

Forensics Event Chooser *Courtesy of Bethany Lutheran College*

Introduction

This guide contains information about the standard college forensics events, to help Speech Team members select one or more to work on. New team members may prepare just one event for their first tournament. Before long, they will be working on two or more events. Some tournaments permit entering as many as five; experienced team members enter from two to five events at most tournaments.

Good Material for Interpretation Events

This general rule applies to all events:

"All materials shall not have been used by the student in competition prior to September 1st of the current academic year."

(PRO POE DI POI DUO)

Each interpretation event requires you to select material to read. While the coaches will help and guide you, they do not have a supply of material to give you. It is up to you to find the material you will read and interpret. It is, after all, going to be something that you like and will not grow tired of quickly. To find your selection, start by recalling works or authors that you have read and enjoyed; there may be good material there, or you might identify a topic or style of literature that you could explore further. One of the benefits of forensics is that it turns participants into avid readers - "interpers" are always on the lookout for more good material. To be competitive you need good material. But don't spend too much time looking for "just the right reading." There is no perfect reading, and there is a lot of good literature out there. Be ready to try different things, different moods, different arrays of emotion. Some of your success will be due to the material you choose, but most of your success will come from what you do with the material. Here are some characteristics of good material for interpretation:

- It should be **adult** literature. Sometimes readers do children's stories, but rarely do they score high competitively. Be wary of material that sounds juvenile or "high-schoolish."
- Good literature is **universal** - that is, it explores themes and situations that touch the experience of all people at all times.
- Good literature is **individual** - that is, the author explores the universal theme in a unique and special way, so that even if we have experienced the theme before, it seems fresh and new.
- Good literature has **depth** - that is, it stimulates the listener's thought and imagination more and more each time through, and the performer is still discovering new elements to convey on the 30th and 40th times the piece is performed.
- A good selection contains a **variety** of feelings, moods, and emotions. It doesn't sound "all the same" but rather gives you a chance to display several aspects of your speaking ability.
- A good selection does its job within the allotted **time limit**. Usually you must cut parts out of a selection so it fits your time limit, 10 minutes maximum. Shoot for a cutting that, on first reading, lasts 7 or 8 minutes. As you work on them, readings tend to take more time.

Check your selection choice with the coaches. They will advise you regarding its quality, and especially whether it is a piece that is too often done on the circuit.

The Limited Preparation Events (IMP EXT)

These are events in which you do not have your entire performance planned and rehearsed ahead of time, since you do not know the exact topic on which you will speak until you get to the tournament. But these events are not "unprepared." There is a lot you can (and must) do on your own and in practice sessions to become competitive in these events.

The Prepared Public Address Events (PER INF ADS CA)

These speeches are thoroughly researched, outlined, written, memorized, and practiced before the tournament. Good topics are important, but more important are the skills in analysis, organization, language, and delivery that you will display.

Parliamentary Debate (PD)

Debate involves head-to-head competition with a team from another school on a topic announced at the start of the round (PD).

PROSE INTERPRETATION (PRO)

Official description: A selection or selections of prose material of literary merit, which may be drawn from more than one source. Play cuttings are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time is 10 minutes including introduction.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will enjoy some very good literature, making it "yours" in a special way.
2. You will enjoy coming to understand and appreciate what makes it good.
3. You will enjoy sharing your story and your insights with audiences.
4. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
5. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
6. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, as you stay alert for clues that will make you a better interpreter.
7. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, as you search your own experience to help you understand and convey your chosen reading.
8. You will learn to "control a room" with your performance.
9. You will learn a lot by watching excellent interpreters.

Special features of this event in competition:

PRO usually has the most entries in every tournament. That means it is very competitive, with many experienced and highly skilled speakers. Sometimes PRO requires semi-final rounds, while other smaller events go straight to finals.

