

TCFL Speech and Debate Events Overview

The Tri-County Forensics League (TCFL) sponsors 10 official league tournaments each competitive season, beginning with the Fall Novice tournaments, followed by the Winter Opens, and ending with the Spring State Qualifying Tournaments late February to mid-March. See our competition calendar on our league website: <<http://trivalleysite.yolasite.com>>. Novices are encouraged to compete at both novice *and* open tournaments! Compete often! Additionally there may be opportunities to compete at college and high school invitationals. The goal is to “qualify” in Feb/March by placing in the top 5 or 6 in your individual event or top-rank in Congress or Debate. You must compete in at least one League tournament at the “Open” level to be eligible to compete at a State Qualifier. All league tournaments follow the rules set forth by the state organization, CHSSA (California High School Speech Association), which holds a state championship tournament in April. If you “qual,” you earn the right to compete for a State Championship title!

Speech and Debate is divided into three main types of events: **Debate, Student Congress, Individual Events**

DEBATE: 4 types: Lincoln Douglas (LD), Parliamentary (Parli), Public Forum (Pu Fo) and Policy

LD: Lincoln-Douglas debate is one-on-one debate (you work alone). There is an affirmative speaker and a negative speaker. All contestants debate the same national topic, which changes each semester. Unlike other types of debate, LD is *value* debate. It is the most philosophical of all the debate categories. Thus, rather than debating the pros and cons of a proposed policy, students focus on the merits of the *values* implied in the resolution. Judging is based on effective presentation, taking into account direct clash of issues, organization, logic, analysis, evidence, sportsmanship, and persuasiveness. LD debaters prepare both sides of the resolution, the affirmative and the negative, and can expect to debate both sides at every tournament in alternating rounds.

Parli: Parliamentary Debate is an exciting two-partner/two-team competitive debate on a different topic each round. Each team is given a topic 20 minutes before the round begins. Published information may be consulted during prep time. But except for handwritten notes made during prep time, no materials may be brought into the debate round. Then, without the aid of prepared “briefs,” teams must argue for or against the resolution, relying on persuasive delivery and strong analytical arguments to win.

Public Forum (aka “Po Fo”): A great choice for beginning debaters. Two 2-person teams debate each other on a national topic which changes every month focusing on a current event. Research and prepared speeches are allowed and you can expect to work very closely with your partner both before and during the debate round. Teams will debate both sides of the resolution at every tournament.

Policy (Team Debate): This highly structured policy debate is two-person team debate in which one team, the affirmative, supports a resolution and the other, the negative, opposes it. All contestants debate the same national topic all year, but teams will have varied cases under the topic. Because this style of debate is “policy” oriented, the affirmative team has the burden of offering and defending a specific plan for change. The negative team has the burden of showing that there is no need for a change, that the affirmative’s proposal would not work or that the proposal would be disadvantageous. Judging is based on effective presentation taking into account direct clash of issues, organization, logic, analysis, evidence, sportsmanship, and persuasiveness.

Note: Debate is a serious activity and can become expensive. Debaters often purchase evidence, files, legal pads, briefcases, laptops, and many enroll in debate camps over the summer.

Student Congress is mock legislative debate patterned after our government’s congress. Using parliamentary procedure, students debate and vote upon bills and resolutions regarding state, national and international problems. The bills and resolutions are published 2-4 weeks before the tournament to allow time to research and prepare speeches. Speakers decide whether to speak in the proponenty or the opponency on each topic. In this event, you apply analysis skills as well as extemporaneous and impromptu speaking skills. Furthermore, you become familiar with current social and political problems and learn parliamentary procedure. Typically, students will compete in 3 or more 90-minute “sessions” (rounds) per tournament, arguing different bills and resolutions each time. 15-20 students per “House” are typical, and houses are divided into Novice, JV, and Varsity. You do not need to worry excessively about parliamentary procedure; each house will have a

varsity-level student presiding officer (“P. O.”) to recognize speakers and motions, call for votes, etc. Speakers are evaluated on their analysis of the arguments, clash with other speakers, use of evidence and delivery.

