Oral Reading

Reading literature out loud provides opportunities for students to analyze the text, to grow and to develop as a performer, to communicate a message to an audience and to perform an artistic creation. The oral reading competition should be an extension of the classroom literary and language arts activities in poetry, short stories and children’s fiction. See the UIL web site for frequently asked questions about oral reading.

Section 1458:
ORAL READING

(a) REPRESENTATION.

(1) Contestants. Students in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grades who are eligible under Sections 1400 and 1405 may enter this contest at the district meet. At the district meet, students in grades four through eight may enter no more than two speech events (Impromptu Speaking, Modern Oratory, Oral Reading.) Ninth grade students are limited by the requirements in Section 1000 (b).

(2) Divisions. This contest will consist of two divisions unless the district executive committee approves separate divisions for each grade.

(3) Individual Competition. Each participant school may enter as many as three contestants per division in the district meet.

(4) Team Competition. There is no team competition in the Oral Reading contest.

(b) NATURE OF THE CONTEST.

(1) Summary. Reading a text out loud serves four purposes: to analyze the text as a literary critic; to grow and to develop as a performer; to communicate a message to an audience; and to perform an artistic creation. All of these apply to the Oral Reading competition, which should be an extension of the classroom literary and language arts activities in poetry, short stories and children’s fiction.
or nonfiction. The maximum time for each presentation is six minutes. There is no minimum time limit.

(c) PREPARATION.
(1) Selecting Material. The League office does not prescribe a list of poetry or prose selections for oral reading. However, the A+ Handbook contains helpful information about selecting appropriate material. Selections used by contestants should not offend the moral standards of the community nor be in bad taste. Plays or speeches may not be used as selections. Coaches should revise or reject all selections that in any way fail to meet these qualifications.

(2) Manuscripts. Contestants shall read their selection from a manuscript. It is suggested that the selection be held in a simple, dark-colored folder or small notebook that does not draw attention to itself.

(3) Introductions. An introduction is not required but is permitted. The introduction shall be delivered within the time limit. The main emphasis should be on the individual selection or selections of prose or poetry.

(4) Style and Delivery. Contestants may not use costumes or props in the contest. Responsive use of the body (i.e. spontaneous changes in posture, gestures and place-to-place movement) is permissible. However, this active use of the body should:
(A) be appropriate to the demands of the selection;
(B) be a natural outgrowth from the literature to be performed; and
(C) be limited in scope.

The judge's opinion in this matter is final. Coaches are encouraged to prepare contestants for the fact that judges will apply their own opinions to what they value in style and delivery and these opinions will vary from judge to judge.

(d) CONTEST ADMINISTRATION.
(1) Personnel.
(A) Contest Director. The contest director will be in charge of running the contest and resolving any problems that arise. The director may appoint an assistant director. The contest director may be the coach of a participating student.

(B) Timekeeper. A timekeeper should be provided for each contest to notify the contestant of the amount of time remaining from the total allotted time. The timekeeper should demonstrate to the contestant the type of time signals to be used. While the timekeeper may use either hand signals or timecards to indicate to the speaker the remaining time, time cards are a much preferred method of signal.

(C) Judges. The contest director may recruit one judge or an odd-numbered panel of judges for each section. Judges may not be coaches of participating students. Prior to the contest, judges should become familiar with the oral reading evaluation sheet and the standards for style and delivery. So far as possible, judges should not know what school any contestant represents.

(2) Creating Sections. A section shall consist of no more than eight contestants. If nine or more students enter oral reading, they shall be divided into sections using the guidelines in Section 1003. Districts may create smaller sections when space permits. A separate room is needed for each preliminary section. Winners from the preliminary rounds will compete in a final round using the guidelines in Section 1003.

(3) Materials.
(A) Provided by UIL. The following materials will be provided to schools submitting the appro-
appropriate requisitions. See Section 1408 (c) for the dates when invitational materials will be available. See Section 1408 (e) for the dates when district materials will be available.

(i) Evaluation sheets.
(ii) Judges’ Ballots.
(iii) Contest Director’s Ranking Sheet for a panel of judges.
(iv) Contest rosters.

(B) Provided by the Student. Literature to be performed in appropriate notebook.

(C) Other. No other materials may be used in the contest.

(e) CONDUCTING THE CONTEST.

(1) Speaker Order. Contestants may be assigned to sections and speaker order may be established prior to the day of the meet. If the contest director prefers, the contestants in each preliminary section may draw for speaker order just before the contest begins.