What you will do to become competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 3 weeks

1. select the Prose event
2. find a good piece of prose literature 2-3 days
3. rough cut to approach time limit 1-2 days
4. type onto computer disk 1 day
5. final cut to about 7-8 minutes 1 day
6. print-out into competition book 1 day
7. preliminary analysis of material 2-3 days
8. early rehearsals 4-5 days
9. compose introduction and transitions (brief!)
10. polishing rehearsals 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Possible recutting to improve selection or timing
2. Possible revision of introduction and transitions
3. Continuing analysis and rehearsals

Hints for finding material:

Book collections of short stories are often good sources for prose readings. Find a book of short stories, look at the table of contents to locate the shortest ones (the fewest pages - the less cutting necessary, the better), then look at those stories to see if any interest you and would make a good reading. Other good sources are current magazines, like the New Yorker, that publish short prose pieces. Page through the past year's issues, find the short stories, and see if any interest you.

POETRY INTERPRETATION (POE)

Official description: A selection or selections of poetry of literary merit, which may be drawn from more than one source. Play cuttings are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will enjoy some very good literature, making it "yours" in a special way.
2. You will enjoy coming to understand and appreciate what makes it good.
3. You will enjoy sharing your poems and your insights with audiences.
4. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
5. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
6. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, as you stay alert for clues that will make you a better interpreter.
7. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, as you search your own experience to help you comprehend and convey your chosen poetry.
8. You will learn to "control a room" with your performance.
9. You will learn a lot by watching excellent interpreters.

Special features of this event in competition:

Good Poetry Interpretation has quite a different sound from Prose. Poetry is usually compact, with much feeling and emotion in each phrase and line. It takes great care and skill to convey to a listener everything that is there. POE is usually a fairly large event, but not as big as PRO.

What you will do to become competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 3 weeks

1. select the Poetry event
2. find a good poem, of right length or several shorter poems by same author or several shorter poems on one theme 2-3 days
3. rough cut to approach time limit 1-2 days
4. type onto computer disk 1 day
5. final cut to about 7-8 minutes 1 day
6. print-out into competition book 1 day
7. preliminary analysis of material 2-3 days
8. early rehearsals 4-5 days
9. compose introduction and transitions (brief)
10. polishing rehearsals 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Possible recutting to improve selection or timing
2. Possible revision of introduction and transitions
3. Continuing analysis and rehearsals

Hints for finding material:

Page through poetry anthologies, and see what interests you. If you find a key poem you want to do, but need more to fill out your program, you can find other poems by the same author by using library indexes and catalogs. Or if you want to build your program around a theme, use the Granger's Index to Poetry (in library reserve section) which lists poems by topic. It takes a little work to track down the poems that are indexed there, so plan to spend several hours in the library, or even to order books of poetry through interlibrary loan. Putting together a good poetry program can be interesting, fun, and satisfying.

DRAMA INTERPRETATION (DI)

Official description: A cutting which represents one or more characters from a play or plays of literary merit. This material may be drawn from stage, screen, or radio. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction .

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will enjoy some very good literature, making it "yours" in a special way.
2. You will enjoy coming to understand and appreciate what makes it good.
3. You will enjoy sharing your story and your insights with audiences.
4. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
5. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
6. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, as you stay alert for clues that will make you a better interpreter.
7. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, as you search your own experience to help you comprehend and convey your chosen reading.
8. You will learn to "control a room" with your performance.
9. You will learn a lot by watching excellent interpreters.

Special features of this event in competition:

Some Drama Interpretation involves monologue, a single character speaking. But most involves two or more characters in a play, all represented, of course, by you the interpreter. You will have to be careful to keep the characters distinct from one another, so the listener doesn't get lost. At most tournaments DI is a much smaller event than PRO or POE.

What you will do to become competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 3 weeks

1. select the Drama Interpretation event
2. find a good piece of a play 2-3 days
3. rough cut to approach time limit 1-2 days
4. type onto computer disk 1 day
5. final cut to about 7-8 minutes 1 day
6. print-out into competition book 1 day
7. preliminary analysis of material 2-3 days
8. early rehearsals 4-5 days
9. compose introduction and transitions (brief)
10. polishing rehearsals 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Possible recutting to improve selection or timing
2. Possible revision of introduction and transitions
3. Continuing analysis and rehearsals

Hints for finding material:

Start by remembering plays you have seen (or been in) and liked. Movie and TV screenplays are good sources too, as well as radio scripts. Sometimes you can get a good cutting by audio-taping the sound track from a video, and typing out the words. But be careful of drawing from famous scenes or popular movies; the judge has seen Meryl Streep or Dustin Hoffman do it, and it will be hard for you to measure up to that competition. Maybe the best thing is to head for the library and read some new plays.

