

DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

Overview

Dramatic Interpretation, or DI, interprets and presents a piece of literature using voice, body and facial expression. Usually the material is almost exclusively dialogue with almost no narration. The selections are commonly taken from plays, novels and short stories. Creating a good DI needs a scholar, an actor, an author, a director, a stage manager, and sometimes a singer or choreographer, but all these people need to be you!

Rules and Requirements

- The selection, partially or wholly, may not have been used by the contestant in competition in previous years in the same or in a different event
- The excerpt must be taken from a published printed source. The Internet is not an accepted source if you cannot purchase a published copy.
- You cannot add more than 150 words, which ONLY can be used as introductory, transitional, or for updating. The editing and/or delivery must not change the author's intent.
- The speech must be memorized.
- Your presentation cannot go over 10 minutes long (though some tournaments allow a 30 second grace period). There is no minimum time, but speeches that do well are usually not shorter than 5 or 6 minutes
- No props and/or costumes are allowed.

Selecting Material

- You need to see some plays and movies.
- Search for good ideas, powerful scenes from books, plays or stories.
- Ask teachers and parents for ideas.
- Look in library files and textbooks and at play critiques.
- Look for a selection that is suitable, understandable, and that has a reasonable number of characters.

Editing Material

Stay within the ten minutes including the introduction and transitions. Edit the selection by eliminating:

- An unnecessary character.
- Unnecessary narration, descriptions and dialogue.
- All "he said" and "she replied" from sentences.
- Individual and unimportant words from sentences.

Preparing the Final Presentation

- Write a short introduction, including the author, title, source, and any necessary background material. Write any transitions necessary to connect parts of the cutting. Keep in mind you cannot add scenes but you can rearrange scenes to make the presentation easier to understand.
- Memorize the script.
- You need to have a specific voice and mannerisms for each character.
- Develop vocal characterization. Decide on accents, vocal qualities, rate, volume, and pauses. Develop gestures that fit the characters and what they are saying. Develop the appropriate emotions for each character.

- Practice, recreating the meaning and emotion of the selection through the use of voice, gesture, body movement, and facial expression. The total effect should be to carry the listener away mentally to the time and place of the selection.