, scene, act, agency, and purpose, are the five questions that comprise all dramatic situations in literature. But writers and poets usually don't set out to give you answers to these questions in their works, and while one or two elements will be very clear in the text, others are uncertain.

Beverly Whitaker Long explains the clear answers in a text as the **certainties**, those facts we know are true. (In "Her Story," for example, the speaker's name, Grace, is a certainty.) **Probabilities** are answers that are likely given the evidence in the text. (Grace probably graduated from college based on her testimony that she is well learned in Shakespeare.) **Possibilities** are answers that may be true, but are only hinted at in the text. (If Grace wanted to play Juliet, it is possible that she also tried out for the role of Ophelia.) Probabilities and possibilities are made by inferring things from the text. A **distortion** is a wrong answer about a text. (Grace is white is a distortion because the text tells us she is "big and black and burly.")

Our job in understanding a text is to find the certainties, make guesses at probabilities and possibilities, and avoid distortions. Without a basic understanding of the dramatic elements of the poem, we are often "calling words" without a sense of the person talking in a specific situation to some purpose. Imagine trying to play a musical instrument without being able to read music. Yes, we can manage to create sounds—frequently terribly displeasing ones—on the horn, but the directions in the musical score mean nothing to us without understanding the language of the text. When you understand the score, you can then move to practicing the score and make very beautiful music.

### The Competitor's Edge

You will understand the text more if you know more about the author and the author's intent. When you find a selection, research the author. If the author has given interviews, runs a blog or a website or has had biographical information published about him/her, read it. This helps you uncover a whole new layer of meaning to performance text.

*Katrese Skinner, El Campo HS*



### The Competitor's Edge

*In poetry, give thought to how to perform every single word. The economy of language in poetry means that the poet has carefully chosen each word to include as much meaning as possible. Just as the poet's word choice is intentional, so should your performance of each word be. Kathy Owens, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor*

Beyond these basic questions you must answer, analyzing the language of the writer is imperative. In poetry, especially, literary devices are vital keys to a complete understanding of the message. Spending a session with your speech coach or English teacher would be immensely valuable in helping you capture a complete understanding of your selection.

## Introductions for Selections

Research indicates that within the first seven seconds of a speaker's introduction, the audience has already decided whether the individual is worth listening to or not. All of us are aware of how vital first impressions are. To invest all of our time rehearsing our selection with only last minute preparation of an introduction is a tragic mistake. At the UIL State Meet when all of the performers are so well prepared, the deciding factor on who is selected the State Champion can rest on that very thing — the introduction.

### What Should an Introduction Do?

- 1) The introduction should **prepare the audience**. Listeners need the introduction to help them focus and to get ready for what is to come in your performance. The information you provide them can steer their thinking in the direction you need so that they don't miss that opening line which may be central to your story or poem and will connect them to your selection.
- 2) The introduction should **allow the audience to meet you**. As an oral interpreter reading literature to an audience, you become the middle man between author and audience. You take on the characteristics of the writer's persona or the speaker in the poem. It is only in the introduction that the audience gets the opportunity to meet you as a person. That is why the introduction should not be "performed" but rather shared with the audience in your natural, conversational style.
- 3) The introduction should **provide essential information**. Contest rules mandate author and title always be given within the performance. Typically, that occurs in the introduction. Perhaps there is background material the audience needs to be informed of in order to fully understand your cutting. Details about the writer can enhance our relationship with the piece.
- 4) The introduction should **establish a mood**. Your attitude as you deliver the introduction creates a certain mood for your audience. Setting just the appropriate frame of mind better prepares your audience to experience the literature.
- 5) The introduction should **fulfill any requirement prescribed by the category**. In the contest rules, when the category descriptor indicates the introduction should be used for a specific purpose, you should insure your introduction is well planned and that it embodies the prescribed role. Judges will address this negatively on

your ballot if you do not do so since the ballot includes the judging criteria of whether or not you have adhered to the prescribed category.

An introduction is **not** a mere 2-3 sentences tagged on to the beginning of your performance because of UIL rules. An introduction has a very definite purpose and always should **enhance** your performance. Critical to the overall success of your performance is following the requirements set forth in the contest category descriptor. Make certain you have familiarized yourself with the paragraph describing and explaining the category before you prepare your introduction.

### The Competitor's Edge

Introductions may be the most important part of your performance. They are what truly connects you, the literature and the audience.

*M'Liss Hindman, Tyler Junior College*

## Strategies for Introductions

How do you approach an introduction? There are a variety of ways to do so. Let creativity be your guide — judges are often impressed with uniqueness. Consider what you can tell your audience in the introduction that they do not already know. The following are suggestions of ways to begin your presentation.

### Focus on how You Relate to the Selection

Some judges like nothing better than knowing more about you and what better way to allow them to meet you than by sharing why you chose this particular piece or how this literature has spoken to you. Perhaps you have learned something significant through analyzing the piece. Personalizing your opening gives the audience an affinity with you that creates a positive rapport. No introduction, however, should be so personal that it makes the audience uncomfortable.

### The Competitor's Edge

The introduction is crucial in describing how the literature fits the performer. It has been said that interpretation competitions are won and lost after the teaser and introduction due to the special nature of these informational items. The first minute and a half are monumental to the overall performance. *Emily King, Sundown HS*

### Focus on Our Common Heritage

As our society becomes increasingly divided, it becomes essential that we take the time to not only explore, but to reach a meaningful understanding of where we have been in order to fully appreciate where we are going. Through discovering our shared experiences, we all realize that our common history and desire to achieve our goals is what unites us. When you can achieve this, you have effectively captured your audience for your performance.

### Focus on the Writer or His / Her Purpose

Every serious student of oral interpretation will spend essential time researching the background of an author and consulting literary criticism. Many times you are fortunate enough to discover the reason/event which prompted an author or poet to write a particular piece or perhaps the writer will have explained his or her intent upon writing the piece. Hearing this information can inspire an audience to greater levels of understanding and increase their curiosity.

### The Competitor's Edge

In writing an introduction, write buzz words down (themes of the piece, feelings from the piece, the importance of the topic). Those buzz words create a great starting point. Then, think about these questions: 1) How do I personally connect with the piece? 2) Why am I performing this topic? 3) Is there anything about this piece I need to explain that is not already in the piece? 4) How does this piece link to our world today? 5) Why is the message important? Then incorporate these thoughts into the introduction.

*Julie Schniers, formerly San Angelo: Central HS*

### Focus on the Category's Requirements

This handbook provides category guidelines for both prose and poetry. Don't simply read the titles of the categories and documentation measurements. Review these descriptive paragraphs carefully, as they reveal to you what the designers of the category had in mind when they determined the category. Consider focusing on that intent as a part of your introduction. Explain how your selection fulfills the categorical purpose.

#### Introductions for UIL Categories 2024-2025

##### Prose - Category A - Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: recognizing joy in the simplest of things.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven

##### Prose - Category B - Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: celebrating positive change over time that has led to a better future.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven

##### Poetry - Category A - Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: recognizing joy in the simplest of things.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven
- State if the program uses song lyrics as transitions between poems

##### Poetry - Category B - Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: celebrating positive change over time that has led to a better future.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven
- State if the program uses song lyrics as transitions

\*Note: When using multiple selections, some of the titles and authors can be announced during verbal transitions rather than all of them being introduced within the introduction, so long as all titles and authors are orally announced within the program performance.

Performers should not neglect announcing individual titles of selections by merely grouping them such as "a collection from..." and then saying the title of book. Separate titles should be announced.

### Focus on an Element of the Selection

Often the category allows the performer to consider the unifying concept of a piece, such as the style of the writer. An introduction can be used as a personal exploration of the chosen element, furthering the audience's understanding of a literary device. One student, in building a poetry program, selected to examine rhythm in poetry.

He began with:

Poetry is a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language. Poetry makes greater use of the “music” of language. This collection explores the rhythm and sound that makes poetry such a unique genre. Three writers, Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg, and Vachel Lindsey, all demonstrate rhythm in motion, linked to poetic meaning. These pieces will move you, inspire you and insist on your involvement as we flow with the rhythm of these great poets . . . .

Other times, the performance category emphasizes a program and it is necessary to use your introduction to build a thematic approach or focus on a particular writer’s expression of a concept or idea.

These ideas for creating introductions are intended to help you get started in creating your own, not to be prescriptive. You certainly wouldn’t want to try to include all of these elements into a single introduction, and there are any number of creative ways to enable your audience to become prepared to listen to you as a performer share your interpretation of literature by an author you have selected.

### **The Competitor’s Edge**

One way to make your selection more impactful is to use a justification. Ask yourself: why does this selection matter now more than ever before? The answer you find in your research might make a welcome addition to your introduction.

*JP Fugler, Lindale HS*

## **How Should an Introduction be Delivered?**

1) The traditional method keeps the manuscript closed during the introduction. This allows a direct separation from the selection. Speak directly to the audience in a natural conversational manner, rather than performing the introduction. Judges want to see a contrast between the introduction and the actual performance; this is the a good way to help to achieve it. They want to meet you, the individual, before they meet the author and literature you will read.

2) Have a brief “catch-your-breath” pause between the introduction and the selection. Use the time to open the manuscript and to make sure the audience has made the transition with you. (Try not to rush this. You know where you are going from the introduction, but the audience is hearing it for the first time. Give them time to absorb your message you share in the introduction, then pause several “beats” before opening your binder and before moving into the piece.) Don’t rush the pause.

3) Another technique for opening a performance is the use of a “teaser.” This technique is when the interpreter begins the performance by reading a brief excerpt from the actual text they’ve selected, stops to deliver their original introduction, and then continues with the manuscript. Should you choose to do a teaser, you should begin with your manuscript open, and you should read from it to clearly establish these are the author’s words; then close the manuscript for the introduction, re-opening it for the rest of the manuscript. UIL rules do not prohibit the use of this technique.

## What to Avoid in Introductions

- Running out of time. Make sure you have plenty of time within your performance to deliver a well-developed, thought-provoking introduction. If you are having to rush through the introduction or feel compelled to shave the introduction down, perhaps you should consider cutting more out of the selection rather than presenting an under-developed introduction. Make sure you allow enough time for your introduction to make an impact. Remember: That is the time that your audience makes a judgment of what sort of performer you are — those first opening seconds!
- Spoiling the experience for listeners by giving away surprises or ironic twists in the literature. Remember the audience is participating in your presentation, and let them enjoy surprises for themselves. Do not summarize the plot of your selection.
- Asking trite rhetorical questions like: “Have you ever had a dog?” Get rid of worn-out clichés. They have no place in introductions.
- Copying someone else’s introduction that you heard and liked, or having someone else write your introduction for you. It isn’t difficult for an audience to sense that you are *not* talking as yourself. Use language that is clear and concise, but natural to you. Try your introduction out in front of friends and fellow competitors for their input and feedback, but make it your *own*. Never succumb to using the same introduction as another member of your squad uses!
- Reading or performing your introduction. This is your only opportunity to be yourself and establish rapport with the audience. Judges want to meet you! Deliver it conversationally.

## Transitions in Programs of Literature

Everyone has a favorite technique for writing and performing transitions. Again, it is important for you to remember there is no single right way. The performer makes a choice based upon material, technique and audience perception and follows his or her instincts regarding those choices.

Transitions fall into two categories: verbal and nonverbal (physical). Transitions serve as bridges which connect progressions of thought. Use a sentence or two to build themes, link one section to another, promote lines of analysis. This helps to guide your audience through the performance, insuring that they “get your point.” Though verbal transitions are not required, they often enhance a program performance. Verbal transitions with the manuscript closed are preferred by many judges, because they want to be clear when one piece ends and another begins; and they like to see a progression or development throughout the program, something that transitions can reveal. You might consider using them, even though you may have to cut some from your program. Another technique is to simply bring the binder close to your waist without closing it during the verbal transition. It will be worth it in the long run, if transitions provide unity for your program.

On the other hand, not all coaches and judges believe that verbal transitions are the best performance decision. It is important to recognize that physical transitions are indeed transitions! Transitions should grow from the literature and the literature itself should dictate which type of transition works better.

For some programs, a verbal transition might stop the momentum of the performance and jar the cohesiveness of the program. In a case such as this, nonverbal transitions might be more closely scrutinized to see if they provide a better option for the interpreter and the literature itself. Take for example a cutting from Edgar Lee Masters’

*Spoon River Anthology*. These poems all have different speakers and may be more effectively communicated by allowing the audience to see the changes physically and then going into the text. Body language and the strategic timing of pauses and the turning of pages of your script can create effective transitions. Some performers might agree that depending upon the literature, a physical transition takes much less time and gives more time to the actual program of literature. Just be sure it is clear to your audience when a transition occurs within your performance.

Transitions are one of many choices that must be made in the performance of literature. Do not ignore the fact that the introduction should be used very effectively to set up the program itself and if nonverbal transitions are used, the selections themselves should be set up carefully in the introduction. Make those choices and trust your basic instincts.

## Cutting Literature for Performance

While there are many subjective elements that influence the outcome of any oral interpretation contest, in UIL competition, time is not one of them! In both prose and poetry, the maximum time limit is seven minutes. There is no grace period, and the penalty for exceeding the time is disqualification from the round in all but the final round at UIL State Meet. Therefore, the vast majority of the material used in contests will be a selection or selections that have been “cut” to fit the time limit. Cutting literature by deciding what to leave in for performance and what to omit can be extremely difficult, especially the first several times you attempt it. This is an area where input from your coach will be especially critical. But once you have an understanding of the process, you’ll find it much easier to do on your own. From any one longer selection of literature, many good cuttings could be created. There is no single *right* way to cut a selection, but the following general guidelines should be helpful.

- Always read the entire selection before you begin to cut. If you’re reading a novel, keep a list of potential scenes to consider for the script, including page numbers. If you are considering using a script that has already been cut, find and read the entire original work. If you choose such a cutting for performance, it is vital to become familiar with the parts of the script that are missing from the cut version.
- Thoroughly analyze the work as a whole to avoid cutting something that is crucial to the literature.

### The Competitor’s Edge

I love a good story! However, cutting a novel down to the time limit is daunting and requires many hours of revising and editing attempts. The first cutting is never good enough. Through the use of Freytag’s Pyramid, a prose product will hit the mark with exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement.

*Emily King, Sundown HS*

- Continuity within the cutting is critical. As you cut, continuously read aloud the script you’re creating to see that the structure of the piece flows smoothly. Your goal is a cutting that appears “seamless,” with no awkward breaks between portions of the script.
- Pay attention to the line of action, and make sure your cutting has a beginning, middle, and end. You may need to create an introduction that provides background for an isolated scene of action from a longer plot.
- Be careful that your cutting stays true to the author’s intent, and that it isn’t a distortion of the work as a whole. Your cutting should maintain the integrity of the tone, intent, and viewpoint of the text. Return to your original analysis when making decisions about cutting. Whenever possible, read reviews or critical analysis of the



literature, and research the author.

- Read carefully for passages that should *not* be cut because vivid images are created through language. Your audiences will not have a printed script and must follow your spoken words. As you cut, keep this in mind. Keep concrete images, vivid descriptions, and other passages that make listening and understanding easier.
- In longer prose pieces, look for repetitive descriptions that can be cut. If the author describes the same thing in different ways, choose the one that works best for the cutting and your performance and delete the other.
- Most of the ‘tag lines’ (i.e. “He said...”, “Martha replied...”) should be cut. When the tag line is “He said angrily...”, use this as an interpretive clue and *do it* rather than say it.
- Cut the subplots from longer works. Create a story line of the major plot, and omit sections of the manuscript that do not move the action on the main story forward.
- Eliminate profanity and obscenity if there is any so that your performance cutting adheres to UIL directives of community standards.
- After cutting, read the text carefully for references to something you have cut. Pay particular attention to words such as “still”, “again”, etc. If your script says “the shadows of the trees were *still* dancing across the window”, and you’ve omitted the original reference, your audience will be confused.
- When you feel the cutting is complete read your selection for clarity to someone that is unfamiliar with the literature. The listener will not be emotionally attached to a particular line or section of lines and will therefore be able to more effectively gauge the cutting than the performer.

### The Competitor’s Edge

One of the biggest pitfalls is the desire to cut out a lot of the narration to get to the “good stuff” - the dialogue and humorous or poignant parts. As a result, those pieces often seem gimmicky or very technique-driven, never as full or impactful. Remember: the narrator gives us a look into the storylike no one else can!

*Aimee Kasprzyk, Corsicana Fine Arts*

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It is often even more difficult to cut poetry than prose, because the poet has selected and arranged specific language for his or her purpose, already employing an economy of words. In addition, you must be aware of the rhythm, rhyme, and meter of poetry. Repetition in poetry is a deliberate device, and takes special consideration when cutting. For these reasons, it is sometimes easier to cut entire stanzas or major portions of a poem than to cut individual lines, words, or phrases. You must still maintain, as in prose, the author’s intent, continuity, and a sense of wholeness to the cutting.

- When a poem is written in cantos and you are performing it as one long poem, you may cut one or more cantos or even lines within the cantos, but you will want to maintain the order in which the poet arranged them.
- An excerpt of a poem should be a passage so be careful not to cut excessively.
- Weaving is an advanced skill. Read in Chapter 3 on how to properly weave literature.

When you are working with a piece of literature that you selected because you love it, it’s hard sometimes to find anything you are willing to cut! With longer pieces, it is vitally important that you do so, however, and that you’ve cut sufficiently to stay within the time limits. You don’t want a script that is so close to seven minutes that any change of pace or differences in audience reaction would put you over the limit. Don’t jeopardize all the hard work you’ve done by insufficient cutting.

### The Competitor's Edge

Initially, cut in - not out. Start with what you like the most, then begin eliminating details which really do not contribute to the core story. When you cannot cut anymore, allow someone else to read it. A fresh pair of eyes can make all the difference.

*Katrese Skinner, El Campo HS*

## Preparing the Manuscript

Since UIL prose and poetry contests are reading events, a manuscript should be used for competition. Preparation of that manuscript is a vital part of the process as a whole. Rules of the contest state that “The contestant should perform the selections using manuscripts or copies of the selections that are in a binder. Students shall not read from books or magazines.” Contest rules also state the manuscript or copies of the selection should be available to the contest director, if needed at the contest, to aid in addressing question or concerns. Most competitors use a



black stiff-backed 3-ring binder, approximately 9” x 6” in size, as their manuscript folder for several reasons:

1. Black is less obtrusive than other colors. You want the focus of the audience and judge on your performance, not your binder.
2. 3-ring binders make page turning easier. Avoid binders with back-mounted rings because they make the binder unwieldy to hold open properly for performance. Rings should be mounted in the spine. Also avoid binders with plastic see-through covers.
3. 3-ring binders allow greater flexibility in arranging your manuscript.
4. 3-ring binders easily accommodate “slicks” (plastic sheet covers).
5. The 9” x 6” size is easy to handle and less obtrusive than other sizes.
6. Most binders have pockets to accommodate documentation. (Before standing in front of the audience, be sure to empty the binder of everything but the selection you are about to perform.)

Type the manuscript in Landscape format. Use a clean, plain font that is easy to read. Arial is an example of a clean font. Increase the font size to 16 or larger, and double space the lines, so there’s room to add scoring notes. Break the selection down into “beats”, which are edited units of time or thought. Print only on one side.

### The Competitor's Edge

Color code your script. Use different color ink for different characters to remind you which one is speaking.

*Kathy Owens, University of Mary-Hardin Baylor*

Many competitors have turned to the 9” x 6” binder with the plastic sheets because it facilitates the handling of the manuscript. Not only do the “slicks” keep the manuscript intact and prevent it from falling out of the folder, but they also add a stiffness that allows you to turn pages smoothly, one page at a time. Slicks and binders can be ordered from office supply stores or The Black Book Depot ([www.blackbookdepot.com](http://www.blackbookdepot.com)).

Mounting your manuscript on black construction paper or black card stock before insertion into the slick is advantageous because it provides some rigidity for the page and it allows the eye to focus more readily on the page.

The binder is meant to serve as a constant visual reminder that the words you relay to the audience are not your own but those of the author of the literary work.



### The Competitor's Edge

Simply adding the first few words from the next page at the bottom of the previous page in pencil can add extra polish to your performance. You won't have to pause while turning the page each time, making your transitions more seamless.

*JP Fugler, Lindale HS*

## Rehearsal Techniques

Rehearsal is a time to explore. It is easier to take risks during rehearsal than it is in a competitive moment. Don't be afraid to experiment with ideas and techniques. What you find doesn't work in rehearsal can be changed before performance.

Rehearsal should begin only after a thorough and complete analysis of the literature. Practice adds depth to your analysis and helps you to discover ways to make your understanding of the literature come alive for your audience.