(2) No Cheering. Audiences are permitted. Cheering should not be permitted during a contestant’s presentation, and the contest director shall see that this rule is strictly enforced.

(3) No Coaching. No speaker may be coached or prompted in any manner during the delivery of the selection.

(f) JUDGING.

(1) Briefing Judges. Prior to the contest, judges should become familiar with the oral reading evaluation sheet and the standards for style and delivery.

(2) Criteria. The evaluation sheet will include sections for commentary on understanding of the text, control of the performance, appropriateness of the selection, how well the performer prepared the audience and made the meaning of the selection clear as well as the quality of the performance including portrayal of the characters and how well the performer captured and communicated the essence of the literary work.

(3) Length of Readings. Students who go over the allotted six minutes shall be penalized one rank. For example, if the judges rank a student second who has gone over the time limit, that student shall be assigned third place and the student who was ranked third will be given second place. Because contestants of many ages participate in this activity, and because coaches are encouraged to choose selections of lengths which are suited to the ages of the contestants, there is no minimum time limit.

(4) Questions. Questions should be made to the contest director before the decision of the judges is announced as official. The decisions of the contest directors and/or meet officials on these matters are final.

(5) Ranking the Contestants. If a panel of judges is used, the contest director shall tabulate all judges’ ranks to determine places. See 1003 (b).

(6) Ties. There can be no ties in this competition. Ties shall be broken in accordance with Section 1003 (b).

(7) Points. Points are awarded through sixth place according to Section 1408 (i).

(g) VERIFICATION PERIOD. If a panel of judges is used, a verification period should be provided, during which unofficial results should be posted. Coaches should be given no more than 15 minutes to verify that tabulation of rankings is correct. The rankings given by judges are not subject to question.

(h) OFFICIAL RESULTS. The contest director shall announce the official results. Official results, once announced, are final.
Suggested Sources
There is no required list for Oral Reading. Selections must be published although the author may be unknown or anonymous. The following list is provided only as a springboard for ideas. There are countless examples of quality literature that is age-appropriate for students in oral reading. One of the benefits and much of the fun of participating in oral reading is exploring literature to find a selection you love and want to share with others. Happy hunting!

Poetry

- Aiken, Conrad, Cats and Bats and Things with Wings
- Arbuthnot, Mary Hill, The Arbuthnot Anthology; A Time for Poetry (with Shelton L. Root, Jr.)
- Benet, Stephen Vincent, “Nightmare Number Three”
- Bennett, Rowena Bastin, Songs from Around a Toadstool Table
- Berry, James, ed., Classic Poems To Read Aloud
- Bissett, Donald J., Poems and Verses about the City, Poems and Verses to Begin On
- Bradbury, Ray, “I was the Last, the Very Last”
- Brecht, Bertolt, “The Children’s Crusade”
- Brooks, Gwendolyn, Bronzeville Boys and Girls; “The Life of Lincoln West”
- Cammaerts, Emile, The Poetry of Nonesense
- Candill, Rebecca, A Pocketful of Crickets
- Carroll, J.A. & Wilson, E.E. compilers, Poetry After Lunch
- Carroll, Lewis, “The Walrus and the Carpenter”
- Ciardi, John, The Reason for the Pelican; Someone Could Win a Polar Bear; You Know Who; You Read to Me, I’ll Read to You
- Coatsworth, Elizabeth, Poems; Summer Green; Down Half the World; Peaceable Kingdom and Other Poems
- Cullum, Albert, The Geranium on the Windowsill Just Died But Teacher You Went Right On; You Think Just Because You’re Big, You’re Right
- Dahl, Roald, Revolting Rhymes
- Dakos, Kalli, Don’t Read this Book Whatever You Do; If You’re Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand
- de la Mare, Walter, Peacock Pie
- Dickey, James, “Tucky the Hunter”
- Dr. Seuss, Many books
- Dunning, Stephen, Edward Lueders, and Hugh Smith, eds., Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle
- Eliot, T.S., Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats
- Fadiman, Clinton, ed. The World Treasury of Children’s Literature (3 volumes)
- Field, Rachael, Poems; Taxis and Toadstools
- Fields, James Thomas, “The Owl Critic”
- Frost, Francis, The Little Whistler
- Frost, Robert, You Came, Too: Favorite Poems for All Ages.
- Fyleman, Rose, Fairies and Chimneys
- Giovanni, Nikki, Ego-Tripping and Other Poems for Young People
- Glenn, Mel, Class Dismissed; Class Dismissed II
- Graham, Al, “Casey’s Daughter at the Bat”
- Greenfield, Eloise, Honey, I Love and Other Love Poems
- Hader, Berta and Elmer, Snow in the City
- Harbaugh, Thomas Charles, “Trouble in the Amen Corner”
- Hubbell, Patricia, The Apple Vendor’s Fair
- Hughes, Langston, Don’t You Turn Back
- Kay, Helen, City Spring
- Klein, Gerda, The Blue Rose
- Kuskin, Karla, Dogs and Dragons, Trees and Dreams
- Lansky, Bruce, The New Adventures of Mother Goose, and other books of poems
- Lenski, Lois, The Life I Live
- Lewis, Richard, ed., Miracles
- Livingston, Myra Cohn, Sky Songs
- McCloskey, Robert, Time of Wonder
- McGinley, Phyllis, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year (contains some prose)
- McNaughton, Colin, Who’s Been Sleeping in My Porridge?
- Merriam, Eve, Boys and Girls, Girls and Boys; Catch a Little Rhyme; Finding a Poem; The Inner City Mother Goose; It Doesn’t Always Have to Rhyme; Rainbow Writing; There Is No Rhyme for Silver; Inside a Poem
- Milne, A.A., “Blinker”
- Moss, Jeff, The Butterfly Jar
- Nash, Ogden, A Boy is a Boy; “Custard the Dragon”
- Noyes, A., “The Highwayman”
- Plath, Sylvia, “Beds”
- Prelutsky, Jack, The New Kid on the Block; Snap on the Sidewalk
- Sandburg, Carl, Early Moon & other poems
- Service, Robert, “The Pencil Seller”
- Silverstein, Shel, A Light in the Attic; Falling Up; Where the Sidewalk Ends
• Smith, William J., Typewriter Town
• Soto, Gary, Canta Familiar
• Stein, Gertrude, The World is Round
• Tresselt, Alvin, Sun Up

