

SAMPLE DRAMATIC SELECTIONS

AUTHOR

TITLE

Euripedes	I Never Promised you a Rose Garden
H. Green	For Colored Girls...Rainbow is Enough
N. Shange	Macbeth
W. Shakespeare	Untidy Endings
H. Fierstein	Assassins
S. Sondheim	Yo Soy Joaquin
R. Gonzales	Streetcar Named Desire
T. Williams	Runaways
E. Swados	Joy Luck Club
A. Tan	Of Mice & Men
J. Steinbeck	The Piano Lesson
A. Wilson	

SAMPLE HUMOROUS SELECTIONS

AUTHOR

TITLE

J. Kesslering	Arsenic and Old Lace
Shakespeare	Much Ado About Nothing
T. Wilder	The Matchmaker
J. Felffer	Felffer's People
Rostand	Cyrano DeBergerac
Erma Bombeck	If Life is A Bowl of Cherries
V. Cheatham	Snow White and Friends
Dr. Seuss	Horton Hatches The Egg
D. Ives	The Sure Thing
C. Durang	Actor's Nightmare
A. Miller	Creation of The World and Other Business
E. Ionesco	The Bald Soprano

FREQUENTLY USED SOURCES FOR SELECTIONS

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.
 440 Park Avenue South
 New York, NY 10016

Samuel French, Inc.
 7623 Sunset Blvd.
 Hollywood, CA 90046

The Dramatic Publishing Company
 P.O. Box 129 311 Washington St.
 Woodstock, IL 60098

Baker's Plays
 100 Chauncy St.
 Boston, MA 02111-1783

SAMPLE SELECTIONS FOR ORATORICAL INTERPRETATION

The following selections were used by contestants in oratorical interpretation at the California State Speech Tournament in 1991. (In some cases, source information may be incomplete due to inadequate information provided in the photocopied script submitted).

Baruch, Bernard, "Control of Atomic Weapons," *The World's Great Speeches*.

Biafra, Jello, "Die for Oil, Sucker," *Alternative Tentacles Records*.

Carlson, Richard, "When Worlds Collide," *Vital Speeches, July 15, 1988*.

Carmichael, Stokely, "Black Power," *The Rhetoric of Black Power*.

Darrow, Clarence, "Defense of Leopold and Loeb," *A Treasury of Great American Speeches*.

Dix, Dortha, "Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts," *American Historical Documents*.

Farrakan, Lewis, "The Time and What Must Be Done," *Minister Lewis Farrakan Speaks*.

Feinstein, Dianne, "Women in Politics," *Representative American Speeches: 1983-84*.

Ingersoll, Robert, "A Vision of War," *The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll*.

Jackson, Jesse, "Speech to the Democratic National Convention," *The American Reader*.

Kennedy, John F., "Inaugural Address," *The Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the U.S. 1789-1985*

King, Martin Luther, "Our God Is Marching On," *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

MacArthur, Douglas, "Farewell to the Cadets," *Contemporary American Speeches*.

Schanbert, Sydney, "The Risk of Being Different," *Vital Speeches, September 1, 1989*.

Tillich, Paul J., "Loneliness and Solitude," *Representative American Speeches: 1957-58*.

Truth, Sojourner, "When Woman Gets Her Rights Man Will Be Right," *The Voice of Black America*.
Wilkie, Wendell, "Lidice," *Representative American Speeches: 1942-43*.

ORATORICAL INTERPRETATION SOURCES

American Forum: Speeches On Historic Issues 1988-1900, edited by Ernest Wrage and Barnet Basherille, Harper and Brothers, 1960.

Anthology Of Public Speeches, edited by Mabel Platz, H. W. Wilson Company, 1940.

Congressional Digest, Congressional Digest Corporation, Washington D.C. (10 issues per year; "Pros & Cons" section of each issue contains complete speeches and/or excerpts from speeches delivered in Congress or in congressional committees).