There is no single "right" way to get the most out of rehearsal. The following ideas are suggestions that have worked for students in the past and may prove profitable for you. Not all approaches work for every performer. With your coach, find those that fit your personal goals for the performance of literature.

- Establish a regular rehearsal schedule. To be successful in this activity, as with any competitive event, you must commit time and energy to practice.
- Always rehearse with 110% energy and concentration. Going through the motions won't improve your performance or chances of success.
- Mark your manuscript to aid in rehearsal. This might include marking pauses, using different colors to distinguish each character's dialogue, indicating changes in volume or rate, or perhaps highlighting imagery and color words. Refer to document in Appendix entitled, "Oral Interpretation – Textual Analysis" for an example of how to score a script. Some students use this actual scored script in performance; others prefer to use a clean manuscript. Regardless of the choice you make, the literature should be so internalized that you are comfortable with the use of your manuscript as a part of the performance. Keep utmost in your mind that this is an oral **READING** contest and that you must read from the manuscript.
- Videotape your performance. This gives you a great opportunity to examine every aspect of your performance as many times as needed. Try watching the tape with the volume too low to hear, and concentrate on only the physical aspects of your performance.

### The Competitor's Edge

For a new approach to practicing a woven program, try unweaving it for a session and rehearsing all sections from a single piece of literature together. This can help clarify character choices and develop more of a story line for your anchor piece.

*JP Fugler, Lindale HS*

### The Competitor's Edge

Practice makes perfect! Every reading should be timed. Interpretation includes a variety of natural emotions and reactions, one of which is silence. And, a moment of silence is only possible when the timing is perfect.

*Emily King, Sundown HS*

- Restrict yourself to only listening to, not watching the video. Sound allows you to focus on the vocal dimension of your performance. Their insight and constructive criticism can help you improve.
- FOCUS! Make the most of the time you do devote to rehearsal. Visualize characters as real people; visualize the environment by believing you are truly there. Even visualize an audience to create an atmosphere similar to the contest situation.
- Occasionally, practice in a noisy surrounding. It is difficult to do, but it helps your ability to concentrate, which is vital when you are in that competitive setting. Try a “concentration follow-through” rehearsal with other performers on your squad. Have all interpers practice at the same time standing across from each other, so that you can learn to focus, no matter what! Be sure that each performer times his performance to evaluate whether or not he was consistent with his pacing, etc.
- Read your selection at a variety of volume levels. Not all contest rooms are similar and you will need to adjust your projection to fit the room.

### The Competitor’s Edge

The absence of a thing can be powerful. Plan SILENT reactions. Rehearse them with viewpoints in mind. A narrator reacts to the audience. A narrator thinks and visualizes, and characters speak to each other versus the narrator’s reaction to the exchange. The most powerful moments are found in the silence; diminutive sounds and gestures provoke the greatest responses and yearning questions. In the silence, we seek to understand.

The silence is the magic in oral interpretation.

*Magda Mirelez, Bay City HS*

- Try isolating portions of your script for practice. Concentrate on one scene from your cutting throughout one entire rehearsal. During another rehearsal, read aloud only the dialogue, excluding everything else. This helps you concentrate on the distinction of characters and the consistency of character portrayal. Another time, select only the narration to read. Does the narrative enhance the overall performance? It deserves as much concentration as your characterization. If it doesn’t add to the flow of your presentation, you might re-analyze your cutting of the literature.
- Ask people who are totally unfamiliar with your selection to listen only to your introduction. Then discuss with them what impression the introduction gave them about what is to follow in the selection. Can your introduction stand alone? Next, deliver your introduction again, followed by performing your piece. Now, what was the listener’s impression? Make sure your introduction achieves the purpose you want it to for your piece!

### The Competitor’s Edge

Don’t. Go. Profile. When working on character placement, think of the outside top corners of your open binder as invisible walls and don’t allow your nose to turn any further out to the side than those corners. This will keep you from going too much profile but allows the audience to distinguish which character is speaking while still seeing the majority of your face.

*Aimee Kasprzyk, Corsicana Fine Arts*

- Turn off the light and deliver your introduction. This causes listeners to focus on the structure and effectiveness of your introduction without distraction.
- You might even prepare more than one introduction to your piece and bring in others to listen and give you feedback as to which works more effectively.

- Seek as many audiences to perform in front of as possible. Ask your English teacher to fit you in to the curriculum schedule one day. Perform in front of your family and friends. Younger students always appreciate oral performance, so perhaps you can visit an elementary or junior high school classroom. Community day care centers or nursing home facilities might welcome a performance as well. Use your imagination in finding a variety of audiences. A variety of feedback can be invaluable.

### The Competitor's Edge

Never limit your rehearsal audience. Practicing your performance in front of a variety of people can expose meanings or elements of your performance you may not have originally seen.

*Tasha Jones, Tuloso-Midway HS*

Regardless of which rehearsal techniques work for you, you need both private rehearsal time and sessions with your coach. Commit your entire energy to your private rehearsal so that you achieve the greatest benefit from time with your coach. Be on time. Be prepared and be ready to give it your best effort. Remember that your ultimate goal is a polished performance!

## Performance Decisions

There is a fine line between “interpreting” and “acting,” and it is difficult for a performer to discern sometimes. Too many gestures, overly contrived facial expressions, and movement may lead to crossing over that line. Gestures and expressions should be a natural flow from the material. Most UIL judges want the voice to be the focal point of the performance, not body movement. Have your coach listen to your performance without looking at you; if it is still effective, you should be on the right track. Also, even though you have rehearsed your piece many times, you must make your performance seem natural and spontaneous. If your performance is technically wonderful, but has no “heart,” your success will be limited. (See earlier discussion in Chapter 1.)

Along the lines of “acting” has arisen the issue of singing during the performance. If you’re entertaining the idea of wanting to sing in your performance, you are advised to consult the rules of the contest. Category restrictions for prose and poetry in the *contest rules* establish that these contests are ones in oral reading, clearly indicating that reading, not acting or singing, is the focus and intent of the competition.

The *rules* indicate that singing, if used in the introduction, transitions, commentary, and/or selections, should conform to guidelines similar to those for the use of foreign language words and phrases - incidental use only.

Category A and B of Poetry allow the reader to use song lyrics only published as music as transitions within the program. These can be read or possibly sung, if kept to a minimum, and the performer shall state in the introduction if using them.

Throughout the processes of analyzing the literature and exploring through rehearsal, you will be making decisions about performance. You will search for effective ways to make the literature come alive for an audience through your vocal and physical presentation of the script. You will polish a performance that reflects through the use of your voice, facial expressions, and body your interpretation of the meaning and message of the selection. You will determine how you can — through focus, posture, use of your voice, and all the other elements of interpretation at your disposal — help the audience experience the literature through their imagination. You will participate in the art of relaying the message of an author’s writing, through yourself as the interpreter, to a variety of audiences.

The product of this process will be your oral interpretation, unique to you. Be prepared that, in competition, there are many subjective opinions about performance. Judges may disagree with your performance choices and even the advice your coach has given you. That does not automatically mean your judge is incompetent nor does it necessarily reflect on your ability to understand literature. If you have done your “homework” by analyzing each preparation step, making conscientious choices about the critical aspects of your performance based on your findings, you can accept those critiques as merely opinions that will assuredly differ from individual to individual. The most important thing is: Did you do your best to interpret the selection as closely to the intent of the original author as possible? Sometimes your judges’ comments, no matter how contradictory to your analysis, can serve as catalysts whereby you take a fresh look at performance issues or initiate a review of elements you had not yet researched. Stay open to new insights that can be substantiated through studying the piece again. Growing through exposure and analysis of literature is what UIL oral interpretation is all about!

### **The Competitor’s Edge**

Perform in honor of those whose stories you get to share. Be the voice that the author and the story deserve. Pick literature you can do that with; practice to be your best; and perform with your whole heart every single time.

*Julie Schniers, formerly San Angelo: Central HS*

## **The Internet as a Resource**

The Internet is a wonderful research tool by which to locate selections, as well as information about authors for documentation purposes. By all means, use this realm. A word of caution though: *prose and poetry selections found only on the Internet and not published in print form are not considered to meet the category requirement of “published.” Students should check categories to determine which ones require “published in hard copy.”* The Internet is also an easy way to locate required documentation for the categories.

### **Quality of Documentation on the Internet**

Setting standards is essential: The Internet makes available web pages from fourth grade students right alongside those from world-class experts. Just as in the print medium, one must make a distinction between the *New York Times* and the *National Enquirer*.

### **Following are standards set forth for UIL documentation.**

- NO use of web pages that come from discussion groups or chat rooms
- NO use of comments posted on blogs
- NO use of web pages where the author is a student in grade school, high school or college
- NO use of Wikipedia

### **Preferred web pages sponsored by one of the following:**

- The author’s official copyrighted website
- A government institution
- A major educational institution, with pages maintained by faculty and departmental personnel, not students
- A recognized book publishing company
- A reputable journalistic organization (CNN, New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, etc)
- An online library maintained by government agencies, colleges, universities (Library of Congress)
- A recognized online encyclopedia (*not* Wikipedia)

**Determining Credibility – Examining the Site**

- What is the site?
- Who sponsors the site and where does their data come from?
- Click on “About Us” and read their background.

**Determining Credibility – Things to Avoid and Sites Not Appropriate**

- Don’t simply “google” for biographical data and other facts.
- Don’t just assume the site is legitimate.
- Do not use Wikipedia, although you may evaluate the web pages linked within the Wikipedia entry as possible legitimate resources.
- Do not use: *IMDb.com*, *Goodread.com*, *Freebase.com*, *TrueKnowledge.com*
- Do not use unauthorized Encyclopedias.
- Do not use social media sites.

See *Evaluating Internet Sources for Documentation* for further discussion of problematic sites.

**Try Searching these online sites for information**

- *Library of Congress Home Page* - <http://lcweb.loc.gov>
- *World Cat* - <http://worldcat.org>
- *University of Illinois library webpage* - [www.library.illinois.edu/infosci/research/guides/dewey/](http://www.library.illinois.edu/infosci/research/guides/dewey/)
- *Booksinprint.com* - Provides an advanced search for fiction and non-fiction.
- *The On-Line Books Page*  
Includes original fiction, reviews, author interviews and thousands of annotated links to book-related sites.
- *A Celebration of Women Writers*  
<http://www.digital.library.upenn.edu/women>  
This site provides a more in-depth biographical information about women writers and their books. The site is arranged A to Z by the authors last name and in some cases gives a full text version of some of the books or poems they have written. Most sites on the individual pages have pictures on the authors as well as the biography.
- *Poetry Foundation* - [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)  
Includes poetry, poet biographies, and a listing of other online resources.
- *Poetry International* - [www.poetryinternational.org/pi/home](http://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/home)  
Includes poetry and poet biographies searchable by content or country as well as publication information below each poem appearing on the website.

**Try searching these online bookstores for information.**

- *Amazon.com* (<http://www.amazon.com>)
- *BarnesandNoble.com* (<http://www.barnesandnoble.com>)
- *The New York Public Library Online* (<http://www.nypl.org>)  
(The New York Public Library also has an online bookstore on its site.)

### Library Resources

- *Contemporary Poets, Dramatists, Essayists, and Novelists of the South: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*, edited by Robert Bain and Joseph M. Flora
- *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 248: Antebellum Writers in the South. (also known as the DLB series)

### A Tip on Managing Internet Research

When looking for literature online for categories that permit it, limiting your searches is often more useful than simply typing your search terms into Google. Try finding a few handy websites you frequent when looking online for literature and creating a [Google Custom Search](#). When you create your own search engine, you can control what websites Google searches and increase the likelihood that what you find could be useful.







# Understanding the UIL Categories

The UIL categories have come a long way. The earliest interpretation event, “declamation,” began in 1911 as the second oldest contest sponsored by UIL. It consisted of delivering published orations which promoted good citizenship, involved a story or event about the “making of America,” or commemorated Texas heroes, history, and progress. These orations were delivered from memory. Not until 1950 was poetry a separate event in the UIL program, and not until 1959 was a manuscript required during the presentation. In 1961, declamation became prose interpretation, and for the first time, a list of five poets and five writers was prescribed by the League office. Defined categories have been the mainstay of UIL interpretation for over sixty years. The educational goal of requiring literary works that fit specific categories is to encourage students to read widely and well.

Some have suggested that we simply throw away all the rules and just let the students perform whatever literary works they want. Who cares about category requirements as long as students are great performers? Don Crabtree, renowned coach, member of the National Speech and Debate Association Hall of Fame and NSDA Executive Council responded to this notion: *“Literature is and should be an art form. Do we sacrifice art for the sake of an easy to get, sometimes cheesy, cutting? I hope not. Part of the true educational value of the interp events is to explore a vast genre of authors, works, and styles.”*

In recent years, the guidelines for categories have allowed much more freedom of selection on the part of contestants, combined with criteria that encourages the exploration of contemporary literature and forms of literature that often go unexplored by high school students. In an effort to receive statewide input for categories, the League posts a form on the UIL website whereby coaches and students may submit ideas. In addition, a group of experienced coaches are selected to serve on the State Advisory Prose and Poetry Committee, representing large and small schools as well as geographical regions throughout Texas. The selection process is greatly refined from earlier times when the committee met for a brief session during the state meet.

The current categories were selected after in-depth discussion about how to best meet the educational and aesthetic needs of our students. From the beginning, the Committee laid out several goals to guide us in our deliberations. Criteria establishing the framework for selecting categories set forth that the categories should (A) provide a strong educational experience for contestants; (B) engage student interest; (C) be easy to document; (D) challenge students to read literature they might not otherwise read; and (E) be clear in both letter of the law and spirit of intent.

The categories allow a great deal of freedom of choice, encourage creativity, and require easy documentation. One thing to note is that, category restrictions are not the same for both categories.

## Prose and Poetry Interpretation Handbook

In an effort to simplify the categories for teachers who coach both prose and poetry and to enable competitors to remember which category is designated A and which is B, the categories for both contests are parallel. Discussion of them will be grouped accordingly.

### Restrictions for Prose Category A

Material chosen for use in Category A of Prose Interpretation shall meet the following 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, but not self-authored.
- (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.

### Descriptor for 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. The overall tone of the performance should be joyful.*

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 but may not be self-authored. The majority of the performance must be *published* prose. The performance should evoke *an appreciation of finding joy*.

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For Category A, the performance may be fiction or non-fiction. 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.

### Documentation Requirements for Prose Category A

In order to meet category restrictions, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is published prose in hard copy.

1. If performing a single literary work, it shall be published printed prose.
2. If performing a program, all selections shall be published, printed prose, with the exception that one prose selection may be unpublished, but not self-authored.
3. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Prose A Documentation online form.
4. The contestant shall provide proof the selection(s) are published prose. Examples of acceptable proof of publication include:
  - the original published source
  - a photocopy of the copyright of the original source
  - online printout of Library of Congress cataloguing information
  - If a prose selection is drawn from a literary collection (anthology) the contestant shall supply the original source or a photocopy of the table of contents that designates the title of the book and proof the prose selection is included in that book
  - A printout from an online source proving the selection is included in the published collection. Printouts of online documentation shall include the URL of the website downloaded in the header or footer

- If a prose selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is prose

Examples of unacceptable forms of formal documentation include:

- Social media
- Copying and pasting into a word processing document

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.

## Restrictions for Poetry Category A

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, but not self authored.
- (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.

## Descriptor for Poetry Category A: Recognizing Joy: Focus on the Little Things

*The goal of this category is to recognize joy in even the simplest of things. The overall tone of the performance should be joyful.*

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, but it may not be self-authored. The majority of the performance must be *published* poetry. The performance should evoke an appreciation of finding joy.

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.

## Documentation Requirements for Poetry Category A

1. If performing a single literary work, it shall be published printed poetry.
2. If performing a program, all selections shall be published, printed poetry with the exception that one poem may be unpublished, but not self-authored.
3. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Poetry A Documentation online form.
4. The contestant shall provide proof the selection(s) are published. Examples of acceptable proof of published include:
  - the original published source
  - a photocopy of the copyright of the original source
  - online printout of Library of Congress cataloguing information
  - If a poem is drawn from a literary collection, the contestant shall supply the original source or a photocopy of the table of contents that designates the title of the book and proof the poem is included in that book
  - A printout from an online source proving the poem is included in the published collection. Printouts of online documentation shall include the URL of the website downloaded in the header or footer
  - If a poetry selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is poetry

Examples of unacceptable forms of formal documentation include:

- Social media
- Copying and pasting into a word processing document

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.

*Commentary for Prose and Poetry, Category A:*

The overwhelming response from coaches, judges, and contest officials on what type of literature they requested for categories was “Please get us out of the doom and gloom! We are weary of listening to traumatic content and only harsh realities full of negativism.” When we interviewed students, they shared that because that had been the trend for several years, they felt as though they had to perform extremely traumatic literature in order to win the round because it was what “everybody” was reading. The committee wanted to provide a way to break this cycle and give students a reason to read literature that celebrates joy and the positive things in life.

This does not mean that performances shouldn't have contrasting levels; indeed, they should! But the intent of the categories is to seek literature that promotes positive lessons learned, that focuses on mentally healthy situations and relationships, that embodies the “good” that there is in life. Perhaps it's the discovery of how much a family member means to you even though you did not recognize that initially until that relationship deepened due to circumstances. Maybe it is growth encountered as a result of having to make a sacrifice for another person, or realizing that material things are not so important as people. As students begin to search for literature that speaks to them, have them brainstorm things where they can recognize small moments that shape their perspective thus bringing them joy. Through these categories, let's celebrate life!

## Restrictions for Prose Category B

Material chosen for use in Category B of Prose Interpretation shall meet the following restrictions:

- (A) A minimum of two prose selections with a maximum of four prose selections shall be used in this program.
- (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 or screenplays, movies, and monologues shall not be used.
- (E) Songs lyrics shall not be used as selections or transitions in this performance.
- (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.

## Descriptor for Prose Category B: Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

*The goal of this category is to explore developments that have enhanced our world and to celebrate the positive change over time that has led to a better future. For this reason, students should consider using prose that spans different time periods.*

In this category, the contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two prose selections and no more than four prose selections that shines a light on how our world has evolved for the better, empowering us to move toward a better tomorrow. The program may, *but is not limited to*, examine progress in medicine, mental health, women's suffrage, technology, family relations, science, education, societal roles.

**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 but self-authored pieces shall not be used unless published in hard copy. 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.

### Documentation Requirements for Prose Category B:

1. All selections may be published, printed material, online material or transcribed material that is prose.
2. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Prose B Documentation online form.
3. No proof of publication for Category B is required.
4. If a prose selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is prose.

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.

### Restrictions for Poetry Category B

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

- (A) A minimum of two selections of poetry with a maximum of six selections of poetry shall be used in this program.
- (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.



## Descriptor for Poetry Category B: Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

*The goal of this category is to explore developments that have enhanced our world and to celebrate the positive change over time that has led to a better future. For this reason, students should consider using poetry that spans different time periods.*

In this category, the contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two poetry selections and no more than six poems that shines a light on how our world has evolved for the better, empowering us to move toward a better tomorrow. The program may, *but is not limited to*, examine progress in medicine, mental health, women's suffrage, technology, family relations, science, education, societal roles.

**Students may use poems from one or more poets.** Co-authored and anonymous works are permissible but self-authored pieces shall not be used unless published in hard copy. 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.

### Documentation Requirements for Poetry Category B

1. All poems may be published, printed material, online material or transcribed material.
2. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Poetry B Documentation online form.
3. No proof of publication for Category B is required.
4. If a poetry selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is poetry.

Students are urged, but not mandated, to take to the contest site the original source of each published selection.

Continue reading this handbook and the official UIL website for expanded, detailed information about acceptable and unacceptable documentation.

#### *Commentary for Prose and Poetry, Category B:*

It is no secret that the world changes at a rapid pace around us. Evolution is a daily experience- but one we don't get to regularly reflect upon. When we do pause to look back, seeing where we began and where we are now can empower us to move forward in a positive direction.

Category B for both prose and poetry seeks to shine a light on how our world has evolved for the better. Some may immediately think technology - which, yes, is a completely viable idea! But positive change occurs in a variety of ways. It could be the advancement of medical treatments as we work to eradicate illness. It could be the rise of women in STEM. It could follow the journey of education as it progressed from a one-size-fits-all approach to one that embraces the unique needs of students. It could examine the changing definition of what a family looks like. It could be the rise of understanding and support for mental health. We are often told to look back on our own lives and see how far we've come. This category asks our students to look back on the developments that surround our communities and see how much we've achieved together.

