



National Association
Of
Dramatic and Speech Arts,
Incorporated
(NADSA, Inc.)

Performance Competition Handbook

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PREFACE

This handbook has been prepared to provide detailed guidelines about the various events sponsored by the National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts, Incorporated (NADSA, Inc.) during the Annual Conference. The Annual Conference is organized, planned and presented in a festive spirit of fun and personal growth. It is a time to fellowship and celebrate the art of performance. During the early years, concern was raised about the training and development opportunities available to African-American individuals who desired to embark on building a career in the arts. The idea of NADSA **was born**. NADSA began hosting an Annual Conference with hopes of offering an ongoing opportunity for up-and-coming NADSA members. Participants in the Annual Conference receive hands-on-training as well as various events to display their talents. It is important that we highlight the conference format. **You will notice that the conference activities are presented in a Festival format as opposed to a Tournament.** All Conference participants should be clear on the differences between the two.

- The **festival** is a competitive events or series of events in which participants are evaluated to determine competitive rating. Festivals do not emphasize competition and winning because the participants are not ranked; participants are judged against ***qualitative subjective standards*** to determine whether their performance has been superior, excellent, good, fair, or poor. Trophies and certificates usually are awarded to participants who received good, excellent, and superior ratings. Only one round is involved. The festival stresses training and providing experience, and puts less emphasis on competition. The coordinator of a festival often provides a feature that is comparatively unique. Festivals also tend to schedule more time for the round, to allow ample time for oral critiques after each participant has performed. The NADSA festival of events are held so that all persons in attendance may view all participants and hear most oral critiques as time permits. Also, unlike a tournament, only ONE participant from an organization may participate in each individual forensic activity with the exception of Original Poetry.
- A **tournament** is a competitive event or series of events in which participants are evaluated to determine comparative positions by rating and ranks. The goal of a tournament is the ranking of participants in each event. Accordingly, the host will award trophies or certificates for the various rankings. The element of competition is often controlled by establishing divisions that are based on qualifications, so that novices need not compete directly— at an unfair disadvantage— with experienced persons. In many meets, the best teams and individuals ultimately compete against each other in elimination rounds leading to a final, championship round. The evaluation of the participants is made by qualified critic-judges who provide the tournament director or Host with the ballots from which ***he/she*** can determine the final ratings and rankings.

Our hope is that ALL participants will read this manual prior to preparing for the NADSA competitions.

INTRODUCTION

The National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts, Incorporated (*NADSA, Inc.*) was founded in 1936. *NADSA, Inc.* is a professional affiliation of performers, administrators, educators, students, technicians, and craftsmen of the *theatre, communicative and performing arts*. *NADSA* serves a two-fold purpose:

- To encourage member institutions to establish and conduct programs in the theatre, communicative and *performing arts*; and
- To provide pre-professional as well as professional experience for students, faculty, and practitioners.

The *NADSA* festival is a time to fellowship and celebrate the art of performance. All *NADSA* members will have the opportunity to observe and participate in the sharing of the Speech and Dramatic Arts during the conference. This handbook is designed to provide you with the information needed to prepare for an enjoyable conference.

Please Enjoy!

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS

Allen Williams One-Act Play Festival

(15 Minute Critique Session Follows each Round of Competition for participants ONLY)

Contestants in this event will need to present a complete dramatic work without script in hand. NO INTRODUCTIONS. The work may be a one-act or cutting from a full-length theatrical or screenplay (TV or film) or any creatively staged piece that has a plot and a complete through line. There is a 60 minute (ONE HOUR) time limit. ***This includes set-up and strike. If the time exceeds 60 minutes, the cast is automatically disqualified.*** A copy of the floor plans and special needs (sets, sound, or lighting) must be submitted to host before conference submission deadline.

Play Production Critique Criteria

1. **Choice of play:** (appropriate for the particular producing unit).
2. **Direction:** (whether concepts are viable and successfully realized. Casting, work with actors; control and delineation of structure of production. Stage pictures and movement).
3. **Acting:** (believability, technical skills of the performer, interpretation of characters, ensemble performances).
4. **Production elements:** (utilization of the space and the contribution to production concept as costumes, properties and environments).
5. **Execution:** (running of the show which includes set up and strike).