Contemporary America Speeches - A Source Book Of Speech Forms And Principles, Sixth Edition, edited by Richard L. Johannessen, et al., Kendall/Hung Publishing Company, 1988. (Earlier editions published in 1965, 1959, 1972, 1978, 1982. College orations in volumes cannot be used for oratorical interpretation.)

The Dolphin Book of Speeches, edited by George Hibbit, Dolphin Books, 1965.

Famous After Dinner Speeches, edited by Benjamin Franklin and Don Bate, The Associate Clubs, Inc., 1949.

Famous American Speeches, edited by Stewart H. Benedict, Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1967.

Great American Speeches 1898-1963, Appleton Century Crofts, 1970.

Mark Twain Speaking, edited by Paul Fatout, University of Iowa Press, 1976.

New Welcome Speeches, edited by Herschel Hobbs, Zondervan Publishing House, 1975.

Outspoken Women: Speeches By American Reformers 1635-1935, edited by Judith Anderson, Kendall/Hung Publishing Company, 1984.

Representative American Speeches, H. W. Wilson Company (Published as a part of The Reference Shelf series; published each year for the last 60 years).

A Treasury of Great American Speeches, selected by Charles Hurd, Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1959 (Our country's live and history in the words of its great men).

A Treasury Of The World's Greatest Speeches, edited by Houston Peterson, Simon and Schuster, 1965.

Vital Speeches Of The Day, New City Publishing Company, Mt. Pleasant S.C. (Published on the 1st and 15th of each month, it contains copies of complete speeches, all contemporary.)

The World's Greatest Speeches, edited by Lewis Copeland, Dover Publications, 1958.

The World's Great Speeches, edited by Lewis Copeland and Lawrence Lamm, Dover Publications, 1973.

SAMPLE THEMATIC INTERPRETATION

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION AND THEME STATEMENT: (For the sake of ease, the theme is underlined) Mrs. Cleaver, wearing a spotless, wrinkle-free dress, and pearls, vacuums the living room. Dad opens the door, tosses his hat onto the hat rack, and proclaims, "Honey, I'm home." Two clean, freckle-faced children bound down the stairs, followed by their faithful dog. We are shown this image in books, magazines, movies and on television programs depicting the all-American family. However, the All-American family is only an image. Let's take a look at reality.

TRANSITION #1: The modern American family is a far cry from this pretty picture. Parents are still the nucleus of the family, still the protectors and first educators of their children, except that all too often, they abdicate this responsibility to someone or something else. America's number one babysitter, the TV, preaches a distorted set of values and behaviors to children. Russell Baker describes his education in crime, courtesy of his parents reliance on the "boob tube," in "School vs. Education."

SELECTION #1: A cutting from "School vs. Education" by Russell Baker. [This is a satirical narrative essay which describes a pre-school child's education in crime from watching TV.]

TRANSITION #2: Although Baker describes a dysfunctional family that is the result of the lack of parental input, too much parental influence can have the same result. A child responds to her mother's continual "interference" with self-destructive behavior in *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan.

SELECTION #2: A cutting from *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. [This is a novel which explores the conflict between the first generation Chinese women and their daughters.]

TRANSITION #3: Even when parents attempt to raise their children "right," rapid changes in society and the state of the world can leave their children unprepared to face reality. America's experience in Vietnam gives testimony to this paradox. A "good" eighteen-year-old boy leaves for Vietnam and returns a tortured twenty-year-old to confront his parents in *Sticks and Bones* by David Rabe.

SELECTION #3: A cutting from *Sticks and Bones* by David Rabe. [This is a social drama of the 70's which illustrates a family coping with their son's Vietnam experience.]

ORAL READING ASSIGNMENT OF THEMATIC INTERPRETATION

(Sample lesson for the teacher/coach)

1. Requirements

- A. Introduction
- B. Transition
- C. Literature
- D. Conclusion
- E. Two copies of your manuscript: one to turn in before speaking, the second to be used in presentation.
- F. Labeling in margin of the Introduction, Transitions, (underline link to theme), and Conclusion.

