

Individual Events

- Category 1: Dramatic Interpretation
- Category 2: Oral Interpretation of Poetry
- Category 3: Religious Reading
- Category 4: Declamation
- Category 5: Humorous Interpretation
- Category 6: Oral Interpretation of Scripture

Group Events

- Category 7: Duet Acting
- Category 8: Acting
- Category 9: Readers Theatre
- Category 10: Choric Speaking

Speech General Rules:

1. All material should be in good taste and of high quality. Entries will not be restricted to sacred themes. However, entries which reflect anti-biblical themes, content, and/or word usage (including profanity or suggestive language)—or which contain sensualism, humanism, or worldliness (including offensive performance)—are not acceptable.
2. No student or group will perform the same selection in two consecutive years. In addition, the same selection is not to be used by multiple groups from the same school in the same year.
3. Singing of a song during a speech is to be limited to no more than one verse of the song or no more than 1.5 minutes of the speech. In addition, no instrument may be used to accompany the individual or group during the speech performance.
4. All selections are to be memorized (no scripts permitted).
5. Each student must submit two typewritten copies of his selection (including transitional material; see 6.d) to the judges prior to his performance.
6. The following rules apply to categories 1 - 6.
 - a. Body movement should be primarily, but not limited to, movement above the waist.
 - b. No hand props or costume pieces will be permitted.
 - c. All selections will be taken from published works.
 - d. In addition to General Rule #7, the contestant may reintroduce himself, the selection, and author as well as provide the audience with necessary background information in order to set the mood for the piece. He may also give transitional narrative for clarity within the piece. These additions combined are not to exceed 1 minute and are included in the time limit. Transitional material must be included in the script provided for the judges.
7. The judge will confirm the speaker and say, "You may begin." Timing and adjudication will begin immediately.
8. Students will be penalized for going over time or under time in any category of competition where time limits are established. When a student violates his time limit by more than 1 minute, the student will receive a ten (10) point in the overall score. However, if he is over time or under time by less than 1 minute, points or a fraction of a point will be deducted which may prevent an otherwise first-place winner from placing first, a second-place winner from placing second, or a third-place winner from placing third.
9. **Recording is absolutely prohibited** except for the recording of a single entry by representatives of the participant's school for personal use. The recording of all or portions of the performance of more than one entry in an event is prohibited. In any case, the head judge in a competition may prohibit recording. No recording made by anyone other than competition officials may be considered for adjudication purposes.

Rules by Category (Individual Competition)

Category 1: Dramatic Interpretation

Category 2: Oral Interpretation of Poetry

Category 3: Religious Reading

Category 4: Declamation

Category 5: Humorous Interpretation

Category 6: Oral Interpretation of Scripture

Category 1: Dramatic Interpretation

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation by an individual of a serious selection of narrative or dramatic literature.

1. Cuttings may incorporate multiple characters, but monologues are acceptable.
2. Religious readings are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 3: Religious Reading.
3. Elementary (grades 4-6) – 3 to 7 minutes

Category 2: Oral Interpretation of Poetry

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of poetry by an individual.

1. Selections from the Bible are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 6: Oral Interpretation of Scripture.
2. Selection must be a single work or a cutting of a longer work.
3. Elementary (grades 4-6) – 3 to 7 minutes

Category 3: Religious Reading

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of prose by an individual.

1. The selection should inspire or convict spiritually.
2. The presentation should include dialogue and be dramatic in nature.
3. Selections from the Bible are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 6: Oral Interpretation of Scripture.
4. Elementary (grades 4-6) – 3 to 7 minutes

Category 4: Declamation

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of persuasive or inspirational material of high literary value, originally prepared by and presented orally by another person or persons.

1. Selections must come from published speeches.
2. The delivery should not be acted out with characters. The delivery should be free from contrived accents. The delivery should be directed toward the audience and not toward an assumed off-stage audience.
3. Selections from the Bible are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 6: Oral Interpretation of Scripture.
4. Elementary (grades 4-6)– 3 to 7 minutes

Category 5: Humorous Interpretation

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of a humorous selection by an individual.

1. Cuttings are to be taken from published plays or prose.
2. Selections with multiple characters are preferred.
3. Elementary (grades 4-6) – 3 to 7 minutes

Category 6: Oral Interpretation of Scripture

Definition: A memorized oral interpretation by an individual of one long or two short passages from the Bible (King James Version only), with appropriate introduction and transition.

1. Performers are encouraged to select narrative (story) passages.
2. A passage with dialogue in which characters speak is recommended.
3. Students will be evaluated based on the effective use of distinct and separate characters.
4. Elementary (grades 4-6) – 3 to 7 minutes

Rules by Category (Group Competition)

Category 7: Duet Acting

Category 9: Readers Theatre

Category 8: Acting

Category 10: Choric Speaking

Category 7: Duet Acting

Definition: A stage performance in which two individuals each portray **one character** without the use of script, costumes, staging, lights, sound effects, or make-up.

1. Cuttings must be taken from published dramatic literature or from published prose that has been scripted for stage.
2. Duet acting will develop understandable scene(s) with clear character relationships, character movement, and character action and reaction. The scene(s) should grow through increased insight, intensifying of plot or mood, and thematic statement.
3. Actors may speak to silent or off-stage characters.
4. Actors may make use of small hand props and costume accessories (such as an umbrella, shawl, gloves, hat, glasses, etc.).
5. Prohibited elements in this category include full costuming, makeup, lighting, and furniture other than a table and chairs, stools, or boxes.
6. Elementary (Grades 3-6): 4 to 10 minutes

Category 8: Acting

Definition: A stage performance in which three to six individuals each portray **one character** without the use of script, costumes, staging, lights, sound effects, or makeup.

