



2026 Drama Rules

General Rules:

- 1) Material chosen for any of the drama categories should be from published works of excellent literary quality and should be of a wholesome nature avoiding any unbiblical themes, content, and/or language. Profanity, euphemisms, sensual language, suggestive language, or emphasis on worldly, anti-biblical ideas in the piece will not be permitted. Any performance that interprets the literary work in an offensive, worldly manner will be disqualified. All scripts must be submitted for approval at least two weeks prior to the competition and should include the title and author of the published selection to be presented. If it is a cutting or adaptation, the edited version must acknowledge the title and author of the original work. Points may be taken off for late script submissions.
- 2) Students may enter more than one category but should only enter one selection in each category. All drama presentations are to be memorized. Two typewritten scripts need to be provided for the judges.
- 3) Younger students (grades 3 and up) may compete in a middle school or high school acting, reader's theatre, or choric speaking. Older students may not compete in lower-level categories.
- 4) The title of the work, the author, and the student or groups will be verified by the judges. When the judges give consent to begin, the timing and judging will begin immediately. The presentation must stay within the time limits for the category. If a presentation goes beyond the allotted time, points will be deducted. After thirty seconds over time, the judges will end the presentation.
- 5) The same piece of drama should not be performed by multiple individuals or groups from the same organization or school in the same year of competition. Drama selections should not be repeated in two consecutive years.
- 6) No background music of any kind, acoustic or electronic, will be permitted to accompany any individual or group drama performance. Singing as part of the drama or the use of instruments as a prop is limited to no more than 1.5 minutes in a dramatic presentation; it will be counted as part of the time limit for that dramatic presentation. Emphasis should be on the drama, not the music. Any music included as part of a dramatic presentation must also abide by the guidelines given for the music competitions.

- 7) Body movements should be mostly, ***but not limited to***, from above the waist for Categories #1-9. Full acting and movement are permitted for Category #10. Points may be deducted for excessive or inappropriate body movements.
- 8) Costumes and Props:
- Costumes and ***small*** hand props (a purse, a cane, a hat, glasses, etc.) are permitted for the individual presentations in Categories #1-5 and #10.
 - Costumes must be ***modest*** and appropriate to the dramatic presentation; they should enhance, not detract from, the facial expressions and movement of the presenter.
 - ***A photo of the intended costume should be sent along with the script for approval.*** Failure to do so will result in a deduction of points. Points may also be deducted for late photo submissions.
 - Stage make-up, beards, mustaches, wigs, and such are permitted but should be used judiciously in Categories #1-5 and #10. These items should not interfere with the judges' ability to see facial expressions and hear clear enunciation. Since there are not stage lights, stage make-up, if used, should be minimal.
 - Costumes, props, make-up, and accessories are not permitted in Categories #6, 7, and 9.
 - Category #8 may have small props or costume accessories if it helps identify the character or a switch of character being portrayed; accessories of any sort should be minimal for this category; full costumes are not permitted. All members dressed in black or matching colors for Category #8 or #9 is acceptable and not considered to be a costume.
 - Categories #8 and #10 may use chairs, a table, stools, platforms, and/or prop boxes. No other large furniture is permitted. Each drama group is responsible for bringing their own props; these items are not provided by WMA.
 - Risers may be used for Category #9. Risers may be provided by WMA but must be requested at the time of registration.
- 9) Flash photography should not be used during a performance. Recordings by the family or a member of the student's organization or school will be permitted; however, recordings of any portion of another dramatic presentation in the same category by another student from a different organization or school will not be permitted. The judges reserve the right to prohibit recordings if deemed necessary to the concentration of the performance.

RULES BY CATEGORY:

Category #1: Dramatic Interpretation

An individual memorized presentation of a **non-comedic** published story or play. It may be a cutting or excerpt of a larger piece, or an adaptation of a larger piece edited to fit the 10-minute time limit. It may be a secular monologue or a cutting including multiple characters and dialogue performed by one individual. The emphasis is on interpreting a scene of telling a story. Biblical stories are not appropriate for this category and should be entered in Category #5; Biblical or historical character monologues should be entered in Category #3.