PROGRAM ORAL INTERPRETATION (POI)

Official description: A program of thematically-linked selections of literary merit, chosen from two or more of the recognized genres of competitive interpretation (prose, poetry, and drama). A substantial portion of the total time must be devoted to each of the genres used in the program. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes, including original introduction and/or transitions.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will enjoy some very good literature, making it "yours" in a special way.
2. You will enjoy coming to understand and appreciate what makes it good.
3. You will enjoy sharing your story and your insights with audiences.
4. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
5. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
6. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, as you stay alert for clues that will make you a better interpreter.
7. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, as you search your own experience to help you understand and convey your chosen reading.
8. You will learn to "control a room" with your performance.
9. You will learn a lot by watching excellent interpreters.

Special features of this event in competition:

POI is usually the smallest of the Interpretation events, probably because it takes some work to put a good program together. Performers are usually veterans who have done PRO or POE before. It can be a lot of fun to create a program, because it requires considerable imagination to put various pieces together in an effective way.

What you will do to become competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 3 weeks

1. select the Program Oral Interp event
2. decide on a program theme 1-2 days
3. search out pieces of prose, poetry, and drama that develop the theme 4-5 days
4. type onto computer disk 1 day
5. adjust or cut to about 7-8 minutes 1 day
6. print-out into competition book 1 day
7. preliminary analysis of material 2-3 days
8. early rehearsals 4-5 days
9. compose introduction and transitions (brief)
10. polishing rehearsals 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Possible recutting, changing selections, or changing order of selections to improve effect or timing
2. Possible revision of introduction and transitions
3. Continuing analysis and rehearsals

Hints for finding material:

You need some prose, some poetry, some drama - or at least two of the three. Review the hints in each of those sections for help. Since you will probably be developing a theme, you will be searching subject-indexes more than anything else to find items that fit your theme.

DRAMATIC DUO (DUO)

Official description: A cutting from a play, humorous or serious, involving the portrayal of two or more characters presented by two individuals. This material may be drawn from stage, screen, or radio. This is not an acting event. Thus, no costumes, props, lighting, etc., are to be used. Presentation is from the manuscript and the focus should be off-stage and not to each other. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will enjoy some very good literature, making it "yours" in a special way.
2. You will enjoy coming to understand and appreciate what makes it good.
3. You will enjoy sharing your story and your insights with audiences.
4. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
5. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
6. You will become a better observer of the world around you, staying alert for clues that will make you a better interpreter.
7. You will better understand yourself, searching your experience to help you comprehend your chosen reading.
8. You will learn to "control a room" with your performance.
9. You will enjoy working with a partner, both in rehearsals and in competition.
10. You will learn a lot by watching excellent interpreters.

Special features of this event in competition:

In some tournaments DUO is a rather small event, but the competition is usually good. This is one of the toughest events for which to find good material. There is room for considerable imagination in staging and performing this event, and it will be fun to work with your team-mate to come up with ideas. DUO requires more than just two good interpers; it needs two that work well off of each other. It is truly a team effort.

What you will do to become competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 3 weeks

1. select the Dramatic Duo event
2. find a partner
3. find a good piece of a play 2-3 days
4. rough cut to approach time limit 1-2 days
5. type onto computer disk 1 day
6. final cut to about 7-8 minutes 1 day
7. print-out into competition book 1 day
8. preliminary analysis of material 2-3 days
9. early rehearsals 4-5 days
10. compose introduction and transitions (brief)
11. polishing rehearsals 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Possible recutting to improve selection or timing
2. Possible revision of introduction and transitions
3. Continuing analysis and rehearsals

Hints for finding material:

As with DI, start by remembering plays you have seen (or been in) and liked. Movie and TV screenplays are good sources too. Sometimes you can get a good cutting by audio-taping the sound track from a video, and typing out the words. But be careful of drawing from famous scenes or popular movies; the judge has seen Meryl Streep or Dustin Hoffman do it, and it will be hard for you to measure up to that competition. Maybe the best thing is to head for the library and read some new plays.

