



NATIONAL
SHAKESPEARE
COMPETITION

Judge Handbook

www.esuus.org



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Dear Judges,

The English-Speaking Union is pleased to invite you to participate in the **English-Speaking Union (ESU) National Shakespeare Competition!**

This project, a performance-based education program that unites high school students and teachers with ESU Branches nationwide, reaches over 18,000 teenagers in over 800 schools across the United States. In the competition, students read, analyze, perform and recite Shakespearean monologues and sonnets in three qualifying stages: school, ESU Branch, and national. Approximately sixty branches participate in the program annually. We encourage you to become one of the many judges involved in the competition. And to those dedicated judges who continue to participate, we look forward to another year of celebrating the Bard with you.

Since 1982, the **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** has helped teachers make Shakespeare's work come alive. Students nationwide read, analyze, perform, and recite Shakespearean monologues and sonnets. In a competitive, yet friendly atmosphere, students engage with material that transcends past and present, distance and differences. They practice essential skills such as critical thinking and close reading. Students connect with like-minded peers and increase their self-confidence. In its history, the ESU National Shakespeare Competition has empowered students to create and convey their own unique perspectives to an audience.

We thank you for joining the ranks of renowned academics, directors and actors from across the country who support our efforts to bring Shakespeare to every community.

This handbook includes everything you need to judge the ESU National Shakespeare Competition at the school and branch levels, including a Monologue Scoring Rubric, Sonnet Scoring Rubric and Judges' Evaluation Form. We hope this handbook will be a helpful resource for you as you evaluate contestants' work this year. This handbook and other resources are also available online at www.esuus.org.

Thank you for your time, effort and dedication to the study and performance of Shakespeare.

Best regards,

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Program Overview

What is the Competition?

The English-Speaking Union (ESU) National Shakespeare Competition is a nationwide competition in which high school students read, analyze, perform and recite Shakespearean monologues and sonnets in three qualifying stages: school, ESU branch, and national.

Competition History

The ESU National Shakespeare Competition began in 1983 with 500 students in New York City. Now the competition involves ESU branch communities nationwide. Thousands of high school students and their teachers, from Honolulu to Boston, participate in the program each year. Over the competition's history, young people of all backgrounds have rediscovered Shakespeare's writings and learned to express his words with understanding, feeling and clarity.



The ESU National Shakespeare Competition has been recognized by the Globe Center (USA), the Children's Theatre Foundation of America, and the American Academy of Achievement. Judges for the competition have included: Andre Braugher, Kate Burton, Maurice Charney, Blythe Danner, Barry Edelstein, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Helen Hayes, Edward Herrmann, Dana Ivey, Peter Francis James, Kristin Linklater, Peter MacNicol, Jesse L. Martin, Cynthia Nixon, Tina Packer, Annie Parisse, Sarah Jessica Parker, Nancy Piccione, Phylicia Rashad, Christopher Reeve, Louis Scheeder, Carole Shelley, Jean Simmons, Richard Thomas, Courtney B. Vance, Sam Waterston, Dianne Wiest, Gene Wilder, and Irene Worth.



Competition Structure: School → ESU Branch → National

The program begins in the classroom as an integral component of a Common Core-aligned ELA, Humanities and/or Theater curriculum, affording teachers the opportunity to use performance as a learning tool. A school-wide competition is held in the Fall/Winter semester, in which students perform a monologue from one of Shakespeare's plays and declaim a sonnet from his 154 sonnet cycle. The school competition winner advances to the ESU branch (community) competition in the winter. The branch competition winner advances to the national competition held in New York City in the spring; all of the winners perform their monologue and sonnet in front of their fellow contestants from across the country. Seven to ten of those contestants are chosen for the final round of the competition. The finalists perform their selections again for a second panel of judges.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The English-Speaking Union is committed to providing an inclusive and respectful environment for all students participating in the National Shakespeare Competition. The ESU does not tolerate discrimination or unequal treatment

based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or any other aspect of a student's identity. All students should be given an equal opportunity to participate and should be evaluated based on their preparation, interpretation, and performance. Students should be free to select a monologue of their choosing and should not be penalized or treated differently based on their choice of material.

