

# Introduction to the Wonderful World of TCFL Speech & Debate!



The Tri-County Forensics League (TCFL) sponsors 11 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 the 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 are opportunities to enter college and high school invitationals. The goal is to “qualify” in Feb/March by placing in the top 5 or 6 in your event. **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:

**Congress**

**Debate**

**Individual Events**

Within each category there are subdivisions

Although you can certainly compete in more than one event, novices might want to stick to just one event per tournament until they are more comfortable with the tournament experience. TCFL encourages EVERYONE to enter the first league tournament of the season, a **Congress** tournament held in October. At every Congress tournament, students are divided by their levels of experience. If this is your first or second congress, you will be assigned to a “Novice House.” If this is your 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Congress, you will compete in a “Junior Varsity House.” Beyond your 4<sup>th</sup> Congress, you are considered a “Varsity” speaker and may be asked to preside (“P.O”) over sessions as well as speak.

If you are new to Speech & Debate, Congress is a great way to take your first plunge. It’s more “bite-sized” than preparing a 10-minute IE speech or a whole debate case; in Congress you speak for 3 minutes on your topic—and you can use your notes! You will get 6 topics total at least 2 weeks in advance, so you have plenty of time to research and write a 3-minute pro or con speech on each topic. And you will have company, because in Congress, there are usually 15 speakers assigned to a room. Try it!

After the congress, your next Novice opportunity to compete is at the Novice **Debate** Tournament. You might try a partner debate event such as Public Forum (“Po Fo”) or Parliamentary (“Parli). Or your coach may recommend LD or Policy. Parli is a good choice for students who have good general knowledge of current events and who are good at speaking off the top of their heads. Po Fo is a better choice if you like doing research and are more comfortable delivering prepared speeches.

The last opportunity you have to compete at a strictly Novice tournament is the Novice Individual Events Tournament—the “**IE**’s.” There are 13 IE’s to choose from: prepare one (or two), and while you are at the tournament, try to observe other events during your “down time”. This will help familiarize you with all the events and you’ll be able to make more informed choices in the future. No matter which event(s) you choose to enter, novices *are* allowed to bring notes into the round without penalty. But notes are *only* permitted at the Novice IE tournament, for all “Open” level tournaments, you need to have your speech perfectly memorized.

League IE tournaments divide the events into 2 panels: Panel A and Panel B. You will perform your speech 3 times, regardless of whether you are in Panel A or Panel B. If you are doing an ‘A’ event, you will have the ‘B’ round off and vice-versa. Make sure you use your time well, and go see other events during your “off” round. At most league tournaments, the events are divided this way:

**'A' PANEL EVENTS**

**ORATORICAL INTERPRETATION (“OI”)**  
**ORIGINAL ADVOCACY (“OA”)**  
**EXPOSITORY (“EXPOS”)**  
**EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING (“EXTEMP”)**  
**DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION (“DI”)**  
**STORYTELLING**  
**SPONTANEOUS ARGUMENTATION (“SPAR”)**

**'B' PANEL EVENTS**

**ORIGINAL PROSE & POETRY (“OPP”)**  
**ORIGINAL ORATORY (“OO”)**  
**IMPROMPTU**  
**THEMATIC INTERPRETATION (“TI”)**  
**DUO INTERPRETATION (“DUO”)**  
**HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION (“HI”)**

A typical IE tournament league schedule looks like this:

8:00—8:30	Registration
8:30—9:00	Judges Instructions
9:00 AM	1 <sup>st</sup> Extemp Draw
9:00—10:30	Round 1A
10:30—12:00	Round 1B
12:00—1:30	Round 2A
1:30—3:00	Round 2B
3:00—4:30	Round 3A
4:30—6:00	Round 3B
7:00—8 PM	Awards!

So, if you are in an ‘A’ panel event such as Storytelling or OI, you will be competing every time you see an ‘A’ (rounds 1A, 2A, 3A). If you are in a ‘B’ panel event such as OPP or HI, you will compete every time you see a ‘B’ (rounds 1B, 2B, and 3B). You do the same speech every time (except for the Spontaneous Events Extemp, SPAR and Impromptu, where the topics change every round) before a different judge. So by the end of the day, 3 different judges have evaluated you. If you rank 1<sup>st</sup> in each round, you get a 1-1-1 and we will announce that you “picket fenced” and you will get a standing ovation when you come to the front of the room to get your trophy! Generally trophies are awarded to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners, but in the events with large entries, we give out 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, etc. The awards assembly gets very exciting!

Important: If you want to do an ‘Interp’ event, clear your material with your coach. There are strict state rules about scripts; furthermore, your selection must be within the boundaries of good taste and literary merit. If you are researching and writing an original speech, keep a list of every source you use, both online and conventional books. Anything you end up quoting or citing must eventually be documented when you submit your script for entry at the league State Qualifier; you will also be preparing a “Works Cited” page, so keep track of all your sources.

