

**ARTICLE XXIII  
Readers Theatre**

**Section 1. Entries.**

Clause 1. Each school will be entitled to enter one Readers Theatre group in the District Contest.

Clause 2. The Readers Theatre group will consist of two through fifteen students.

**Section 2. Selections/Materials.**

Clause 1. Material used for Readers Theatre will be adaptations of prose, poetry, and/or drama. A member school will not use material in this area which is identical to that used in other large group events.

Clause 2. Each school will be responsible for securing performance rights. (See royalties on page 13.)

**Section 3. Length.** The length of the performance will be limited to twenty-five minutes.

**Section 4. Preparation and Presentation.**

Clause 1. The contest performance will be given on a stage only if one is available. A group will have five minutes to set up equipment in the performing room, and all time beyond this five minutes will be taken off their performance time.

Clause 2. The performers of a given group will all appear on the stage or in front of a standard classroom. Movement and blocking are optional. The actual performing may be done with the student (or students) seated, standing or moving.

Clause 3. All performers must use a script as an aid, but may have some portions of the presentation memorized. Scripts may be temporarily set down.

Clause 4. Mechanical or instrumental sound effects are not allowed. However, vocally emitted noises and sound effects created by the student are permissible. Singing may be used, but should not be the sustaining force. It must remain secondary to the Readers Theatre.

Clause 5. Contestants may use straight chairs as provided by the host school. Contestants may use other chairs, stools, stepladders, blocks, crates, benches, steps or risers which they must provide which may be used in any way deemed necessary and appropriate.

Clause 6. Music stands may be used for the sole purpose of holding scripts. If music stands are used, the stands may not be used as a prop or any function other than supporting the script.

Clause 7. The performer will utilize the skills of interpretive voice and facial expressions. Costuming, make-up, special effects, and additional props will not be used. Familiarity with script is encouraged to allow the interpreter to suggest visualization, development of character, vocal, facial and bodily tensions.

**Section 5. Timing.** The local manager will appoint a timekeeper. No signal will be given until the expiration of twenty-five minutes at which time a whistle signal will be used to call the performance to an end or be subject to disqualification.

**Section 6. Judging.** Judging will be based on effective speaking communication and on the ability of the group to convey the message of the presentation. Further judging consideration ought to include: effective bodily tensions; use of offstage focus, onstage focus or a combination of both; an expressive vocal interpretation with characterization.

**Section 7. Winners.**

Clause 1. The same selection must be used in the State Contest.

Clause 2. Any school winning a Division I rating in the State Contest the preceding year may not use this same selection the next year.

**CASEBOOK**  
**Questions - Answers**

1. Q. May students stomp feet, clap hands or sing?  
A. Yes.
2. Q. May performers wear robes?  
A. Yes, but if used, all readers must wear uniform robes.
3. Q. Is uniformity of attire permissible?  
A. Yes, if not interpretive as an effect to establish a character.
4. Q. May performers leave the room?  
A. No.
5. Q. May cuttings from major plays be used?  
A. Yes. Directors are reminded that they must comply with permission requirements, and clear with the publisher holding the copyright.
6. Q. We received a Division I rating at district contest in Readers Theatre. Are we to take the same selection to the State? Must we take exactly the same cast to state as we took to district? Or may we drop one of the members, for example, and/or add another?  
A. You must use the same selection in Readers Theatre on the state level as was used in district competition. The cast may be adjusted according to the needs of your school community between the district and state.
7. Q. One of our cast members at District read a brief introduction to our presentation (an excerpt), setting the scene and presenting the background. One of the judges commented that this introduction should have been told, not read. Is this correct?  
A. The reading of the brief introduction in association with your presentation does not disqualify the play, but might introduce the possibility of a lower rating among judges. Certainly, you invite superior review by the judges if the introduction is told rather than read.
8. Q. Should performers use onstage or offstage focus?  
A. Performers may use offstage focus, onstage focus, or a combination of both to achieve visual contact.
9. Q. Must the introduction come first?  
A. No, the introduction can follow a preview/teaser.
10. Q. Must students read from script for the entire performance?  
A. No. Students may refer to the script and scripts must remain within the performance area if they are temporarily set down.

11. Q. May performers have physical contact with each other?  
A. Yes.
12. Q. May blocking and movement be used?  
A. Yes, movement is allowed but not necessary. Style of performance is at the discretion of the director.
13. Q. May forms of literature other than plays be adapted to readers theatre?  
A. Yes, but the adaptation should have primary emphasis on characterization and dialogue interactions.
14. Q. May the seating devices be moved and/or used to create sound effects?  
A. Yes.
15. Q. May chairs or blocks etc. be used to suggest a special effect. Example: fences, windows, barriers, etc.?  
A. Yes.
16. Q. What is the difference between One-Act Play and Readers Theatre?  
A. The focus of Readers Theatre should be on presentational form presented within the limitations of a performance area, without stage lights, costuming, make-up, etc.
17. Q. May a script be used as a prop?  
A. Yes, but only momentarily.
18. Q. Can head attire be considered costuming?  
A. Yes.
19. Q. May students enter clapping hands, singing, or stomping feet?  
A. Yes.
20. Q. May group-speaking sections be included in the Reader's Theatre?  
A. Yes, but the use of group speaking sections must remain secondary to the individual performance.