Only basic lighting and set pieces will be provided by the host institution for rehearsals and performance. All works are rated: ***Superior, Excellent, or Good.*** Plaques are awarded to productions rated Superior and Excellent. Trophies are presented to productions rated good. ***There will be a closed critique of the productions after each round of competition. There will be an open critique of general comments at the end of the play festival, depending on the time and judges' availability.***

Duo-Acting

A Duo-Acting scene includes two actors performing a complete scene without scripts. Performance time must be at least five minutes but not to exceed seven minutes (5 to 7 minutes). No more than two or three pieces of furniture, *such as a table, chair or stool* may be used. Basic set pieces will be provided by the host institution but **must be requested in advance**. Must provide own props, if applicable. No costumes allowed, however a costume accessory is permitted. Performers are required to strike their set, props, and/or costume accessories pieces unless otherwise notified. A total of thirty seconds is allowed which includes both Set-up and strike. Three-points will be deducted for every 15 seconds under OR over time.

Duo-Acting Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Voice:** Can actors be heard distinctly? Is rate too fast or too slow? Variety of rate and inflection? Pronunciation and articulation properly done for each character? Is dialect (is applicable) used correctly and naturally?
2. **Characterization:** Is there a complete bodily and mental recreation of the characters by each actor? Reaction to other characters complete and effective? Can audience “believe” their characterizations all the time the actors are on stage?
3. **Movement:** Were movements of each actor in keeping with the character? Was there controlled, poised body movement? Pantomime, if used, accurate and convincing?
4. **Contrasting:** Clearly contrasting moods in the dialogue? Are emotional transitions natural and effective? Are lines delivered in a manner that seems natural to the play’s characters?
5. **Ensemble:** Smoothness of acting, indicating adequate rehearsal and close cooperation and understanding among the actors? Is it a closely knit, rhythmically-correct show?
6. **Timing:** Are cues picked up properly? Is pacing correct throughout?
7. **Motivation:** Are there logical reasons for all business and movement by the actors which is consistent and in keeping with the characters in the play?

All works are rated: *Superior, Excellent, or Good*. Trophies will be awarded to the three teams with the highest score by the adjudicators.

Dramatic Monologue

A Solo performance from any medium. No scripts allowed. Monologue must be complete. Movement is permitted. The performers may use a chair and hand props. Performance time must be at least three but not exceed five minutes (3 to 5 minutes). Three-points will be deducted for every 15 seconds under OR over time. Performer must strike chair (if used in scene) unless otherwise notified.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. **Voice:** Was projection adequate for space? Was rate too fast or too slow? Was there variety of rate and inflection? Was pronunciation and articulation properly done for the character? If dialect was used, was it done correctly, clearly, and naturally?
2. **Characterization:** Was there a complete mental and vocal recreation of the character? Did you “believe” the performer’s characterization during the whole performance?

3. **Movement:** Were movements in keeping with the character? Was there too much random movement or were there logical reasons for all movement? Was it consistent? Did actor possess a well controlled body? Were pantomimes accurate and convincing?
4. **Mood:** Was the author's attitude properly projected? Were emotive elements clearly recognizable: fear, sadness, anger, etc.?
5. **Contrast:** Were there clear and contrasting moods in the monologue? Were these emotional transitions natural and effective? Were the lines delivered in a manner which seemed natural to the character in this situation?
6. **Tempo:** Were the lines allowed to drag? Was it too fast or too slow to follow intelligently? Was the pace in keeping with the general ideal of the literary work? Was it fast enough for farce? Did it slow down for tragedy? Were sub-climaxes and the climax well built up?

All works are rated: *Superior, Excellent, or Good*. Trophies will be awarded to the three individuals with the highest score by the adjudicators.