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS (IES)

NOTE: TIME LIMITS FOR ALL IES ARE 10 MINUTES, 30 SECONDS, UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

ORIGINAL ORATORY AND ORIGINAL ADVOCACY (OO/OA)

In **OO**, the student presents an original speech written by himself or herself. Subjects vary, but regardless of the topic, the student’s *aim is to arouse, persuade, inspire and or motivate*. There may be a maximum of 150 quoted words and these quotes must be identified. The speech should be memorized. No visual aids permitted.

Any appropriate subject may be used. The speech should not be expected to solve any of the great problems of the day, rather it should be expected to discuss intelligently, with a degree of originality and with some profit to the audience, the topic chosen. An “OO” may serve to alert the audience to a threatening situation, strengthen devotion to a cause, etc. Humor and satire are often employed.

OA is similar to OO but has important differences. Here the student presents an original persuasive speech which identifies a problem and offers a clear, concise legislative solution. Not as broad as OO, in OA the topic is limited to subjects concerning public policy issues of a tangible nature, and *the speaker must advocate a specific legislative and/or regulatory governmental action*. There may be a maximum of 150 quoted words and these quotes must be identified. The speech should be memorized. No visual aids.

EXPOSITORY (“EXPOS”)

The purpose of this original speech is to inform in an entertaining manner, rather than to persuade. It should explain, describe, clarify, illustrate or define an object, idea, concept or process. These speeches range from simply giving information to actually demonstrating a process. Although speakers are not required to use visual aids, it is recommended and most do. The visual aids used should enhance the speech; they should not substitute for effective writing and oral presentation. Costumes may be worn if they are used as visual aids and are put on and taken off during the speech; they may not be part of the speaker’s beginning or ending attire. The set-up and take-down of the visual aids are part of the timed speech, which is subject to the 10:30 limit. **Timing begins as soon as the speaker begins set-up, and does not stop until all aids have been cleared from view.** No persons or animals may be used as aids, nor may audience members participate other than as observers.

ORIGINAL PROSE & POETRY (OPP)

OPPs are perhaps the most varied of the IEs. The presentation is the original work of the student and may take the form of stories, poems, spoken word, skits, plays, essays, diary entries, or any combination, both humorous and serious. Subject to the 10 minute maximum/30 second grace, there may be up to 150 quoted words. The writing in OPP should demonstrate creativity. Any subject matter is fair game. The speaker may even present several original pieces, which may or may not be thematically linked. Dancing and singing are permitted.

SPONTANEOUS ARGUMENT (“SPAR”—NOT A STATE EVENT)

Description: This is a fun, exciting event, in which one speaker “debates” a topic against a rival speaker. The first speaker on the round posting sheet is affirmative, the second is negative and goes against the first, etc. The topics are worded in the form of resolutions, and may be silly or serious. The judge gives the “Aff” speaker the topic. That speaker has **1 minute** to prepare. The Aff then gives a **1 minute** constructive speech in which he/she identifies the topic and builds his/her position (either the judge or a student timer gives hand time signals). The opponent then has **1 minute** to prepare. The “Neg” then gives a **1 minute** constructive speech, building the reasons to negate the resolution. The two speakers then square off against each other in a civilized manner for **3 minutes of open**, unstructured argument. It ends with the Neg then giving a **1 minute rebuttal** speech, in which he/she clashes against the ideas offered by the Aff. The Aff has the last word, giving a **1 minute** rebuttal speech in which he/she clashes against the ideas offered by the Neg. **Both speakers deliver their arguments to the judge only; they should not face each other.**

IMPROMPTU: (It helps to have a stopwatch for this event!)

In this spontaneous event, the speaker prepares the speech in the judge's presence. The topics vary by round, from brief quotations to current events, to personalities, to single-word abstracts. From the time you are handed your choice of 3 topics, you have **2 minutes** (novices at a Novice tournament have up to 5 minutes) to prepare the speech. Prep time begins as soon as you are handed the topics. The maximum speaking time is **5 minutes**, and no notes may be used during the speech (although novices at a Novice tournament may use one 3X5 index card written on one side only). Unless there is a timer in the room, the judge gives time signals, usually at 2 mins, 3, 4, 4:30, and a 10 second countdown using finger signals, not vocal cues. Experienced Impromptu speakers will go right to the wire! There is no minimum time in this event, but length is rewarded. The speech may be humorous or serious and will be judged on content, organization, adherence to topic, and delivery. The speech does not have to be necessarily factual.