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING (IMP)

Official description: An impromptu speech, serious in nature, with topic selection varied round by round, section by section. Topics will be of a proverb nature. Speakers will have a total of 7 minutes and may use the time at their own discretion. Notes are permitted. Each speaker in a given section will have the same topic.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will enjoy sharing your observations and insights with coaches and team members in rehearsal, and with audiences in competition.
2. You will gain confidence in the value of your own experiences and thinking.
3. You will learn a variety of methods for structuring ideas for clear and effective presentation.
4. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
5. You will learn to think systematically and efficiently under severe time pressure.
6. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
7. You will learn to "read" audiences, adjusting your speech to audience reactions as you go along.
8. You will read more widely and perceptively, gathering material which you can use in your speeches.
9. You will develop your memory, as you stock it with stories, facts, and viewpoints to use in your speeches.
10. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, as you stay alert for information and viewpoints that will make you a better thinker and speaker.
11. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, as you search your own experience to help you find worthwhile things to say.
12. You will learn a lot by watching excellent impromptu speakers.

Special features of this event in competition:

To clarify this event: You walk into the competition room, the judge hands you a slip of paper with a topic on it, and from that moment you have 7 minutes to think up and deliver a speech on that topic. Speakers usually use one or two minutes to think and plan, and then give a five-minute speech. IMP usually attracts two kinds of speakers - the lazy and the very good. The lazy are those who see this as a "no-preparation" event, easy to get into without a lot of work. They don't do well, but it's nice to encounter them in rounds because you will score higher than they do. The very good are those who know how to prepare for this event and work at it. Often they are people with debate experience, and so they are glib and smooth talkers - but debate experience is not always an advantage, because debaters often pick up bad habits (like using jargon, and rapid-fire delivery) which they can't shake. Usually quite a few people enter IMP, many because they think it's easy. It's not, if you do it well.

What you will do to become competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 3 weeks

1. select the Impromptu event
2. learn about speech structure 2-3 days
3. try out a topic or two, slowly 1-2 days
4. practice: do it over and over, 2-3 topics a day 2 weeks
5. read widely: current events, history, philosophy, anything useful, to stay up-to-date and to stock memory with material

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Keep practicing.
2. Work to make structures more sophisticated, yet clear
3. Work to make sure speeches are on the topics provided
4. Continue reading widely to stock mind with good material

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING (EXT)

Official description: Contestants will be given three topics in the general area of current events, choose one, and have 30 minutes to prepare a speech. Maximum time limit for the speech is 7 minutes. Notes are permitted. Students will speak in listed order. Posting of topics will be staggered.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will learn a great deal about current events, local, national, and international.
2. You will enjoy sharing your observations and insights with coaches and team members in rehearsal, and with audiences in competition.
3. You will learn a variety of methods for structuring ideas for clear and effective presentation.
4. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
5. You will learn to think systematically and efficiently under time pressure.
6. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
7. You will learn to "read" audiences, adjusting your speech to audience reactions as you go along.
8. You will read more widely and perceptively, sorting and gathering material which you can use in your speeches.
9. You will learn to develop an extensive filing system, storing useful material so that it can quickly be found when needed.
10. You will develop your memory, stocking it with stories, facts, and viewpoints you can use in your speeches.
11. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, staying alert for information and viewpoints that will make you a better thinker and speaker.
12. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, as you search your own experience to help you find worthwhile things to say.
13. You will learn a lot by watching excellent extemporaneous speakers.

Special features of this event in competition:

To clarify this event: A half-hour before you are scheduled to speak, you are given a slip of paper on which you will find three topics from current events. You have a half-hour to select one of the topics, and prepare a seven-minute speech on it. Your half-hour preparation time must be carefully used; in it you must formulate a thesis and outline for your speech, support your points with research drawn from your previously-prepared files, and spend a few minutes rehearsing. Often people with debate experience are drawn to EXT, and so they are glib and smooth talkers - but debate experience is not always an advantage, because debaters often pick up bad habits (like the use of jargon, and rapid-fire delivery) which they can't shake. EXT is a rigorous and challenging event, a lot of work but very worthwhile.