Judges, teachers, volunteers, and Competition organizers are expected to treat all participants with professionalism, respect, and fairness.

Selection Eligibility: Monologue & Sonnet

The School or Branch Coordinator should check that students' selections meet the following criteria:

Students must select their monologues from this year's Monologue Packet, provided by the ESU. The packet includes over 250 monologues from more than 120 characters in all 38 plays. The selections offer a variety of monologues, of 15 to 22 lines a piece; students may select any monologue, regardless of gender. Selections have been taken from the Folger Digital Texts resource (folgerdigitaltexts.org).

No alterations may be made to the monologues. They must be performed as written in the packet.

Sonnets must come from Shakespeare's 154 sonnet cycle. These are all listed in this year's Sonnet Packet and are available at folgerdigitaltexts.org. Students must perform the complete sonnet; **no alterations are allowed**

School Competition Rules

The school must adhere to the following rules at their competition

- Each student must select, memorize and perform one monologue from a Shakespeare play. We recommend that each student also declaim one sonnet, but the sonnet is not required at this level of competition.
- Students may perform their pieces (monologue and sonnet) in whatever order they prefer.
- Students' order of performance should be determined by lot.
- Students should introduce themselves by name *only*.
- Students should identify their selection before they begin their performance.
- Students *may not* wear costumes or use props of any kind (including chairs, jewelry, items of clothing, and hair/hair clips). The use of props is grounds for immediate disqualification.
- Students should speak naturally in their own voice (rather than affect a British accent).
- Students are expected to memorize their pieces. If necessary, however, prompting is allowed. If a student requires prompting, they must say "Line."
 - A prompter must be available to students during the competition. Another student (one who is not participating in the competition) may fulfill this role.

Additional Rules for the Branch & National Competitions

These rules apply only to the Branch and National Competitions.

- In addition to their monologue, each contestant **must** select, memorize, and declaim one sonnet.

Note on Cold Readings

Branch competition (optional): Some ESU branches with a large number of contestants also include a cold reading of a monologue in the final round of their branch competition. Cold readings are chosen by ESU branch representatives.

National competition: national finalists will no longer perform a cold reading of a monologue.

Instructions for Judging a School Competition

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of the ESU National Shakespeare Competition! You will serve with at least two other professionals who have expertise in Shakespeare studies, production and/or education.

Instructions for the School Competition

During the school competition:

- Watch each student perform a monologue from one of Shakespeare's plays (2-3 minutes : student).
- Score each performance using the Monologue Scoring Rubric and Judges' Evaluation Form. Take no more than 1 minute to assign scores and write notes between performances.
- Deliberate with your fellow judges following the performances.
- While you deliberate, a judges' liaison will be on hand to observe and answer any questions you may have. A copy of the Judge Handbook will also be on hand.
- Select a school winner to advance to the branch competition.
- Select a first runner-up (in case the school winner is unavailable to compete at the branch competition).
- Additional awards and distinctions (3rd place, honorable mention/s, etc.) may vary from school to school.

Judge Etiquette

During the school competition, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not interact with the students or with the audience until the winners are announced at the end of the program.
- Do not view a copy of the school competition program until the winners are announced at the end of the program.
- Separate yourselves from the rest of the audience to minimize distractions.
- Audience members will not be allowed to sit directly behind you. This ensures that no audience member can see your evaluations as you score and take notes on students' performances.
- You will be informed by the judges' liaison of any issues with a student's performance (i.e. an ineligible monologue, added or dropped lines from a sonnet and/or monologue or use of a prop).

School-Level Evaluation Guidelines

Student Evaluations

Below are the two main categories by which you will evaluate each monologue:

Understanding

- A thorough understanding of the text, including language, character and plot.
- Within this category, there are three subcategories: meaning, language and character.