Oral Interpretation of Poetry

Contestants in this event must present a poetic selection with script, bound in a black binder, in hand. Poetry is defined as a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm. An introduction is required at beginning of performance and must include name of selection(s) and the author. Introduction does NOT have to be memorized. Participant may use more than one selection, but an introduction that explains the through line or theme of the selections must be a part of the total performance. Creative introductions are permitted (song lyrics, quote, etc.). Performance must be between 3-5 minutes. ***Time starts with introduction.*** Three-points will be deducted for every 15 seconds under OR over time. Movement is limited to two steps.

Criteria of Evaluation

1. **Choice of Selection:** Is the selection appropriate for the speaker and occasion? Does it have enough merit to justify the time and effort devoted in a contest of this sort?
2. **Adequacy of Introduction:** Does it give enough information about the author, setting, and circumstances to establish the proper mood and understanding on the part of the audience? Does it arouse attention and interest? Was the transition from introduction to selection smooth?

3. **Apparent Insight and Understanding:** Does the interpreter appear to have an insight into the mood and emotional implications of the selection? An appreciation of the author's theme, purpose, and point of view? An understanding of the intent of unusual words, allusions, figure of speech, and the like?
4. **Characterization:** Is character delineation vivid and consistent? Is it secured largely through vocal and facial suggestions rather than through "impersonation" and "acting"? Are transitions between characters smooth without being obscure?
5. **Voice and Diction:** Is pronunciation acceptable? Is enunciation distinct without being pedantic? Is voice clear, resonant, pleasant, and flexible enough to be responsive to mood and meaning? Are these projected adequately?
6. **Bodily Action:** Is there physical poise as shown in posture, gesture, and movement? Does the interpreter avoid distracting mannerisms and other unmotivated activity? Does he avoid "extravagant theatrical projection" although otherwise motivated and appropriate?

All works are rated: *Superior, Excellent, or Good*. Trophies will be awarded to the three individuals with the highest score by the adjudicators.

Oral Interpretation of Prose

A prose selection (non-poetry) is presented with script, bound in a black binder, in hand. Prose is defined as a story told in ordinary language that can be distinguished from poetry by its greater irregularity, variety of rhythm and its closer correspondence to the patterns of everyday speech. An introduction is required at beginning of performance and must include name of work and the author. Creative introductions are permitted (song lyrics, quotes, etc.). Introduction does NOT have to be memorized. ***Time starts with introduction.*** The selection must be at least three minutes but not to exceed five minutes (3 to 5 minutes) in length. Three-points will be deducted for every 15 seconds under OR over time. Movement is limited to two steps.

Criteria of Evaluation

1. **Choice of Selection:** Is the selection appropriate for the speaker and occasion? Does it have enough merit to justify the time and effort devoted in a contest of this sort?
2. **Adequacy of Introduction:** Does it give enough information about the author, setting, and circumstances to establish the proper mood and understanding on the part of the audience? Does it arouse attention and interest? Was the transition from introduction to selection smooth?
3. **Apparent Insight and Understanding:** Does the interpreter appear to have an insight into the mood and emotional implications of the selection? An appreciation of the author's theme, purpose, and point of view? An understanding of the intent of unusual words, allusions, figure of speech, and the like?

4. **Characterization:** Is character delineation vivid and consistent? Is it secured largely through vocal and facial suggestions rather than through “Impersonation” and “acting”? Are transitions between characters smooth without being obscure?
5. **Voice and Diction:** Is pronunciation acceptable? Is enunciation distinct without being pedantic? Is voice clear, resonant, pleasant, and flexible enough to be responsive to mood and meaning? Are these projected adequately?
6. **Bodily Action:** Is there physical poise as shown in posture, gesture, and movement? Does the interpreter avoid distracting mannerisms and other unmotivated activity? Does he avoid “extravagant theatrical projection” although otherwise motivated and appropriate?

All works are rated: *Superior, Excellent, or Good*. Trophies will be awarded to the three individuals with the highest score by the adjudicators.