Category #2: Humorous Interpretation

An individual memorized presentation of a **humorous** published story or play. It may be a cutting or excerpt of a larger piece, or an adaptation of a larger piece edited to fit the 10-minute time limit. It may be a secular monologue or a cutting including multiple characters and dialogue performed by one individual. The emphasis is on interpreting a scene or telling a story and achieving a humorous response from the audience. Biblical stories are not appropriate for this category and should be entered in Category #5; Biblical or historical character monologues should be entered in Category #3.

Category #3: Character Monologues

An individual memorized presentation of a **historical or Biblical biographical sketch**. It may be serious or humorous; it may be in the first person as if the character is telling the story himself; or it may be in the third person as if someone else is telling about this person. It may include dialogue with more than one character in the story with the emphasis remaining on the biography. The purpose of a character monologue is to educate and/or entertain.

Category #4: Poetic Interpretation

An individual memorized interpretative presentation of a **poem(s), sacred or secular**. **More than one poem may be combined to meet the time limits as part of topical presentation.** Bible selections are not permitted in this category. Important information may be given in the introduction of the piece to set the mood or the scene for the piece; such additions will be counted as part of the 10-minute time limit. **Time limits for ALL grades/divisions will be a minimum of two minutes, maximum of ten minutes.**

Category #5: Biblical Interpretation

An individual memorized, interpretative presentation of **a story, chapter, or series of verses on a topic** taken directly from Scripture (King James Version only). Important

information may be given in the introduction of the piece to set the mood or the scene for the piece; such additions will be counted as part of the 10-minute time limit.

Category #6: Sacred Prose Interpretation

An individual memorized, interpretative piece of a ***sacred theme, not a poem, but a prose writing of inspirational material*** taken from a published work of appropriate literary quality. For example, an essay, speech, or retelling of a story with a biblical or spiritual emphasis would qualify for this category. Biblical character monologues are not appropriate for this category; see Category #3. Direct quotations from Scripture are not appropriate for this category; see Category #5.

Category #7: Declamation

An individual memorized presentation of an ***inspirational or persuasive secular -- not sacred -- prose speech, essay, or editorial*** from a published work. Sacred or Bible passages do not qualify for this category. ***Time limits for ALL grades/divisions will be a minimum of two minutes, maximum of ten minutes.***

Category #8: Reader's Theatre

A memorized group presentation of three to six speakers from any published work that may be properly adapted to reader's theatre format. The published work may be dramatic or humorous in tone; it may be prose or poetry; it may be secular or spiritual in theme; and it must meet all the guidelines set in the general rules. Reader's theatre is not read from a script, nor is it directed. Speakers should effectively use both group and individual speaking to develop distinct, individual characters. All acting and speaking is directed toward the audience; speakers do not interact with each other as in the acting category. Although group speaking and actions are permitted, ***the emphasis in the reader's theatre is on the individual characters and their collective development of the drama; the individual visual acting and speaking should be well-developed.*** Originality of interpretation and dramatization is strongly encouraged.

Category #9: Choric Speaking

A memorized group presentation of seven to fifteen speakers from any published work that may be properly adapted to the choric speaking form. The published work may be dramatic or humorous in tone; it may be prose or poetry; it may be secular or spiritual in theme; and it must meet all the guidelines set in the general rules. Choric speaking is not read from a script, nor is it directed. Speakers should effectively emphasize unison group speaking with appropriate and dramatic use of variations in pitch, rate of speed, intensity, volume, and such. Solo voices are appropriate for characterization but should be used infrequently since the emphasis is on the group for this category. Interpretation of word color and dramatic climax should be evident with the creative use of vocal

sounds and effects. Speakers and actions are directed toward the audience; speakers do not interact with each other as in the acting category. Movements and gestures should be mostly in group movements to emphasize scene changes or divisions in the presentation and to add to the interpretation of the story or piece. All movements should be mostly from the waist up, although other group movements or gestures are permitted. ***The emphasis of the Choric Speaking category is to present a dramatic auditory experience as a collective group.***

Category #10: Acting

A memorized ***complete stage performance by a group of two to six actors, each actor portraying one character and developing the scene through interaction, reaction, and other acting techniques.*** Cuttings from published works of literature, plays, or prose that have been adapted for the stage and that meet all the guidelines set in the general rules will be permitted. One or more actors may serve as individual narrators to introduce the group, set the scene, or communicate necessary information in transitions; this will not be considered to be acting more than one character.