



Newsletter

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One-Act Play: 2016 Rules Changes

(1). Evaluation sheet revisions

Pulling feedback from the new format debuted in 2015-16, we have further tweaked these. The response mark of "D" for "developing" has been replaced with two new marks: "N" for "needs improvement," and "P" for "progressing." Rather than giving a response mark in the eight specific rubric areas, response marks have been consolidated to the four general clusters (direction, performance, ensemble, and technical).

(2). Repeat adjudicators

Individuals may now adjudicate at multiple levels (district, sectional, and State). If a director/advisor from a school has an issue with an adjudicator after any contest, s/he can file a concern with on the WHSFA website within 5 days of the contest in question, including a copy of the evaluation sheet and/or documentation of the oral response.

(3). Adjudicator deliberation

At the district/sectional festival, results will be announced no more than twice a day (usually halfway through and at the end), so adjudicators have the opportunity to reconsider their recommendation. They will have the ability to only change "stop" recommendations to "advance" (but not vice versa), and only if a schools' results have not yet been announced.

(4). Fourth adjudicator at State A fourth adjudicator will be at every performance to simply watch the show holistically and contribute to comments afterwards and before oral critiques begin. This adjudicator also can nominate awards. The number of nominations required still remains at two.

WHSFA Constitution Revisions

Nonprofit organizations like WHSFA are required to occasionally review their governing documents and determine whether those governing policies reflect current operations and changing needs of membership. The WHSFA Board of Control has spent the past year reviewing those documents, and has brought forward some recommended revisions. As per Constitutional requirements, member schools must re-

view the proposed changes, and cast a vote to ratify or oppose those changes. Each school may cast just one ballot, so multiple advisors (theatre, speech, etc.) should consult with one another before the ballot is cast. Votes will be collected through December 1, 2016. To see proposed changes and to cast a vote, visit: whsfa.org/constitution.

Embrace Debate

Foster soft skills, research, critical thinking, and listening.



Urge Your School to Debate. There are only about three dozen schools in Wisconsin that participate in interscholastic debate, compared to nearly 400 schools that participate in Speech. No wonder our dialogue about politics has been distilled to sound bites and declarations lacking substance! What's more, we hear anecdotal information that some schools have debate "clubs," curriculum that includes debates,

Mock Trial, and other avenues that could translate perfectly into WHSFA Debate. Through partnering with the pedagogically-driven 21st Century Debate Association, WHSFA offers a fresh, accessible form of debate called "Public Forum," with rounds that last only about a half hour. Visit whsfa.org/howtodebate to learn more.



Middle Level News

After extensive discussion and analysis, the Middle Level Advisory Committee and Board of Control decided to discontinue using checkboxes for "Excellent, Very Good, etc." on evaluation sheets. Several coaches complained there is no correlation between what was checked and overall grades given by adjudicators. In fact, the two sets of evaluation standards - letter grades for overall

achievement, and checkboxes for individual criteria - often sent mixed signals. Checking boxes requires adjudicators to dedicate thought as to an entry's achievement level in each criterion, rather than spending more time on substantive commentary, which is where the real learning happens, particularly at the developmental level of a pre-adolescent. The committee agreed the chief function of the evaluation sheet is to provide feedback, so

emphasizing comments over checkboxes is preferred. Therefore, the checkboxes will be removed, and the top of evaluation sheets will instruct adjudicators to "comment on what was strong, and what needs improvement."

Hosting a Middle Level Festival? Complete the **Host Information Form** on the *Middle Level Contests webpage*.



Thespians Contest



Wisconsin Thespians is excited to be bringing Individual Events (IEs) to the Wisconsin High School Theatre Festival (WHSTF) once again. Participating in IEs gives WI Theatre students the opportunity to receive feedback from a theatre professional and the chance to win a \$250 scholarship awarded by the Educational Theatre Association and Wisconsin Thespians. Students who receive a superior rating also have the opportunity to perform at Nationals in Lincoln, Nebraska in June 2017. IEs offered this year are Monologue, Duet Acting, Solo Musical Theatre, and Duet Musical, and all WHSTF students are eligible to participate. There will be a \$10 registration

fee per event. More information is available at: schooltheatre.org/programs/nies and: wisconsinthespians.org.

Individual Events compliment WHSTF events as they provide one more opportunity for students to showcase their acting skills in an educational environment. We hope you will consider participating this year as IE sessions will be held on Friday, Nov. 18 at the Wisconsin High School Theatre Festival. IEs are open for audience members and theatre educators to observe and learn more about Wisconsin Thespians.



Adjudicator Concerns

Advisors concerned with the way their students were adjudicated at a WHSFA contest can now file a concern via online form, allowing them to upload an evaluation sheet and describe their issue in detail. This will allow us to better track poten-

tially problematic adjudicators, and work with them to address their approach to adjudication. See the respective "contests" page on the WHSFA website for the activity in question.

Facebook

Help promote forensic activities in Wisconsin High Schools by liking the WHSFA Facebook page, and encouraging your students to! We will be posting interesting news and information with increasing frequency this year!