Extemporaneous Speaking

Contestants will be briefed 5 minutes prior to the Extemporaneous draw. Participants in this event will draw two topics in the general area of current events relating to the African-American experience in politics, health, education, entertainment, culture, religion, or sports. All contestants will have 15 minutes collectively to prepare a speech that is the original work of the student. Limited notes are permitted. Note cards will be provided for contestants. Sources cited are NOT required in speech. Performance time must be at least three minutes but no more than five minutes. Three-points will be deducted for every 15 seconds under OR over time. ***Time cards showing remaining time will be provided by a time keeper.*** Contestants arriving late will forfeit preparation minutes missed. Contestants arriving later than 15 minutes may NOT be allowed to perform.

Criteria of Evaluation

1. Relevancy
2. Thought content
3. Organization
4. Development of ideas
5. Use of language
6. Voice and Diction
7. Bodily action and communication

All works are rated: Superior, Excellent, or Good. Trophies will be awarded to the three individuals with the highest score by the adjudicators.

J.A. Johannes Original Poetry

This is a ***non-competitive event***. Poetry is defined as a concentrated awareness of experience of language chosen and arranged to elicit an emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm. This event will take place at the “Mixer” original poetry night during conference. All works presented in this category will be ***reviewed and edited for publication***. Participants in this event will present original poetry (script in hand) with an introduction. The selection must be at least three minutes but not exceed five minutes in length. ***Participants must submit three (3) typed copies of his/her poetry, 30 days prior to the conference date, to the designated chair of this event and a completed NADSA Permit-to-Publish form for each selection must accompany submission. Selections will not be rated.***

W. Dury Cox Design Competition

Contestants in this event will present a ***three-dimensional work*** - set, costume or light design – from a school production, past or current, which will be publicly displayed at conference host site. The design will be judged by adjudicators. Competition guidelines are as follows:

NADSA Design Competition Guidelines:

Costume Design Competition

1. The costume design should be presented on a hanger(s) and available for possibly being draped on dress form.
2. The design should be rendered on 11" x 14" sheets.
3. The design rendering should be mounted on matte boards
4. A brief (one page) synopsis of the play and design intent should be included.
5. Swatches of the paint, costume and gel should be included.
6. Sample 8 x10 color photos with paper work should be mounted. (No more than four photos).

Lighting Design Competition

1. The lighting design should include a light plot as well as photos of lit theatre stage.
2. The design should be drafted on 18" X 24" or 24" x 36" velum.
3. The design should be photocopied and the photo copies should be mounted on matte boards.
4. A brief (one page) synopsis of the play, design intent, and instrument schedule should be included.
5. Swatches of the paint, costume and gel should be included.
6. All paperwork should be mounted on matte board.
7. Sample 8 x 10 color photos with corresponding cue sheets and color sections should be mounted. (No more than four photos).

Scene Design Competition

1. The scenic design should include a floor plan, section, and evaluations of the scenery.
2. Actual model (assembled in white) is to be included.
3. The design should be drafted on 18" x 24" or 24" x 36" velum.
4. The design rendering should be photo copied and mounted on matte boards.
5. A brief (one page) synopsis of the play and design intent should be included.
6. Swatches of paints, upholstery, and other fabrics used should be included.
7. Sample 8x10 color photos with paper work should be mounted. (No more than 4 photos)

S. Randolph Edmonds Playwriting

All entries must be original with themes from the Black and/or African-American experience. Previously produced works, adaptations, and translations are INELIGIBLE. Scripts must be professionally bound with a cover sheet that includes: name of playwright, date, title, school, address, and office phone. The second page of manuscript should present a brief resume of playwright. Three copies of the script must be submitted before current submission deadline (see current S. Randolph Edmonds Playwriting form). Revisions are not allowed after work has been submitted. The scripts will be sent to professional playwrights, directors and/or producers for adjudication. The winner will be announced at the Annual NADSA Conference Awards Banquet. The winner will receive the S. Randolph Edmonds Playwriting Award, ***which includes a plaque and a monetary award. The winning play will be presented by the host institution at the following year's conference.***

Reader's Theatre

Participants in this event will present an oral interpretation of a complete dramatic work with script, bound in a black binder, in hand. The work may be a one-act play or cutting from a full-length theatrical or screenplay (TV or film) with a plot and a complete through line. This category is limited to ***six (6)*** entries. Consequently, the first six schools which submit their forms will be allowed to participant. Time allowed is ***twenty (20)*** minutes which INCLUDES set-up and striking. There is no limit on how many participants per school. The productions are critiqued according to:

Adaptation of Script

1. Does the material evoke a definite response from the audience? Is it likely to give the audience a "memorable experience"?
2. Does it have "wholeness"? Does it leave the audience with a sense of having participated in a complex experience?
3. Are the story line and characters clear?
4. Is the division of lines meaningful? Does the characters have lines that would have been more effective if given by the narrator? If a character speaks narration of description, is the material clearly from **his/her** point of view? Does the narrator have lines that would have been more effective if given by characters?
5. Does the script have close-up scenes– scenes that reveal details of emotion, motivation, environment and characterization?
6. If it is a compiled script, has it been given dramatic unity– made into a Theatre piece?

Staging

1. Are the readers arranged so that all faces can be seen clearly?
2. Are the readers arranged for the best psychological effect?
3. Is the arrangement of the readers pictorially effective?
4. If levels are used, do they seem appropriate?
5. Are the readers sufficiently close together for the audience to see the reaction of other characters to the speaker?
6. If movement is used, does it server a definite purpose for showing psychological relationships? For marking a transition of time or place? For illuminating the section in the text?
7. Is the lighting effective? Can the faces of the speakers be clearly distinguished? If lighting is used to pick out scenes and to mark transitions, is it handled smoothly?
8. If music or other sounds are used, do they add to the total impact of the performance? Does the music interfere with audience comprehension of the words?
9. Does the clothing of the readers aid in unifying the production? Does it contribute to the pictorial effectiveness? Does it aid in suggesting who the characters are?
10. If properties are used, do they have the audience envision the scene, or are they distracting?

Performance

1. Does the performance have an overall unity?
2. Is the meaning of the script projected?
3. Does the performance have flow and effective pacing? Does it move from segment to segment with a sense of progression? Does it build to a high peak of interest?
4. Does the performance have a spontaneous “first-time” quality?
5. Is the narration delivered in a manner making it an integral part of the script and the performance (or does the action stop for the narration)? Is the narration vivid? Does it reveal the speakers’ attitude? Is the point of view clear? Does the narration seem to create images of scenes and actions in the minds of the audience?
6. Does the narration use a storytelling manner, relating directly to the audience? Does the narrator seem to visualize the imaginary scene when *he/she* is not speaking? Does the narrator make clear *his/her* story.
7. Do the readers project distance and believable characters?
8. Do the characters change as directed by the literary experience?
9. Are the readers “thinking with senses” and creating mental images as they speak the words?
10. Do the readers possess aliveness? Do they have projective energy– a reaching out to the audience – in their reading and action?
11. Do they listen when they are in the scene? Do they react through facial expression and muscle tone?
12. If an interpreter reads lines for more than one character, does *he/she* use voice and body tone to make a clear distinction among the various characters.
13. Is it clear at all times which readers are in the scene? Are the readers who are not in the scene sufficiently unobtrusive?
14. Do the interpreters handle their script efficiently and unobtrusively?
15. Is there consistency in the focus of the readers? Do all the readers locate a given scene

in the same area?

All works are rated: *Superior, Excellent, or Good*. Since this category is in an experimental stage, certificates will be presented to all productions according to the rating received. Each production will receive an oral critique.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVENT PARTICIPANTS

- Upon completion of registration, you will be *issued a Name Badge*. This will serve as your identification and admittance to all conference for duration of annual conference.
- On the day of competition, report to assigned room at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the event. (Extemporaneous Draw participants should arrive 30 minutes before their competition begins). Introduce yourself to the event chairperson.
- *Participants will be assigned numbers according to receipt of their institution's registration (i.e. the first registered institution will be Participant #1, and so on. However for the One-act Play competition, Directors will pull numbers for their respective line-up).*
- After your presentation, return to the seating area until all contestants have presented.
- Upon completion of the event, a fifteen (15) minute critique session will be held if time allows. This critique will cover general areas of concern. The exception is the One-Act Play competition which has a closed-critique for round of participants only.
- Participants' completed evaluation forms from adjudicators will be given *to Directors at end of Banquet*.
- Please be respectful of other performers on stage. **MAINTAIN THEATRE ETIQUETTE AT ALL TIMES.** No cat-calls, hoots, or heckling performers.
- Please be aware that excessive profanity and/or sexuality during your performances may leave your institution open for censure in the competitions if your language and/or body movements violate acceptable academic standards.
- There is no official dress code for NADSA competitive events. However, socially acceptable dress codes are appreciated. Formal or semi-formal attire is encouraged for Banquet.