What you will do to become competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 3 weeks

1. select the Extemporaneous Speaking event
2. learn about speech structure 2-3 days
3. develop a filing system to store material for quick retrieval continuous
4. try out a topic or two, slowly 1-2 days
5. practice: do it over and over, every day 2 weeks
6. keep reading in current events, copying and filing useful material on every possible topic

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Keep practicing.
2. Work to make structures more sophisticated, yet still clear
3. Work to make sure speeches are on the topics provided
4. Continue reading widely to stock files with useful material

PERSUASIVE SPEAKING (PER)

Official description: An original speech by the student designed to inspire, reinforce, or change the beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions of the audience. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Multiple sources should be used and cited in the development of the speech. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will learn much about a significant current problem.
2. You will learn how to analyze and understand problems, how to broaden your knowledge through systematic research, and how to formulate solutions to problems.
3. You will enjoy sharing your observations and insights with coaches and team members in rehearsal, and with audiences in competition.
4. You will learn how to structure ideas for clear and effective presentation.
5. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
6. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
7. You will read more widely and perceptively, sorting and gathering material which you can use in your speech.
8. You will develop your memory, learning to depend on it to provide you with the latest version of your speech.
9. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, staying alert for information and viewpoints that will make you a better thinker and speaker.
10. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, searching your own experience to help you find worth-while things to say.
11. You will learn much by watching excellent speakers.

Special features of this event in competition:

In early tournaments the PER event is relatively small, because not many people have them ready yet. The good speakers are those who have been working over the summer. Late in the semester the event gets much larger, because students in college speech and persuasion courses are encouraged to enter - sometimes whole classes enter. Most of these are not competitive, but some are good. The best persuasive speeches improve and develop over a long series of tournaments.

What you will do to be competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 4 weeks

1. select the Persuasive event
2. find a good topic area 2-3 days
3. do some preliminary research 1-2 days
4. develop an effective thesis statement 1 day
5. create preliminary outline 1 day
6. extensive research to support outline points 1 week
7. write the speech 2-3 days
8. rewrite for timing and polish 2 days
9. memorize the speech 2 days
10. practice delivery 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Additional research to strengthen, keep up-to-date
2. Rewrite to strengthen, clarify
3. Re-memorize new version
4. Continue practicing delivery

Hints for finding good topics:

Speeches in PER are usually "speeches to convince" or "speeches to actuate" which explore some significant problem and argue for a particular solution. It's best if the solution is some action the audience itself can take (beyond just "write your congressperson" which is by now a cliché). The trick is to find some problem that touches all of us, but which isn't already over-discussed. Old topics work too, if you can find a new angle on them. By the time your speech is competitive, you will have done an amount of research equivalent to an upper-division (Jr-Sr) college term paper.

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING (INF)

Official description: An original, factual speech by the student on a realistic subject to fulfill the general aim to inform the audience. Visuals may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Multiple sources should be used and cited in the development of the speech. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will learn a great deal about an interesting topic.
2. You will learn how to research a topic to find useful information.
3. You will learn how to structure information for clear and effective presentation.
4. You will enjoy sharing your observations and insights with coaches and team members in rehearsal, and with audiences in competition.
5. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
6. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
7. You will read more widely and perceptively, sorting and gathering material which you can use in your speech.
8. You will develop your memory, learning to depend on it to provide you with the latest version of your speech.
9. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, staying alert for information and viewpoints that will make you a better thinker and speaker.
10. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, searching your own experience to help you find worthwhile things to say.
11. You will learn a lot by watching excellent speakers.

Special features of this event in competition:

The INF event is usually the largest of the public address events. In the first tournaments, the good speakers are those who have been working over the summer. Late in the semester the event gets much larger, because students in college speech courses are encouraged to enter - sometimes whole classes enter. Most of these are not competitive, but some are good. The best informative speeches improve and develop over a long series of tournaments. Visual aids are often used; if so, they should be very well done, with a professional look (figure a minimum of a week to plan and construct them).