Schedules for TCFL Debate and Congress regular season tournaments differ slightly from what you see above, but those tournaments are also divided up into 3 rounds. At our debate tournaments, you will debate 3 times, twice on one “side” and once on the other, so it necessary to prepare both affirmative cases and negative cases in advance. At our congress tournaments, you will debate two bills/resolutions each round (3 rounds = 6 topics). Each tournament schedule will be on the tournament “invitation,” accessible by clicking the links on our website calendar. Other helpful handouts can be accessed on the webiste as well. Visit our league website often! Stay informed of breaking news and tournament deadlines and results! 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>

## Brief Event Descriptions

**Original Events** (10-minute time limits; all must be delivered from memory at the varsity level)



**Original Oratory** – The student will present an original speech. The subjects vary considerably; but, regardless of the topic, the student's aim is to arouse and persuade. Any subject may be used, but the contestant must be truthful. No more than 150 directly quoted words are permitted. The speech must be memorized. No visual aids are allowed.

**Original Advocacy** – This speech is the original work of the contestant. Any subject may be used, but the contestant must solve a current problem by proposing a governmental, legislative or regulatory change. 150 words of direct quotation are allowed; no visual aids. **NOTE:** All specific legislative remedies must reveal the agent of action—the body responsible for implementing the proposed solution.

**Original Prose/Poetry** - The prose-poetry presentations are the original composition(s) and ideas of the contestant. The material may be a monologue or a dialogue and may be dramatic or humorous in nature. Singing is permitted. The contestant may use up to 150 words quoted from other sources. Sitting, kneeling, and lying on the floor are permitted, but furniture may not be used.

**Expository** – The purpose of this speech is to inform in an entertaining manner. It should describe, clarify, illustrate, or define an object, idea, concept or process. Accompanying audio and/or visual aids are encouraged, but not required. No other person may be used as an aid. Items of dress necessary to the presentation may be put on and removed during the course of the presentation. The maximum 10-minute speaking time includes set up and removal of all aids.

### **THE 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!** All have 10-minute time limits, including intros; all must be delivered from memory at the varsity level:



**Storytelling** - A great LEAGUE ONLY\* event for Interpers, especially novices! 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. Note: **\*NOT A STATE EVENT**, but Storytellings can sometimes be converted to HI's!

**Oratorical Interpretation** - The speaker chooses a published speech delivered originally by a real person. The speech must have originated as a public address. Speech websites such as TED are popular sources for OI. If a famous speech is selected, the speaker should not do an impersonation. The *interpretation* should recreate the meaning of the selection through the use of voice, gestures, eye contact, and facial expression. In addition, the student makes a brief introduction of no more than 150 words that highlights the intent of the original speaker. The speaker, place, and date of the speech **MUST** be included in the introduction. Sitting, kneeling, and lying on the floor are permitted; furniture may **NOT** be used.

**Dramatic Interpretation** - Selections may be chosen from published stories, plays, essays, or poems that are serious in nature. The cutting may be a small portion of a larger work but should stand on its own. Title and author must be included in the introduction. No more than 150 words may be added for appropriate introductory and/or transitional purposes, but they may **NOT** change the author's intent. Gestures, pantomime, and singing are acceptable. Sitting, kneeling, and lying on the floor are permitted. Furniture may **NOT** be used.

**Humorous Interpretation** - Selections must be chosen from published stories, plays, essays, or poems, which are humorous in nature. The cutting may be a small portion of a larger work but should stand on its own. Title and author must be included in the memorized introduction. No more than 150 words may be added for introductory and/or transitional purposes and they may **NOT** change the author's intent. Gestures and pantomime are acceptable; sitting, kneeling, and lying on the floor are permitted. Furniture may **NOT** be used.

**Thematic Interpretation** - The contestant is to present a program of published works based upon a theme of his or her choice. Each program will contain three or more separate selections of at least 150 words or an entire work from different published works. Each selection must be at least 150 words or an entire work. Memorized introductory, explanatory and transitional material must include the authors and titles of each selection. Up to 1/3 of the entire presentation may be the original writing of the contestant. The contestant must hold a manuscript (typically in a binder), but reading is optional. The binder may be used as a prop. Sitting, kneeling, and lying on the floor are permitted, but furniture may **NOY** be used.

**Duo Interpretation** - Two contestants present a selection from published stories, plays, essays, or poems. Different pieces of literature may **NOT** be combined. The cutting may be a small portion of a larger work but should stand on its own. Title and author must be included in the memorized introduction. No more than 150 words may be added for introductory and/or transitional purposes, and they **MAY NOT** change the author's intent. The contestants may not touch each other, and may not use props or costumes. Contestants must use "off-stage focus" and may not make eye contact during the interpretation. Maximum speaking time is 10 minutes. Sitting, kneeling, and lying on the floor are permitted. Furniture may **NOT** be used.