This category requires the use of at least two pieces of literature. With change comes diverse perspectives. The utilization of different texts challenges our students to explore unique viewpoints and find the common thread of development that exists within a variety of literature. Advancement is not a single story, but rather a combination of experiences and collaborative efforts. We believe this is best achieved by using multiple text sources instead of a singular one. The goal is to support students' critical thinking as they find material that works well together to highlight positive change in our world. It is our hope that this category will allow our students to celebrate how far we've come and inspire hope as we continue to evolve.

### **Permission to Use**

The right to perform copyrighted interpretation selections for contest must be secured. Just purchasing the book does not give you permission to perform the literature at a contest. It is the responsibility of the local school to secure all performance rights for contest selections. UIL assumes no responsibility for copyright permission to perform material. Educational use is not an excuse to use copyrighted works without permission. A word of caution: you and your coach will want to start the process of securing permission early in the season because it can take time.

As you seek copyright permission, be aware of the permission you must receive. You must have express permission by the copyright owner to alter words. Derivative permission is when you wish to "soften" a particular expletive to make it appropriate for school competition and you want to edit. Realize that you need permission to do that. If you wish to take a clip out of a book ("transcript"), this is allowable; however if you change the lines, it is a copyright infringement. Deleting a word is "transforming" a piece. Weaving is permissible when you are creating a whole new piece.

For a broader comprehension of copyright compliance, coaches are encouraged to review the free online course, "Understanding Copyright and Compliance", provided by the National Federation of State High School Associations. <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/understanding-copyright-and-compliance>



## Introductions for the Categories:

The categories emphasize the role of the introduction as a critical part of the performance. Contestants should pay particular attention to each category descriptor for the purpose the introduction should fulfill. In brief summary, the required information to be included in addition to title(s) and author(s) (unless noted in a transition within the performance), and a statement if the performance is woven are:

### Introductions for UIL Categories 2024-2025

#### Prose - Category A - Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: recognizing joy in the simplest of things.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven

#### Prose - Category B - Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: celebrating positive change over time that has led to a better future.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven

#### Poetry - Category A - Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: recognizing joy in the simplest of things.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven
- State if the program uses song lyrics as transitions between poems

#### Poetry - Category B - Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow

- Include a statement to connect the literature to the goal statement in the category: celebrating positive change over time that has led to a better future.
- Include all titles and authors read\*
- State if the program is woven
- State if the program uses song lyrics as transitions

\*Note: When using multiple selections, some of the titles and authors can be announced during verbal transitions rather than all of them being introduced within the introduction, so long as all titles and authors are orally announced within the program performance.

Performers should not neglect announcing individual titles of selections by merely grouping them such as “a collection from...” and then saying the title of book. Separate titles should be announced.

## Questions and Clarifications: Category A of Prose

1. Can comic books be used?

A comic book is only an episode without complete development of character (as revealed by its very definition).

Why encourage a student to use this for a performance?

Graphic novels have been allowed for some time, but they are different from single comic books, as there is a follow-through on character development, etc. They continue to be allowed, as long as they adhere to category requirements.

2. If a book is written by someone along with another individual, may it be used in Category A of Prose?

Yes. Co-Authored and anonymous works are permissible.

3. Category A does not say we have to automatically document the genre. When would that be necessary to provide?

When your selection is taken from an anthology that contains a mixture of prose and poetry and perhaps even drama, it would be necessary. When that occurs, you must complete another step to document that your piece is prose. This would apply, as well, in Category A of Poetry if you pull from a mixed anthology. You would need to prove your piece is poetry. Sometimes, proof is easy because the table of contents is divided into the different genres included in the book. Other times, you may have to visit the author’s official website to see if there is a reference to your selected piece’s genre. These are only two examples of how to document; there are definitely other methods.

## Questions and Clarifications: Category B of Prose

1. If I transcribe a news story from a major broadcast but the specific reporter’s name was not given, can I still use it in my program?  
Yes. Give the credit to the broadcasting network as the “author” and the date.
2. Does Category B of Prose require two or more authors?  
No. Rules do not govern how many different authors are used. You just cannot use the same authors you use in Category A. Rules do govern you must read at least two selections.

## Questions and Clarifications: Category A of Poetry

1. How many poems are required in this category?  
Only one is required but up to six (maximum) can be read.
2. Can song lyrics from YouTube videos be used as one of my poems in this category?  
Category A restrictions specifically state: “Song lyrics published only as music may be used but ONLY as transitions.” so if you find the lyrics only on YouTube, you may not use them.  
They must be published as music to be used as transitions.  
They must be published as poetry to be used as poems in the performance.  
No high school “garage band” recordings — unless, of course, the song has been published.
3. Do song lyrics used as transitions count in the total number of 6 poems allowed?  
No.

### The Competitor’s Edge

**Never assume you remember the documentation rules off the top of your head. Even the seasoned pros print the documentation rules and refer back to them often. UIL provides a helpful checklist that will keep you in the clear. When in doubt, check the rules.**

*Tasha Jones, Tuloso-Midway HS*

## Questions and Clarifications: Category B of Poetry

1. What should I do if the poem I want to use has profanity in it?  
UIL does not condone profanity in performances. Contest rules say you should revise or reject the literature. If it’s impossible to cut the profanity (you must check with the copyright owner to secure permission to alter the piece), you may want to choose more appropriate literature for competitions. Remember: You represent not only yourself, but also your family, school and community and this is a professional formal competition. Also, your administration must be aware and grant approval for selections you are

performing.

2. What is transcribed material?

This is when you listen to an audio of the poem without having it in print, and then type the audio into a manuscript.

## RULE REGARDING USING SAME SELECTION

**Category Restriction:** No contestant shall use selections from the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet. (regardless of categories)

**Explanation:** The purpose of this rule is to support the goal of the contest, “to encourage the contestant’s exploration of a variety of literary selections.” The intent of the rule is to prohibit students from performing cuttings from the same literary piece more than one year at the State Meet. Philosophically, to meet the educational goal of this contest, students who have successfully advanced to the State Meet and competed at the highest level of UIL competition with a piece of literature should perform different literature in all future State Meets so they continue to learn and grow in their knowledge of literature and performance. Performing the same piece over and over again stymies a student’s educational growth.

**Clarification:** “Selection from the same literary work”

This does not prohibit a student from reading different poetry/short stories that are published in the same poetry collection/anthology as the poem/story the student competed with at State the year before. Each poem/short story, though possibly by the same author, would be a *different* literary work. However, this does mean that one cannot select different chapters/cuttings (i.e., Chapter 1 vs. Chapter 10) from the same novel performed previously at State by the student, since they are both part of the *same* literary work.

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### The Competitor’s Edge

Documentation is an aspect coaches and students can underestimate the time required to be prepared. It is never too early to begin the documentation process. Study the categories and documentation requirements thoroughly before you search for literature. Find documentation before you start to prepare the literature for performance.

*Shawn Duthie, Holliday HS*

**Examples:** Assuming the selections met the category guidelines specified:

A student could perform a cutting from Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* his first year at State Meet, and then a cutting from *Huckleberry Finn* the following year. Although related, these are clearly two separate literary works. A student could perform a poem by a certain poet his first year at State Meet, and then perform a different poem by the same poet, published in the same poetry book, the following year at State Meet.

The different poems are separate literary works.

### The Competitor’s Edge

If you’re not having fun, then it’s time to go back to the drawing board and find new material that gets you fired up!

*Tasha Jones, Tuloso-Midway HS*

## Helpful Checklist for UIL Prose Documentation Requirements

*Competitors must choose contest material that meets the criteria established in the Category Restrictions, Guidelines and Descriptions. Read the UIL contest rules in the UIL Prose and Poetry Handbook and the UIL website for assistance concerning acceptable and unacceptable documentation.*

- Have I completed the UIL Prose A Documentation Form, including my coach's signature and mine, and made copies for the contest director and each of my judges?
- Do I have proof my Category A literature is published in hard copy? (Show this proof to the contest director.) If more than one selection is used, one, but only one, may be unpublished, as long as it is not self-authored.
- Have I used *no more than* four selections?
- If my Category A selection was drawn from a literary collection (anthology), have I taken extra steps to prove my selection is included in this anthology? (Show this proof to the contest director.)  
If I do not have the original source:
  - √ Have I photocopied the title page and the table of contents?
- If my Category A selection(s) is/are drawn from a book containing mixed genre, do I have proof my piece(s) is/are prose?
- Am I certain that my Category A selection(s) is/are not a play, screenplay, speech, movie or monologue?
- Is/are the author(s) of my selection(s) for Category A different from the author(s) whose selection(s) I am reading for Category B?
- Do I have the original source(s) of my Category A for contest? (*optional but helpful to have*)
- Have I completed the UIL Prose B Documentation Form, including my coach's signature and mine, and made copies for the Contest Director and each of my judges?
- For Category B, have I used at least two but no more than four prose selections?
- Am I certain that my Category B selections are not plays or screenplays, movies or monologues?
- If my Category B selections are from the internet or transcribed, have I included the URL on the documentation form?
- Are the authors of my selections for Category B different from the author whose selection I am reading for Category A?
- Do I have the original source(s) of my Category B for contest? (*optional but helpful to have*)
- Have I submitted both A and B performances to my administration (principal) and had them approved for performing at UIL contests?

\*All documents used for official documentation must be printed in hard copy. Documentation only on electronic devices such as smart phones or an E-Reader is not acceptable at the contest site.

## Helpful Checklist for UIL Poetry Documentation Requirements

*Competitors must choose contest material that meets the criteria established in the Category Restrictions, Guidelines and Descriptions. Read the UIL contest rules in the UIL Prose and Poetry Handbook and the UIL website for assistance concerning acceptable and unacceptable documentation.*

- Have I completed the UIL Poetry A Documentation Form, including my coach's signature and mine, and made copies for the contest director and each of my judges?
- For Category A, have I included *no more than 6* poems?
- Do I have proof that my Category A poem(s) are published in hard copy? (*Show this proof to the contest director.*) If more than one selection is used, one, but only one, may be unpublished, if not self-authored.
- If my Category A selection(s) is/are drawn from a literary collection (anthology), have I taken extra steps to prove my selection is included in this anthology? (*Show this proof to the contest director.*) If I do not have the original source:
  - √ Have I photocopied the title page and the table of contents?
- If my Category A selection(s) is/are drawn from a book containing mixed genre, do I have proof my piece(s) is/are poetry?
- Are the poet(s) of my selection(s) for Category A different from the poets I have selected for Category B?
- Do I have the original sources of my Category A for contest? (*optional but strongly encouraged*)
- Have I completed the UIL Poetry B Documentation Form, including my coach's signature and mine, and made copies for the contest director and each of my judges?
- If my Category B selections are drawn from a book containing mixed genre, do I have proof the selection my selections are poetry?
- For Category B, have I included at least two but no more than six (6) poems?
- Am I certain that my Category B selections are not plays, screenplays, monologues or song lyrics published only as music? (*Category B allows song lyrics published only as music to be used but ONLY as transitions, if I state so in my introduction, NOT as a selection in my program.*)
- If my poems are from the internet or transcribed, have I included the URL on the documentation form?
- Are the poets of my selections for Category B different from the poet(s) I have selected for Category A?
- Do I have the original source(s) of my Category B for contest? (*optional but helpful to have*)
- Have I submitted both A and B performances to my administration (principal) and had them approved for performing at UIL contests?

\*All documents used for official documentation must be printed in hard copy. Documentation only on electronic devices such as smart phones or an E-Reader is not acceptable at the contest site.

# Weaving Is An Option

by M'Liss Hindman

Weaving gives the performer a wide range of options for the performance. So this essay will look at what weaving is and how one does it effectively.

Before getting into the “ins and outs” of how weaving is done, it is important to emphasize that the purpose of weaving is NOT to create a new piece of material. The purpose of weaving is to highlight thematic development and to enhance the meaning of each individual piece of material.

Not all pieces of literature can be woven together nor should they be, so all of the categories still allow the contestant other options such as using verbal transitions or no transitions at all (sometimes referred to as “stacking.”)

Contestants reading woven literature have to work to develop the individual voice of each of the pieces. The best woven literature is performed in a manner where each individual piece is easily discernible from the other through the contestant’s vocal and physical delivery. And, yes, woven programs are more difficult to perform because they require the performer to work on multiple characterizations and the finer qualities of each of the pieces. This is true unless the student is reading a woven poetry program written all by the same author with the same persona. Then only different moods would be developed between the poems.

The term “weaving” is used intentionally to avoid the negative connotations of “blending” literature. Blending implies putting literature together in a way which makes a completely new work. That process violates author’s intent. Weaving, on the other hand, has the connotation of each strand remaining visible and distinct, as in a woven basket.

Perhaps a clearer analogy is to think of a woven program of poetry like a television talk show. The television show has a theme and different speakers have been invited as guests because of their different perspectives and knowledge on a subject. (Note: The interpreter chooses the different pieces because of their different perspectives upon the theme.) During the talk show, the different speakers do not lose their individual voice or integrity just as the pieces should not lose theirs during a woven program. If anything, just as the television show allows us to walk away from the communication more knowledgeable because of a holistic understanding of the issue, a woven program allows the interpreter and the audience to better understand the theme by allowing different poets’ and authors’ personas to speak on the issue.

## The Competitor’s Edge

Remember: You are NOT creating a new piece; you are creating a beautiful quilt of literature.

*M'Liss Hindman, Tyler Junior College*

So now that it is understood that weaving is taking literature apart and putting them back together in a thematic way, how does one put together a program? For clarity’s sake, let’s examine the genres of literature separately:

**WEAVING POETRY:** Sometimes the contestant begins with a single poem, enjoys the theme of that poem, and looks for other poems to go with the original selection. Other times, a contestant thinks of a theme and then looks for poetry to develop the theme. Either way works. Success depends on the individual and how diligent he/she is in looking for a solid theme and good poetry.

For example, “love” is too general of a theme to develop in a program that lasts less than seven minutes. There are far too many types of love and levels of love to explore in that amount of time. A more realistic theme to develop would be “the power of a mother’s love for a child.” This theme is more specific and yet would allow for



a variety of angles of thematic development. So whether the performer starts with a poem or a thematic idea, one must make the theme specific and worthwhile for both him/herself and the audience to enjoy.

**WEAVING PROSE:** Just as in Poetry, the contestant may begin with a single piece of literature that has a strong thematic idea and then research literature to find other pieces of prose and dramatic literature that fit with the original theme. Other times, a contestant may think of the theme first and then look for the literature that supports it. For instance, a student who had always been interested in the era of the 1950's begins to research information about that era and comes up with stories of women who had been suffragettes, women who had pioneered in the working arena and tragic part from a movie where two women were dealing with the horrors of the Great Depression. She puts these pieces of literature together to create a very compelling program about the various plights of women in the 1920s.

With the definition of weaving clarified and the basic idea of thematic development addressed, it is important to grasp how putting a program of literature together works. Understand that there are no hard and fast rules for weaving. It depends upon the literature chosen. Generally a program has a beginning, a middle and an end. Think of the program as a speech with its own specific arguments. Arguments might be given for and against an issue or it might appear as more of a conversation about the theme. One technique of putting together a poetry program is to use a central piece (also known as the anchor piece) and weave the other selections in and around it. But remember, there are no hard and fast rules. Literature segments might be just alternated, depending upon the messages of the poems and how the theme is being advanced. For many interpreters, weaving will come instinctively. Others will have to work at it for hours - even days.

Weaving literature is an intellectual challenge. Coaches and students interested in learning how to weave must realize that in order to weave effectively, analysis of each complete work of literature is paramount. Poems, segments of prose stories, scenes from plays and movies cannot be woven together well unless an understanding of each stanza, line, paragraph, scene, and word has been achieved.

Remember: weaving is not creating a new piece of literature – it is instead highlighting the nuances of individual pieces already written into a program begging to be performed. Trial and error is to be expected. Not all attempts at weaving are successful. But after the long hours of researching and analyzing and weaving, the real work of bringing the poets' and author's individual narrators to life begins.

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### The Competitor's Edge

When you weave several pieces together, we should still be able to tell the difference between the various selections. If it all sounds like one continuous story, that's not weaving. That's creating a whole new selection.

*Katrese Skinner, El Campo HS*

## Oral Interpretation Textual Analysis

*Gleaned from Robert Shepard, Plano ISD*

### OBJECTIVE:

Create a performance that will have believable characterization, dramatic and impacting moments, and sense of journey from the beginning of the selection to the end.

### STEP ONE:

The text for an oral interpreter is like sheet music to a musician. When analyzed correctly and scored properly, the text gives the interpreter all the clues s/he needs to create characters.

*Read the entire text first.*

*Look up any word you do not understand.*

*Look at the punctuation for your character that the author has put into the literature.*



*Commas ( , ) mean "Take a breath!"*

*Periods ( . ) mean pause or possible change of thought*

*Ellipses ( ... ) mean the character is unsure*

*Dash ( — ) whatever follows a dash is very important to the character or it is an interruption*

*Colon ( : ) usually means that a list is coming. If your character has a list of repeated words or phrases regardless of a colon or not, each item in the list must be different.*

*Example: "I wish that someone would hold me, I wish that life were easy, I wish that we could get married." Each "I wish" and what follows it must build, or get softer, or be said in a different way.*

*Colons can also mean that what follows is very important to the character.*

*Exclamation point ( ! ) means the character is excited, angry or emotional.*

*Question mark ( ? ) means that they are questioning someone. Your pitch must go up at the end of your sentence for the audience to know that you are asking a question.*

*Lengths of lines. If the character speaks for several sentences without taking a pause, ( , ) then they are trying to be heard or they are nervous.*

*The shorter the lines back and forth, the more emotional anger or tension in the scene is building.*

#### STEP TWO:

Score the text (mark your manuscript) once you have studied the punctuation.

/ = Pause

// = Pause & change of thought

/// = Extended pause and shift in the scene

< = Louder

> = Softer

~ ~ ~ = Faster

—  
—

= Slower

### The Competitor's Edge

Put page breaks where they make sense. Never turn a page in the middle of a description or action.

*M'Liss Hindman, Tyler Junior College*

#### STEP THREE:

Circle an operative word per phrase/line/sentence.

An operative word is the one word we must hear in a sentence in order for the phrase/line/sentence and the next phrase/line/sentence to make sense. The operative words in a performance are key to an audience understanding what is happening in a poem/story and for an interpreter to fully bring action to the text.

Think of the operative word as if looking at a painting. The operative word is the red dot in the midst of a sea of black. In other words, in a phrase/line/sentence, the words around the operative word are the shading or background. The operative word is the point or focus of the phrase/line/sentence – otherwise, everything sounds the same. You should slightly stress the operative word.

#### STEP FOUR:

Define the Super Objective of the text.

This is what the overall message or call to action is from the text. What does the text want the audience to do as a result of experience the text?

*EXAMPLE: Lion King. People must realize that each of us has a force that is greater within us than that which is in the world. Each of us must remember who we are, in order to take our rightful place in life.*

### The Competitor's Edge

Silence is your friend. Pause intentionally and perform between the words as well as during the words.

*Kathy Owens, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor*

## Additional Important Definitions

THROUGH LINE OF ACTION – overall life goal of each character/speaker in the text/poem

UNITS OF ACTION OR “BEATS” – A major change of thought, action or situation.

Every text is divided into units. By breaking the text down into smaller chunks, you are able to commit to the text moment-by-moment, rather than attempting to perform the entire selection at one time. A unit is over usually when a major event happens. You must clearly define each unit in order to be able to clearly share the story/poem moment by moment.

*EXAMPLE: Lion King. The unit would be learning that being King has its limits.*

OBJECTIVE – System of wants and needs of a character from unit to unit. The purpose of an objective is that one character is always needing or wanting something from the other character or the audience and s/he has a desperate need to win.

*EXAMPLE: Lion King. Mufasa – I must persuade Simba to tell me that he will never visit the graveyard again. (With this objective, the performer can see the result of what Mufasa is fight for.)*

An objective changes when your character either achieves the result, loses the battle or there is a major shift in the scene.

OBSTACLE – The thing that stops you from getting what you want. You must figure out what stops your character from getting what they want.

TACTIC – The way the character goes about overcoming an obstacle in order to achieve an objective. Tactics are verbs or actions that you do to get what you want.

*EXAMPLE: I must persuade Simba to tell me that he will never visit the graveyard again. The obstacle is that Simba is young and does not understand the delicate balance of nature. During the story, Mufasa could try several tactics to win his objective like: persuade, uplift, demand, convince.*

As a result of writing clear objectives, obstacles and tactics and following what you have written, your scene will take life and will have levels and a sense of journey.

STAKES – How important is it to your character to win his/her objective? The higher the stakes, the better the scene.

*EXAMPLE: For Mufasa: if Simba does not do what he asks, then Simba could get killed.*

When stakes become life or death, the characters will do anything to achieve them, which makes it exciting to perform the selection and for audiences to experience the literature.

