

ARTICLE XXIX

Group Improvisation

Section 1. Entries.

Clause 1. Each school may enter one to three teams in the district contest.

Clause 2. Each team will consist of two through five students.

Section 2. Selections/Materials.

Clause 1. Materials for Group Improvisation will be drawn from a selection of situations.

Clause 2. Materials used by, or the manner of presentation by students at contest deemed by the local contest judge(s) to be obscene or disruptive, may receive lower ratings, or in some cases may result in disqualification.

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

Section 4. Preparation and Presentation.

Clause 1. The team will report to the center five minutes prior to their scheduled presentation time. They may use this time to do warm-up exercises and prepare. Students should draw all three situations without looking at the topics. The two-minute prep time will begin when the third situation is drawn. All drawing and preparation will take place in the performance room.

Clause 2. The team's objective will be to create a scene using their situation which progresses from point A to point B, employing the situation. The team will hand a listing of their draw to the room chairperson as they enter to perform.

Clause 3. The room chairperson will announce each group's draw before the performance.

Clause 4. Five chairs may be used in any way the team deems necessary. Properties other than chairs and normal wearing apparel will not be used.

Clause 5. Students must not costume. They may, however, adjust normal wearing apparel to enhance characterization (i.e. straightening tie, pushing glasses down on nose). Students may use wearing apparel as a property (i.e. removing it and placing it somewhere in the room).

Clause 6. Prompting by anyone other than a team member will disqualify a team.

Section 5. Timing and Signals. The local manager will appoint a timekeeper who will use a timing device and indicate with timing cards the time as it elapses. Timing will begin with the first movement or spoken word. At the end of the first minute, a "4" will be held up and so on down the scale of numbers - 3, 2, 1, 1/2 and 0. At the end of five minutes the timekeeper will blow a whistle. Failure to stop at once will result in disqualification. Timers must show time cards to performers CONSTANTLY. Timers must be in front row center or be pointed out to performers.

Section 6. Judging. In rating the team, the judges will be instructed to observe the following criteria: ensemble playing, commitment, fluency, timing, creativity, concentration and characterization.

CASEBOOK
Questions - Answers

1. Q. What are some typical examples of situations?
A. Situations: Somebody late boarding a ship.
 Somebody trying to buy a used car.
2. Q. May canned performances be used?
A. The intent is that it be a fresh performance each time. The appearance of a canned performance may invite disqualification.
3. Q. Does the situation have to be the central plot?
A. Yes.
4. Q. What is ensemble playing?
A. Ensemble playing involves respect of fellow players and an understanding of the nature of theatrical focus, often described as "Give and take," as well as exploring and employing the talents of the assembled players as a team.
5. Q. What is characterization?
A. Characterization involves not only the creative invention of character, but also the commitment to character (using physical and vocal acting techniques) and the constructive (rather than destructive or argumentative) interaction of the characters the ensemble creates. Note that conflict is an effective tool for exploring this interaction, particularly when the conflict is either resolved or heightened without resorting to violence, negation, or argument.
6. Q. May students use any part of the performance area other than the floor?
A. Students must not use parts of the performance room that could be considered as props, such as doors, desks, windows, walls, etc. Accidental touch does not mean **USED**.
7. Q. Are ethnic stereotypes, "off-color humor", offensive language, sexual innuendoes acceptable in Improvisation?
A. Such inclusions may invite lower ratings, or possibly disqualification.
8. Q. Is the use of or removal of objects from pockets (e.g. coins, sunglasses, wallets, Kleenex, keys, combs) considered normal wearing apparel?
A. No. Objects carried in pockets are considered props.
9. Q. May performers talk after the 2-minute prep time has elapsed (e.g. while setting up chairs)?
A. Yes.