Expression & Communication

- An effective, interpretive delivery of the text.
- Includes the effective use of both body and voice to demonstrate an individual point-of-view.
- Within this category, there are three subcategories: vocal, physical and ownership.

For more details, see the Monologue Scoring Rubric.

Evaluation Forms

For the competition, we have developed a Judges' Evaluation Form, which was created based on educators' and judges' feedback from previous years. This form is designed to create a base of discussion. Each subcategory (above) is listed on a scale of 1 - 4 (1 : the least effective and 4 : the most). Criteria for each scale can be found in the Monologue Scoring Rubric.

On the Judges' Evaluation Form, you will score each monologue in each of the six subcategories. These scores are added up, and an overall score is awarded to each student. This score is not the sole determinant of the winner, but rather a tool used to select a winner.

Please note:

- It is recommended but *not* required that students perform a sonnet at the school competition.

Familiarize yourselves with the Judges' Evaluation Form; a sample form is included in this handbook. A scoring book consisting of Monologue Scoring Rubrics and Judges' Evaluation Forms for each student in the order of their performance will be provided for you on the day of the competition.

Remember: You will see many students back to back. A few notes as the student begins, to fix the student's APPEARANCE in your memory, will immeasurably aid subsequent recall. To assist you, there is a box on the top left corner of the Judges' Evaluation Form for any notes related to the student's appearance. This box is for your own use and does not factor into the student's scoring.

Instructions for Judging a Branch Competition

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of the ESU National Shakespeare Competition! You will serve with at least two other professionals who have expertise in Shakespeare studies, production and/or education.

Instructions for Branch Competition

During the branch competition:

- Watch each contestant **perform one monologue and recite one sonnet** (3-4 minutes per student).
- Score each performance using the Monologue Scoring Rubric, Sonnet Scoring Rubric and Judges' Evaluation Form. Take no more than 1 minute to assign scores and write notes between performances.
- Deliberate with your fellow judges following the performances.
- While you deliberate, a judges' liaison will be on hand to observe and answer any questions you may have. A copy of the Judge Handbook will also be on hand.
- Select a branch winner to advance to the national competition in New York City.
- Select a first runner-up (in case the branch winner is unavailable to compete at the national competition).
- Additional awards and distinctions (3rd place, honorable mention/s, etc.) may vary from branch to branch.

Judge Etiquette

During the branch competition, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not interact with the contestants or with the audience until the winners are announced at the end of the program.
- Do not view a copy of the branch competition program until the winners are announced at the end of the program.
- Separate yourselves from the rest of the audience to minimize distractions.
- Audience members will not be allowed to sit directly behind you. This ensures that no audience member can see your evaluations as you score and take notes on contestants' performances.
- You will be informed by the judges' liaison of any issues with a contestant's performance (i.e. an ineligible monologue, added or dropped lines from a sonnet and/or monologue or use of a prop).

Branch-Level Evaluation Guidelines

Contestant Evaluations

Below are the two main categories by which you will evaluate each monologue and sonnet:

Understanding

- A thorough understanding of the text, including language, character and plot.
- Within this category, there are three subcategories: meaning, language and character.

Expression & Communication

- An effective, interpretive delivery of the text.
- Includes the effective use of both body and voice to demonstrate an individual point-of-view.
- Within this category, there are three subcategories: vocal, physical and ownership.

For more details, see the Monologue Scoring Rubric and Sonnet Scoring Rubric.

Evaluation Forms

For the competition, we have developed a Judges' Evaluation Form, which was created based on educators' and judges' feedback from previous years. This form is designed to create a base of discussion. Each subcategory (above) is listed on a scale of 1 - 4 (1 : the least effective and 4 : the most). Criteria for each scale can be found in the Monologue Scoring Rubric and Sonnet Scoring Rubric.

On the Judges' Evaluation Form, you will score each monologue and sonnet in each of the subcategories. These scores are added up, and an overall score is awarded to each contestant. This score is not the sole determinant of the winner, but rather a tool used to select a winner.