State Theatre Festival Showcases

For more information (including how to get tickets), visit goo.gl/sqg4Tx

Rwanda & Juliet

Film presented by UW-Madison Arts Institute
Thursday, Nov. 17, 2016 at 8pm

As part of the 2016 Year of Shakespeare in Wisconsin, join us for a special screening of *Rwanda & Juliet*, by filmmaker Ben Proudfoot. Dartmouth Professor Emeritus Andrew Garrod travels to Rwanda to mount a production of *Romeo and Juliet* featuring members of both the Hutu and Tutsi tribes a mere two decades after inter-tribal genocide has occurred. The journey towards opening night is fraught with financial and interpersonal tensions, setbacks and against-the-odds triumphs. This layered, nuanced documentary gets to the heart of the matter by giving us a clear-eyed example of why Shakespeare is as relevant and important today as ever before. See link above for links to the film trailer and educational materials.



La Cage Aux Folles

Presented by UWSP Dept. of Theatre & Dance
Friday, Nov. 18, 2016 at 4pm and 8pm

Winner of multiple Tony Awards including **Best Musical**, the classic and much-revived musical comedy *La Cage Aux Folles* tells the story of Georges, the owner of a swanky and sexy Saint-Tropez nightclub, and his partner Albin, who moonlights as the glamorous drag queen songstress Zaza. When their son brings his fiancée (and her conservative parents) home to meet the flashy pair, feathers get ruffled and households upended in a poignant tale of one family's struggle to stay together, stay fabulous, and above all else, stay true to themselves. You roared with joy at the film adaptation, *The Birdcage* - now marvel at the hummable music some call Jerry Herman's (*Hello Dolly/Mame*) best!

Resources for Coaches/Directors

Insurance/NFHS Membership

The National Federation of State High School Associations offers professional membership to theatre directors, speech/debate coaches, and/or adjudicators, which covers \$1 million in general liability insurance coverage, as well as \$50,000 in accident insurance while participating in and traveling to/from interscholastic contests. The \$20 individual membership also includes publications and other online resources. Some school administrators and/or activity/athletic directors will cover this from their budget. More information: goo.gl/9DjiDA



National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA): This nonprofit organization and forensic honorary society, founded and headquartered in Wisconsin as the "National Forensic League," has a number of resources and professional development initiatives to offer. They will occasionally email WHSFA coaches with information. To learn more, visit speechanddebate.org.



Educational Theatre Association (EdTA): This nonprofit organization, known for its International Thespian Society, offers a number of resources to support both curricular and extracurricular programming in theatre. To learn more, visit schooltheatre.org.

Speech News & Notes



Rules Changes

The following changes to rules were made for the 2016-17 season:

- * The time limit for Solo Acting (Humorous/Serious) has been increased to 10 minutes. *Subdistrict hosts are reminded to schedule fewer entries per section to accommodate the longer time.*
- * Demonstration Speech now allows for one or two speakers (*previously, a non-speaking aide was allowed, and now that individual is allowed to speak*). See rules for more details.
- * (Clarification) All manuscripts in interpretive categories and note cards in speech categories must be paper (and not digital devices).

Farrago: Layer or Marble Cake? The National Speech & Debate Association's (NSDA) recent debut of the category, Program Oral Interpretation (POI) is effectively Farrago that allows for students to intersperse smaller groupings of lines from their different literary selections out of discrete sequence, and without in-context transitions (between pieces of literature). Whereas in traditional Farrago, students may deliver piece A, then B, then C, then D; in POI, there may be lines from pieces A, B, C, and D that following this sequence: A, C, D, A, B, C, B, A, B, C, D, A, D, C. The WHSFA's Category Committee was conflicted about making a change without seeing more examples, so it decided to keep the rules as they stand. The WFCFA has changed its rules for Farrago, Group Interpretive Reading, and Poetry, so schools participating in both organizations are encouraged to prepare more traditional performances, which will work in both.

WFCFA Rules Changes

The WHSFA has worked to enhance collaboration with WFCFA, and at the request of several WHSFA schools, we lengthened Solo Acting to 10 minutes to bring it in line with WFCFA, NSDA, and the NCFL. Unfortunately, at its September 2016 meeting, WFCFA made several changes deepening differences even as WHSFA strives to collaborate:

- * Using "and/or" for the two Moments in History topics, instead of "or"
- * Interpretive category manuscripts may be used as a prop
- * Replaced Four-Minute with a 6-minute Informative Speech category
- * Removing allowance for a speaker stand in Special Occasion
- * Allowing interwoven material in interpretive categories (see previous section)
- * Tournaments will determine uniform Storytelling topics by round (WHSFA asks adjudicators to select stories, each round)

Remember, these are changes made by WFCFA and not WHSFA.

Online Registration opens **Wednesday, January 11**, where coaches also will be able to book a time slot for the State Speech Festival. By January 3, we will have instructions for logging into SpeechWire, so you can make sure you can access your user account. By mid-January, we encourage all speech coaches to have an idea of what their rosters will look like. Visit www.whsfa.org/speech/contests for more details. The next edition of this newsletter also will have more information.

