



English in Action

The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition

To: High School Educators Across the Country
From: Education Department, ESU

2019 Memo to Teachers Interested in Participating in the ESU National Shakespeare Competition

Dear Teacher,

The English-Speaking Union invites you, your students and your school community to participate in the **English-Speaking Union (ESU) National Shakespeare Competition!**

Since 1982, the **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** has partnered with teachers to make Shakespeare's work come alive. This unique, performance-based education program provides students with multiple points of entry to engage with rigorous material and practice essential skills such as critical thinking and close reading. High school students from across the country read, analyze, perform and recite Shakespearean monologues and sonnets. They connect with like-minded peers, increase their self-confidence, and relate to classic works. In the thirty-six year history of the competition, the ESU has helped educators empower nearly 350,000 students to create and convey their own unique perspectives to a live audience.

We provide all the necessary resources to begin the competition in your classroom. It then progresses through three qualifying stages.

- Ninth through twelfth graders are eligible to participate in a school-wide competition.
- The school winner then advances to a competition held at your local ESU Branch.
- Branch winners will travel, all expenses paid, to New York City.

In 2018, finalists performed on the stage at the world-famous Lincoln Center Theater. Past national winners have received scholarships to the Young Actor's Summer School at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, and to the American Shakespeare Center Theatre Camp in Staunton, Virginia, as well as cash prizes. To learn more about this exciting, educational program online, please visit www.shakespearecompetition.org

The English-Speaking Union of the United States was founded in 1920, on the conviction that a shared language could bring individuals together, despite differences in nationality or background. Entering its second century, ESU is dedicated to supporting teachers and learners of English through programs such as the National Shakespeare Competition, our Teachers Learning Abroad (TLab) program, and the ESU Middle School Debate League. Like you, we understand that mastery of the English language is vital to students' success in the 21st century. Please visit our website at <https://www.esuus.org/esu/> to learn more.

If your school hasn't taken part in our competition, we hope that you will consider offering this exciting, educational opportunity at your school this year. To past participants we extend our deep appreciation for your dedication, to both your students and to this program. We look forward to working with you to make 2019 our best competition ever!

Please read on to learn more.



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FAST FACTS

What: A nation-wide competition open to high school students. Please see the [Teacher Handbook](#) for specific rules and information.

When & Where: You can start your classroom and school competitions as soon as you'd like! Please contact your local branch, visit the website or refer to the [Teacher Handbook](#) for deadlines, dates and locations.

Why: Because we believe that teachers like you deserve support in your mission to educate and engage students. And because we believe it's never too early to develop their love for reading, analyzing, and speaking the English language, especially Shakespeare! We hope to become an asset to your practice.

Who: For almost 100 years, The English-Speaking Union has been a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting teachers and learners of the English language. The **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** is just one of many programs that help us achieve that goal.

How: Participating in the **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** is easy! Find your local ESU Branch ([Participating Branches](#)) and fill out the [School Participation Form](#).

Visit [ESU National Shakespeare Competition](#) to review competition materials, including the [Teacher Handbook](#). Hold a school-wide competition to determine your school's representative at the Branch Competition. Student monologues **must** be selected from the [2019 Monologue Packet](#). Then submit the [School Winner Entry Form](#) to qualify your student for the Branch Competition.

The [Teacher Handbook](#) includes everything you need to get your students ready including:

- Conditions of school participation
- Organization of classroom and school competitions and supplies
- Judging materials
- Lesson Plans
- Connection to national standards

Thank you for your interest in the English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition. Please contact shakespeare@esuus.org or your ESU Branch with any questions. We think teachers are the most important people on the planet and we look forward to working with you this year.