What you will do to be competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 4 weeks

1. select the Informative event
2. find a good topic area 2-3 days
3. do some preliminary research 1-2 days
4. develop an effective thesis statement 1 day
5. create preliminary outline 1 day
6. extensive research to support outline points 1 week
7. write the speech 2-3 days
8. rewrite for timing and polish 2 days
9. memorize the speech 2 days
10. practice delivery 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Additional research to strengthen, keep up-to-date
2. Rewrite to strengthen, clarify
3. Re-memorize new version
4. Continue practicing delivery

Hints for finding good topics:

A good INF topic is one that we know little of, yet which touches all of us. Your goal is to help the listener understand something that affects them, but of which they know little. There are two kinds of topics that are so often used it is best to avoid them: obscure diseases, and obscure scientific discoveries. Better to find a topic that is more every-day, but still little understood.

AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING (ADS)

or **STE (Speech to Entertain) in Phi Rho Pi**

Official description: An original humorous speech by the student, designed to exhibit sound speech composition, thematic coherence, direct communicative public speaking skills, and good taste. The speech should not resemble a night club act, an impersonation, or a comic monologue. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will learn a great deal about an interesting topic.
2. You will learn how to research a topic to find useful information.
3. You will learn how to structure information for clear and effective presentation.
4. You will enjoy sharing your observations, insights, and sense of humor with coaches and team members in rehearsal, and with audiences in competition.
5. You will learn more about humor - what kinds there are, what makes it funny, and what makes it persuasive.
6. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
7. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
8. You will read more widely and perceptively, sorting and gathering material which you can use in your speech.
9. You will develop your memory, learning to depend on it to provide you with the latest version of your speech.
10. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, staying alert for information and viewpoints that will make you a better thinker and speaker.
11. You will come to a better understanding of yourself, searching your own experience to help you find worthwhile things to say.
12. You will learn a lot by watching excellent after dinner speakers.

Special features of this event in competition:

While at some tournaments this event is rather small, it always attracts excellent speakers. It also attracts audiences; the room is always packed for ADS finals. Judging is often unpredictable; various judges have different senses of humor.

What you will do to be competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 4 weeks

1. select the After Dinner event
2. find a good topic area 2-3 days
3. develop a humorous approach 1-2 days
4. develop an effective thesis statement 1 day
5. create preliminary outline 1 day
6. extensive research to support outline points 1 week (and brainstorm ways to make it more funny)
7. write the speech 2-3 days
8. rewrite for timing and polish 2 days
9. memorize the speech 2 days
10. practice delivery 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Additional research to strengthen, keep up-to-date
2. Rewrite to strengthen, clarify, make it more funny
3. Re-memorize new version
4. Continue practicing delivery

Hints for finding good topics:

ADS is sometimes defined as a speech that makes a serious point by using humor. The point should be obvious throughout (not just brought in at the end), and the humor should be abundant throughout as well. Almost any good informative or persuasive topic can become an ADS if it is developed in a humorous way.

COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS (CA)

Official description: An original speech by the student designed to offer an explanation and/or evaluation of a communication event, such as a speech, speaker, move-ment, poem, poster, campaign, etc., through the use of rhetorical principles. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will learn a great deal about an interesting communication event, and the audiences that it affects.
2. You will learn a lot about communication itself, and the research and theorizing that explains how it works.
3. You will learn about the intellectual process called "criticism," applying it to your chosen communication event.
4. You will learn how to research a topic carefully.
5. You will learn how to structure information for clear and effective presentation.
6. You will enjoy sharing your observations and insights with coaches and team members in rehearsal, and with audiences in competition.
7. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
8. You will learn self-control and poise under pressure.
9. You will read more widely and perceptively, sorting and gathering material which you can use in your speech.
10. You will develop your memory, learning to depend on it to provide you with the latest version of your speech.
11. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, staying alert for information and viewpoints that will make you a better thinker and speaker.
12. You will better understand yourself, searching your own experience to help you find worthwhile things to say.
13. You will learn a lot by watching excellent speakers.

Special features of this event in competition:

CA is always the smallest event at every tournament. That's because it's the toughest to get into - you need to know a lot about a number of things (the communication event, the theories that explain it, the process of criticism) before you can even put your speech together. Since the event is small, chances of reaching finals are often better. But that's balanced by the fact that most entries are experienced, veteran speakers, so the competition is very tough. This is an all-star event: it's an honor just to be in it.