1. Cuttings must be taken from published dramatic literature, published plays by a reputable author, or from published prose that has been scripted for stage.
2. Acting will develop understandable scenes with clear character action and reaction. The scene(s) should grow through increased insight, intensification of plot or mood, and thematic statement.
3. Actors may speak to silent or off-stage characters.
4. Each actor must portray only one character.
5. Narration: A brief introduction or scene description may be given, but is not required, for each scene change. The narration must be done by one or more of the actors. The narration may be done by any of the actors and does not violate the requirement that each actor may portray only one character.
6. Full costuming is not permitted. Actors may make use of small hand props and costume accessories (such as an umbrella, shawl, gloves, hat, glasses, etc.). In a quality performance, small props may be used appropriately to enhance the performance and props are not used excessively so that they distract from the performance.
7. Participants must be able to perform their scene(s) in an acting space of approximately 18' x 10'.
8. Prohibited elements in this category include Readers Theatre performances, full costuming, makeup, lighting, and furniture other than a table and chairs, stools, or boxes.
9. Elementary (grades 3-6) – 4 to 10 minutes

Category 9: Readers Theatre

Definition: The oral presentation of dramatic, poetic, or prose material by a group focused on the audience, utilizing some or all of the following techniques: effective use of distinct and separate characters, out of scene, characterization, group speaking, and group movement. The presentation may include these types: cameo (face only movement), upper body, or whole body movement. Characters are not to interact with each other as they do in Acting. (Refer to Distinctions between Readers Theatre and Choric Speaking.)

1. Group size consists of three to six individuals.
2. Readers may make use of small hand props and costume accessories (such as an umbrella, shawl, gloves, hat, glasses, etc.). In a quality performance, small props may be used appropriately to enhance the performance and props are not used excessively to that they distract from the performance. No makeup, lighting, full costumes, or furniture other than a table, chairs, and stools. Platforms or prop boxes are permitted.
3. All members dressed in black (or any color) or in the same style shall not be considered to be wearing costumes.
4. The presentation will be judged on originality of arrangement and the skillful use of the techniques to move the audience with the chosen material. Memorization is required. It may not be directed.
5. Any form of literature, poetry or prose, adapted to the Readers Theatre form will be appropriate for this contest. All literature must meet acceptable guidelines.
6. Elementary (grades 3-6) – 4 to 10 minutes.

Category 10: Choric Speaking

Definition: An oral group presentation utilizing some or all of the following techniques: unison speaking, solo speaking, vocal effects, word color, dramatic climax, and group movement. Characters are not to interact with each other as they do in Acting. (Refer to Distinctions between Readers Theatre and Choric Speaking.)

1. Group size consists of seven to fifteen individuals.
2. The presentation must be memorized. It may not be directed.
3. All members dressed in the same color or style shall not be considered to be wearing costumes.
4. The presentation will be judged on originality of arrangement and the skillful use of the techniques to move the audience with the chosen material.
5. Scripts: Any form of literature, poetry, or prose adapted to Choric Speaking form will be appropriate for this contest. All literature and music used in the choric reading must be published material. More than one script may be combined along with music to design the Choric Reading; otherwise the scripts must meet guidelines listed in Speech General Rules #1.
6. Movement/Interaction:
 - a. Group movement may be used to enhance the presentation, but should be limited to simple choices such as changing positions between “scenes” or divisions in the presentation.
 - b. Movement, individual and group, should be more limited than movement in Readers Theatre.
 - c. Characters are not to interact with each other, as they do in Acting. All speaking and visual expression is to be directed toward the audience rather than toward other actors. There should be no intentional physical contact between characters.
7. Hand Props/Instruments: No hand props or costume pieces will be permitted. An instrument may not be played during the presentation and auditory props may not be used.
8. Risers may be used.
9. Music: Any form of singing or music used in the presentation should be used to complement the speech effects, and may not exceed 1.5 minutes of the entire presentation.
10. Use of Voice and Group vs. Individual Voices: Performers are to express different pitch levels, pace, pause effect, rate, intensity, and volume. Their speech should be expressed mainly in groups of voices, with **infrequent** solo lines. Large and small group voices must dominate. Excessive use of dialogue between characters without engagement of the chorus must not dominate the performance. Diction must be clearly understood, spoken with ease, and expressed with energy.
11. Elementary (grades 3-6) – 4 to 10 minutes

Distinctions between Readers Theater and Choric Speaking

1. Readers Theatre emphasizes the individual performers, whereas Choric Speaking emphasizes the group speaking with one collective “voice.”
2. Readers Theatre relies on each individual speaker’s unique characterizations and use of other individual acting techniques, while Choric Speaking relies on the group speaking as one body using varying combinations of unison and solo voices.
3. Readers Theatre is more closely related to characterization and acting, while Choric Speaking is basically a speaking choir with many voices.
4. The emphasis of Readers Theatre is the dramatized development of a text via visual elements and the spoken interaction of individual performers. The emphasis of Choric Speaking is the creative use of the voice (vocal variety, word color, etc.) in a choral manner to reinforce the meaning of the text. Choric Speaking is primarily an auditory presentation.