Prose

• Baum, Frank, The Wizard of Oz
• Bloomingdale, Teresa, Murphy Must Have Been a Mother & other stories
• Blume, Judy, Books
• Bombeck, Erma, Stories
• Bradbury, Ray, Stories
• Brown, Rita Mae, Six of One
• Brown, Virginia, Who Cares
• Byars, Betsy, The Summer of Swans & other books
• Canfield, Jack, Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul & others
• Carroll, Lewis, Alice in Wonderland; Through the Looking Glass
• Cisneros, Sandra, Stories about growing up
• Cleary, Beverly, Books
• Clymer, Eleanor, The Big Pile of Dirt
• Collier, Christopher & James, My Brother Sam is Dead & other books (history & historical fiction)
• Conford, Ellen, If This is Love, I’ll Take Spaghetti
• Cooney, Barbara, “Three Cheesecakes and a Coffee”
• Cooney, Caroline, Drivers Ed; Goddess of Yesterday & others
• Crutcher, Chris, Athletic Shorts
• Dahl, Roald, Short stories or novels
• Danziger, Paula, The Cat Ate My Gynsuits & other stories
• DiCamillo, Kate, The Tale of Despereaux; Because of Winn-Dixie
• Dolson, Hildegard, “How Beautiful with Mud”
• Dr. Suess, 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins, Butter Battle Book
• Ephron, Delia, Funny Sauce; How to Eat Like a Child (and Other Lessons in Not Being a Grownup)
• Faulkner, William, The Wishing Tree
• Fleming, Ian, Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang
• Gag, Wanda, Millions of Cats
• Gilbert, Sarah, League of their Own
• Grahame, Kenneth, Wind in the Willows
• Henry, O., Stories
• Hinton, S. E., Tex
• Jackson, Shirley, Stories

