

DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION FAQ

What is Dramatic Interpretation (DI)?

A Dramatic Interpretation (DI) creatively explores and develops the intellectual, emotional, and artistic embodiment of a work of literature for performance.

The competitor will select a non-original (written by another person) piece of literature to interpret from the genre of plays, prose, or poetry. Dramatic Interpretation material is dramatic in nature. Media transcriptions from movies, TV, or tape recordings are not allowed.

What is the goal of Dramatic Interpretation?

The goal of Dramatic Interpretation, as with all of the interpretive events, is to develop a selection from a work of literature into a uniquely original performance that communicates both the oral and physical dimensions of the piece.

What is the time limit?

10 minute maximum; no minimum

Can I transcribe my interpretive script from a movie or radio program?

Media transcriptions from movies, TV, or tape recordings are not allowed.

Can I compete with a speech used in a previous season?

Material must be prepared and used for the current NCFCA season only. (Previous seasons' speeches and subject matter will be disqualified. A previous season's Duo Interpretation cannot become this season's Dramatic Interpretation.) Competitors may appeal in extenuating circumstances.

How do I introduce my piece?

The title and author of the selection must be introduced. The identification of the piece should be near its beginning but may follow a teaser or other background information. There is a penalty for neglecting to cite the title and author.

My material is too long. What do I do?

Competitors may cut a piece of literature to fit the time limit.

May I add my own introduction and transitions?

Up to 150 words may be added to the selection for introductory and transitional purposes as long as the additional words do not change the intent of the author.

Can I use the 150 word allowance for any other purpose?

No, the 150-word allowance is not to be used for other purposes. The intent of the 150 word allowance is for transitions and introductions. It is not to be used to add words to the piece: not to incorporate more entertaining rhetoric, not to add original work into the piece, and not to incorporate another author's work into an interpretation, except in the Open Interpretation category.

May I use props?

No props, costumes, audiovisuals will be allowed.

What is gratuitous vulgarity?

This refers to vulgar, obscene or profane language or gestures which are included for shock value. Gratuitous vulgarity is not appropriate.

Can I sing or dance in my interp?

Limited singing and dancing is permitted, but it must be purposeful and motivated by the literature.

How much is the interpreter allowed to move?

All action should generally take place center stage. Only feet are permitted to touch the floor at any time.

If the audience laughs, causing speech to go overtime, will I be penalized?

Audience participation or laughter that extends the time of a piece will not result in penalizing the speaker.

Do I have to memorize my piece?

Yes. Memorization is required. No scripts, notes, or prompting are allowed. Use of a script in a qualifying tournament requires a penalty of two ranks. Use of a script at the National Championship requires disqualification.

Can automatic script penalties be waived for a speaker with learning disabilities or difficulty with memorization?

The answer is that there can be no exceptions. Competitive forensics reveals strengths in young speakers who did not believe they were capable. Speakers are frequently unable to memorize until they "have to." When speech participants have to, they often try harder and achieve more than they thought they could. Finally, the purpose of this activity is not to win, but to grow in communication ability. The memorization requirement is included to encourage speakers to be the best communicators they can be.

My child has special needs and/or circumstances. Can he be considered an exception to a competition rule?

From a practical standpoint, an exception here would open the door for a host of exceptions. An unlimited number of participants could see themselves in need of exceptions and an infinite number of potential exceptions requested. It becomes highly complicated to communicate the variety of potential exceptions to the judges as well as competitors. The ultimate purpose for participating in competitive forensics is for to improve communication skills. Special students have shown much improvement in this environment.

Do I have to submit my script?

Each National Championship participant will submit a copy of each script upon check-in at the National Championship for any interpretative event in which he or she is eligible to compete. Many Regional Invitational Tournaments also require script submission. The Script Submission Form is available online with the other IE documents.

Can I compete with the same speech in two different categories?

Speakers may not use the same speech in two separate categories at the same tournament. However, the same speech can be moved to a different category at a different tournament. For example, a speaker may not enter the same speech into both Open Interpretation and Dramatic Interpretation at the same tournament. They may enter the same speech in OI in one tournament and in DI at a later tournament. If the speech qualifies to advance to a higher level of competition in both categories (Regionals or Nationals) the speaker will have to choose a category.