# Ethics for UIL Competition

Several years ago as the state advisory committee developed the categories for Prose and Poetry, we worked to have less restrictive documentation and in some instances lifted the “proof of publication” element. Once we committed to this “freedom”, we then began to see pitfalls that might occur. The discussion unfortunately included comments about students and teachers who might “cheat”, “manipulate”, and go so far as to write material and say someone else wrote it and use it. So let’s talk about that elephant in the room..... ETHICS.

First of all, as high school teachers, we have an obligation to teach our students the rules and regulations of contests in which they are entered. And then the students have the ethical obligation to follow those rules. The reasoning behind this is simple: in order to have any fair and equitable contest, a set of standards has to be maintained. This encourages professional and ethical behavior of not only the students and their teachers but also of the administration and parents.

The UIL Academic Contest Ethics Code requires “participants to participate in contests in the spirit of fairness and sportsmanship observing all rules - both in letter and in spirit.” Coaches are required by the Code to “sponsor and advise individuals and teams without resorting to unethical tactics, trickery which attempts to skirt the rules, or any other unfair tactic which detracts from sound educational principles.”

In the Speech world of UIL and specifically in Prose and Poetry, we as educators inherently have several obligations: not only to know the rules and teach them to our students, but also to accept the responsibility of being certain that students have the correct documentation for the contest. It is our responsibility that, even though some things may not be “checked” by contest officials, selections adhere to the rules. It is our responsibility to set the example. It is our responsibility to teach the students right from wrong and how can we do that if we ourselves are ‘bending the rules’? Professional educators/coaches should set the standard and should be the proper example.

As we begin the creative process with these exciting categories, educators must follow the rules both in letter and spirit. The attitude can not be that “if we don’t get caught, it’s OK”. We have to be ethical. As coaches and contestants, we must respect the rules and show leadership by following those rules. Let’s get that elephant out of the room. Let’s embrace the excitement of having innovative categories and BE ETHICAL!

Sammy Green and M’Liss Hindman  
former coach, Spring High School and UIL oral interpretation state consultant

## Guidelines for Judges of Poetry and Prose

When serving as a critic for a UIL oral interpretation contest, judges must be familiar with the season's prose and poetry categories. The descriptors are listed in the UIL contest rules which can be accessed from the UIL website. Additionally, the tournament official should provide a copy. If they do not, judges should request one. Reviewing the descriptors in advance of the contest will aid judges in addressing an important criteria included on the ballot: "Did the performer adhere to the prescribed category?"

Judges should examine the overall performance.

- Did it make you think?
- Did it cause you to have an emotional experience?
- Did you believe the "world" and characters created by the performer?

When judges are evaluating movement and eye contact, again take into account the overall performance. Eye contact and movement that do not distract from the performance but rather appear to be an extension and outgrowth motivated by the literature itself should not be penalized. This is a subjective area so judges should use the UIL contest rules for direction.

### From the UIL CONTEST RULES AND GUIDELINES

\*Note that these are not the rules in their entirety but are important sections applicable to judges. It is also important to note the word "shall" is a mandate. Judges do not disqualify contestants. That is the role of the Contest Director. However, judges may indicate on the ballot if a mandate was not fulfilled by the contestant.

*Introductions.* An introduction is required in both categories. The introduction and/or transitions during the performance shall include the name of the poet(s) and the selection(s) to be performed and should prepare the audience to listen to the selection(s). The introduction should reflect spontaneity, though it should be prepared ahead of time. Judges should know what each category requires for its specific introduction.

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*Manuscripts or Copies.* The contestant should perform the selections reading from manuscripts or copies of the selections that are in a binder. Students shall not read from books or magazines or perform without a manuscript or copy of the selection.

*Style and Delivery.* Contestants should not use costumes or props.

(A) Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture, gesture, and place-to-place movement) is permissible. However, this active use of the body should:

- (i) be appropriate to the demands of the selection;
- (ii) be a natural outgrowth from the literature to be performed, and
- (iii) be limited in scope.

(B) Only incidental singing in the introduction, transitions, commentary and/or selection may be included. The judge's opinion regarding style and delivery is final. Coaches are encouraged to prepare contestants for the fact that perceptions of style and delivery will vary from judge to judge.

*Time Limit.* The time limit for each performance including introduction and any transitional material may not exceed seven minutes. There is no grace period. The penalty for exceeding seven minutes is disqualification from the round by the contest director, with the exception of the final round of State Meet when the contestant shall receive last in the round. The responsibility for keeping within the restricted time limit rests with the contestant.

Judges should read the category descriptors in their entirety before judging. Refer to the contest rules, chapter 2, and the categories in chapter 3.

# Writing Educational Ballots

Competition should be a valuable learning experience for students each and every time they perform. Judges play an integral role in making that happen by taking an educational approach to the UIL prose and poetry ballots.

How does a judge make their ballot educational? Write comments that have a purpose and comments that are meaningful.

What comments have purpose and meaning?

- Comments that are specific
- Comments that point out the positive
- Criticism that is expressed in a considerate manner

The UIL Oral Interpretation ballots are divided into three major sections: the introduction, the selection/performance and the overall evaluation. Questions are provided within each section to guide the judge in what to address on the ballot.

The introduction to a contestant's performance has taken on a very significant role within the performance and particularly with the current categories, the introduction has a distinct purpose. When listening, the judge should consider:

- Did the performer prepare you to listen to the selection?
- Secondly, did the content meet the category requirements? In the current category descriptors, contestants are instructed to include specific information. Judges should familiarize themselves with these mandated elements by carefully reviewing the category descriptors in advance of the round.
- Finally, critics should evaluate the contestant on delivery style of the introduction. Was it conversational in nature and did it add to the overall effectiveness of the performance?

A judge who writes on the ballot, *"Your introduction needs work!"* has not provided meaningful direction for a student to improve. An example of a more meaningful comment with purpose would be *"Category B requires that you tell the audience upfront in the introduction why the literature speaks to you. This information was not stated in your introduction."* Being specific with comments provides the detail a student needs to revise the introduction.

The second division of the ballot asks the judge to evaluate the performance of the selection, addressing issues such as:

- Was the material appropriate to the performer and the goal of the category?
- Did the performer successfully portray the narrator, the characters and the scene?
- Did the performer demonstrate an awareness of the person's purpose?
- Did the performer make appropriate use of physical and vocal skills?
- Was the use of the manuscript, internal pacing, pauses and closure appropriate?

If a student reads a judge's comment *"Too slow!"*, it is impossible to know if the judge thinks the entire performance is incorrectly paced. Because of the vagueness of the comment, the student cannot ascertain where adjustments need to be made. A more meaningful comment with purpose would be *"This scene (name specific part within the selection) needs to develop more through using a quicker pace in order to build intensity."*

Even a positive comment such as *"Characters were clear"* isn't as meaningful as *"You had well-developed characters. The mother in the story exhibited distinct qualities that distinguished her from all the other characters, making her stand out as a strong, believable individual."*

Perhaps the judge wants to point out that *"Bookwork needs to improve."* However, that comment doesn't direct the student on how to change handling the performance binder. Specific instruction is much more helpful in assisting in the growth of the student's holistic performance. *"Make sure the manuscript does not distract from your*

*performance. Hold your binder in more of a “V” shape than an “L” or flat. Pull the binder closer to your body.”*

The final section of the UIL ballot asks the judge to consider what he or she liked about the performance and why. This is where critics also should give specific areas of improvement and most importantly, address whether or not the performer adhered to the prescribed category. It is unfair to require contestants to select literature and design their performance to meet the contest rules and then have judges not bring that criteria into consideration when ranking each contestant.

Essentially, a good critic will justify their ballot. To do so:

- Comments need to be consistent with the rank.
- Positive and the negative criticism should be balanced.
- Descriptive rather than evaluative statements should be used.
- The contestant should be given a goal.
- The ballot should help the student improve.

To make a ballot an educational experience for the contestant, be concise, be considerate, be specific. For further examples of writing educational ballots, visit the UIL Oral Interpretation webpage.

### The Competitor’s Edge

It is important to realize every ballot is an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills. Whether you receive a 1 in the round, or a rank of 6, it doesn’t matter as long as you grow from each round. If you don’t break to the next level, always watch the round to appreciate a superior performance.

*Shawn Duthie, Holliday HS*

## Documentation Questions & Answers

(Note: Additional Q&A specific to current categories and rulings are listed on the UIL website.)

### E-mail Documentation

Q. Is e-mail an acceptable form of documentation?

A. Many students can receive e-mail directly from the authors themselves. E-mail is acceptable as long as it provides sufficient information to legitimize it as being received from a proper source. If the email address does not indicate the legitimate source (such as Scholastic Publishing), it is preferable for students to request from the respondent that they include their title/position and contact information. Note: The respondent should be instructed to copy the original request for information onto their response so the particular request can be verified. (See the UIL website for sample email to author.)

<http://www.uiltexas.org/speech/oral-interp/sample-letter-to-request-documentation-from-authors>

Sometimes it may be necessary to contact an author or publisher for documentation purposes. In that case, you’ll want to develop a letter like the sample below explaining who you are and why you need this information.



Dear (Author/Publisher),

I am a (student/coach/librarian) from (your high school), in (your city), Texas. I (participate/work with students) in an academic competition sanctioned by the Texas University Interscholastic League of the University of Texas. The nature of the competition is the performance of prose and poetry literature.

For the purposes of this oral reading competition, there are prescribed categories of literature and one of the contest rules is that we must meet documentation requirements for the literature that we are using. This year, we must provide proof that (the literary work has been published in hard copy, etc.)

You may view these requirements at the links below:

(Prose) <https://www.uiltexas.org/speech/oral-interp/2024-25-prose-categories>

(Poetry) <https://www.uiltexas.org/speech/oral-interp/2024-25-uil-poetry-categories>

Can you confirm that (your literary work has been published in hard copy, etc.) by clicking “reply” directly to this email and including a statement of confirmation?

I appreciate your time and look forward to your future publications.

Kind regards,

(your name)

(your contact signature)

Internet

Q. Is Internet an acceptable form of documentation?

A. When evaluating Internet sources for documentation purposes, quality standards are a necessity because the Internet contains web pages posted by youngsters as well as world-class experts. Just like the print medium, you must distinguish between quantity and quality. Students are allowed to access the Internet to locate documentation. As long as the site they have downloaded the information from is a legitimate one, it is acceptable to offer as documentation. Many contemporary authors today have their own website, and information from these are acceptable, since they are copyrighted to the author, as is information students download from a publishing company’s website. However, be careful of personal websites that are not copyrighted. These do not provide acceptable documentation. (See also section on Internet Resources.)

Acceptable Internet sites include those run by:

Government Agencies

College/University pages that are maintained by faculty and university department personnel, not students

Online encyclopedias

Book Publishers

Online libraries maintained by government agencies, colleges, universities

Unacceptable Internet sites: (Also check the UIL website for latest rulings.)

Wikipedia

Goodreads.com

Trueknowledge.com

IMBb.com

Freebase.com

Unauthorized encyclopedias

If an online data service is used for documentation, the source of the published material should be included.

Letterhead Stationary Documentation

Q. Is a letter from the publisher/author on letterhead stationery acceptable?

A. Yes. The letter should be formal and on official stationery, not handwritten on plain paper.



## Prose and Poetry Interpretation Handbook

### Written Documentation

- Q. What do the contest rules mean by “written documentation”? May I hand copy or type my documentation?
- A. No. Documentation should be provided from its original source, either photocopied or downloaded and printed electronically. Students may not create their own original documentation or provide it on an electronic device such as a smart phone, tablet or Kindle.

### Published

- Q. In order to prove a selection is published, printed material and Internet material has been printed in hard copy as well as being on the Internet, may we use Library of Congress cataloging information?
- A. Yes. Students may research a book by accessing the Library of Congress Online Catalog. If the book is listed there, you may download and print the FULL RECORD cataloging information in order to serve as proof the book is published in hard copy.

### Special Collections

- Q. My students enjoy the Chicken Soup for the Souls series. Can these be used for the contest?
- A. It is strongly recommended students not use selections from the Chicken Soup series. They are problematic and usually result in disqualification due to incomplete documentation. Documenting the stories proves very difficult. Many times the individual attributed to a particular story in the collection is only a contributor and not the original author. Finding proof of original authorship will require a student and coach to obtain confirmation from the publisher. Often, more than one genre is included in the book. Again, although not prohibited, we recommend students not use this series.

### Same Selection

- Q. Can you explain the rule concerning using the same selection I’ve already used in UIL competition?
- A. Contestants may not use the same literary work more than one year at UIL State Meet. See further discussion on this issue earlier in this handbook.

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### Prose Poetry

- Q. I’ve found literature which is referred to on the book jacket as a prose poem. Should it be used in the prose contest or in the poetry contest? Where would it fit?
- A. *A Handbook to Literature*, Harmon and Holman discusses this “modern phenomenon” and indicates that “some writers and critics argue that the prose poem doesn’t really exist.” “It may be that prose poem is a graphic or print category determined, finally, by how a piece is laid out in print.” Literature scholar Lawrence Perrine indicates in *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense* that a prose poem is “usually a short composition having the intentions of poetry but written in prose rather than verse.”
- Because this is a competitive situation, contestants should use contest material which clearly can be determined as prose OR poetry. The risk of controversy or disqualification is not worth it. Literature which clearly fits the genre categories abounds and makes it unnecessary to risk using literature which creates a genre blur.

### One Poem or Two

- Q. Is poetry which includes stanzas divided by Roman numerals but not individual titles considered one poem or multiple poems?
- A. Poetry that has one title but Roman numerals between stanzas is one poem. The divisions are called cantos. *A Handbook to Literature* defines a canto as a section or division of a long poem. Derived from the Latin cantus (SONG), the word originally signified a section of a narrative poem of such length as to be sung by a minstrel in one singing. The books of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* are divided into cantos. Early in this century, Ezra Pound published pieces at first called “cantos of a poem of some length” and eventually called that poem simply *The Cantos*. Contemporary examples include: *The People, Yes* by Carl Sandburg and *Rage* by Lesléa Newman.

### Excerpt

- Q. Sometimes the category says we can use an “excerpt” from a poem. How long is an excerpt?
- A. There is no specified required number of lines; however, the cutting of the poem should meet the definition of excerpt which is “a passage selected or extracted”.

### Novels-in-Verse

- Q. My literary selection is catalogued as a novel-in-verse. In which contest, prose or poetry, may it be performed?
- A. If a literary work can be officially documented as a novel-in-verse (such as the Library of Congress Cataloging), it is considered poetry for UIL competition.

### Magazines and Journals

- Q. Does a periodical such as a syndicated magazine and/or journal qualify as a “hard copy” publication?
- A. Yes, as long as the magazine and/or journal is not an online edition but is printed, paper material. It meets the definition required for published in hard copy. Note that local school departmental journals do not qualify since they do not have subscribers.

### Books with Mixed Genres

- Q. Can I perform a selection from a collection that has multiple genres, such as both poetry & prose included in the book?
- A. You can, but you must complete an extra step in documentation. You will have to prove the piece you have chosen is the appropriate genre for the contest so find official documentation that clearly defines the selection is either prose or poetry. An example would be a statement from the author’s official website that you have downloaded and printed with the URL in the header/footer.

### Electronic Retrieval Devices Used for Documentation

- Q. May I show the contest director my documentation on my e-reader or tablet or cell phone rather than printing the document?
- A. No. This would not meet the constitutional requirements. (See further discussion online on the Oral Interpretation page of the UIL website.)

### “e-books”

- Q. Can I purchase an “e-book” rather than a hard copy of the book and use it to prove the book has been published in hard copy?
- A. No.

### No Table of Contents

- Q. If my book does not contain a table of contents, how can I prove a selection is included in that book?
- A. There are alternative methods to document your selection is included in a source, even if the original source has no table of contents.
- Run the book through World Cat Literature database (most school libraries subscribe so ask your librarian) and see if the search shows all the titles of poems in the book because often World Cat Literature will do that. If the source can be located in WCL and provides this info, simply download and print.
  - Consult the poet’s website. It may provide discussion of the book and indicate the titles,
  - Contact the publisher for a confirmation your selection is included in the book.
  - Use other databases. Grainger’s Index to Poetry is also a great source libraries typically have where you can do a search. (This is also a great source for providing proof of what book a poem is published in.)
  - Literary Criticism from an academic source that may include the mention of the poem title in a particular source. Example – McGill’s Critical Survey of Poetry (for poems); McGill’s Critical Survey of Long Fiction (for prose). Many school libraries contain these series.
  - See the section over Internet Resources in the UIL Prose & Poetry Handbook for additional sites that may provide the documentation you need. (such as BooksinPrint.com, PoetryFoundation.org)

### Changing category selections

- Q. If my A and B performances fit either category, may I have my documentation checked and then determine which to perform once the sectioning for the round is posted?
- A. Once documentation has been cleared for a given contest, you should not switch category selections.

## Specific Writers and Books

The literary works *Out of the Dust* and *Witness* authored by Karen Hesse, Scholastic Press, are poetry.

The literary works by Sonya Sones, “One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies,” “Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy,” “What My Mother Doesn’t Know” and “What My Girlfriend Doesn’t Know” are poetry. For updates on additional writings of Ms. Sones, see the Documentation Rules section on the UIL Oral Interpretation webpage.

*The Realm of Possibility* by David Levithan is poetry, with the exception of the piece, “Writing.”

The literary works “Crank,” “Burned,” “Glass,” “Identical,” “Impulse,” “Pretty, Hungry” and “Tricks” by Ellen Hopkins are poetry. For updates on additional writings of Ms. Hopkins, see the UIL website or the author’s official website.

*Def Poetry jam on Broadway...and More* is tricky. The book has a table of contents that is divided into two parts: Part One and Part Two. These are two separate parts of the book with two different title pages. Part I has been ruled by UIL to be performance literature and therefore may be ineligible for competition. It is a Broadway show that has won a Tony Award for “best Special Theatrical Event” and the Peabody Award. The manuscript includes stage directions. Poems in Part II at the back of the book, the “...and More” were not included in the Broadway show and many have been published stand alone in poetry anthologies. If you wish to use poems from the publication, be certain they meet the requirements of the specific category you are preparing.

*Sold* by Patricia McCormick has conflicting documentation. The author herself has been contacted, and the official UIL ruling is poetry.

*Heaven Looks a Lot Like the Mall* by Wendy Mass is confirmed by the author as “written in free verse” and therefore, is eligible for UIL poetry.

More Questions?

See the UIL Oral Interpretation webpage for official rulings on specific literary works and for additional questions and answers to be added throughout the year.

## Digital Documentation

More and more, districts and regions are requesting that documentation be provided prior to the tournament in digital form. If you qualify for the State Meet, you will submit it in advance digitally. Guidance on how to assemble your documentation is provided below.

- UIL Documentation Form
- Cover of Book
- Publication Page (copyright information is on this page)
- Table of Contents\*(if no TOC see Q & A section for alternative methods)
- Proof of Genre\*

\*Only necessary if selection is taken from an anthology that includes multiple genres (such as prose AND poetry AND drama). If so, in addition, you must include proof of the GENRE of your specific selection(s) unless the Table of Contents designates the genre.

For performances that contain multiple selections, scan in the same order each title is listed on your selection Documentation form.

## A Special Word to the Wise

Coaches should be responsible for checking the documentations their students have secured long before the district meet date. It is important that your students meet the documentation guidelines specified. You will want to verify that the documentation is straightforward and without vagueness to avoid the risk of the documentation being questioned at district, regional, or state competition. In such cases even if the documentation is ultimately approved, your student has been unnerved, which may impact their potential to perform to their very best capabilities. Don't take the chance of that happening. Not taking great care in securing the correct documentation can nullify many hours of practice, since constitutional rules prohibit a student from performing their selection without proper documentation.

Sometimes, district officials may be uncertain as to the appropriateness of documentation and pass it on to the Regional level. Expect documentation to be checked carefully at all levels of League competition. It might not pass a higher level if it does not clearly follow the guidelines as explained in this manual.

Not all invitational tournaments follow UIL guidelines. Some do not even check documentation at all! This can cause a contestant and their coach to assume their documentation will not be questioned at District.

Expanded discussion of appropriate documentation is posted on the UIL website. All coaches should consult it during the competitive school year. The State Office cannot review every student's documentation. Read the contest rules as well as the detailed explanations about documentation included in this handbook very carefully. If your documentation is questionable, play it safe and search for additional documentation that will clear up the questions. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that the documentation, although possibly allowed at the district meet, will be approved at the regional or State Meet levels. Because this is a competitive situation, you are warned to select a different performance piece if you cannot secure documentation that is clear. Plenty of great literature worthy of performance falls within the contest categories, making it unnecessary to risk not being allowed to compete because of controversy.

