

# Original Prose and Poetry

## Overview

In Original Prose and Poetry, or OPP, you write and present a piece composed of original prose, poetry or a combination of prose and poetry. This event provides an opportunity for “creative” writers to present their work to an audience. The material may be humorous, dramatic, or a combination. The competition in this event is challenging because the material varies so widely. OPP combines the originality of oratory and the creativity of interpretation.

## Rules and Requirements

- Your piece must be your original work. You may not use the same subject in competition in the same event, or in Expository, Advocacy, or Oratory in the same year or in any other years
- Your manuscript must be prepared in advance. The manuscript must follow the MLA style guidelines for internal citations and must include a “works-cited” page, or shall include a disclaimer from the student indicating that the composition was accomplished without access to or use of any published source. Presentations which include impersonations, depictions or distinctive work or phrases based wholly or in part on the creative work of another, or upon the public personal of any professional performer, living or dead, must include appropriate acknowledgement in the submitted script (either within a “Works Cited” page or a separate “Personalities Cited” page). In addition, such words or phrases must be included in the total count of words quoted.
- You cannot add more than 150 quoted words.
- 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.

## Writing the Speech

- Decide on a topic.
  - Good taste is the only limit. Consider your rationale and purpose if you are going to focus on a controversial topic or use controversial language.
  - Choose an appropriate tone for the work: humor, satire, suspense, anger, fear; the list goes on.
  - Collaboration is a perfect vehicle to flesh out ideas for story lines, character development, etc.
- The presentation may be one long work, short story, play, essay, narrative poem, or several short works.
- Poetry may be rhymed, free, or blank verse.
- Develop the manuscript. Keep in mind the audience will hear but not see the sentences. Read aloud what is written to see if it flows well and that it meets the time requirements. If this is a story, remember it needs a beginning, rising action, climax or high point, and an end.
- As you polish the speech, have other people listen and suggest improvements. Revise and rewrite as necessary.

## Practice the Delivery

- Read the manuscript silently several times. Then read it aloud, repeatedly, always saying the lines with expression. If you have numerous characters, give each a separate voice and distinct mannerisms. This gives you a chance to become the actor you always wanted to be.
- When the speech is memorized, practice in front of a full-length mirror. Use gestures and facial expression, but don't over-rehearse. A good delivery should be polished, direct, clearly enunciated, easily heard, and visually interesting to watch.