New Coach? You do not need to feel like you're alone. Contact office@whsfa.org today, and we'll make sure you feel supported with resources and a mentor coach in your area.

Impromptu Speech is now available as a pilot category at invitational contests, and as a non-qualifying category at sub-district and district festivals as determined by individual festival hosts/district chairs. We are currently working on some instructional materials to familiarize coaches with this exciting pilot, and will have more details in our winter newsletter.

Reading Stands

Host schools are not required to provide these for speech categories. Contestants must bring their own.



Exercising Better Judgment

Time's Up!

Adjudicators have the option of ending a student's presentation after it has exceeded the grace period by one minute.

Minimum Time?

The WHSFA has traditionally not required a minimum time for presentations, although adjudicators are encouraged to evaluate development – or lack thereof – of each presentation. This should be evaluated in the criterion regarding development in speech categories, and in the criterion regarding understanding meaning in interpretive categories.



When is it a Costume?

In interpretive categories, if contestants wear clothing implied for a particular character or described in the script, that is a costume. In group categories, merely dressing alike does not constitute a costume, unless the script calls for it (such as characters who are twins). In speech categories, if a student is wearing the attire called for by a particular occasion or topic, that is a costume. However, in Demonstration Speaking, students should wear attire appropriate to what is being demonstrated.

Inclusivity and Sensitivity

We live in a diverse world, and will encounter students whose life experiences and viewpoints differ from ours and that of our students. It is particularly important to remind adjudicators to bear this in mind when writing comments, and to remind students to be respectful of their peers at contests. Recent research of more than 1,000 forensics alumni from across the country by UW-La Crosse Professor J. Scott Baker, Ph.D. cites "building confidence" as a top benefit of our activity. Yet, the fear of public speaking is real; anytime we face an audience, we make ourselves vulnerable. The role of adjudicators is to address students' tactics, not their identity, nor their personal belief systems. Please remind adjudicators you hire to avoid writing comments like, "you have a wide stance for a

girl," or "your white shoes are distracting." Instead, they should address the specific questions in the evaluation criteria. This year, our Public Address category explores rights of transgendered individuals. We need to remind students and adjudicators alike to be supportive of others taking on controversial topics – even if they disagree. Constructive criticism by adjudicators and affirming body language by peers in the audience can empower students. Let's avoid discouraging their further participation in forensic activities.



Verifying Literary Material: At subdistrict and district festivals, we highly suggest adjudicators check students' source material (photocopy/facsimile of the original publication, not a retyped, word-processed version) for presentations in interpretive categories. That will prevent students from advancing to the next contest level and then being disqualified for using the wrong genre. The most common mistake is using dramatic literature in Group Interpretive Reading, or non-dramatic literature in Play Acting. Dramatic literature is where each line is attributed to a specific character to perform. When students transcribe from performances such as YouTube, they need to research the genre of the performer's source material.

Adjudication Training & Renewal

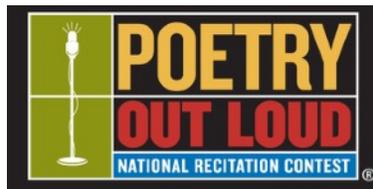
Now is the time to remind current Speech adjudicators to renew their certification (if they're due), and/or to recruit new ones and encourage them to enroll in our training program. Visit whsfa.org/adjudicators, where you'll also find a roster of certification status.

Learning Opportunities & Contests

NHD NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

Moments in History Speech offers a wonderful cross-curricular connection for students who are interested in social studies, and a great approach is to partner with the National History

Day (NHD) contest in your school. The 2017 theme is "Taking a stand in history," which could apply to a topic within either of this year's time periods. For more information, including finding regional contests, visit goo.gl/xJgDKv. The Wisconsin state NHD contest is April 22 at UW-Madison, the same weekend as WHSFA's State Speech Festival.



Poetry Out Loud encourages students to learn about great poetry through memorization and recitation.

This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life. Poetry Out Loud starts at the classroom level; winners advance to a schoolwide contest, then regional, then State, and ultimately to National finals. The Wisconsin registration deadline for participation is November 23, 2016. See goo.gl/eaEvxj for more information.



Shakespeare in Wisconsin: Several Wisconsin organizations have partnered to offer a tremendous educational resource in Madison: Shakespeare in Wisconsin. This includes Folger Shakespeare Library's First Folio Tour, statewide performances, and more. For more information, please visit: shakespeare.library.wisc.edu

**FIRST
FOLIO!**

the book that gave us
SHAKESPEARE

on tour from the
Folger SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

State Theatre Festival T-Shirts

Don't throw away your shot to get shirts!

Directors are encouraged to **pre-order** at whsfa.org/2016theatreshirt

Advisors may pre-order merchandise ahead of State contests to pick up in person at the contest, or pay to have items shipped.





Wisconsin High School
Forensic Association

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New Merchandise

Our new "wordle" design is available on zip hoodies and drawstring backpacks! Order online at whsfa.org/store