## Defining and Distinguishing Poetry, Prose, and Drama

In the early days of UIL competition, it was fairly easy to categorize literature into one of the three main genres. Basically, all you had to do was look at the text on the page. Prose was primarily written in paragraph form, poetry was structured in stanzas, and drama included character names before each line of dialogue. However, in today's post-modern literary world, writers often borrow qualities from many different forms to create their own unique style of literature. Furthermore, recent trends place a new emphasis on the spoken word and the performance of literature. Solo performers combine vaudeville, theatre, music, standup comedy, poetry, the visual arts and dance to showcase their talents and inspire their audiences. These literary and theatrical developments have made it increasingly difficult to determine the appropriateness of some material for use in the UIL prose and poetry contests. The category restrictions for each performance category indicate whether or not selections from plays, screenplays or theatrical monologues can be performed. Check all four categories carefully for clarification on when they are and are not allowed.

Unfortunately, many recently published plays look like prose or poetry on the page. Research indicates the use of the Dewey Decimal system is the most effective and credible way to establish the genre of a particular piece of literature.

The Dewey Decimal Classification is the oldest and most widely used classification system in the world. It is used by a majority of libraries, including nearly all public and school libraries in the United States. Information regarding Dewey Decimal categories and subdivisions is available on the University of Illinois library webpage at [www.library.illinois.edu/infosci/research/guides/dewey/](http://www.library.illinois.edu/infosci/research/guides/dewey/)

The first three digits of a Dewey Classification number determine a book's class, division, and section for library

cataloguing purposes. For example, numbers beginning with 811 identify American poetry, 812 American drama, and 813 American fiction.

Bibliographic information on specific works, including classification according to the Dewey Decimal System, is available at the Library of Congress Online Catalogue <http://catalog.loc.gov/> To access this site follow these steps:

1. Go to the Library of Congress site and click on “Library Catalogs”
2. Click on “Basic Search”
3. Search by title, author, etc.
4. Enter the information in the search box, then click “begin search”
5. The search results will be displayed. You may be shown several different works with the same title. Make sure you click on the title that corresponds to the material and author you are investigating. There are oftensound recordings, videos, and other misleading items in the search results.
6. If the correct title and author appear at the top of the page, click on Full Record
7. Scroll down to the Dewey Classification Number. The subject record may also denote the genre.

As contemporary writers begin to blur the distinctions between genres, verifying a selection’s viability as a UIL contest piece has proven very difficult. Arguments arise when it comes to drawing lines between performance art and poetry or monologues and prose. Fortunately, the Dewey Decimal numbers provide a clear and unbiased decision about this matter.

The following selections, which have been questioned in the past, are categorized as drama by the Dewey Classification System, and are inappropriate for use in UIL prose or poetry categories referenced earlier that prohibit the use of plays or screenplays:

*Blown Sideways Through Life* by Claudia Shear  
*Freak* by John Leguizamo  
*Jails, Hospitals, and Hip-Hop and Some People* by Danny Hoch  
*No Cure for Cancer* by Denis Leary  
*Pretty Fire* by Charlayne Woodard  
*The Redthroats and Smooch Music* by David Cale  
*Savage/Love* by Sam Shepard  
*Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll* by Eric Bogosian  
*Shimmer and Other Texts* by John O’Keefe  
*Swimming to Cambodia* by Spalding Gray  
*Two or Three Things I Know for Sure* by Dorothy Allison

You may occasionally find a book or anthology that the Dewey System labels as “miscellaneous writings.” These books are often collected works of individual authors that are not limited to or chiefly identified with one specific form. You may also encounter a book, published by a small press, which has not been assigned a Dewey Decimal number. In cases such as these, it is necessary to ask the following questions to identify the material’s classification.

- **Does any part of the book mention its performance by the author?**

Many writers and poets travel the country reading their works at bookstores and university campuses. This certainly does not transform their literature into theatre. Poets such as Patricia Smith, Bob Holman, and Hal Sirowitz also perform their writings in Poetry Slam contests. These events require the contestants to interpret their poetry without the aid of costumes, props or sets. Poetry Slams are not Theatre, but contests that celebrate the oral tradition of poetry.

However, some texts are prefaced with a notation about their original performance as a work of Theatre. For example, the performance piece “Shimmer” follows a paragraph that states,



“...*Shimmer* was first performed by the author on January 5, 1988...Among other awards he has won for *Shimmer* are the 1988 Drama Critics Circle Award for Solo Performance in San Francisco and a 1989 New York Dance and Performance Choreographer/Creator Award.”

Even though the text is written in a prosaic, paragraph form, the introduction clearly establishes the work as a piece of Performance Literature.

Another popular book is Russell Simmons’ *Def Poetry Jam on Broadway ... and More!* The editor’s notes in the front of the book refer to Part I as performance literature. A show performed on Broadway, Part I of *Def Poetry* received a Tony Award, an award given for musicals. There are also stage directions in the opening to the show. Further in-depth research provides additional insight when accessing the website of Poetry, a performer in the show, where it is listed as “*the Tony Award-winning Broadway play.*”

- **Does the piece contain stage directions?**

Stage directions are instructions to the actor which are usually written in italics. They also help the reader of drama understand the text and story, serving a similar function as narration in a work of prose. The presence of stage directions can help you establish a piece as a work of drama. Sections of Whoopi Goldberg’s *The Spook Show* are written in paragraph form, but contain stage directions such as (*Enters with a white shirt draped over her head*) and (*Sniffs and wipes nose with hand; looks at her hand.*)

- **Are there any published articles, reviews, or interviews which clarify the genre of this particular work?**

Newspapers and magazines often review or analyze works of literature. Articles found in these periodicals can give you insight into a particular book’s content and form.

- **Do I have the correct original source?**

Many works of literature are published in more than one form. For example, John Irving’s *The Cider House Rules* is available as a novel, a play, and a screenplay. A cutting from the novel would be an acceptable prose selection. The other two literary versions of the story could not be used in UIL oral interpretation categories that prohibit drama.

It is important for you as a performer to thoroughly analyze the piece you will be using for competition. Most of the time it is easy to determine whether a book contains prose, poetry or drama. However, when the lines of literary genre are blurry, use the steps above to verify your material’s credibility as a UIL prose or poetry selection. Make copies of your findings to bring to competition. If your material is called into question, you will need printed evidence to use in its defense.

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# 4

## Preparing for the Contest

If you're fortunate, you will find a variety of ways to share literature through performance. Audiences might include your classmates, your family, friends, and people at community activities. But preparing for competition includes understanding both the general format of speech tournaments and some rules of etiquette and sportsmanship. Beyond the hard work you've already done in selecting, analyzing, and rehearsing your selections, being aware of these issues will enhance your chances of both enjoyment and success in a competitive situation.

### Plan in Advance for Competition

- **Check your schedule carefully** before you sign up for a tournament. This should include family, work schedules, practices or rehearsals for other activities in which you are involved, and total class absences allowed for extra-curricular activities. Invitational and practice meets most often include a penalty or “drop fee” for students who register but fail to compete. If for some reason you cannot attend after you've committed yourself, let your coach know as soon as possible, so that someone else may fill your slot.
- For UIL competition, **check the academic conflict pattern** located on the UIL website and contest entry restrictions. According to the *Constitution and Contest Rules*, if you enter Prose Interpretation, you cannot enter Poetry Interpretation or Lincoln-Douglas Debate. Likewise, if you enter Poetry, you may not enter Prose or LD Debate. For invitational meets, check the rules for entering multiple events, since some invitational meets may not follow the UIL conflict pattern.
- Remember that this is an extra-curricular activity and that your **school work comes first**. Make arrangements about assignments or make-up work ahead of time if you are going to miss a class for competition. Then honor those obligations.
- **Know the rules**. Ask questions *before* the contest, not when you're in the middle of the meet and you are involved in a controversy over a possible rule violation. If you are not sure you understand the rules, contact the League for clarification well in advance of your competition.
- Make sure you have turned in any travel, medical, or other **permission forms** required by your school and that they are accurate.

Provide your parents or guardians with a schedule and travel information.

- **Pack for travel carefully**, but don't try to take everything you own. You'll probably be traveling with limited storage space, and remember, too, that you're the one who has to haul that luggage around. Some things you should take include:
- **Proper attire for performance** - Be confident and assume that you'll compete both days in a two-day tournament! Plan your wardrobe choices so you don't need several pairs of dress shoes. Sneakers are not appropriate. Ladies, pack proper undergarments (such as slips) for the outfits you have selected for contest. Attire for performance should be professional, conservative and neat. Avoid the fads of the day; classic is the best choice. You want to be remembered for your performance, not for your tie or the bow in your hair. Avoid any article of clothing or accessory that draws attention to itself, including white shoes, jewelry (i.e. large, dangling earrings) and other accessories. Judges see you before they hear you, so dress to impress them. Slacks, ties, and a jacket for men are preferred; jeans are not. For girls, short skirts, midriff tops, or revealing slits in skirts add a less-than-serious note as do low-cut or skintight blouses. Remember that conservative professionalism is the standard of dress for tournament competition so that your attire does not interfere with the judge's enjoyment of your performance. A neat, clean, un-wrinkled appearance is the goal, so choose your wardrobe carefully.
- Your **selections and documentation**, with an additional copy in a safe place (with your coach or in the squad files taken to the tournament). UIL rules specifically state that students shall not be allowed to compete in a League contest without sufficient documentation, so check and *double-check* that you have it *before* you leave for the meet! Remember: you must have enough copies not only for the contest director but all the judges you potentially will have. Some tournaments have a panel of judges (3 to 5 on each panel) to bring extra copies.
- Clothes for travel and any free time - Meet your school's or **squad requirements**.
- Sufficient **money** - but don't take a bankroll that might be lost!
- Your own **medication** - never take anyone else's!
- Cosmetics and/or shaving materials, and **incidentals** such as safety pins, band-aids, aspirin, etc. Like the Boy Scouts, "Be Prepared!"

## What to Expect at the Contest

When your school registers at a meet, your coach will receive any information you need that is not posted in some central public place. Some tournaments assign contestants to sections of preliminary rounds by name, but many use code numbers: a number for the school and a number or letter for each contestant entered in any event. It is very important that a coach inform the tab room of any "no shows" or students who are substituting prior to the contest. Some tournaments may require this information in written form at registration.

For UIL prose and poetry contests, the contest director or some designated official will draw for the category to be read in the preliminary round. Every contestant in prose will perform from the same category for preliminary rounds. Every contestant in poetry will perform from the same category, although this might be different from the category selected in prose. In both events, contestants in the finals will read from the remaining category. Mark your manuscripts as "A" or "B" so you don't get confused at the tournament and accidentally read the wrong selection in the announced category.

At the district, regional and state meets, a contest official will check for documentation in any category where it's required, either in a general assembly room or in the room where each preliminary section will be judged.

This is the time when you will give the contest director your documentation forms you have printed from the UIL oral interpretation webpage; along with any required documents (see contest rules). UIL contest manuals allow contest directors to check both categories prior to the preliminary round, or even days before the meet. Recently, more contest are requesting documentation be organized, copied and scanned and then emailed or dropped into a digital folder for contest officials to review. Consider in advance how you will need to adapt when you are not able to simply “show them the book.” Some also choose to verify in advance that students have not violated other category requirements (i.e., not reading the same author in both categories), taking care of a situation which might occur if a student advances to the final round and contest officials later discover that he has not met basic requirements of the contest. By that time, a student could have advanced to finals due to the ineligible status of another contestant. No student should be allowed to read without proper documentation. In invitational meets, the hosting director determines what procedures will be followed.

After the preliminary rounds, the students advancing to the finals will be announced or posted. At all official UIL meets, this occurs after ballot verification. Ballot verification is a time for coaches to check to see that no errors in tabulation of ranks have occurred, but it is not a time to question any decision of the judges. If UIL contest officials do not announce a verification time, coaches should inquire and insist that an official ballot verification be held. A student and/or coach not present for ballot verification forfeits the opportunity to verify tabulation. No questions may be raised after ballot verification, so don't let this opportunity slip by you. It is critical that you attend.

## Tournament Guidelines

Speech tournaments can be exciting, even exhilarating experiences. You have the chance to test your own skills, learn from others, and meet people you might otherwise never know. But they are also situations in which uncertainty, nervousness, tension, fatigue, and competitiveness can ruin the day. Becoming familiar with tournament procedures and etiquette can reduce the uncertainty. Being well-prepared reduces the risk of nervousness and tension, and a little experience helps a lot. Using common sense prior to and during the tournament can reduce fatigue. And courtesy, graciousness, and sportsmanship can create an atmosphere where healthy competition can be fun for everyone involved.

The following guidelines should help you make the most of your tournament experiences. They obviously do not include all the issues that should be considered. Each school is urged to develop a complete code of conduct and tournament rules for speech competitors.

### At the Contest Site

- Know your school and student code number. This will be in registration information or posted on the wall in a general assembly area. Most tourneys use a coding system to prevent judges from having knowledge of a contestant's name or school, in order to prevent bias.
- Locate the room of your section before the round begins.
- Be at the room for your event at least 10 to 15 minutes before the scheduled time to start.
- Even though UIL qualifying tournaments (such as region, state) follow a conflict pattern which does not allow you to cross-enter, many invitational meets do allow this. To cross-enter means you enter more than one event per time slot. If you are cross-entered at an invitational tournament, you need to write your name and code on the board in both competition rooms. Put an “XE” to the left of your name so judges will know that you will

be competing in the room (even though you need to report to the other contest room to compete first)

- Stay in contact with your coach and squad. Changes in schedules or room assignments occur frequently.
- After you have been eliminated from the competition, watch other rounds as often as possible. You can also watch rounds in events you are not entered in. It's a great chance to learn, especially watching finals rounds.
- Be aware of what's going on around you, and don't be noisy in contests areas. It is important to be courteous in the area where squads gather, too.
- Do not leave the contest site without the permission of your coach.
- Keep up with your own material and whatever else you brought. Do not leave valuables, including your contest selections, unattended.
- Put your name, school and address, and phone number in your performance folder.
- Follow the rules of the host site. Clean up after yourself.

### In the Prep Room

- This is the assembly room where the Contest Director will draw which category you and the other contestants will read for the preliminary round.
- Be certain that your documentation fulfills the requirements stated in the rules.
- In advance, organize your documentation and label it by category.
- Highlight the key elements of your documentation to make it quick and easy for the Contest Director to check.
- For documentation retrieved from online, be certain that the URL address is clearly downloaded and appears printed on the page(s).
- For each category, have the official [UIL Documentation Form](#) to give to the Contest Director for documentation check.

### In the Contest Room

- Give each judge (there should always be an odd number 1, 3, 5) a copy of your [UIL Documentation Form](#).
- Never enter or leave a room when a contestant is performing.
- Listen courteously to other performers and stay for the entire round.
- When it's your time to perform, show confidence as you approach the front of the room. You start making an impression when you leave your chair. Before rising, be sure your folder is right side up!
- Know where the timekeeper and judges are seated before you begin. Ask for clarification of time signals before beginning; the responsibility of keeping time ultimately resides with you!
- Make sure the use of your manuscript, including turning pages, does not distract from your performance.
- The performance folder should contain only the selection you are performing that round. Remove all other paper from it.
- Make sure that you have the attention of all the judges before you start, since you don't want anyone to miss your opening sentences. You can do this by patiently waiting until they finish their previous ballot and then making direct eye contact with each judge. No need to ask: "Are the judges ready?"
- If you make a mistake during performance, and sometime you will, don't let it destroy you. Judges and audiences want you to do well, and they will remember a successful recovery more than a mistake. Do not stop to apologize, since that only draws attention to the error.
- Work with your coach on ways to control nervousness and stage fright, and techniques that can help you relax in a contest situation.

### The Competitor's Edge

Be the audience you want to have every round. A spectator who gives support and engages in the storytelling grows in empathy, grows others in confidence, and receives support from their peers.

*Magda Mirelez, Bay City HS*

#### At the awards assembly and afterwards

- It's fine to be surprised and pleased, but don't get carried away with your excitement. Be a gracious winner.
- It's okay to be disappointed, but it's not okay to let it show. Applaud for everyone.
- Remember that a judge's comments on the ballot are not a personal attack. It is an evaluation by one judge or set of judges on that one performance only. Learn from the ballot what you can. Read it again at a later time, when you are less emotionally involved.
- Berating the qualifications of a judge will not make you a better performer. Never talk about a judge at the tournament site. You never know when they might be within hearing distance. Also, you just might have them judging you at the next tournament!
- Be responsible for getting all of your belongings back to the bus or other vehicle as quickly as possible.
- Be sensitive to others' feelings. Congratulate those who won awards, encourage those who didn't, and help make return travel time relaxing.

### The Competitor's Edge

Not only should you win with grace, but you should lose with grace. One tournament you may win the entire tourney and the next, you may not advance to out rounds. Learn from every ballot.

*Phyllis Tucker, retired, Guyer HS*

## Ethics and Sportsmanship

Honest, ethical behavior is essential in speech competition, just as it is in our everyday lives. You have the responsibility to know the contest rules, to be certain your documentation is accurate, to make sure your selections meet all the requirements of the category guidelines and to insure that you are eligible to compete under the rules of UIL and state law.

You have obligations to your coach and squad members. Take care of your own material, and never disturb things that do not belong to you. Be punctual. Be sincere in your efforts to do your best. Remember that you are representing your school and community and always be courteous. Practicing good sportsmanship will make your experience at tournaments more pleasant for you and everyone else.

## A Philosophy of Competition

*“Winning isn't everything. Striving to is . . . .”*

This motto is an honorable one, for it reveals the true essence of competition. At the end of a tournament season, the real issue isn't: “Who won first place at the State Tournament?” but rather: “Which competitors achieved their very best with performances they can be proud of long after the applause has died and the lights are down

on the awards ceremony?”

Consider, for a moment, why *you* want to compete. Are you here to explore literature? If that’s the case, then you do this event because it gives you that special opportunity to exchange *your* ideas on what something means through *your interpretation* and performance of that piece of literature. This approach to competition enables you to learn more about literature and to learn new skills in how to present that material. This is precisely why categories are provided. They encourage the performer to find selections outside those authors and areas which we were first introduced to through our literature books at school. These texts are good beginning points, but let’s face it, almost every other potential competitor has access to these same sources! These books may help you to determine authors you like, styles of poetry or prose that appeal to you, and even subject areas that you might wish to research further. Definitely, a root of competition is knowledge. This year’s new categories challenge you as a performer to bring your own world into the selection process. You have a wonderful opportunity to not only bring literature to life, but make your performance truly unique and special to your own journey.

### **The Competitor’s Edge**

Be the storyteller! Become a performer! Transition to a competitor! And of course, share your love of the story...and have FUN!

*Karen Gossett, retired, Guyer HS*

What about another reason for competition? Are you here to see who you can beat? When winning is the only reason you compete in this event, then your personal alarms should be sounding. You see, far beyond winning, perhaps a more lasting goal of competition is that of seeking excellence.

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The idea of seeking excellence rather than winning may seem only like a semantic difference. But if a student seeks to attain a personal best, then the goals are limitless as opposed to the goal of being better than someone else. Certainly, competition provides a vital motivation for excellence and a regular measuring stick for performance, but excellence must be a goal, and winning the bonus. Excellence may lead a student to winning a trophy, but the goal of excellence will take a student much farther. (from The Minnesota State High School League Instructional Guide)

### **The Competitor’s Edge**

Set a goal of learning, not yearning. See competition as a way to learn to improve yourself, not to yearn for medals and trophies.

*M’Liss Hindman, Tyler Junior College*

We challenge you to pursue excellence!

Avoid rushing to your coach's file to secure a performance piece that has already been cut by another squad member in year's past (with complimentary introduction!) True learning is in the "process" of preparation and performance. Don't cheat yourself out of growth by skipping steps within the process. The truly successful champions are those who have spent countless hours on their own in the library, reading great literature to find that piece that perfectly fits them, who scour through literary criticism to learn all they can about the writer, and to discover subtle details they may have overlooked during their own analysis. The champion is that one who reads beyond the high school literature book because they realize that there is wonderful literature out there waiting to be read, begging to be brought alive and shared through performance.

Do you want to be a champion? Then seek and observe those who are - perhaps they wear a UIL medal around their neck - perhaps they don't. Still, the true champions are those who have seized this activity and have grown as individuals through preparation and performance. The rewards of competition are immeasurable and medals and trophies are the very least of these. Speech competitors grow into special individuals not simply because they possess talent, but because they possess the desire, determination, and discipline to cultivate that talent to its fullest.

Take the challenge to pursue excellence, to attain your very best in an intriguing, entertaining literary event and you will be a winner!

### **The Competitor's Edge**

One of the most valuable things you gain from competition is networking. Instead of just hanging out with the people from your own school, make friends with your fellow competitors. This can create lifelong friendships and business contacts.

