

How to Create Prose Poetry Programs

The goal of Prose-Poetry Reading is to compose a ten-minute program on a central theme that evokes an emotional response from the audience, whether it be dramatic or humorous. Programs must include at least 200 words of poetry and 200 words of prose (non-poetry, may consist of excerpts from a novel, short story, essay, article, play, etc.)

1. Make sure the student adheres to the requirements specified in the OHSSL Constitution for the number of words and the printed manuscript.
2. The student writes the transitional material to link the program together; make sure it's more than just title and author, that it includes an element of the theme.
3. Make sure the student keeps a bibliography as he selects his literature for this program.
4. Begin with a piece of literature that the student likes. Examine the elements in that literature – themes, characters, use of imagery, the rhythm, and so forth. Select a theme to build the rest of the program. Then the student begins to look for more material that has the same theme. He should find more than he thinks he needs so there is a variety with which to work.
5. Encourage the student to find literature that hasn't been used before (no more "The Road Not Taken" by Frost or "Many Moons" by Thurber) – unless the old "standbys" can be used in new and unique ways.
6. Be sure the material fits the student in voice quality, appearance, and maturity. Strive for the unexpected so the student will stand out. Use humor; don't be afraid to mix dramatic and humorous elements in the same program. Remember that all material must have been published.
7. Try different selections in early tournaments; using judges' feedback, gradually hone and set the program.
8. The program may be set up in one of three ways – 1. The student gives the transition which includes title, author, and theme element and then reads the literary selection; or 2. The student presents all the titles and authors and theme elements in the introduction; then the literary selections are woven together seamlessly; or 3. Another method chosen by the coach and student. Whichever method is used should fit the student and delineate to the judges the different literature selections.
9. The student holds the manuscript and gives the appearance of reading, even though by the end of the season it's probably memorized. The notebook should not be so big as to cover the student's face or make gestures difficult or so small as to make it difficult for the student to read the font. There is no rule that says the introduction and transitions must be done with the notebook closed; however, many judges expect it.
10. The student doesn't move around at the front of the room. Minimal gestures are acceptable; the judge determines what is "minimal."
11. Many times the students fail to hold dramatic moments. Work on this with them...especially at the end of the program. Let the moment happen before the

student breaks the mood.

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