EXTEMPORANEOUS: A LIMITED PREP EVENT

In **Extemp**, speakers report to a designated "Extemp Prep" room, taking with them physical or electronic files they have organized prior to the tournament; live internet access in the prep room is forbidden. Every 7 minutes, a new speaker draws three questions pertaining to current events, and chooses the question he/she is most comfortable speaking about. Here is an example of the kind of questions you might get:

1. What are the major challenges facing Mexico?
2. Is the two-party political system broken beyond repair?
3. Can diplomacy defuse the threat of a nuclear Iran?

After choosing one topic, the speaker has 30 minutes to research, write and memorize a 6 - 7 minute speech (novice speakers at a designated Novice Tournament may make notes on one 3x5 index card and use it in the round). Topics are pulled from the last 6 weeks of periodicals such as *Time* and *The Economist* (although you are not limited to these publications for research purposes). You then report to a different classroom to deliver your speech to a judge who evaluates it on content, analysis of the question, and delivery. NOTE: the above sample questions are a mixture of foreign and domestic topics, but at many tournaments, International Extemp (IX) and National Extemp (NX) are actually separate events.

Speech Structure: Most Extemp speeches follow a format like the following:

I. INTRODUCTION (often about 1 minute long)

- A. Attention getter: anecdote, quote, etc. If it's an anecdote, there should be CLEAR relevance to the topic
- B. Explain the link of your anecdote or quote to the topic.
- C. Explain the significance/importance of the topic.
- D. State your question **WORD FOR WORD** as it was written.
- E. Answer the question, and preview what your two (or three) main points will be.

II. BODY (about 5 minutes long)

- A. Transition into your 1st Point
 1. Generalization/Observation/Assertion/etc.
 - a. Documentation/evidence (cite your sources!)
 - b. Documentation/evidence (cite your sources!)
 2. Generalization/Observation/Assertion/etc.
 - a. Documentation/evidence (cite your sources!)
 - b. Documentation/evidence (cite your sources!)
- B. Transition into your 2nd Point; support with cited evidence (repeat above steps)
- C. Transition into your 3rd Point; support with cited evidence (repeat above steps)

III. CONCLUSION (typically 30 seconds to 1 minute long)

- A. Repeat or paraphrase the Question (*So when we consider the challenges facing Mexico today, from the drug cartels to the . . .*)
- B. Repeat your answer and summarize the areas of analysis that you presented.
- C. Tie your ending into your opening attention getter ("close the circle").

INTERPS: DRAMATIC, HUMOROUS, THEMATIC, DUO & ORATORICAL (DI, HI, TI, DUO, OI) (AND STORYTELLING!)

Generally, the art of interpretation is to create characters, making them seem living and real to the audience. Presentation should be from memory and without costumes or props, **however special rules apply to Duo and Thematic Interp—take note!**

Selections must be cuttings from *conventionally published* literary genres—no online sourcing allowed. During the presentation, the speaker must name the title and author of the piece; this introduction may be given at or near the beginning of the presentation. Script adaptations (added or changed words) may be used for the purpose of continuity, not to change the original intent of the author. Selections are judged for their appropriateness as contest material and their suitability to the speakers using them. Speakers are judged on quality and use of voice, inflections, emphasis, pronunciation, enunciation, and especially the ability to interpret characters consistently.

General Rules and Judging Criteria for Interpretation

1. The speaker should recreate the character(s) through the use of voice, gesture and facial expression. The total effect should be to carry the listener away mentally to the time and place of the story.
2. If multiple characters are portrayed, they should be consistently distinct in voice and gesture.
3. Transitions in time, character, mood and emotion should be clearly evident.
4. Clear diction and good vocal communication skills should be utilized by the performer.