*Kathy Owens, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor*

### **The Competitor's Edge**

When creating art, the goal is not to win. The goal is to take us on a journey where we all can escape into the story!

*Robert Shepard, Plano Senior HS*



## How to Run A Meet - Instructions for Contest Directors

**These directions expand upon, but do not replace, the information in the UIL *Constitution and Contest Rules*. The contest director should read Sections 1000, 1003 and 1006 of the Constitution, the rules in this handbook, then read these guidelines for additional details. See also the Academic Quick Reference Chart, found on the UIL website.**

**Contest directors may choose to ask that documentation be sent prior to the meet. This allows for a quicker and more efficient documentation check process on contest day. If the district committee or region is inclined to request such, the contest director should have a system in place for requesting documentation prior to the meet and communicate this with the schools involved.**

### CONDUCTING THE CONTEST

- (1) *Selecting the Category*. The director in charge of the contest will determine the category by a random draw and, once the category is drawn, shall use that category for all selections in that round. The contestants shall be bound by this one category; i.e., in any one contest they will all present selections belonging to one category. The other category will be used if finals are necessary. Contestants who fail to read material from within the selected category shall be disqualified.
- (2) *Rooms*. In conducting this contest, one room will be needed for each preliminary section, as the sections should be run simultaneously.
- (3) *Audiences*. Students should be offered the educational opportunity to experience the variety of literature and performances available through UIL participation. Therefore, contestants should listen to each other during the contest. Additionally, coaches of the contestants and anyone else interested in listening to the performers are allowed to be in the contest room. No coaching shall be permitted during the contest.
- (4) *Timekeeper and Signal Standards*. A timekeeper should be provided for each contest to notify the contestants of the amount of time remaining from their total allotted time. The timekeeper should sit where they can be seen by contestants and should demonstrate before each contestant begins reading the type of time signals to be used. See Individual Speech Contests, General Instructions (b) (4) for timekeeper and signal standards. The responsibility for keeping within the seven-minute time limit rests with the contestant.

### DUTIES OF THE CONTEST DIRECTOR

- (1) *Sections*. If more than eight contestants are entered, preliminary and final rounds shall be held. See 1003 (b) (1) of the C&CR.
- (2) *Speaker Order*. The contest director shall assign or conduct a drawing for speaker order among the contestants.
- (3) *Interruptions*. The contest director, or the monitor, should prevent any interruption of a speaker during a contest. Cheering is prohibited.
- (4) *Recording*. Schools and/or individuals are prohibited from recording (audio and/or video) speech contests. The UIL reserves the right to record for educational purposes.
- (5) *Questions*. Questions shall be made to the contest director before the decision of the judges is rendered. The decisions of the meet officials in these matters are final.
- (6) *Judging*. Judging shall be by an odd number of judges or by one judge. At minimum, judges should be high school graduates with experience in oral interpretation. A copy of the judging instructions and category descriptors provided by the League office will be given to each judge. Contest directors are responsible for explaining these instructions and categories to the judges. Judges should be instructed not to discuss their decisions with other individuals or judges while judging a given contest. See Individual Speech Contests, General Instructions (b) (2). Coaches may request copies of judging instructions from the League office.
- (7) *Ranking Contestants*. See Individual Speech Contests, General Instructions (b) (3).
- (8) *Unofficial Results*. Until students and/or coaches have had a chance to look at the rankings and the individual evaluation sheets during the announced verification period, results should be announced as unofficial.

# Before the contest

## REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (REGION)

The League office appoints a committee of speech and debate coaches to advise and assist the regional contest director before, during and after the meet. A list will be sent from the State office in late fall. Include these committee members in conducting a planning meeting for regional competition. Their knowledge and insight will help ensure a smooth contest day.

## ROOMS

- Contest assembly room where the category to be performed is drawn and documentation check may occur
- A separate room for each section in the preliminary round
- Tabulation room (may be shared with other speech events) Contest directors should inform coaches if the tabulation room will be “closed” or “open.”

## MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

The contest director provides the following:

- Stopwatch and time cards for each section, timing instructions from the contest rules
- Copy of current Constitution and Contest Rules, *UIL Prose and Poetry Interpretation Handbook*. (downloaded from the UIL website)
- Arrange to use SpeechWire tournament management online system which is customized for UIL contests. You can also download TalkTab from the speech tournament page of the UIL website. Do this well in advance to be certain TalkTab will run properly on your computer.

## CONTEST PACKET

Check current information on the contents of the Contest Packet as the League is moving to digital documents and electronic ballots through specified tournament software.

The League office provides the following:

- Individual evaluation sheets
- Master Ballots/instructions to judges
- Timekeeping Record Sheet
- Judges’ Ranking Sheet for a panel of judges
- Instructions to contest directors for documentations check
- (REGION) “No-Show” forms
- Districts and Regions are encouraged to use the official tournament system, Speechwire, to access electronic ballots.

## PERSONNEL

- Sufficient number of competent and objective judges (1, 3, or 5 per section)  
At minimum, judges should be high school graduates.
- Chairperson/Timekeeper (1 per section; judges should not serve as timekeepers)
- Tabulation room staff (2-3)

## SUBSTITUTION (DISTRICT)

Before the contest begins, students may be substituted for entries on the official district meet online entry form if the substitutes present the contest director with substitute eligibility forms or letters from the superintendent or designated administrator certifying their eligibility. At the conclusion of the meet, submit the letters to the district director. Make sure changes are entered into the online program.

## ALTERNATES (REGION)

If a student who has qualified for the regional meet is unable to attend, district officials should notify in writing the alternate (listed on the district results form) who should then be permitted to compete. Only the designated alternate from that district is allowed to fill the empty slot.

## SCHEDULING

If space permits, run the prose and poetry contests at the same time, as contestants are not allowed to enter both. Two and one-half hours has been allotted for the preliminary round of this contest. It is critical to stay on schedule since some students may need to go to other events. A verification period is required after the preliminary round and after the final round before the official results are announced.

**STUDENTS  
ARE PROHIBITED  
from using the same  
literature more than  
one year in UIL State  
Meet poetry contest.**

**INVENTORY ALL  
materials well in  
advance to make  
sure you have what  
you need. If neces-  
sary, photocopy any  
of the UIL forms you  
may require.**

**COACHES OF  
contestants entered  
may be used to  
help administer the  
contest but should  
not judge their own  
students.**

FOR MORE information on substitution, see C&CR, Section 903 and 904.

SpeechWire will section for you according to UIL procedures.

**SECTIONING REQUIREMENTS**

Section 1003(b)(1) of the C&CR specifies how many sections are required based on the number of contestants entered. This sectioning is mandatory. The chart from the C&CR is reproduced below:

No. Entries	Preliminaries	Participants Advancing to Final Round
1- 8	None*	Final Round
9-16	2 Sections	1st, 2nd, 3rd from each section
15-24	3 Sections	1st, 2nd from each section
20-32	4 Sections	1st, 2nd from each section
32-39	8 Sections	1st from each section

\* If desired, a preliminary round may be held.

Contestants should be entered on the district online entry form according to strength. Contest directors should section by distributing first, second and third place district entries as equally as possible, avoiding when possible, placing contestants from the same school in the same section. At the regional level, first, second and third place district winners should be distributed as equally as possible throughout the sections.

**DISTRICT SECTIONING (DISTRICT)**

Assign contestants to sections for the preliminary round in accordance to the C&CR. For example, an event with 24 contestants may be arranged into three or four prelim sections. Avoid, when possible, placing contestants from the same school in the same section. Distribute first, second and third seed entries as equally as possible throughout the sections.

Under no circumstances are different sections of the same event to be run at different times.

**REGIONAL SECTIONING (REGION)**

Sectioning is conducted the same way at the regional level as it is at district, but it is critical to distribute first, second and third place district winners as equally as possible throughout the sections. For example, avoid placing all the first places from districts in the same section which would most likely result in a strong section. The following rubric illustrates how the first, second and third places from eight districts are sectioned accordingly.

Example One: Three Preliminary Sections (not speaking order)

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
D - P	D - P	D - P
1 - 1	1 - 2	1 - 3
2 - 3	2 - 1	2 - 2
3 - 2	3 - 3	3 - 1
4 - 1	4 - 2	4 - 3
5 - 3	5 - 1	5 - 2
6 - 2	6 - 3	6 - 1
7 - 1	7 - 2	7 - 3
8 - 3	8 - 1	8 - 2

Example Two: Four Preliminary Sections (not speaking order)

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
D - P	D - P	D - P	D - P
1 - 1	1 - 2	1 - 3	2 - 1
2 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 1	3 - 2
3 - 3	4 - 1	4 - 2	4 - 3
5 - 1	5 - 2	5 - 3	6 - 1
6 - 2	6 - 3	7 - 1	7 - 2
7 - 3	8 - 1	8 - 2	8 - 3

“D” DENOTES

“district”

“P” DENOTES “place”

**SPEAKING ORDER**

Competitors may request to be placed first or second in the round in order to compete in a nonconflicting event, but students may not request to be placed in the last half of the round. The contest director may randomly determine

speaking order, or contestants may draw for speaking order.

(DISTRICT) If the contest director determines speaking order, each school should receive a variety of speaking positions. For example, if a school enters three students, ideally the three students from that school should receive an early, middle, and late speaking position. If the contestants do not draw to determine speaking order for finals, the contest director should assign speaking order so that a student has a different position for finals than he or she had in prelims (e.g., speaker #1 in prelims and #4 in finals). Speakers prefer drawing for speaking order.

(REGION) If speaking order is determined by the contest director, each district should receive a variety of speaking positions. Ideally the three contestants from a district should receive an early, middle and late speaking position. The following chart (based on example 1, previous page) illustrates giving the three places from a district a variety of speaking positions.

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
D - P	D - P	D - P
1. 1 - 1	1. 6 - 3	1. 4 - 3
2. 2 - 3	2. 7 - 2	2. 5 - 2
3. 3 - 2	3. 8 - 1	3. 6 - 1
4. 4 - 1	4. 1 - 2	4. 7 - 3
5. 5 - 3	5. 2 - 1	5. 8 - 2
6. 6 - 2	6. 3 - 3	6. 1 - 3
7. 7 - 1	7. 4 - 2	7. 2 - 2
8. 8 - 3	8. 5 - 1	8. 3 - 1

If the contestants do not draw to determine speaking order for finals, the contest director should assign speaking order so that a student has a different position for finals than he or she had in prelims (e.g. speaker #1 in prelims and #4 in finals).

### JUDGES

Inform each judge of the time and place of the contest and provide a copy of the individual evaluation sheet, instructions for judging and poetry category descriptions. One effective way to utilize judges is to permit prelim judges in one event to serve as judges for the final round in another event. For example, prelim judges in sections of prose interpretation can then serve as a panel of judges for the final round of poetry interpretation. Poetry prelim round judges will then serve as a panel of judges for the final round in prose. Panels should always be an odd number (3, 5, etc.). You may use a single judge in each section of the prelim rounds at district, but the UIL recommends using a panel of three judges when possible, especially at regionals. The UIL strongly encourages the use of a panel of judges in finals. An individual should not judge the preliminary and the final round of a given event.

A tournament is only as good as its judges. Therefore, judges should be selected on the basis of capability and impartiality. They may be recruited from forensic programs of nearby colleges and universities, or from current school coaches, faculties or communities. At minimum, they should be high school graduates with experience judging oral interpretation performances. Districts and regions should ensure they have completed training in UIL rules and contest procedures. Additional training in implicit bias (free online course at NFHSLearn.com) and multicultural competence (NSDA website: [speechanddebate.org](http://speechanddebate.org)) are also critically important.

Hold a judges meeting prior to beginning the contest to explain the categories and performer requirements. Instruct judges not to discuss their decisions with other individuals or judges while judging a given contest or prior to turning in completed ballots.

### TIMEKEEPERS

Because time limits are critical to this contest (contestants who go over seven minutes are disqualified), it is crucial that a timekeeping training session be held prior to beginning the contest. See timekeeping instructions later in this manual under “During the Contest.”

## During the contest

### ROLL CALL

Call roll to see that contestants are present.

(DISTRICT) Call for the substitute listed on the school’s entry form if a contestant is not present.

(REGION) Call for the alternate on the online advance qualifiers list if a contestant is not present. Only certified alternates

**AT REGION,  
speaking order  
should vary for  
each district. The  
contest director may  
randomly determine  
or speakers may  
draw.**

**REGIONS SHOULD  
vary these patterns  
as they section  
additional speech  
contests at the meet  
so patterns are not  
identical for all  
speaking contests.**

**The UIL provides a  
database of poten-  
tial speech judges  
on its website.**

from that district may fill the empty slot.

Make sure any alternate seated has correct documentation requirements for the event.

**CATEGORY DRAW**

Contestants must prepare a selection from each of the categories described in *The Prose and Poetry Interpretation Handbook* and must be prepared to read a selection from each category. The contest director should conduct a drawing prior to the beginning of the round to determine which category will be read by all contestants in the round. For example, if category B is drawn, all contestants will read from that category. Once a category is drawn for the round it must be used for that round. For the final round the remaining category will be used. A separate draw may be held for both the prose and poetry contests. The contest director may check documentation for all rounds before the first round begins, so that a student does not advance to the final round and is unable to read due to insufficient documentation. If documentation is checked for both categories before prelims and either one is insufficient, the student should not be allowed to read. Remember, documentation may also be checked in advance of the meet.

**CATEGORY REQUIREMENTS/RULE REMINDERS**

The contest director should read aloud to the contestants the specific requirements of the category drawn. Remind the contestants that the time limit, including the introduction, is seven minutes. There is no grace period nor minimum time. The responsibility for keeping within the seven minutes rests with the contestant, not the timekeeper. The penalty for exceeding the seven minute time limit is disqualification.

**POETRY CATEGORIES**

**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, but not self-authored. (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.

**Category A: Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things**

The goal of this category is to recognize joy in even the simplest of things. The overall tone of the performance should be joyful.

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, but it may not be self-authored. The majority of the performance must be *published* poetry. The performance should evoke *an appreciation of finding joy*.

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.

**Documentation Requirements**

1. If performing a single literary work, it shall be published printed poetry.

**STUDENTS SHALL not be allowed to compete without sufficient documentation.**

2. If performing a program, all selections shall be published, printed poetry with the exception that one poem may be unpublished, but not self-authored.
  3. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Poetry A Documentation online form.
  4. The contestant shall provide proof the selection(s) are published. Examples of acceptable proof of published include:
    - The original published source
    - A photocopy of the copyright of the original source
    - Online printout of Library of Congress cataloging information
    - If a poem is drawn from a literary collection (anthology), the contestant shall supply the original source or a photocopy of the table of contents that designates the title of the book and proof the poem is included in that book
    - A printout from an online source proving the poem is included in the published collection. Printouts of online documentation shall include the URL of the website downloaded in the header or footer
    - If a poetry selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is poetry
- Examples of unacceptable forms of formal documentation include:
- Social media
  - Copying and pasting into a word processing document

### **Bibliographic Information**

Students are urged but not required to take to the contest site the original published source of the selection.

### **Category B Restrictions**

Material chosen for use in Category B of Poetry Interpretation shall meet the following restrictions: (A) A minimum of two selections of poetry with a maximum of six selections of poetry shall be used in this program. (B) All literature 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 shall not 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.

### **Category B: Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow**

The goal of this category is to explore developments that have enhanced our world and to celebrate the positive change over time that has led to a better future. For this reason, students should consider using poetry that spans different time periods.

In this category, the contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two poetry selections and no more than six poems that shines a light on how our world has evolved for the better, empowering us to move toward a better tomorrow. The program may, *but is not limited to*, examine progress in medicine, mental health, women's suffrage, technology, family relations, science, education, societal roles.

**Students may use poems from one or more poets.** Co-authored and anonymous works are permissible but self-authored pieces shall not be used unless published in hardcopy. 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.

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 poetry to the**

Consult the contest memo included in the contest packet for expanded clarification of categories and documentation.

UIL PROVIDES a documentation template online for both categories. Students are required to use it at contest.



**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.

#### **Documentation Requirements**

In order to meet category restrictions, all poems may be published, printed material, online material or transcribed material. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Poetry B Documentation online form. No proof of publication for Category B is required. If a poetry selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is poetry.

#### **Bibliographic Information**

Students are urged but not required to take to the contest site the original published source of the selection.

### **PROSE CATEGORIES**

#### **Category A Restrictions**

Material chosen for use in Category A of Prose Interpretation shall meet the following 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, but not self-authored. (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.

#### **Category A: Recognizing Joy: Focusing on the Little Things**

The goal of this category is to recognize joy in even the simplest of things. The overall tone of the performance should be joyful.

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 but may not be self-authored. The majority of the performance must be *published* prose. The performance should evoke *an appreciation of finding joy*.

For Category A, the performance may be fiction or non-fiction. 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.

#### **Documentation Requirements**

1. If performing a single literary work, it shall be published printed prose.
2. If performing a program, all selections shall be published, printed prose, with the exception that one prose selection may be unpublished, but not be self-authored..
3. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Prose A Documentation online form.
4. The contestant shall provide proof the selection(s) are published prose. Examples of acceptable proof of publication include:
  - the original published source
  - a photocopy of the copyright of the original source
  - online printout of Library of Congress cataloguing information
  - If a prose selection is drawn from a literary collection (anthology), the contestant shall supply the original source or a photocopy of the table of contents that designates the title of the book and proof the prose selec-



tion is included in that book

- A printout from an online source proving the selection is included in the published collection. Printouts of online documentation shall include the URL of the website downloaded in the header or footer
- If a prose selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is prose

Examples of unacceptable forms of formal documentation include:

- Social media
- Copying and pasting into a word processing document

### **Bibliographic Information**

Students are urged but not required to take to the contest site the original published source of the selection.

### **Category B Restrictions**

Material chosen for use in Category B of Prose Interpretation shall meet the following restrictions: (A) A minimum of two prose selections with a maximum of four prose selections shall be used in this program. (B) All selections may be published, printed material, internet material or transcribed material from literary sources 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) Song lyrics shall not be used as selections or transitions in this performance. (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.

### **Category B: Inspiring Change: Striving for a Better Tomorrow**

The goal of this category is to explore developments that have enhanced our world and to celebrate the positive change over time that has led to a better future. For this reason, students should consider using prose that spans different time periods.

In this category, the contestant shall create a program containing no fewer than two prose selections and no more than four prose selections that shines a light on how our world has evolved for the better, empowering us to move toward a better tomorrow. The program may, *but is not limited to*, examine progress in medicine, mental health, women's suffrage, technology, family relations, science, education, societal roles.

**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 but self-authored pieces shall not be used unless published in hard copy. 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.

### **Documentation Requirements**

All selections may be published, printed material, online material or transcribed material that is prose. The contestant shall prepare and **provide for the contest director and each judge** a hard copy of the UIL Prose B Documentation online form. No proof of publication for Category B is required. If a prose selection is drawn from a book containing mixed genre, the contestant shall provide proof the selection is prose.

### **TIMEKEEPING**

Time must be kept for this contest. Judges in the round should not also keep time. The timekeeper should sit in front of the judges and where they can be seen by contestants and should demonstrate to contestants the type of time signals to be used. There is no grace period in poetry interpretation. The responsibility of keeping within the given time limit rests with the contestant, not the timekeeper. The penalty for exceeding the seven-minute time limit is disqualification from the round, with the only exception being in the final round of the State Meet. All timekeepers should be trained in advance of the contest according to instructions in the contest rules, which are provided below:

SpeechWire is the tournament management online system. The TalkTab computer program for tabulating multiple judge ranks may also be downloaded from the speech page of the UIL website. District and region contest directors should use it to avoid incorrect placement. If using the tournament management software currently selected by the League, it should be programmed to calculate rankings according to the UIL procedures.

*Timekeeper and Signal Standards.*

- (A) A timekeeper should be provided for each contest to notify the contestant of the amount of time remaining from the total allotted time. The timekeeper should sit in front of the judges and where they can be seen by contestants and should demonstrate before each contestant begins the type of time signals to be used. The time cards are a much preferred method of signal.
- (B) A timekeeper should use timecards to indicate to the speaker the remaining time. If timecards are available, when the speaker begins to talk, the card marked “7” should be held so that the speaker can see it. When the speaker has talked for one minute, the card marked “6”, should be held so the speaker can see it, which indicates six minutes remaining, etc. When the speaker has talked for six minutes the timekeeper should raise the card marked “1” above his/her head. When only 30 seconds remain, the timekeeper should raise the “1/2” card (preferably a yellow card) above the head. At the end of the full seven minutes, the timekeeper should hold the “stop” card (preferably a red card) above the head, or otherwise indicate that the total allotted time has been consumed. An interpretative contestant who is still speaking as the “stop” card is raised is deemed to have gone over seven minutes. Prose and poetry contestants may not go over seven minutes without disqualification. The timing should begin with the first word spoken and should stop on last spoken word, not the closing of the binder. 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 competitor.