What you will do to be competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 5 weeks

1. select the Communication Analysis event
2. find an interesting communication event 2-3 days
3. learn more about it (preliminary research) 2-3 days
4. locate a theory that can help explain the event 2-3 days
5. analyze event in light of theory, draw conclusions 1 week
6. structure/outline the presentation 2-3 days
7. write the speech 2-3 days
8. rewrite for timing and polish 2 days
9. memorize the speech 2 days
10. practice delivery 4-5 days

Between-tournament preparation:

1. Additional research to strengthen, keep up-to-date
2. Rewrite to strengthen and clarify
3. Re-memorize new version
4. Continue practicing delivery

Hints for finding good topics:

Any communication event can be a CA subject: speech, movie, cartoon, advertisement, TV commercial, sculpture, painting, a political or social movement. The idea: identify the strategies employed by the communicators as they try to get their messages across. Once you identify and describe the strategies, then evaluate them: did they work or not? Were they appropriate or not? Did they do harm or good? and What are the implications for society? Imagine what communication events you've witnessed (or heard of) that would be interesting to understand and evaluate like this.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE (PARLI)

Named after the style of debate used in the British Parliament, Parliamentary Debate features clashes between two-person teams. The "Government" favors change, the "Opposition" does not. The order of speeches:

- Prime Minister Constructive 8 min.
- Leader of the Opposition Constructive 8 min.
- Member of the Government Constructive 8 min.
- Member of the Opposition Constructive 8 min.
- Leader of the Opposition Rebuttal 4 min.
- Prime Minister Rebuttal 4 min.

The judge is called the Speaker of the House. Often there is more than one judge, sometimes lay people (not involved in coaching debate), experts in various fields, or just "people from the street."

The topic, different each round, is announced to both teams 15 minutes before the debate is to begin; they have that much time to develop a case.

Rules forbid bringing written evidence into the round. The goal is to be reasonable and convincing using knowledge expected of a well-informed college student. Value is placed on being witty and entertaining, as well as reasoned.

Audience responses are encouraged; hearing a point they like, they rap on the table. Speakers may interrupt each other with "Points of Information" (questions).

To be competitive in Parliamentary Debate, speakers must be strong in two areas:

- a wide general knowledge, and
- the theory and practice of argument and debate.

What you should expect to get out of this event:

1. You will learn about reasoning, what makes an argument good or bad, and how arguments support cases.
2. You will learn various ways to build convincing cases.
3. You will learn how to respond to the arguments of others.
4. You will learn how to structure information for clear and effective presentation.
5. You will enjoy sharing your observations and insights with coaches and team members in practice, and with opponents and audiences in competition.
6. You will learn greater control of your voice and body, making both more expressive.
7. You will get better at thinking on your feet, practicing self-control and poise under pressure.
8. You will learn to become a more careful listener.
9. You will read more widely and perceptively, sorting and gathering material which you can use in your debates.
10. You will develop your memory, learning to depend on it to provide you with information you need at the moment.
11. You will learn to become a better observer of the world around you, staying alert for information and viewpoints that will make you a better thinker and speaker.
12. You will better understand yourself, searching your own experience to help you find worthwhile things to say.
13. You will learn a lot by watching excellent debaters.

Special features of this event in competition:

Though a relatively new event, PD is being offered at more and more nearby tournaments, so opportunities to compete are growing. The Bethany-hosted PLUM tournaments are an important factor in the growth of PD in the upper midwest. There may also be chances to demonstrate the event on campus. PD is now a Phi Rho Pi National Tournament event, so debaters who wish to be on the National Tournament Team can use PD as one of their qualifying events.

What you will do to be competitive in this event:

Initial preparation: about 6 weeks

1. select the PD event
2. discuss and practice topic analysis 1 week
3. discuss and practice case construction 1 week
4. discuss and practice argument presentation 1 week
5. discuss and practice rebuttal 1 week
6. practice rounds 2 weeks
7. read, stay alert for useful material continuously
8. study, discuss, and practice argument and debate theory continuously