II. Check Points required

- A. Time 5 to 10 minutes
- B. Two copies of the manuscript
- C. Eye contact 100 percent of time during introduction and transitions
- D. Typed, double-spaced
- E. Rehearsed five or more times
- F. Checking diacritical (pronunciation) marks
- G. Slowing down your delivery

III. Typical subjects for which themes can be created

- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 31. Responsibility | 21. Loneliness | 11. Emotion | 1. Anger |
| 32. Revenge | 22. Love | 12. Envy | 2. Beauty |
| 33. Sadness | 23. Money | 13. Excuses | 3. Bitterness |
| 34. Sincerity | 24. Negativism | 14. Fantasy | 4. Children |
| 35. Suicide | 25. Nonsense | 15. Friendship | 5. Complications |
| 36. Traditions | 26. Passion | 16. Frustration | 6. Crisis |
| 37. Ugliness | 27. Peace | 17. Happiness | 7. Death |
| 38. Unrequited Love | 28. Pollution | 18. Hatred | 8. Depression |
| 39. War | 29. Positivism | 19. Humor | 9. Displeasure |
| | 30. Religion | 20. Jealousy | 10. Embarrassment |

IV. Organization

Once selections have been made, determine an appropriate order. Edit selections, if necessary, unifying them with original transitions. Use the following pattern or something similar:

Introduction: Use standard attention devices to establish the theme. Lead into the first selection by explaining how it relates to the theme, title, and source of selection. Keep it short. Selections: Summarize the idea of the first selection and blend in a transition to the second selection. Tell the author and title. Continue this pattern for each selection. Conclusion: End with the last selection if it provides a lasting impression. If an original conclusion seems more appropriate, summarize the last selection and generalize the theme. A final quotation or a profound statement relating to the theme is another variation.

A. Introduction

1. Should not be literal interpretation of the author's point of view.
2. Should be an interpretation of your own philosophical point of view on a particular problem or unique segment of society.
3. Theme should be clearly presented.

4. Could include examples from personal life experience such as: being forced to make an unpopular decision, acting jealous, wanting revenge, hating someone, or feeling hurt. The introduction may include the humorous side of life.

B. Transitions

1. Must include the author's name, title, and source.
2. Must promote continuity of theme.
3. Must clearly tie to the piece of literature.

C. Selections

1. Some effective thematic interpretations have both serious and funny selections. The actual choices of literature may be influenced by several factors:

- Variety of genres and styles -- prose, poetry, drama, song lyrics, essays
- Variety of moods -- satire, comedy, drama
- Length of cuttings
- Pacing of literary selections
- Depth of literary selections
- Performance requirements such as vocal variety

2. There must be a minimum of three selections, each tied to the preceding selection by transition. (A selection can be any published writings, poetry, prose, plays, short stories, and songs.)

3. Each selection must clearly reflect the theme.

4. The three or more selections must be used in their entirety (i.e., a short poem) or must use a minimum of 150 words of a longer work.
5. Selections should come from diverse authors and sources. Selections may also come from different works by the author.

D. Presentation

1. Characterize the presentation so that individuals, images, messages, and situations are life-like and believable. Be as animated as possible. Rather than standing on the outside, merely reciting, step into the literature and become a part of it.
2. Vary the delivery to avoid a monotone or flat emotional level.
3. Memorize your introduction and transitions.
4. Practice the presentation for someone who will make worthwhile suggestions for improvement.

PREPARING FOR THE DUO INTERPRETATION

by Donovan Cummings, Edison-Stagg High Schools

Duo interpretation is a California State Tournament event and a main event at the National Forensic League Nationals. While rules have not been "set in stone," the rules for both organizations are similar.