AUDIENCES

Contestants should be offered the educational opportunity to experience the variety of literature and performances available through UIL participation. Therefore, it is permissible for contestants to listen to each other. Additionally, coaches of the contestants, and anyone else interested in listening to the performers, are allowed to be in the contest room. Before the round begins, request that all cell phones be turned off.

**After the contest**

CHECKING BALLOTS

If using paper ballots check to see that the ranks on the judge’s ballot and the individual evaluation sheets are the same. Check to see that each judge gave one and only one first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, etc. Check to see that each judge signed all ballots, including master ballots. Do not dismiss your judges until completed.

SPEECH RANKINGS

TABULATING RESULTS

There are no ties in speech events. In the case of panel judging it is critical that the UIL system of majority or better ranks be utilized. (A Judges’ Ranking Sheet for a panel of judges is included in the appendix.) The following criteria, in the following order, shall be used to determine all ranks:

Remember: In any case where there is a tie all contestants who are tied shall be awarded a place before going on to another contestant or place.

1. Any contestant who receives a majority of firsts shall be awarded first place.
2. In the event that no contestant receives a majority of firsts, the contestant with the lowest sum of total ranks shall be awarded first place.
3. If, at this point, two or more contestants tie with the same low sum of total ranks, the tie shall be broken by the use of judges’ preference. Judges preference is a method of tabulation and does not infer that judges confer to reach a preference. See further explanation below.
4. Should a tie occur at this point between three or more contestants which cannot be broken by judges’ preference, the ranks of only the tied contestants shall be converted to decimal equivalents on the following scale:

Rank of first	=	1.00
Rank of second	=	.50
Rank of third	=	.33
Rank of fourth	=	.25

Rank of fifth	=	.20
Rank of sixth	=	.17
Rank of seventh	=	.14
Rank of eighth	=	.13

The contestant with the highest sum total of the decimal value of ranks shall be awarded first place.

- If after converting to decimal values two contestants remain tied with equal sums of decimal values, this tie shall be broken by judges' preference.
- 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.
- Should a tie among three or more contestants occur which cannot be broken by these methods, it shall be broken by a blind draw, except for State finals.

The order of this criterion shall be used to determine all ranks. When determining second place, a majority of second place ranks or better is the first criterion. When determining third place, a majority of third place ranks or better is the first criterion, etc.

Second place must be determined next. If a tie existed for first place, the person tied with the first place winner is automatically given second place. If no tie existed, a contestant (not already awarded a place) ranked second or better by a majority of the judges shall be awarded second place. If, however, no contestant receives a majority of seconds or better or if two unranked contestants receive a majority of seconds or better, (i.e., ranks of 1 and 2, or 2 and 2), then the contestant with the lowest sum of total ranks shall be awarded second.

In the following example, both unranked contestants have a majority of seconds or better, so contestant #2, whose sum of total ranks is lower, is ranked second. Contestant #1 is then awarded third before any other contestant or place is considered, and the next place to be awarded is fourth.

Contestant	Judge A	Judge B	Judge C	Total	Rank
One	3	2	2	7	3rd
Two	2	1	3	6	2nd
Three	1	5	1	N/A	1st

In the next example, first place was awarded to a contestant with a majority of firsts, and no contestant had a majority of seconds or better. Contestants 1 and 2 have the same sum of total ranks, so the tie for second must be determined by judges' preference.

Contestant 1 is ranked higher (or receives higher preference) than contestant 2 by two of the three judges (A & C), and is awarded second place. Contestant 2 shall be awarded third place before any other contestant or place is considered. Any tie between only two contestants can be broken by judges' preference.

Many three way ties, where three contestants have the same sum of total ranks, can also be broken by determining judges' preference, as in the following example:

Contestant	Judge A	Judge B	Judge C	Total	Preference	Rank
One	1	4	4	9	- -	3rd
Two	4	3	2	9	+ +	1st
Three	5	1	3	9	+ -	2nd
Four	3	5	5	13		5th
Five	2	2	6	10		4th
Six	6	6	1	13		6th

No speaker has a majority of firsts, and three speakers are tied with a rank sum of 9.

- Compare speaker #1 to speaker #2, and two of three judges (B & C) ranked #2 higher. A (+) beside speaker #2 in the preference column, and a (-) beside number #1 indicate the judges' preference.
- Now compare speaker #1 to the other contestant involved in the tie, speaker #3. Two judges (B & C) ranked #3 higher than #1, indicated by a (+) in the preference column for speaker #3, and a (-) in the preference column for #1.
- Now compare speaker #2 to speaker #3, and note that two of the three judges (A & C) ranked speaker #2

**ATTENTION:**  
In any case where there is a tie all contestants who are tied shall be awarded a place before going on to another contestant or place.

**ONLINE NOTE:**  
If this is your final speech event to certify ranks, be sure to calculate speech team points.

higher, as indicated by a (+) in the preference column for speaker #2, and a (-) for speaker #3. The two (+)'s for speaker #2 in the judges' preference column indicate that speaker #2 was preferred over both other contestants, so this speaker is awarded first.

4. Speaker #3 was ranked higher than speaker #1 by two of the three judges, so contestant #3 is awarded second.
5. Contestant #1 is then awarded third.

Please note that although speaker #5 has a majority of second place ranks, this contestant is not awarded second place, because all three contestants tied for first must be ranked before considering other contestants or places.

The next place to be determined is fourth place, and speaker #5 is the only unranked contestant with a majority of fourths or better (two second place ranks). Therefore, contestant #5 is awarded fourth place.

The next place to be determined is fifth, and speaker #4 is the only unranked contestant with a majority of fifths or better. Therefore, contestant #4 is awarded fifth place, and speaker #6 is awarded sixth.

Should a tie occur at this point between three or more contestants which cannot be broken by judges' preference, the ranks of only those contestants involved in the tie shall be converted to their decimal equivalent.

In the following example, contestant #2 has a majority of firsts and is awarded first place. No unranked contestant has a majority of seconds or better, and contestants #1, #3, and #5 have the same total low sum of ranks.

Contestant	Judge			Total	Preference
	A	B	C		
One	1	6	4	11	+ -
Two	2	1	1	N/A	
Three	3	2	6	11	- +
Four	6	3	5	14	
Five	4	5	2	11	- +
Six	5	4	3	12	

Judges' preference cannot be determined because no contestant is given preference over both others. Only the ranks of the tied contestants shall be converted to their decimal equivalent as follows:

Contestant #1	Contestant #3	Contestant #5
1st = 1.00	3rd = .33	4th = .25
6th = .17	2nd = .50	5th = .20
4th = <u>.25</u>	6th = <u>.17</u>	2nd = <u>.50</u>
1.42	1.00	.95

- Contestant #1 has the highest sum total of decimal value, and is awarded second place.
- Contestant #3 has the next highest total and is awarded third place, and contestant #5 is awarded fourth place.
- Both contestants remaining unranked have a majority of fifths or better. Therefore, contestant #6, with the lower sum of total ranks, is awarded fifth place and contestant #4 is awarded sixth.

Contestant	Judge			Total	Value	Preference	Decimal	Rank
	A	B	C					
One	1	6	4	11	+ -	1.42	2nd	
Two	2	1	1	N/A			1st	
Three	3	2	6	11	- +	1.00	3rd	
Four	6	3	5	14			6th	
Five	4	5	2	11	- +	.95	4th	
Six	5	4	3	12			5th	

- If after conversion to decimal values, two contestants remained tied, this tie shall be broken by judges' preference, as in the following example of three contestants tied for first:

Contestant	Judge			Total	Pref	Decimal	Rank
	A	B	C				
One	1	5	2	8		1.70	1st
Two	3	1	4	8	+	1.58	2nd
Three	4	3	8	8	-	1.58	3rd

**INDIVIDUAL POINTS**

- 1st place.....15
- 2nd place.....12
- 3rd place.....10
- 4th place .....8
- 5th place.....6
- 6th place .....4

**SPEECH TEAM POINTS**

- 1st place.....10
- 2nd place.....5

**SPEECH**

**TEAM POINTS**

Speechwire will calculate and award speech team points.

In this example, judges' preferences cannot be determined among the three tied contestants. When ranks are converted to decimal value, contestant #1 has the highest total and is therefore awarded first place. Now judges' preferences shall be used to break the simple two-way tie between contestants #2 and #3. Two of the three judges (A&B) ranked contestant #2 higher than #3, and contestant #2 is awarded second place. Contestant #3 shall be awarded third place before any other contestant is considered.

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.

If at this point, a tie still exists among three or more contestants whose decimal value of ranks is equal, the tie must be broken by a blind draw, except at state finals.

All three contestants shall be awarded ranks by a blind draw before any other contestant or place is considered. Points shall be divided equally in accordance to Section 902 of the C&CR.

#### DISQUALIFICATIONS

Only the contest director is empowered to disqualify contestants for time or rule violations. Judges should rank all contestants in a round and then bring the issue to the contest director's attention after the round. Judges may not disqualify contestants. For disqualifications in the final round, the contestant should receive no place (rank). He or she also does not contribute points toward the speech team award or overall sweepstakes.

#### BALLOT VERIFICATION

This period is mandatory. Before the official results are announced in both preliminary and final rounds, the contestants and/or coaches should be given the unofficial results and allowed to view individual evaluation sheets for no more than 15 minutes. The judges' ranking sheet used to tabulate ranks from a panel of judges should be available during the verification period. Contestants and/or coaches may, at this time, bring up any questions concerning tabulation to the attention of the contest director. The contest director will then correct any errors before the official results are announced. Students may keep their evaluation sheets after official results are announced. Questions about judges' decisions are not allowed.

#### OFFICIAL RESULTS

When the ballot verification period is over, announce or post the official results. These results are final. At this time, individual evaluation sheets may be released to coaches/students.

#### AWARDS

Present medals and points to the individual winners according to the guidelines outlined in the UIL *Constitution and Contest Rules*. (places 1-6)

#### REPORT TO DIRECTOR

(DISTRICT) Individual contest directors shall give the contest roster/results form and sorting envelopes to the district director immediately after the contest. The district meet director is responsible for entering results into the UIL Online System, Speechwire. District results must be submitted into the online system and made available for public review by 5 p.m. on the Monday following the second district week.

(REGION) Individual contest directors shall give the contest roster/results form and sorting envelopes to the regional director immediately after the contest. The regional meet director is responsible for entering results into the UIL Online System, Speechwire, and making them available for public review by 5 p.m. of the Monday following the regional meet. Regional directors shall also provide to the UIL State Office a list of contestant absentees if alternates were not present to take these individuals' places.

Alert state-qualifying coaches to access the State Tournament website immediately for important deadlines and procedural information.

#### MAILING RESULTS

Mailing full meet results to participating schools is optional since results will be posted online.

#### EXTRA CONTEST MATERIALS

Destroy or distribute any extra contest materials.



# Appendix

A Special Word to Coaches

Prose Judge Procedures

Poetry Judge Procedures

Hints for New Coaches

Virtual Meets - Best Practices

Special Needs Students

TILF Scholarship Information

**MORE INFO AVAILABLE ONLINE!**

**Visit the UIL website at:**

[http://www.uiltexas.org/speech/oral interp](http://www.uiltexas.org/speech/oralinterp)

Do's and Don'ts of Submitting Documentation Video

<https://youtu.be/kWRsYEIgRus>

Analysis of Text and Introductions in Prose/Poetry Video

<https://youtu.be/Be3MReOuhGA>

# A Special Word to Coaches

Once upon a time...

I was a theatre teacher and coached acting and directed UIL one act plays, and then, behold, I was a speech teacher and coached prose and poetry interpretation...and each was separate, but equal. But then there was a union between acting and oral interpretation and a beautiful thing happened...literature came to life, the characters were real, and performances were exciting...

...and everyone lived happily every after!

As one of the “old” ones who received a degree in Speech and Drama, I have always believed the genres could and should benefit each other and that is the way I approach guiding my readers.

Many teachers, regardless of the subject they teach, coach oral interpretation and create that visual world as only theatre of the imagination can, painting pictures for the captivated audience. No costumes or props are used, just the creative connection between the interpreter, the literature, and the listener. Taking the best practices from both speech and theatre techniques and applying them to any performance benefits the message, as well as the messenger.

This world of oral interpretation is a thrilling place to be, as it is a form of communication and communication is the foundation for any future generation.

My children grew up traveling with me, sitting in the audience, listening to the stories I told that others have told before me. Their own mother rarely read to them at home since she was too busy reading and listening to others. Eventually, they too became storytellers despite this lack of maternal influence. The education they received in oral communication, whether in the theatre or in competitive forensics, proved to be invaluable as they started their careers – in sports!

So my challenge to any and all entering the world of oral interpretation, whether you are a veteran or novice coach, and whether your students are also involved in the One-Act Play, marching band, journalism, choir, even the captain of the drill team or football team, or, if you are lucky enough to find that student who devotes their entire being to forensics, make sure they understand that this activity not only enhances their speaking skills but also develops a strong work ethic, encourages independence, teaches insight, promotes self-discipline and self-awareness, and most importantly, prepares them for life.

And each year brings new stories to be shared, new characters to be created, and new goals to be accomplished...in speech AND in theatre. I hope you make this year your “happily ever after.”

Karen Gossett, Speech Teacher  
Coach of State Speech Team Champions  
Guyer High School (retired)  
Denton, Texas



## UIL STATE MEET - PROCEDURES FOR JUDGES – PROSE

The lead judge should announce, “Turn off all cell phones.” Be firm, please!

1. Access your ballot by logging in to <https://live.Speechwire.com>. Your ballot will be pushed to the email you used to set up your account. Make sure the sound on your laptop is turned down so notifications you receive will not disturb the performances.
2. Rank all contestants (1,2,3,4,5,6); double-check your decision.
3. **You may submit your ranks electronically and then go back and type in comments on each ballot.** The contestants appreciate this written feedback! Make your comments as specific as possible, balancing praise for strong points of the performance and helpful suggestions for future improvements. **Please avoid statements that reflect personal bias against selections and topics, as well as comments that could be harmful to a contestant’s morale such as their attire.**

**ORAL CRITIQUES:** The contestants will remain in the contest room for your oral critique. Offer general suggestions, praise, and insight that might be helpful to all contestants. Please avoid specific critiques of individual performers. (DO NOT DISCUSS YOUR RANKINGS.) A total of 15 minutes for the critique period, including all three judges, has been scheduled.

**QUESTIONS:** Any questions concerning your decisions should be referred to the contest director. Coaches, parents and contestants are not to confer with you at any time concerning your judgment.

**DISQUALIFICATION:** Questions that might result in disqualification should be referred to the contest director or tournament director. Your testimony on these matters may be requested. If a contestant goes overtime, please go ahead and rank the contestant. **The Contest Director is empowered to disqualify but judges are not.**

### About the Contest

Each student has prepared two prose selections for the UIL prose categories. The contest director has drawn at random for the category that all students will use in this round and documentation has been checked pre-tournament. Total presentation time, including introduction and transitions, must not exceed seven minutes. There is no grace period. An introduction is required, although its content, form, and delivery style is left to the student. The introduction (or transition, where applicable) must include the name of the writer and the selection. Performers must utilize a manuscript in the performance.

### Evaluating the Performances

Please use the judging criteria below to guide your evaluation of each student’s performance. Your written comments and suggestions for improvement will be most helpful if they offer specific reasons for the judgments you make. Statements which suggest a personal bias toward an author or selection generally are counterproductive. Please keep in mind that the best critiques *teach* and *encourage* the student.

### Ranking the Contestants

At the end of the round, you will rank the performers by number - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. - according to your judgment about the quality of the performances. **Do not tie any contestants.** If you are on a panel of judges, please do not confer during the round or before you have completed your ballot. **It is not the responsibility of the judge to disqualify a student.** Any irregularity should be referred to the contest director who may request information from the judge(s) in making a decision.

*The best critiques teach and encourage the student. Please offer specific areas of improvement and positive attributes of the performance.*

### Introduction

- Did the performer prepare you to listen to the selection?
- Did the content meet the category requirements, and did delivery style of the introduction add to the overall effectiveness of the performance?

### Selection/Performance

- Was the material appropriate for the performer and the goal of the category?
- Did the performer successfully recreate the narrator, the characters and the scene?
- Did the performer demonstrate an awareness of the narrator’s purpose and audience?
- Did the performer make appropriate use of physical and vocal skills?
- Was the use of manuscript, internal pacing, pauses, and closure appropriate?

### Evaluation

- What did you like about the performance and why?
- What areas of improvement are needed?
- Did the performer adhere to the prescribed category?

THANK YOU FOR JUDGING!

## UIL STATE MEET - PROCEDURES FOR JUDGES – POETRY

**The lead judge should announce, “Turn off all cell phones.” Be firm, please!**

1. Access your ballot by logging in to <https://live.Speechwire.com>. Your ballot will be pushed to the email you used to set up your account. Make sure the sound on your laptop is turned down so notifications you receive will not disturb the performances.
2. Rank all contestants (1,2,3,4,5,6); double-check your decision.
3. **You may submit your ranks electronically and then go back and type in comments on each ballot.** The contestants appreciate this written feedback! Make your comments as specific as possible, balancing praise for strong points of the performance and helpful suggestions for future improvements. **Please avoid statements that reflect personal bias against selections and topics, as well as comments that could be harmful to a contestant’s morale such as their attire.**

**ORAL CRITIQUES:** The contestants will remain in the contest room for your oral critique. Offer general suggestions, praise, and insight that might be helpful to all contestants. Please avoid specific critiques of individual performers. (DO NOT DISCUSS YOUR RANKINGS.) A total of 15 minutes for the critique period, including all three judges, has been scheduled.

**QUESTIONS:** Any questions concerning your decisions should be referred to the contest director. Coaches, parents and contestants are not to confer with you at any time concerning your judgment.

**DISQUALIFICATION:** Questions that might result in disqualification should be referred to the contest director or tournament director. Your testimony on these matters may be requested. If a contestant goes overtime, please go ahead and rank the contestant. **The Contest Director is empowered to disqualify but judges are not.**

### About the Contest

Each student has prepared two performances for the UIL poetry categories. The contest director has drawn at random for the category that all students will use in this round and documentation has been checked pre-tournament. Total presentation time, including introduction and transitions, must not exceed seven minutes. **There is no grace period.** An introduction is required, although its content, form, and delivery style is left to the student. The introduction must include the name of the writer and the selection. Performers must utilize a manuscript in the performance.

### Evaluating the Performances

Please use the judging criteria below to guide your evaluation of each student’s performance. Your written comments and suggestions for improvement will be most helpful if they offer specific reasons for the judgments you make. Statements which suggest a personal bias toward an author or selection generally are counterproductive. Please keep in mind that the best critiques **teach** and **encourage** the student.

### Ranking the Contestants

At the end of the round, you will rank the performers by number - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. - according to your judgment about the quality of the performances. **Do not tie any contestants.** If you are on a panel of judges, please do not confer during the round or before you have completed your ballot. **It is not the responsibility of the judge to disqualify a student.** Any irregularity should be referred to the contest director who may request information from the judge(s) in making a decision.

***The best critiques teach and encourage the student. Please offer specific areas of improvement and positive attributes of the performance.***

### Introduction

- Did the performer prepare you to listen to the selection?
- Did the content, form, and delivery style of the introduction add to the overall effectiveness of the performance?

### Selection/Performance

- Was the material appropriate for the performer?
- Did the performer successfully recreate the persona and the scene?
- Did the performer demonstrate an awareness of the persona’s purpose and audience?
- Did the performer make appropriate use of physical and vocal skills?
- Was the use of manuscript, internal pacing, pauses, and sense of closure appropriate?

### Evaluation

- What did you like about the performance and why?
- What areas of improvement are needed?
- Did the performer adhere to the prescribed category?

THANK YOU FOR JUDGING!

# Hints For New Coaches

UIL tournaments are exciting for coaches as you see the hard work of your students come to fruition. However, without careful planning, first-year coaches may find tournaments almost overwhelming. It is important to be prepared for the additional responsibilities that competition requires of you so that you can create a healthy balance between forensics and your regular classroom duties. Being organized and knowing what to expect ahead of time are keys to meeting this challenge successfully. Here are a few hints and unwritten rules you might find helpful to know as you begin the tournament circuit.