DRAMATIC AND HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION (DI/HI) Specific rules are:

1. Ten minute maximum with a 30 second grace period allowed.
2. Selection must be available nationally as a conventionally published source (electronic sources forbidden). The cutting must be from a single source in both DI and HI (Duo, Storytelling and OI too!)
3. An introduction at or near the beginning of the presentation must include the title and author.
4. A maximum of 150 added words is allowed (including the introduction). Words that are changed from the original text also count as “added words.” Changes can be made for purposes of clarity, but should not change the author’s intent.
5. The selection *should be memorized*. Use of notes in Open-level DI or HI results in an automatic low ranking.
6. No props, costumes, or character make-up may be used.
7. **Note: Singing, dancing and kneeling in Interp events is allowed!**

DUAL INTERPRETATION (DUO)

In this event, two students interpret a selection taken from a play, a story, a poem, or other published literary material. The duo presents a selection from a single, conventionally published print source (no internet downloads!) and each student may present a single character or multiple characters; singing, dancing and kneeling are also allowed. Students should not use scripts and must maintain “off-stage” focus; that is, *they may not look at each other or touch each other during the presentation—which often leads to very creative choreography!*

As in the other Interpretation contests, no props, costuming or stage make-up allowed, however Duo partners often color-coordinate their outfits. The 10:30 minute maximum applies. The selection should be balanced, with no one partner dominating. During the presentation the duo team must identify the author and the title from which the cutting was made. The cutting must be from a single, conventionally-published print source.

During the introduction only, the participants may address each other directly—they may even choose to make physical contact!—and may present personas different from the characters they portray in the cutting itself. However, during the performance itself, focus must be indirect (off-stage)—and **NO TOUCHING**.

STORYTELLING: (NOT A STATE EVENT—LEAGUE ONLY)

Description: Here the speaker interprets an entertaining published story appropriate for elementary school-aged children. The use of the book in the presentation is optional. Although not required, many storytellers use props; they may also put on costumes and sing and dance—Storytelling can get very athletic! Multiple characters and zany, exaggerated voices are the norm. There may be a maximum of 150 added words, including the

introduction. Like any interp, the intro must include the title and author of the story. A great event for Novice Interpers! Note: Storytellings can often be converted to HI's!

THEMATIC INTERPRETATION: (TI) THE "BINDER" EVENT

Description: In this event, the speaker attempts to communicate a specific theme by using at least three different literary selections (in a 10 minute speech) which illustrate and develop that theme. This event uniquely combines interp selections with original material. Each selection must be at least 150 words long and be pulled from 3 separate conventionally published sources, although the author need not be different. For example, three selections from three *different* works by one author would be acceptable).

Original introductory, transitional and explanatory material must be written by the speaker and contribute to the development of the theme. In fact, up to 1/3 of the 10 minute presentation may be the speaker's own writing.

A handheld manuscript is required in this event. This is the only event where the use of a script is **MANDATORY!** Scripts are usually placed in a small binder which must remain in the hands of the speaker at all times. Speakers often get very creative with the use of the binder! Although it can serve as a prop, it must not contain visual aids and **MUST** contain the speech—an empty binder could be cause for disqualification. The speaker, although required to carry the manuscript, is not required to actually read from it. The selections can be memorized, or the speaker may choose to "read" from the hand-held script. Neither method is preferred.

Judging Criteria: the total presentation should develop one thematic concept. The net result for the listener should be a new and clearer understanding of the theme the speaker develops. Interpretation of the selections should display a clear understanding of the mood and emotion of the selections. Introductory and transitional material should contribute to the total effect of the thematic development. Each selection may be introduced at the time it is presented, or TI speakers may introduce all of the selections at once near the beginning of the presentation, and then "weave" the selections together. As in all interp events, singing is allowed.

ORATORICAL INTERPRETATION (OI)

Finally, an interp event you can source on the internet! The selections will be speeches originally delivered in a public forum before an audience (NO comedy routines, poetry slams, etc.—these are excluded; speeches must be oratorical in nature). The student's aim is to effectively convey the message intended by the original speaker. There is the usual 10 minute maximum with a 30 second grace period. 150 original words may be added by the speaker in an introduction and for purposes of cohesion of the cutting. The introduction must identify the title of the speech, the author, the location, and the date and circumstances under which the original speech was delivered. Two or more speeches may not be combined. The selection should be memorized.

Note: OI is the only interp event which permits online sourcing.

Remember to visit our league website often! Stay informed of breaking news and tournament deadlines and results! All tournament invitations can be downloaded from the links on the calendar, and this and other helpful handouts may be accessed. You can also link to the state organization from our calendar, where you will find even more helpful information. Bookmark it!

<http://trivalleysite.yolasite.com>