Familiarize yourselves with the Judges' Evaluation Form; a sample form is included in this handbook. A scoring book consisting of Monologue Scoring Rubrics, Sonnet Scoring Rubrics and Judges' Evaluation Forms for each contestant in the order of their performance will be provided for you on the day of the competition.

Remember: You will see many contestants back to back. A few notes as the student begins, to fix the student's APPEARANCE in your memory, will immeasurably aid subsequent recall. To assist you, there is a box on the top left corner of the Judges' Evaluation Form for any notes related to the contestant's appearance. This box is for your own use and does not factor into the student's scoring.

APPEARANCE

PERFORMANCE #

**ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
NATIONAL SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION
JUDGES' EVALUATION FORM**

SCORE: ____/44

The Monologue and Sonnet should be viewed as integral parts of the whole performance and
equally considered when adjudicating.
Students are expected to show evidence of the following criteria. SCALE: 1 = LOW to 4 = HIGH.

STUDENT NAME: _____

<u>MONOLOGUE</u>	<u>SONNET</u>
Character: _____ Play: _____	Sonnet #: _____
<u>UNDERSTANDING</u>	<u>UNDERSTANDING</u>
MEANING: understands the speech and its context in the play. 1 2 3 4	MEANING: understands the sonnet's content (any messages, allusions, ironies, etc.) 1 2 3 4
LANGUAGE: understands Shakespeare's use of language in the monologue. 1 2 3 4	LANGUAGE: understands the sonnet's literary and poetic elements (rhythm, imagery, antithesis, etc.) 1 2 3 4
CHARACTER: an accurate portrayal of character point of view, status, and emotion 1 2 3 4	
<u>EXPRESSION & COMMUNICATION</u>	<u>EXPRESSION & COMMUNICATION</u>
VOCAL: clearly, naturally spoken at an effective volume and pace; reflects the character 1 2 3 4	VOCAL: clearly and naturally spoken at an effective volume, attuned to the poetic elements 1 2 3 4
PHYSICAL: clear, appropriate movement expressing the character and his/her intentions 1 2 3 4	PHYSICAL: an economy of movement that subtly enhances the sonnet 1 2 3 4
OWNERSHIP: confident, poised, energized, fully in character, captivates the audience 1 2 3 4	OWNERSHIP: confident, poised, energized, fully committed to sonnet, captivates the audience 1 2 3 4
MONOLOGUE SCORE: _____ out of 24	SONNET SCORE: _____ out of 20
NOTES:	NOTES:

Monologue Rubric

<u>UNDERSTANDING</u>	1	2	3	4
<i>MEANING</i>	- misunderstands the meaning of the speech and/or its context in the play.	- understands the general meaning of the speech (i.e. it is comedic). - does not understand the context of the speech in the play.	- clearly understands the meaning of the speech. - clearly understands the context of the speech in the play.	- sophisticated understanding the meaning of the speech. - detailed understanding of the context of the speech in the play.
<i>LANGUAGE</i>	- does not understand certain words, metaphor or imagery in the speech. - misunderstands poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme, etc.).	- understands most words, metaphor or imagery in the speech. - understands some poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme, etc.).	- understands all words, metaphor or imagery throughout the speech. - understands all the poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme, etc.).	- excellent understanding of all words, metaphor or imagery in speech. - nuanced understanding of poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme, etc.).
<i>CHARACTER</i>	- does not portray the character accurately in context of the play. - misunderstands the character's point of view, status or emotional state.	- portrays the character accurately in context of the play. - misunderstands some aspect of the character's point of view, status or emotional state.	- portrays the character accurately and clearly in context of the play. - understands the character's point of view, status and emotional state.	- portrays the character accurately and with detailed understanding of context. - sophisticated understanding the character's point of view, status and emotional state.
<u>EXPRESSION & COMMUNICATION</u>	1	2	3	4
<i>VOCAL</i>	- vocal expression unclear or ineffective (related to articulation, volume, pace, naturalness) - vocal choices do not reflect the character	- vocal expression somewhat unclear or ineffective (related to articulation, volume, pace, naturalness) - vocal choices do not accurately reflect the character	- vocal expression clear and effective (related to articulation, volume, pace, naturalness) - vocal choices reflect the character	- excellent vocal expression, clear and effective (related to articulation, volume, pace, naturalness) - vocal choices fully reflect the character
<i>PHYSICAL</i>	- physical expression unclear or inappropriate (related to use of space, and body movement) - physical choices do not reflect the character or his/her intentions	- physical expression somewhat unclear or inappropriate (related to use of space, and body movement) - physical choices reflect the character or his/her intentions	- physical expression clear and appropriate (related to use of space, and body movement) - physical choices clearly reflect the character or his/her intentions	- excellent physical expression, clear and appropriate (related to use of space, and body movement) - physical choices expertly reflect the character or his/her intentions
<i>OWNERSHIP</i>	- lacks confidence or poise - lacks energy - not fully in character - does not engage the audience.	- minimal confidence or poise - low energy - mostly in character - somewhat engages the audience.	- confident and poised - has energy - fully in character - engages the audience.	- impressive confidence and poise - performance level energy used skillfully - fully in character throughout - captivates the audience.