## ***Before the Tournament:***

1. Upon receiving the tournament invitation, make sure there are no major conflicts with the school calendar that might adversely affect your students or their ability to compete (i.e., stock show, football or basketball game, prom). If there are, understand that all students might not wish to participate at that time.
2. Post the tournament date and events early and set your own deadline for signing up that will allow you to submit the entry form in time to meet the tournament's deadline.
3. Arrange for transportation (bus request, etc.) well in advance, following your district's guidelines.
4. If the tournament necessitates an overnight stay, make room reservations immediately. *(This is especially important if your students qualify for UIL State. Reserve rooms well in advance of the meet. For UIL CX Debate State, reserve in early fall and then cancel reservation promptly if your team does not qualify. We advise making reservations early for Congress and Speech State, as well.)*
5. Submit purchase orders for check requests as soon as you know how many competitors you will be entering. Most tournaments charge by the event entries rather than by the student. Know your school district policies and meet important deadlines for the central office/business department.
6. Arrange for the appropriate number of judges required, either by serving as the judge yourself, taking someone with you or paying the judging fees. Usually coaches are asked to fill one of the judging slots, so be prepared to do so. It's the best way to learn and you become a stronger coach. *(If you qualify debaters to State, you are required to provide a judge with strong experience that can adequately judge state-level rounds.) Avoid "buying out" of your judge obligation at invitational meets so you can serve as the judge.*
7. Hand out tournament attendance permission slips to be signed and returned by a specific deadline. This keeps parents aware of dates and holds students accountable for tournament attendance.
8. Pay attention to the "add/drop" deadline. Any drops made after that date usually result in an additional "drop fee". Most tournaments will not allow any additions after that date. Most also use software to register, such as Speechwire.
9. During the week before the tournament, make sure each competitor has performed for you. This not only allows you to make sure the student is prepared, but also focuses the student on the task at hand.
10. Make sure you have communicated to your squad what kind of attire is required for competition. Appropriate dress is almost as important as the performance.
11. Prepare your students for performing in front of an audience since UIL rules allow for observers.

## ***Getting on the Bus***

1. Set a departure time that allows you extra time for any unforeseen difficulties in getting to the contest and hold to it. Waiting for a late student only penalizes everyone else and sets a bad precedence for the future. If necessary, assign one or two team captains to contact all entrants 30 minutes before departure to make sure everyone arrives

in time for roll call.

2. Have specific travel directions for the bus driver.
3. Carry to the tournament:
  - Copy of the entry form and tournament schedule
  - All necessary checks or purchase orders
  - Medical releases and permission slips or copies of these since you might want to leave the originals in a file in your classroom
  - School and parent emergency telephone numbers
  - Legal pad, notebook, pens, pencils, stopwatches
  - Copies of your interpers' documentation
  - Magazine, book, papers to grade, laptop or tablet, etc. as there will be lots of "downtime" waiting for results
  - An "emergency" kit containing band-aids, Neosporin (or equivalent), head and stomach pain relievers, emergency toiletries, incidentals such as an extra necktie, hose, safety pins and a small sewing kit.
  - Permission slip from parents allowing you to dispense the above medications.
4. Just before leaving, have everyone show you their interp folders and documentation. SEE THEM. This can avoid surprises when you get to the tournament site.

### ***Arriving at the Tournament Site***

1. Make sure the students know where the common area is, usually the school cafeteria, where squads gather to wait for contests to begin and results to be posted. Arrange to meet them there once you get checked in at registration. Do not bring your entire team to the registration table.
2. Make sure you know where the bus will be during the tournament. The driver needs to be available for any emergency. Tournaments often provide hospitality for coaches, judges and bus drivers.
3. At the registration table, inform the tournament directors of any changes you haven't already made, including drops and replacements. There is usually no charge for replacements, but there will be an additional fee if you drop an entry. You might wish to consider instituting the policy that students are responsible for their own drop fee. Avoid dropping entries unless it is an extreme emergency. Even then, try to get another student to cover the event. Dropping contestants impacts sectioning and pairings your host has worked many hours to complete. Time to redo can make the tourney schedule late.
4. Make sure to check in your judges, if necessary. Make arrangements for paying the extra judging fees should any of your judges not show.
5. While at the registration table, check all entries to make sure everyone is on the appropriate list. Mistakes do happen, and it's better to catch them at the registration desk rather than when an event is about to begin.
6. Most tournaments have a registration packet containing school maps, sectioning, event times, and other pertinent information for you and your students. This is often referred to as a "poop book." Hosts may provide a version downloadable to your smart phone and tablet.

### ***During the Tournament***

1. Immediately upon finishing registration, meet with your students in the common area. Inform them of their school code (usually a number or letter, which can be found in the tournament packet) and each contestant's sectioning room number and time of event.
2. Arrange specific times when you will meet with the students in the common area throughout the day. Also, let the students know where they can find you should they need to do so.

3. While you don't have to accompany the students to every round, do make sure they know where they are going and when to arrive, especially if they advance to the final rounds.
4. Check in at the judges' table frequently to see if you are needed. The registration packet usually will have your judging assignments, but not always. If electronic ballots are used, your ballot will be pushed to your computer. Even if you have not been assigned, stand-by judges are always appreciated. Failing to pick up your assigned ballot may result in your student(s) being disqualified so fulfilling your judging obligation is imperative.
5. Make sure you know where you can pick up contestants' ballots after a round or how to access them digitally. UIL tournaments have a verification period after the preliminary rounds; know when and where it is and be there. Otherwise, tabulation errors cannot be corrected.
6. The official verification period at UIL tournaments are a must for you to be present. This is a time to check rankings on your students' ballots and final tabulation. Take your *Constitution & Contest Rules* and UIL contest handbook to verification so you are certain of the ranking procedure. Verification is not a time to dispute a judge's decision.

You should stay for the entire verification period. Results remain unofficial until it is over and those results have publicly been declared official. While verification is still underway changes can still be made if tabulation is found to be incorrect.

7. Each tournament has its own tabulation room policy – some are *open tab rooms*, where you can go in at any time to view ballots, judging assignments, etc; others are *closed tab rooms*, where you cannot. (Most UIL district tab rooms are *open*, while most Regional and all State tab rooms are *closed*.) Should you experience a problem during the course of the tournament that requires entry to the tab room, find a tournament official.
8. Throughout the tournament, keep an eye on your students. Unruly behavior is, by far, the largest complaint at contests. Remind your students that decorum and politeness go a long way toward success.
9. Should you be called upon to judge, do so fairly and objectively. Bitter school rivalries have no place on a ballot. Be prompt to rounds so the tournament can stay on schedule. Fill your ballots with well-written, constructive comments; always include areas needed for improvement.
10. Should you wish to observe your students in competition, it is wise to ask them if they are comfortable with you doing so. Some students are intimidated by having their coach in the room with them; this will hinder their performance. Respect their wishes. Be careful not to “coach” during the round. UIL has a “no scouting” rule, so study it carefully to avoid any ethical violations.
11. Even if your students do not make finals, have them observe the round and learn from the “best” that day so they will see what the standards are for winning.
12. Two-day tournament sites may have an area assigned for overnight storage. Know where it is and make sure your students get their materials there prior to leaving for the night. Return early enough the next day to remove them in a timely manner. For ultimate security of materials, take them with you!

### ***At the end of the Tournament***

Once the competitive rounds are over, most tournaments have an awards assembly. If any of your students made the finals, you and your students should definitely attend. If there is no formal awards assembly scheduled (some tournaments give out the medals or trophies as soon as results are known) or if none of your students advanced, you may leave. But before you do so, do the following:

1. Collect all ballots from the tab room or hospitality room unless the tournament incorporated electronic ballots.
2. Make sure all debate tubs, extemp files, and/or computers are loaded on the bus. Don't just take the students' word this has been done; check yourself.

3. Make sure your portion of the commons area is free of all trash and cleaned to the best of your ability. (The tournament directors will thank you, remember you, and invite you back next year!)
4. Have the students change into traveling clothes, if necessary, and require that they double check they have all their possessions with them on the bus. Having a polo shirt or t-shirt with school logo works well for traveling. It makes it easy to keep up with your students if you plan stops along the way.
5. Thank the tournament directors.
6. On the way home, use cell phones to have the students call or text their parents, giving them an approximate time of arrival. Most tournament returns are very late at night, and parents will be very appreciative if they aren't left waiting in the school parking lots for hours. Besides, you don't want to have to wait long periods of time for students to be picked up once you get back to your home school.
7. Use social media to announce success of the squad, according to school district policy.
8. Tell your students you are proud of them. . .because you are!

### ***The Following Week***

1. Publicize the squad's success.
  - Write up the results for school announcements.
  - Develop contacts with the school and community newspapers. Present them with an article you wrote yourself. Attach digital photos. Doing this will make it easy for them to print and the details will be correct.
  - Make use of local radio, television, and cable stations if possible.
  - Post successes on your squad webpage and Facebook page, according to your school district social media policies.
2. Analyze the Judges' ballots.
  - Screen electronic ballots before sharing with students. Some judges may have written comments damaging to a student's self-esteem.
  - Review the ballots with your students. Afterwards, assign specific items for each student to be working on before the next competition. This ensures every tournament is a learning experience.
  - File ballots in the student's performance folder so they can be reviewed at different stages of the tournament season. Always use ballots as learning tools.



# Virtual Meets

With the advent of the unprecedented global pandemic, it was speech and debate coaches that problem-solved by designing a way for speech tournaments to continue on in spite of the health crisis. With schools, cities, even countries under lockdown, the virtual world became the method of competing. Speech and debate contests are designed and at their optimum value as in-person competition with judges face-to-face with competitors, and rooms filled with audience members. But, the virtual world through computers and the Internet provided a way to continue the critical world of forensics for students during the crisis.

Although in-person competition is definitely preferred, our experiences in the virtual world convince us that some things we experienced were actually good and should be retained once we do find normalcy again. Some schools will continue to sponsor virtual tournaments, providing Texas students with limited travel opportunities the ability to compete against schools hundreds of miles on the other side of the state from them or even out of state, and diversity of competition is a good thing. Judges don't have to travel to a central site so recruiting a variety of judges from a wide array of geographical areas enhances the pool and provides different perspectives and feedback to competitors.

In addition, tournament hosts have new and innovative methods of administering tournaments efficiently. Electronic tournament management systems were designed out of necessity to provide electronic ballots. These make sense to continue even as tournaments revert to in-person because of their expediency, efficiency and the reduction in cost, in addition to their contribution to promoting ecology. So, in an effort to continue to embrace the virtual tournament world, in this chapter, you will find information on best practices when your students compete virtually.



# BEST PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL PROSE AND POETRY INTERPRETATION

## **Preparation**

Prepare for online Prose and Poetry Interpretation before the start of actual competition rounds by participating in online practice rounds. You must practice with your technology before you enter a competitive tournament so that you will be prepared to understand when you are having issues and how to diagnose those problems before they interfere with your actual competition.

## **Technology Set-Up**

Technical set-up is critical to consider in advance. Your computer should be fully charged or, preferably, plugged in. The battery is drained rapidly when using video conferencing software.

Laptop is the best option since most have a built-in microphone and web cam. Tilting the laptop screen can easily adjust the position of the webcam. Purchasing an ethernet cable to hardwire to the router is recommended to improve connectivity. This is far more stable than wi-fi.

A desktop with microphone and webcam can also work. Tablets and phones are the least preferred options for a few reasons: positioning the camera can be tricky; a cell phone hotspot is not likely to have a fast enough connection to provide stable videoconferencing; it requires a few more steps when using Video Meeting apps; moving these devices creates a lot of movement on the screen.

If you do not have the latest and greatest technology, do not worry. Judges will not be judging you on your technical set-up but on the quality of your performance.

Competitors should enter the virtual contest early to test technology in advance. If using wi-fi, check the connection. Turn off unnecessary devices. Test the microphone. Try to minimize simultaneous connections to the router to improve video quality.

## **Location**

Try to secure a separate room away from noise and other people and one that has good lighting. If using a wireless connection is necessary, be as close as possible to the router. Inform others of the tournament schedule and required privacy to compete. Be aware of when to be online and show up early.

## **Cameras**

Adjust the web camera taking into consideration what can be seen in the “virtual box”, and adjust the side lighting so as not to be a dark shadow on the screen. Adjust the room. These adjustments might include: a visual background free from distractions, turning on a desk lamp for back lighting, turning off a ceiling fan to eliminate distraction, removing pets that might make noise and making sure what shows in the background is organized and uncluttered.

You want your camera to be at eye level. That may mean placing your laptop on boxes. Ideally, you want the camera to show you from your knees to slightly over your head. But if the space does not allow that, at least get mid-chest and up. Once you have begun your performance, do not adjust your camera.

Performers are encouraged to stand to perform, unless a disability or space issues prohibit standing. Avoid standing in front of a window or directly under a light fixture.

## **Audio**

Be certain you have silenced notifications for texts, emails, social media and silence your cell phone.

## **Technical Problems**

Technology issues should be reported immediately through a tournament help line or email. The specific “help” procedure should be communicated by tournament officials in advance of the meet.

To Improve Connectivity:

- Wired Internet Connection
  - Plug your computer into the router (the network device that provides Internet connection) with a network cable. The computer may need an adapter to make this possible.
- Move closer to the router.
  - If wired is not an option, the next best option is to place your computer in the same room as the router. The closer the device is to the router, the better the signal quality. The video/audio could freeze if the device is too far away.
- Reboot the router.
  - If the device has repeated connection issues, reboot the router to reset all connectivity.
- Minimize interference.
  - Remove any solid objects between the wi-fi antenna and the router. Avoid using appliances while online, if possible.
- Don't crowd the router.
  - Reduce other Internet usage while online. (Netflix, etc. should not be streaming in the other room)

## **Coach Notifications**

### **Online Procedures**

Familiarize yourself and your students with the tournament management software. Get any necessary accounts or registration set up ahead of time.

Be sure online registration includes your current cell phone number and an email address that is accurately entered. If you have more than one email address, make a

note of which one you have entered in the tournament management software. Cell or email is how each person will receive postings and ballots.

Carefully make sure student names registered on the team roster in the tournament management system match the student account name entered. Example: if you entered the student as “Johnny Smith”, they should not enter themselves as “Jonathan Smith.” Take the time to proof email addresses and phone numbers (if used) to confirm they were entered not only correctly but consistently.

Plan in advance how to keep in contact with your students. There are apps available that do not require sharing cell phone numbers, a practice some school districts prohibit. Discuss protocols with the team regarding pre-round meetings, check-in and during the tournament.

Know how to access the specific tournament online video conference being used.

Be available at all times that your students are competing. Make sure you are aware of your judging obligations. Have contact information for tournament personnel.

### **Reminders If Using *SpeechWire*\***

- Be sure you input your students’ email addresses into *SpeechWire*.
- Judges must set up accounts as well so they can receive their assigned e-Ballots.
- Retrieve your students’ ballots as a PDF and view the tabulation sheets in your team’s *SpeechWire* account.

\****SpeechWire*** is used at District, Region and State as the official UIL tournament management system.

## **Judge Notifications**

### **Preparation**

Judges should prepare to enter the world of online judging before the start of actual competition rounds. Access adjudication training presented digitally or via video.

### **Technology**

Technology set-up is important to consider. Become familiar with the tournament management system and platform. Review all instructions provided by the tournament host and ask questions well in advance of the competition.

### **Equipment**

Judges should use laptops or desktops when adjudicating rounds, not a tablet or a mobile device.

Keep your video on at all times but your microphone off while students are performing. Some judges wish to open one Chrome tab to watch the speaker and another to fill out the e-Ballot. Alternatively, you may wish to write notes on paper while observing the

round and then transcribing the notes to the e-Ballot at the end of the round. Others use 2 devices. Experiment in advance to discover what works best for you.

Note: *SpeechWire* allows you to submit your results and add the comments afterward submitting your ranks, which allows the tab staff to access your rankings to keep the tournament on schedule.

### **Procedure to Start the Round**

Verify the student's name or code and have the contestant reply "Here". This is a quick and easy way to test the audio for each student. In the comment box of the e-Ballot, type the title of the student's selection(s) so Tab officials can verify that what is performed in the round is what was submitted for documentation.

### **Environment and Disruptions**

Judges are encouraged to remember that participants come from diverse backgrounds and we celebrate that we have economic diversity in our community. A student should not be penalized for things beyond their control. This may include unanticipated interruptions, technical issues or streaming quality and the visual background students have available to them. A student who cannot afford expensive equipment should be judged the same as one who can.

### **Technology Problems**

Common tech issues, if a student needs help: (avoid interrupting a performance unless the issue is so bad you can't overlook it)

- Lagging audio – participant can turn off video briefly to improve bandwidth
- Noise in the audio – participant can mute themselves if they are not speaking
- Video quality – participant can readjust light or screen angle
- Disconnection – wait a reasonable amount of time for participant to reconnect  
The Contest Director should use discretion in determining the length of time that is reasonable.

### **Contact Info**

Each tournament will have a Help Desk system that will be clearly explained before the tournament begins. Be certain the tournament officials have your current cell phone number and that you know how to reach them, should problems arise.

**Be aware of Temporary Rule Waivers and Contest Procedures when this contest is administered virtually.**

# Academics - Request for Accommodation Process

## Submitting a Request

The University Interscholastic League will consider requests to accommodate a student with physical or mental impairments. The school should submit the Request for Accommodation form located at the link below with the appropriate signatures a minimum of two weeks before the contest in which the accommodation is sought. Requests submitted after that time, absent extenuating circumstances, will not be granted.

## Request For Accommodation Form

[http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/UIIL\\_Request\\_for\\_Accommodation-9-16-posting.pdf](http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/UIIL_Request_for_Accommodation-9-16-posting.pdf)

The request shall adhere to the accommodations provided by the student's Sec. 504 Committee and/or A.R.D. Committee. No student records are to be submitted to UIL. The only required submission is the signed request with rationale for the accommodation. The completed form should be submitted to the UIL office, Music, Athletics or Academics, that administers the game or contest in question.

## Approval Letter

A response letter from UIL granting or denying the requested accommodation will be provided to the school. A UIL letter approving the accommodation can be submitted at any level of the competition. It is the coach's or sponsor's responsibility to notify and provide a copy of the UIL approval letter to the meet director well in advance of the competition. If the student advances to the next higher meet, it is the responsibility of the student's school to notify the region and/or state meet director immediately.

Additional costs or equipment required for accommodations are the responsibility of the school district. It is the responsibility of the host school, contest director and contestant to follow any applicable UIL ethics code or other applicable UIL rule to ensure the honesty of the competitors and the integrity of the competition.

## Approval Process

Requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. The facts matter in each case. Just as an example, accommodations have been approved for visual impairments, dyslexia, motor skill impairments and special circumstances to take the test in a separate room. Such accommodations have included the use of an enlarged test copy, a magnifying glass, colored overlay, converting a test to Braille format or use of a computer and printer. UIL, however, will not alter a contest's judging criteria as an accommodation or make other accommodations that would fundamentally alter the game or contest.

## TILF Scholarship Opportunities

**From 1959 to 2024, TILF has awarded more than 22,000 scholarships valued at over \$39 million.** Amounts of scholarships range from \$500 for one year to \$24,000 over four years. Some scholarships have special requirements or restrictions such as requiring a student to select certain majors, attend specific colleges or universities, or compete in specific contests. Details of all scholarships and their requirements are listed at the TILF website.

**Applications for 2025 may be submitted in March through May of that year (specific deadlines can be found online at [www.tilfoundation.org](http://www.tilfoundation.org)).**

**All TILF applicants must meet the following requirements:**

- Must have competed at the UIL Academic State Meet, Congressional Debate State Meet, One-Act Play State Meet, or Theatrical Design State Meet **OR** must have advanced to the **octofinal round** (second day) of the Cross Examination Debate State Meet, **OR** must be a **state finalist** in the Barbara Jordan Historical Essay Competition, the Latino History Essay Competition, or the Young Filmmakers Festival **OR** must have been a member of one of the **top 10 teams** per competition group at the BEST, FIRST, or RECF-VEX state robotics contests
- Must plan to attend an accredited college or university in the state of Texas, enroll full-time in college, and maintain a 2.5 college GPA (some scholarships require a higher GPA)
- Must be graduating from high school during the current academic year

**Advancing to the state level in academic pilot contests that are not yet officially sanctioned by the UIL does not qualify a student to apply for TILF scholarships.**

Applicants who are graduating under the state of Texas three-year graduation schedule should inform TILF of that fact. Students who are entering the Texas Academy of Math and Science at the University of North Texas in Denton will apply the year they complete their high school requirements at the TAMS.

The awards committee typically meets in June and all applicants will be notified of their status by mid-July of the application year.

If you have any questions, please visit the TILF website at [www.tilfoundation.org](http://www.tilfoundation.org) or contact:

**Trudy Richards, Executive Director**  
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**512-382-0916**  
**[trichards@tilfoundation.org](mailto:trichards@tilfoundation.org)**