

OPEN INTERPRETATION FAQ

What is Open Interpretation (OI)?

Open Interpretation (OI) provides an unrestricted opportunity for a student to creatively explore and develop the intellectual, emotional, and artistic embodiment of any type of literature he or she chooses. This may include original work, unpublished work by others, or traditional published material.

Any genre is acceptable, including but not limited to the following: prose, poetry, storytelling, historical speeches, historical sermons, and thematic selections. Media transcriptions from movies, TV, or tape recordings are not allowed.

What is the time limit?

10 minute maximum; no minimum

May material be taken from more than one source?

Multiple sources are often used in Open Interpretation. Thematic interpretations present prose and/or poetry from more than one source, woven together around a common theme.

Is this a humorous or a dramatic event?

Selections may be humorous, dramatic, or a combination of the two.

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 will be disqualified. A previous season's Duo Interpretation cannot become this season's Open 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.

Can I take lines from one or more characters and give them to another character?

Yes.

Can I change the tenses of verbs in my Interp?

Yes.

What is *not* allowed in an Open Interpretation?

No props, costumes, audiovisuals, or gratuitous vulgarity 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.

Will I be penalized if my speech goes too long because of audience laughter?

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 to improve communication skills. Special students have shown much improvement in this environment.

Do I have to submit my script?

Scripts are required at every Qualifying Tournament, Regional Invitational, National Open, and the National Championship. 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.