- **Flashing of cameras are not permitted during any performance.**

PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO APPROACH NOR HAVE ANY DIALOGUE WITH ADJUDICATORS OR TIME-KEEPERS WHILE AN EVENT IS IN SESSION.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVENT CHAIRPERSONS

- **On the day of competition, report to the Registration Desk thirty (30) minutes prior to the event you have been assigned to chair. There you will receive the necessary materials and room assignment for the scheduled event.**
- **Report to the assigned room at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to start of the event. Determine if judges and time keepers are present. Check to ensure that they have all the necessary tools for adjudication and timekeeping. Be sure the room temperature is comfortable and lighting is suitable.**
- **Two minutes before event starting time, call for order so that everyone would take a seat. Proceed with a brief introduction of the event, explaining the procedure to be followed and concluding with the introduction of judges. In the competition, introduce each contestant by number only (“Contestant #1”, etc.).**
- **Upon completion of event, acknowledge appreciation of all in attendance. Allow judges and timekeepers enough time to complete and check over rating sheets. A fifteen (15) minute critique session will be held after all competitors have presented. Have each judge and timekeeper place the rating sheets in the envelope made available to them. Collect envelopes and seal. Submit results to the Conference Competition Chairperson at the Registration Desk.**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TIMEKEEPERS

- **On the day of competition, report to the Registration Desk, thirty (30) minutes prior to the event. There you will receive room assignment, stop watch, time cards, and time report form.**
- **Report to assigned room at least ten (10) minutes prior to the start of the event. Acknowledge your presence to the Chairperson/Facilitator. Take a seat where you are visible to all of the judges.**
- **When timing all events, begin your clock at the moment the contestant utters the first word. Upon completion of each presentation, record time on report form. Make sure you have the number of each contestant on the form.**
- **For the Extemporaneous Speaking Event, you will be given a set of time cards that read: 4, 3, 2, 1, ½, and STOP. When timing the event, begin when the first word is uttered. After a contestant has spoken for one (1) minute, put up the 4 minute card. Continue in this manner until the contestant has one (1) minute left to speak. When the contestant has spoken for ½ of the minute, put up the ½ minute card. Do not stand up. Do not call out “STOP”. Raise your hand to put this card up. This will serve as a signal that the contestant’s time is up.**
- **Upon completion of event, sign your name where indicated on the form. Place the form in the envelope and seal. Submit envelope to Chairperson of the event.**

TIMEKEEPERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO APPROACH NOR HAVE ANY DIALOGUE WITH ANY OF THE CONTESTANTS WHILE AN EVENT IS IN SESSION.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGES

- **Report to the registration desk thirty (30) minutes prior to the competitive event. There you will receive the necessary materials, room assignment and criteria for adjudication.**
- **Report to the assigned room at least ten (10) minutes prior to start of the event. Acknowledge your presence to the Chairperson/Facilitator.**
- **After each Contestant has finished, offer your critique on one of the sheet provided. Please record the number and title of the selection on the evaluation forms.**
- **After the last Contestant has finished, keeping the event criteria in mind, record your rating. Double check your decisions to make sure you have recorded exactly what you intended.**
- **Facilitate a fifteen (15) minute critique session covering general areas of concern if time permits.**
- **Sign your name where indicated on the forms. Place the forms in the envelope and seal. Submit envelope to Event Chairperson.**

JUDGES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO APPROACH NOR HAVE ANY DIALOGUE WITH ANY OF THE CONTESTANTS WHILE AN EVENT IS IN SESSION.