

An Introduction to Evaluating Interpretation (DI), (HI), (DUO)

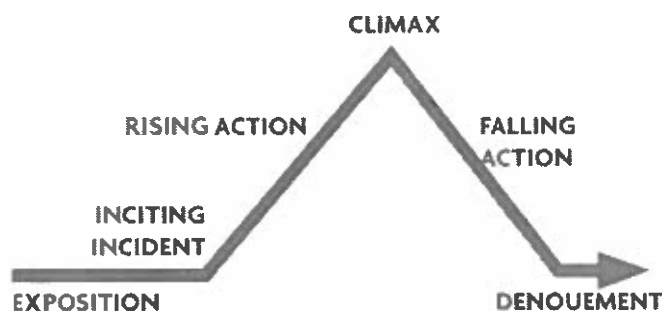


Basic Introduction

Interpretation events include Dramatic, Duo, and Humorous. Dramatic Interpretation is an individual event focused on the performer's ability to convey emotion through the use of a dramatic text. Duo Interpretation is a two-person team event that utilizes off-stage focus to convey emotion and environment by focusing on the relationships and interactions between characters. Humorous Interpretation is an individual event designed to test the performer's ability to use comedic skills to connect with the audience. Judging interpretation events, or Interp, can be thought of as judging the acting abilities of performers.

Evaluating the Round

When judging interpretation, it is helpful to keep the Dramatic Structure in mind.



Exposition sets the scene and gives background information. Exposition occurs throughout the cutting and enhances the audience's understanding of what the character is experiencing. The Inciting Incident sets a conflict into motion and represents the beginning of the Rising Action, which complicates the plot. The Climax is the point of greatest intensity and the turning point of the plot. Falling Action resolves the conflict and Denouement gives a glimpse of life after the conflict.

There are three key areas of an interpretation that come together to create the performance the judge will evaluate. First, *cutting*, or the process of removing text from a full-length play, book, or short story and transforming it into a 10-minute piece. The cutting should create a compelling and understandable story. Second, *blocking*, or the movements a performer makes to convey space, emotion, and action. Blocking should enhance the performance, not distract from the story. Movements should be motivated by either internal or external factors. Internal motivation stems from how the

character is feeling, while external motivation comes from a physical reaction to external factors. Blocking should not only be motivated but also easy to understand. Third, *characterization*: the performer should make informed decisions about the character(s) based on the text of his or her piece. Characterization reveals the personality of the character through line delivery, vocal and facial expression, and varying levels of levity and intensity. The situation should inform the intensity of the performance, rising to a peak at the climax.

Filling Out the Ballot

Performers are ranked on a scale, generally from one to six, with the best performance receiving the one ranking. The judge will also assign speaker points, typically in a range from 90-100, with 100 being outstanding.

Interpretation events take place without the use of costumes or props, and performances are given from memory. Each performance has a 10-minute time limit with a 30-second grace period. If a performance exceeds the grace period, the student cannot be ranked first. There is no other prescribed penalty. The judge will also write comments to the performers on the ballot addressing different areas of the interpretation. When critiquing a cutting, judges ought to reference areas of the Dramatic Structure that were strong or weak and suggest ways in which the student can improve upon the cutting. Judges should consider if they could easily identify what the performer was doing in the scene and which character was speaking. If the performer's blocking is ineffective, the judge ought to indicate ways the performer can improve on the ballot. Critiquing characterization requires the judge to consider whether the character's response to a situation is believable. The ultimate goal of blocking, cutting, and characterization is to create a fully-realized performance that moves the audience. The performer who combines these three factors the best should receive the one ranking.