Sonnet Rubric

<u>UNDERSTANDING</u>	1	2	3	4
<i>MEANING</i>	- misunderstands the meaning of the poem - misunderstands the content of the poem (messages, allusions, ironies, tonal shifts, etc.)	- understands the general meaning of the poem (i.e. it is about love) - does not understand the content of the poem (messages, allusions, ironies, tonal shifts, etc.)	- clearly understands the meaning of the poem - clearly understands the context of the poem (messages, allusions, ironies, tonal shifts, etc.)	- sophisticated understanding of the meaning of the poem - detailed understanding of the context of the poem (messages, allusions, ironies, tonal shifts, etc.)
<i>LANGUAGE</i>	- does not understand certain words, metaphor or imagery in the poem. - misunderstands poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme scheme, etc.).	- understands most words, metaphor or imagery in the poem. - understands some poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme scheme, etc.).	- understands all words, metaphor or imagery throughout the poem. - understands the poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme scheme, etc.).	- excellent understanding of all words, metaphor or imagery in poem. - nuanced understanding of poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme scheme, etc.).
<u>EXPRESSION & COMMUNICATION</u>	1	2	3	4
<i>VOCAL</i>	- vocal expression unclear or ineffective (related to articulation, volume, pace, stress, etc.) - vocal choices do not reflect the poem and its structure	- vocal expression somewhat unclear or ineffective (related to articulation, volume, pace, stress, etc.) - vocal choices somewhat reflect the poem and its structure	- vocal expression clear and effective (related to articulation, volume, pace, stress, etc.) - vocal choices accurately reflect the poem and its structure	- excellent vocal expression that's clear and effective (related to articulation, volume, pace, stress, etc.) - vocal choices fully reflect the poem and its structure
<i>PHYSICAL</i>	- physical expression unclear or inappropriate (related to use of space and body movement) - physical choices overpower the poem and its language	- physical expression somewhat unclear or inappropriate (related to use of space and body movement) - physical choices somewhat reflect the poem and its language	- physical expression clear and appropriate (related to use of space and body movement) - physical choices clearly reflect the poem and its language	- excellent physical expression that's clear and appropriate (related to use of space and body movement) - physical choices expertly enhance and illuminate the poem and its language
<i>OWNERSHIP</i>	- lacks confidence or poise - lacks energy - not connected to the poem - does not engage the audience	- minimal confidence or poise - has low energy - mostly connected to the poem - somewhat engages the audience	- confident and poised - has moderate energy - fully connected to the poem - engages the audience	- impressive confidence and poise - performance level energy used skillfully - exceptionally connected to the poem throughout - captivates the audience.

