

WHAT CONSTITUTES A "LEGAL" SCRIPT, ESPECIALLY IN THE INTERP EVENTS

Thoughts from your co-president, Kathy Graber

The worst thing I have to do at a tournament is disqualify a speaker. It's painful for the student, the coach, and the student's parents and teammates. I've had it happen to me, as has Jerome, and it's a terrible feeling. Please review the material your students enter to make sure it complies with the state rules. State rules can be found on our league website, or you can go to the cahssa.org website and find them in two places: on page 2 of the event coversheet, and in the CHSSA constitution itself. When you are in doubt, shoot me a question. I sit on the IE committee for CHSSA and I really do know the rules backwards and forwards. I can explain anything that confuses you.

Besides the heartbreak of a tournament DQ, there is another reason to make sure your kids are performing LEGAL scripts. In January, you will start getting your scripts ready for submission. No script can be performed at our IE qualifier without having secured league approval first. I will hold a script prep tutorial during our January 26th Open Debate tournament at SOCES, but do NOT wait until then. Otherwise, you may discover that the speech your kid has been winning with all season is "illegal" and not eligible to enter the state qualifier.

League approval entails submitting your script to the appropriate committee for a first read, then correcting any problems identified to you by that committee, then a second submission and then to me for my perusal and signature. If your student succeeds in qualifying for States, the script is then read again by the Area Chair. Again, if the Area Chair finds a problem, you will be given a brief window of time to correct the problem. TCFL prides itself on the fact that once we send our scripts to the Area Chair, we are almost always 100% perfect. We are known to have the best script approval system in the state! In fact, I cannot recall that even one of our league speakers at States has ever been the subject of a protest. Our speakers and coaches are ethical and above reproach. I say this, because there are leagues and coaches up and down the state who have unsavory reputations for cheating. When we win, our wins are legitimate!

As to DI, HI, DUO, and TI: the source of the speech must NOT come from the internet. I know CHSSA is slow to deal with the tech realities of our times, and print is a dying medium, but the current rules are the rules, and if your student is performing a script he/she found on the internet, IT IS NOT LEGAL and it will be rejected in advance of the state qualifier. A legal script must exist in print form, and you must acquire a hard copy. It must be widely available and conventionally published no later than January 1st of the competition year (this is to prevent custom-written interp scripts tailored specifically for the competitor). You can order it from an online purveyor, but they must MAIL you the hard copy version. Keep your receipt and even the envelope it comes in. You may be required to submit these artifacts to prove that you purchased it and that it exists in a hard copy format. If you download the script and print it up on your home computer, it is NOT legal.

OI is the exception. For OI, scripts may be printed directly from an acceptable website, and most these days are. Of course, the traditional print anthology or even magazine or newspaper are still acceptable sources as well. But since most OIs these days come from the internet, make sure in advance that you are able to print the OI script exactly as it appears on your computer screen. This may require you to take "screen shots." I never remember the steps involved, so each time I do it I google "taking screen shots on a mac" and the process is simple. DO NOT DOWNLOAD A PDF OF THE SPEECH. Instead, print it right off the website as it appears on your computer. Make sure the website URL appears either at the top or the bottom of each page.

If you are using the TED website, this can be a challenge, since the transcript of the speech usually appears in an interactive scroll-down menu. You may end up painstakingly scrolling a little bit each time, and taking lots of screen shots to capture the entire speech. Try and see if the speech you want exists on <<http://dotsub.com>>. Weird name for a website, but they have 100's of transcripts (thousands?) and CHSSA accepts this as a legitimate source. What is NOT legitimate are speeches that have been transcribed on social networking sites like Facebook or YouTube or someone's private blog, etc.

I don't want to go over all the interp rules here, but just make sure of the following: **With the exception of TI, all interps must come from a single source.** You are NOT permitted to combine material from different sources, *even if those sources are by the same author.* You may quote a separate source as part of the introduction, but you will have to provide an MLA style citations page for that quoted source. This pertains to songs as well. And **CHSSA frowns on adding songs to interps.** If your students want to sing, pull your material from a musical and sing away! But adding songs that are not part of the original material **is equivalent to combining multiple works;** they are also deemed to change the intent of the author, and as such are considered illegal. If your kid is desperate to add a song (and they can be very effective, especially in DI and Duo), then it should *only* be part of the introduction (or possibly hummed as an epilogue or as a transition device) as opposed to being inserted within the script.

For example, one of my girls was doing "The Women of Lockerbie" and she wanted to add a haunting Scottish folk song. We bought a book of Scottish ballads, photocopied the lyrics to "Loch Lomond," highlighted those lyrics she actually sang (as part of her allowed 150 added words), included those photocopied pages in our script submission, and she sang the piece at the beginning of her presentation as part of her intro. At the end of the presentation, she hummed the melody. Very effective. And legal.

As to OI: make sure the speech was written as a public address by a real person, and delivered as a public address by that same real person. Stand-up comedy, open-mike storytellings, etc. do not fit the definition of public address. Just because words are spoken in front of an audience does not make the speech a public address. Please see that your students are doing "legal" OIs so we do not have to surprise and disappoint them later. By the way, courtroom statements delivered to juries are considered legitimate public addresses as are sermons from the pulpit. But speeches delivered in movies or in books by fictional characters are NOT OIs (however they can be entered as DIs if the script is procured and prepared in a "legal" manner).

On another occasion, I will go over some of the red flag warnings for original speeches--or just ask and I will clarify things. There are so many rules to be aware of, they can get confusing and the kids rarely pay attention, which is where you come in. But please don't let your original kids plagiarize--**we DQ'd a speaker at our last IE qualifier for plagiarizing her OO** (one of her competitors in the round recognized her speech from a YouTube video and we pulled it right up on the spot and confronted the speaker and she had no choice but to admit it). It was awful for her coach, her family and her teammates. Please don't let that happen to anyone on your team. And the kids are very sensitive to **"canned" speeches in Impromptu and Extemp.** They will alert us to kids who are using the same canned material from round to round no matter the topic. That's a harder one to police, but you don't want that cloud hanging over your speakers' heads either. Coach everyone to be ethical, please.

Kathy