• Kipling, Rudyard, The Jungle Book; Just So Stories, “The Elephant’s Child”
• Lang, Andrew, “The Six Sillies”
• Lawson, Robert, Ben and Me
• Lee, Harper, To Kill a Mockingbird (some scenes)
• Lewis, C. S., The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
• Lewis, Richard, ed., Journeys: Prose by Children of the English Speaking World
• Lindgren, Astrid, Pippi Longstocking
• MacIntosh, Prudence, Any stories
• McManus, Patrick, “Tenner Shoes”
• Milne, A. A., The House at Pooh Corner; Winnie the Pooh
• O’Connor, Frank, “First Confession”
• O’Hara, Mary, My Friend Flicka
• Osborne, Mary Pope, the Magic Treehouse books
• Peck, Richard, A Long Way from Chicago; A Year Down Yonder
• Pintauro, Joseph, One Circus, Three Rings, Forever and Ever Hooray
• Saki, “The Storyteller”
• Sandburg, Carl, Abe Lincoln Grown Up; Rootabaga Pigeons; Rootabaga Stories
• Sendak, Maurice, Where the Wild Things Are
• Silverstein, Shel, Lafcadio; The Lion Who Shot Back; The Giving Tree
• Singer, Isaac B., Tales for Children
• Slobodkin, Louis, The Amiable Giant
• Soto, Gary, Summer on Wheels and other stories and novels
• Spry, Johanna, Heidi
• Thurber, James, Stories
• Tolkien, J.R.R., The Hobbit
• Travers, P. L., Mary Poppins
• Twain, Mark, Novels or short stories
• Weik, Mary Harp, The Jazz Man
• White, E. B., Charlotte’s Web; Stuart Little; The Trumpet of the Swan
• Wilder, Laura Ingalls, Little House books
• Zion, Gene, Harry by the Sea
• Zipes, Jack, ed., The Outspoken Princess and the Gentle Knight: A Treasury of Modern Fairy Tales

Links to numerous lists of award winning literature for children and young adults are available on the UIL web site at www.uiltexas.org/aplus
INSTRUCTIONS
Please read from the Constitution and Contest Rules the instructions for evaluating the performances of the Oral Reading contestants. This evaluation criteria has been developed to feature each element of the oral reading situation: the text, the performer, the audience and the combination of all of these – the performance. The questions will overlap, but your comments will be valuable and instructional if you can address each area. You may continue your comments on the back. Please make your comments using language understandable to the contestant. Students and instructors appreciate specific and constructive comments. Please do not confer with other judges before ranking students. Judging decisions are an individual responsibility.

Speaker Number ___________  Speaker Name __________________________
Section _________________  Selection _______________________________

TEXT
Did the performer understand and recreate the speaker or narrator in the selection? Who is talking and why? Did the performer understand and recreate the scene in the selection? Where and when is the speaker/narrator talking and why? Did the performer understand and recreate the situation in the selection? What is happening?

PERFORMER
Was the performer in control of the performance situation? Did the performer adequately reflect the mood of the selection?

AUDIENCE
Introductions and transitions are optional. If presented, did the performer prepare you to listen to the selection? Was the reading memorable to you? Was the meaning of the selection clear to you?

PERFORMANCE
Was the climax(es) of the selection evident in the performance? Did pacing, pauses and builds seem appropriate? Were characters distinctly portrayed vocally, physically, emotionally, intellectually? Did the performance capture and communicate the essence of the literary work? Was it effective?

Judge's signature ________________________________
**Judge’s Master Ballot**

**Circle Event:** Impromptu Speaking  Modern Oratory  Oral Reading  Storytelling

**Instructions**
Each judge should use a copy of this form to rank each of the presentations in the contest. Please do not confer with other judges before ranking students. Judging decisions are an individual responsibility. Refer to the Constitution and Contest Rules or Evaluation Sheet for the criteria used to evaluate the presentations.

**District** ____________________________  **Section** ____________________________

**Grade Level** ____________________________  **Round**  □ Prelims  □ Finals

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<tr>
<th>Speaker Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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Judge’s signature  ____________________________________________

MAKE A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR EACH JUDGE
# Contest Director’s Ranking Sheet

for a panel of judges in speaking events

## EVENT

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## SECTION

| I | II | III | IV | FINALS |

## BEFORE RANKING, CHECK THE FOLLOWING

- ☐ Evaluation sheets have ranks
- ☐ Speaker order
- ☐ Length of presentation

## CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PLACES AND BREAKING TIES

Follow this order to place all contestants.

1. Majority (Watch for the “or better” language in determining a majority.)
2. Lowest sum
3. Judges’ preference
4. Decimal equivalents

## NOTES

1. See Section 1003 of the *Constitution and Contest Rules* or the *A+ Handbook* for a full discussion of this procedure.
2. Ties must be broken before other contestants are placed.
3. Be careful! The lowest total does not automatically win. Follow prescribed order of criteria for each ranking.
4. A computer program is available for multiple judge tabulation. See the UIL Web site.

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* Judges’ preference and decimal values are used only to break ties.