

GETTING STARTED GUIDE

PROGRAM ORAL INTERPRETATION (POI)

Using selections from Prose, Poetry, and Drama, students create a ten-minute performance around a central theme. Program Oral Interpretation (POI) is designed to test a student's ability to intersperse multiple types of literature into a single, cohesive performance. A manuscript is required and may be used as a prop within the performance if the performer maintains control of the manuscript at all times. Performances can also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the title and the author of each selection.

WHAT SHOULD MY PROGRAM BE ABOUT?

Questions to Ask Yourself –

- What motivates you?
- What upsets you?
- What do you want to change about the world?
- Whom do you want to lend your voice to?

Then Narrow It Down by Asking the Following –

- What / who are you advocating for?
- What is your thesis?
- What are possible *causes, effects, and solutions*?
- How can this be a “universal” topic?

NOW THAT I HAVE A TOPIC, WHERE DO I FIND LITERATURE?

Begin with What You Know –

- Think about books, plays, novels, memoirs, poems that relate to the chosen topic
- Use varied search engines
- Utilize bibliographies
- Go to the library / bookstore!

HOW SHOULD I COMPILE THE LITERATURE THAT I'VE SELECTED?

Keep it Organized –

- Make multiple copies of each text (a copy you can write on and a pristine copy you can refer to as needed). Be sure to record or make copies of publication/citation information.
- Put the text into a Google Doc or other digital program that you share with your coach.
- Separate the pieces by genre.
- Choose a different font or color for each piece.

HOW DO I KNOW I'M USING NSDA APPROVED LITERATURE?

The NSDA *Unified Manual* can be found at www.speechanddebate.org, and it includes rules for all events. A general rule of thumb is that all pieces must be published and accessible by the public. Remember, just because you can find it on the internet (especially YouTube!) doesn't mean that it is appropriate for use in round! If you (and your coach) have read the rules in the manual and still are uncertain, your coach should email the NSDA at info@speechanddebate.org, and include information about the piece you'd like to perform. Usually, you'll receive an email answer in one to two days.

HOW DO I STRUCTURE MY PROGRAM?

Follow Dramatic Structure –

- Exposition (Teaser) – Introduce characters, settings, and topic/argument
- Inciting Incident (End of Teaser) – Introduce conflict or issue
- Introduction
- Rising Action – Where the conflict/issue grows
- Climax (at about 8 minutes) – The high point of the conflict or issue **choose this first!**
- Falling Action – Possible solutions to topic; resolution of characters

HOW DO I WRITE AN INTRO?

Consider Including the Following –

- Observation – Quotation, statistic, fact, idea
- Explanation – How does your observation relate to your piece?
- Application – Apply your observation to thesis / argument
- Titles / Authors – List all (by genre)
- Affirmation – End with something memorable

WHERE CAN I FIND VIDEOS OF POI?

All members can access the 2016 final round recording on the NSDA website. Members who have the Resource Package can also access the 2017 final round recording. Other students have chosen to upload videos of their own performances to platforms such as YouTube, but those performances are of varying quality and appropriateness.

Please note – POI is an event that is also popular in college-level forensics. As you come across videos of college competitors' performances, please keep in mind that some of the rules that govern collegiate speech are different from the rules for NSDA competitors. Always check with your coach before including a piece in your program.

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