

classroom

All About Interps

Interpretive Events allow students to make a piece of literature come to life. But this is not theatre – there are no costumes, no props, and a maximum of two interpreters. What you will see is a variety of characters, emotions, voices and attitudes. Interps often leave tears in the eyes of the audience – either from hysterical laughter or searing drama. If you are creative and like to perform, interps are right up your alley. Today we’ll go over the 4 different types of interpretive events and some general rules about them.

OK, although the types of interps can change from year to year, there will be some form of interpretive event every year.

Let’s start with a short description of each event:

We’ll begin with Duo Interpretation

The NCFCA website (NCFCA.org-our national organization) states that,

*“A Duo Interpretation creatively explores and develops the intellectual, emotional, and artistic embodiment of a single piece of literature for dual performance.”\**

Recent Duo Selections: The Hiding Place, Pinocchio, Homer Price – The Doughnut Machine Chapter, The Cat in The Hat, My Fair Lady, The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, The Miracle Worker about Helen Keller,

Duo Interps are often done by siblings as it is easy to find time to practice together. But often friends from the same club decide to do partner up as well. As we get closer to the tournament season we hope to have the ability to let duo partners have an opportunity to practice here if needed.

The duo event is often hard for judges as very funny humorous duos can be competing with a very serious, tear jerker selection – it is hard to compare the two.

Participation in the piece should be balanced between the two speakers. Each speaker can portray several different characters. It is important for the audience to really be able to follow which character the student is portraying at any given time. Different body language, voices, and gestures can help differentiate the characters.

The duo partners must not touch each other or look directly at each other. This is very different than theatre and creates many funny images. On the NCFCA website right now is a picture of a girl pretending to be holding up some tiny thing with her hand. Her partner is standing next to her pretending he is hanging by her hand. This is what duo is all about. The best duo teams have several intricate moves where they create an item – a piece of furniture, a monster, a machine – working together, maybe intertwining, but not touching.

It is a fun category to work on and a definite crowd pleaser!

Next we’ll move to Humorous Interpretation

Once again we’ll go to the NCFCA website to read,

*“A Humorous Interpretation creatively explores and develops the intellectual, emotional, and artistic embodiment of a single piece of humorous literature for performance.”\**

This category, like the remaining two we’ll talk about are performed by just one student.

Recent Humorous Selections: Sketches from books by Dave Barry and Mark Lowry, Calvin & Hobbes selections, Dr. Seuss books, Peter Rabbit, Ramona the Pest, Jane Austen’s Emma, Cheaper by the Dozen, Winnie-the-Pooh and The Ransom of Red Chief

The key to this category is really finding a laugh-out-loud type piece. Like Duo, this event is very popular and by the time the out rounds come (those are the quarters, semis, and final rounds), these rooms are often packed with younger siblings, other competitors, students and parents.

While there is no requirement for the number of different characters a student portrays, they usually have a least 2 or 3 in their pieces.

But if you are a more serious sort, you might instead consider

Open Interpretation

*“An Open Interpretation creatively explores and develops the intellectual, emotional, and artistic embodiment of a single piece of literature for performance.”\**

Recent Open interpretation Selections: Where the Red Fern Grows, Blood of the Lambs, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, pieces about the Holocaust, and Johnny Tremain

The pieces that do well here tend to be quite dramatic, but that is not a requirement. Bloodcurdling screams, uncontrolled sobbing, and tragic deaths are frequent visitors in Open Interp pieces.

Thematic Interps offer a unique opportunity to stitch together several different pieces all centered around a theme. A black binder is a required prop.

Hmmm… where should we go for a definition of this category? That’s right – the NCFCA website.

*“A Thematic Interpretation creatively explores and develops the intellectual, emotional, and artistic embodiment of three or more selections of literature linked by a common theme through personal narrative analysis.”\**

This category has returned after a short hiatus. Creative use of the binder is important, as is neatly weaving the separate pieces together with compelling and clarifying narrative.

Now we will go over a few of the rules to give you a better idea how this category works.

These rules are found on the NCFCA website. It is important that you read the current season rules to make sure your speech is in compliance. Highlights include:

The speaker will select a single, non-original, published selection of literature to interpret from the genre of plays, prose, or poetry. A published selection of literature is a work of an author which is printed or available in e-book form and available to the public. Material must be prepared and used for the current competitive season only.

The selection of literature may not include audio recordings, media transcriptions from movies or TV, or internet material other than e-books. Only a single selection may be used from within a collection of works. Each book of the Bible is considered a separate source of literature.

Up to 150 added words may be used to introduce the selected piece of literature. There should be a clear distinction between the introductory words and the words of the selection. A speaker may not assign original dialogue to an author’s character.

No material may be quoted from literature outside of the single selection, except in the introduction.

The title and author of the selection of literature must be introduced, but is not included in the 150 word count. The selection identification should be near the beginning of the piece, but may follow a teaser from the selection. A one rank penalty is required for failure to identify the selection.

Directly quoted material (Bible verses, song lyrics, quotes, etc.) may be used in the introduction, but must be included in the 150 word count. If directly quoted material is used, the outside source(s) must be mentioned in the verbal delivery of the speech and cited parenthetically within the typewritten script. If directly quoted material is used, a Source Citation Page is required to be submitted with the script.

Speakers may cut the selection of literature to fit the time limit. Phrases from several sentences may be combined. Although single words taken from nearby sentences may be added for transition or character identification, single words from separate sentences may not be strung together to create new sentences.

It is not permissible to change the author’s words for any reason other than pronoun substitution, verb tense, and subject-verb agreement. It is permissible to repeat an author’s words or phrases when the author does not do so.

Lines may be taken from one or more characters and given to another character.

Please note that Thematic has its own set of rules.

So, how do you go about finding a selection?

On the SALT website you will find a Resource tab at the top. When you click on it you will see one of the options listed as SALT SHORTS. These are 1-page, 1-topic help sheets. There is one called “Choosing an Interp Piece”

It includes some questions to ask as well as some suggestions on where to go for ideas.

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\*http://www.ncfca.org/IEEventDescriptions