1. The time limit is ten minutes.
2. Selections must come from published plays, novels, short stories, poems. Any selection must come from a single source (work of literature); sources cannot be combined (e.g., combining lines from *My Fair Lady* and *Pygmalion* or combining two Monty Python scripts from the same book).
3. Performances must be memorized; no notes permitted.
4. Each student may share in the introduction, third person narration, and/or transitions.
5. During performance of the literature, the students must use "offstage focus;" (Introductions, transitions, etc., should be delivered directly to the audience.)
6. Students cannot touch during the performance.
7. In California, the entire performance must be delivered from the center stage area only.

FINDING MATERIAL FOR SELECTIONS/CUTTINGS

1. The easiest selections to locate and cut will be plays. There are many collections of selections already cut into performance scenes. In the collections, the scenes are normally designated for two men, two women or one man, one woman. Frequently, collections contain only monologues, but these can give you ideas. Collections are available from the publishers list at the end of this article.
2. Catalogues for purchasing complete play scripts are helpful. Full-length plays with small casts and one-act plays are indicated in most catalogues. The four major play publishers are listed at the end of this article.
3. Novels and short stories often have dynamic scenes (e.g., *Of Mice and Men*; *The Joy Luck Club*). Narration presents a challenge in cutting, but the finished product can be exciting. Remember: if the point of view is first person, only one performer can narrate and that performer cannot play another character.
4. The cuttings can be either dramatic or humorous.
5. The total presentation should be divided as equally as possible between the two performers. That is important in considering a script for cutting and in making the cutting itself.

CUTTING THE SCRIPT

1. Find a piece of literature that has a scene that can be easily understood by the audience and that builds a dynamic, moving, or hilarious climax/ending.
2. You may: a) use one section or scene from a work of literature; b) use more than one scene and provide transitions between scenes; or c) cut the entire work into one scene by using lines from several different sections/parts of the work. Remember: You do not have the right to delete words, change words, or add words if such modifications change the intent of the author. (In California, the original words used in the introduction and transitions and any word additions and word changes may not total more than 150 words.)
3. As noted above, cut the piece of literature so that both performers have approximately equal time in performance.
4. In performance, the title, author, and source must be included.

5. Beginning students need assistance. They lack the skills of cutting, and they have not read multitudinous stories and novels and plays. The coach should provide the first cutting; as students mature, they will be competent in finding and cutting selections.

PREPARATION FOR PERFORMANCE

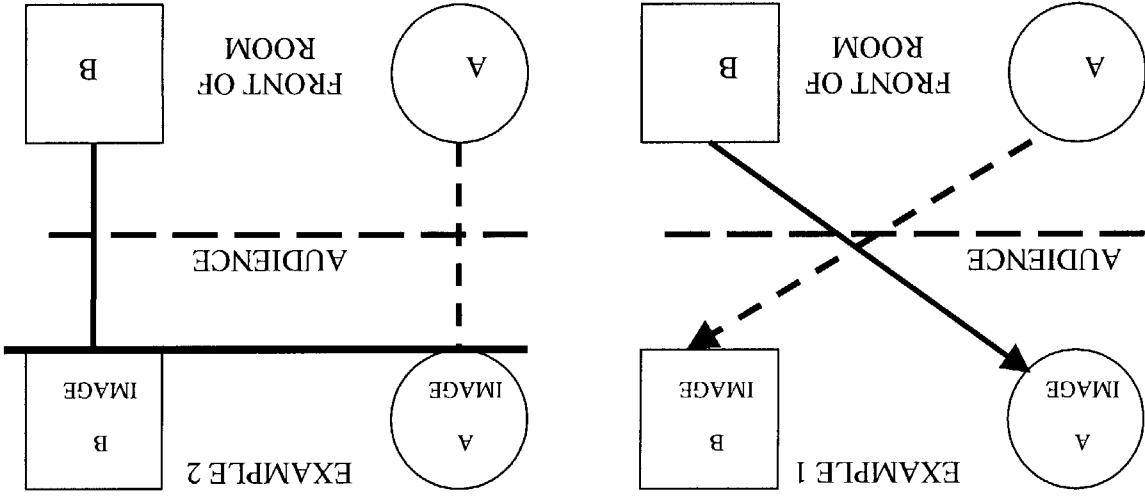
If each student is going to produce a noteworthy performance, the students should do the following:

1. Read the entire play, story, novel before attempting to develop the characters in the cutting.
2. Discuss with each other and with the teacher the entire work of literature, the specific cutting performed, and the characters.
3. Memorize as quickly as possible. (Practicing by reading the cutting aloud several times before lines are memorized can develop poor line interpretation habits that are not easily broken.)

4. Understand "offstage focus." Offstage focus normally implies the two interpreters cannot look at each other, cannot talk directly to each other (as actors would on the stage), and cannot touch each other. The term also implies the focus of each interpreter as he/she speaks is out into the audience area -- either directly to the audience members or to an area in the rear of the room. Thus, the interpreters are projecting the work of literature out to the audience -- suggesting the meaning and feeling, and letting the audience's imagination see and feel the literature.

To learn offstage focus, the students should stand in front of a room that has mirrors in the rear (preferably full-length or large half-length mirrors). Each student can then see his/her partner and talk to his/her mind the image of the other character.

The offstage focus is illustrated in the following diagrams. I prefer Example 1, especially if the interpreters stand more than two feet apart. If the interpreters are from one to two feet apart, Example 2 would work.



When students have memorized the script, they might "act out" the cutting. They might use props, move about the room or stage, touch, etc. This helps students to understand character relationships, character interplay, physical motivations. (To better understand the cutting, the students might even reverse roles during one rehearsal.)

5. Rehearse with concentration on these steps
 - a. Learning to use "offstage focus" -- never looking at each other, always using consistent character placement (where each performer looks when speaking to the other character.
 - b. Working on consistency of character voice.
 - c. Working on the meanings and feelings that must be projected by each character.

d. Adding physical involvement; remembering that physical movements, gestures, facial expressions, etc., are important and necessary, but they must be restrained. The interpreters must suggest the scene in such a way that the audience will "see and hear" the meaning and feeling in their minds.

In my opinion, the power of suggestion is destroyed when the performers are not totally involved. However, when the interpreters make me uncomfortable due to excessive volume, uncontrolled screaming, meaningless or exaggerated movements, I truly "turn off". This article is intended to help those of you who have never coached duo interpretation. There are various schools of thought regarding the coaching of all interpretive events. For those of you who are experienced, please share your ideas with inexperienced coaches. You might also write an article for the *Speech Bulletin*.

The following companies publish collections of monologues and/or scenes for actors. Sometimes the collection of scenes will work for duo interpretation. The monologues may give you ideas which will be useful prior to reading and/or purchasing a script of a play.

These two publishers have several collections:

Smith and Kraus
P.O. Box 127, One Main St.
Lyme, NH 03768
800-895-4331

Applause Theatre Book Publishers
211 West 71st St.
New York, NY 10023
212-595-4735

Other publishers of collections:

Theatre Arts Books
Routledge
29 West 35th St.
New York, NY 10001-2229

Penguin Books USA, Inc.

Bantam Books, Inc.

375 Hudson St.
Portsmouth, NH 03801-3959

666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

Avon Books

Meriweather Publishing Ltd.

The Hearst Corporation
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

Colorado Springs, CA 80933

Dramaline Publications

36-851 Palm View Rd.
Ranch Mirage, CA 92270

The majority of play scripts published in the United States are available from the following publishers. (Your drama teacher may have one or more of the catalogues of these three companies. You can order catalogues.) Most of these publishers have long lists of one-act plays; they may also have monologue collections.

Samuel French, Inc.

Dramatist Play Service, Inc.

7623 Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood, CA 90046

440 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Baker's Plays

The Dramatic Publishing Company

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311 Washington St.
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