## Spontaneous Events:



**Impromptu** – When the speaker's code is called, he/she draws a slip of paper from the judge. On the slip will be three topic choices (typically 3 nouns or 3 quotations). The contestant must choose one of the three. After drawing, the contestant has *TWO* minutes to prepare prior to speaking (novices are given extra prep time at the Novice Tournament only). The maximum time for the speech is *FIVE* minutes. There is no minimum time, but the goal is to hit 5 minutes. Hand time signals will be given. Stress is placed on the ability to speak easily on one subject in an organized, focused manner.

**Extemporaneous Speaking** - Prior to coming to the round, speakers report to a designated "Extemp Prep" room that is monitored by an adult proctor. Each speaker draws three topics, written in the form of

questions, chooses one and spends the next 30 minutes preparing a speech that answers the question. The topics will be drawn from events being discussed in major news outlets during the weeks prior to the tournament. Contestants are permitted to use books, magazines, and articles they have stored on their electronic devices, etc., but they may not consult with other persons. After 30 minutes, the proctor excuses the speaker to another room where a judge is waiting. The maximum speaking time is 7 minutes. There is no minimum time, but aim for 7 minutes. Hand time signals should be provided, but many “extempers” bring their own count-down timers and use those. Notes may not be used, except by novices at a designated novice tournament. At some tournaments, National and International Extemp are separate events, but a well-prepared extemper should be able to compete in both.

**SPAR:** This is a fun, exciting, very popular LEAGUE-ONLY\* event, in which one speaker “debates” a topic against a rival speaker. The topics are worded in the form of resolutions and may be silly or serious (i.e. “Resolved: Shoes should be optional” or “Resolved: Foreign-born American citizens should be able to be elected president of the United States”).

The first speaker that the judge calls up is the Affirmative, the second is the Negative and goes against the first, etc. The judge gives the “Aff” speaker the topic. That speaker has 1 minute to prepare. The Aff then gives a 1-minute speech in which he/she supports the topic and builds his/her position (someone in the round gives hand time signals).

The opponent then has 1 minute to prepare. The “Neg” then gives a 1-minute 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, in which he/she clashes against the ideas offered by the Aff and summarizes his/her position. The Aff has the last word, giving a 1-minute rebuttal in which he/she clashes against the ideas offered by the Neg and summarizes. Both speakers deliver their arguments to the judge only; they should not face each other. **\*NOT A STATE EVENT**

**SPAR Structure:** (Judge begins by handing provided topic to Affirmative Speaker; speaker has 1-minute prep)

Aff Constructive:	<b>1 minute</b>
(Aff hands topic to Neg:	1 minute prep)
Neg Constructive:	<b>1 minute</b>
Open Cross Ex:	<b>3 minutes</b>
Neg Rebuttal/Summary	<b>1 minute</b>
Aff Rebuttal/Summary	<b>1 minute</b>



**Congressional Debate:** In Student Congress, high school students imitate Congress by debating bills and resolutions. Before the competition, various league schools submit legislation to the league officers. After the legislation has been compiled, it is published on the league website about 2 weeks prior to the tournament. Your job is then to research the topics as much as possible, with the goal of being able to speak on both sides of every bill. When you arrive at the tournament, you are assigned to "houses" of approximately fifteen students where you debate the pre-assigned "bills" and "resolutions." Like most tournaments, there are 3 rounds or “sessions,” and different bills are debated each round. A varsity-level Presiding Officer will run each session. To speak or ask a question, each “senator” will be recognized by the Presiding Officer.

All speeches must be delivered from the front of the room. Each speech is limited to three minutes. In addition, each speaker gets one minute of cross-examination from the members.

## DEBATE: There are 4 different debate events



**Public Forum:** In this event, debaters argue a topic of national importance in terms that a "common" person would understand. The debate in "Po Fo" is conducted by teams of two people alternating speeches for their side. There is little focus on extreme speed or obscure debate jargon or theory; instead, successful Po Fo debaters must make persuasive and logical arguments in a manner that is accessible to a wide variety of audiences. THIS IS A PARTNER EVENT.

**Parliamentary Debate:** often shortened as "Parli," this is a debate format in which tournament officials assign a new resolution for every round. After the announcement of the topic, the two 2-person teams have a limited preparation time, usually 20 minutes, during which to plan their respective cases for the side they were assigned, either affirmative or negative. THIS IS A PARTNER EVENT.

**Lincoln-Douglas:** "LD" is sometimes also called "value debate," because it traditionally places a heavy emphasis on logic, ethical values, and philosophy. It is a one-on-one competition. This debate event is research and time intensive; it is not for the faint of heart!

**Policy 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" debate, the affirmative team has the burden of offering and defending a specific plan for a 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. THIS IS A PARTNER EVENT.

**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.**