



Mission Statement

The English-Speaking Union of the United States is committed to promoting scholarship and the advancement of knowledge through the effective use of English in an expanding global community. The ESU carries out its work through a network of 72 Branches and affiliates in the United Kingdom and 60 other countries, which sponsor a variety of language and international education programs.



A Brief History of the National Shakespeare Competition

The English-Speaking Union **National Shakespeare Competition** is a school-based program designed to help high school students develop their speaking and critical thinking skills and their appreciation of literature as they explore the beauty of the language and the timeless themes in Shakespeare's works. In the Competition, students read, interpret and perform monologues and sonnets in three qualifying stages—at the school, community (Branch) and national levels.

Since its beginnings with 500 students in New York City, the program has given more than 250,000 young people of all backgrounds the opportunity to discover Shakespeare's writings and to communicate their understanding of his language and message. The Competition currently involves approximately 60 English-Speaking Union Branch communities nationwide.

Every April, the winners of the local Branch Competitions come to New York City to take part in the **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** held at Lincoln Center. In the semi-finals, all of the contestants perform a monologue and a sonnet on stage. In the last phase of the Competition, those students selected as finalists present a cold reading in addition to their monologues and sonnets.

The winner of the **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** receives the ESU's Amanda Steele Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art's *Young Actors Summer School* in London, England. The runner-up receives \$1,000 from The English-Speaking Union, and the third place winner is awarded \$500 by The Shakespeare Society.

The **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** has been recognized by the Globe Center (USA), the Children's Theatre Foundation of America and the American Academy of Achievement. Judges for the Competition have included Andre Braugher, Kate Burton, Maurice Charney, Blythe Danner, Barry Edelstein, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Helen Hayes, Edward Herrmann, Dana Ivey, Peter Francis James, Kristin Linklater, Peter MacNicol, Jesse L. Martin, Cynthia Nixon, Tina Packer, Sarah Jessica Parker, Nancy Piccione, Phylicia Rashad, Christopher Reeve, Louis Scheeder, Carole Shelley, Richard Thomas, Courtney B. Vance, Sam Waterston, Dianne Wiest, Gene Wilder and Irene Worth.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES

invites

YOU

to participate in the



2011

**ESU NATIONAL SHAKESPEARE
COMPETITION**

Students in the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades study, memorize and perform a monologue from one of Shakespeare's plays.

The School Winner advances to the local English-Speaking Union Branch Competition, adding a sonnet to his or her monologue presentation.

The Branch Competition Winner receives a monetary prize and a trip to New York City, where he or she will have the opportunity to compete onstage at Lincoln Center. The trip will also include acting workshops and cultural activities.

The ESU National Competition Winner is awarded the ESU's Amanda Steele Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art's *Young Actors' Summer School* in London, England. The runner-up is awarded \$1,000 from the ESU, and the third-place winner receives \$500 from the Shakespeare Society.

For further information, please contact your Drama Director.



2011 ESU National Shakespeare Competition

Student Guidelines

The English-Speaking Union of the United States

The Rules of the Competition

The purpose of The ESU National Shakespeare Competition is to help you develop your speaking and critical thinking skills as you explore the beauty of the language and the timeless themes in Shakespeare's works. You are encouraged to bring Shakespeare to life in your own way and to express his words with understanding, feeling and clarity. The most important aspect of the Competition is your ability to understand Shakespeare's works and your ability to communicate that understanding.

- You will memorize, interpret and perform a monologue and, if required, a sonnet. (All school winners must present a monologue and a sonnet at The ESU Branch Competition.) It is strongly recommended that you be familiar with the play from which the speech was taken.
- You should identify your selection before you begin your presentation. You may perform your pieces in the order you prefer.
- You cannot wear costumes or use props of any kind, including chairs, jewelry, items of clothing and hair/hair clips. You should select clothing that allows you to move freely. Some styles of footwear such as heavy boots or high heels can be distracting and limit your movement.
- Prompting, if necessary, is allowed.
- You should speak naturally. We urge you to use your own voice rather than affect a British accent.
- You must be enrolled in the 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade.
- You cannot act for pay on television, the stage or in film during the 2010-2011 school year.

Getting Started

The first step in The ESU National Shakespeare Competition is choosing a monologue and sonnet to memorize and perform. Be sure to check whether or not you are required to select one from a list provided by The English-Speaking Union. Choosing the character and the part you will play is important; you need to be an actor and a casting director at the same time. Ask yourself if you would be a more convincing Juliet or Miranda, Hermia or Helena, Richard III or Henry V. Also remember that actors research their roles; it would be a rare thing to perform a monologue convincingly without knowing the character inside and out. That means knowing the plot and characters of the play well.

Your chosen monologue must not exceed 20 lines (verse and prose) according to *The Riverside Shakespeare (1997)*. The English-Speaking Union will adhere strictly to this rule, and the presentation of a monologue exceeding these limits will result in disqualification. If you are searching outside the suggested list, aim for consecutive material with a beginning, middle and end. While it may occasionally be appropriate to cut the lines of another character in a shared dialogue, try to avoid cutting within speeches. The winner of the school contest will also memorize a sonnet to add to his or her performance at the Branch Competition. Ideally, your sonnet will complement your monologue and help demonstrate your interpretive range.

Suit the Action to the Word, the Word to the Action

The role of the actor is to thoughtfully interpret his or her character on stage. He or she must know his or her role in the play and accurately interpret the meaning of the character's actions. Every great actor is praised for being "natural." However, actors master the tools of vocal and physical expression so completely that they *seem* natural. This should be your goal, too. Explore the range of expressive possibilities of voice and movement. You might experiment with emphasis, phrasing, volume vs. economy of gesture and facial expression. As you do, you will begin making decisions about which means of expression best fits the tone and character of your pieces. Allow your work to grow and change. While a momentary pause may be effective, avoid extended pauses that can detract from your performance.

The Selections:

The Monologue

A monologue is a speech presented by a single character set within the context of a play. In selecting yours, remember that some action (whether implied, reported or presented) has preceded and/or will proceed from this speech. The words spoken by your character will generally fit within the larger framework of the play in one or more of these ways:

- They may reveal something about the character's personality or goals.
- They may be used by the character to incite others into action and move the plot forward.
- They may set the scene or close the action, as in prologues and epilogues.

Once you select a monologue, read the whole play and place yourself in the circumstances faced by your character. Pay particular attention to what happens immediately before the monologue begins. Then begin to explore the words—the character's thoughts and feelings—with your voice and body. Remember, your goal is to make the character come alive on stage, and, in doing so, to convince the audience to accept you as that character and to believe in the message you are delivering. Avoid the temptation to "blow the audience away" with an excess of emotion. In acting, more is often less. An actor who "protests too much" rarely convinces.

As you work on the monologue, ask yourself:

- Who is my character?
- In what situation do I, the character, find myself?
- What decisions and discoveries am I making?
- What do I want to happen as a result of this speech?
- Given my past and my personality, how will I act to bring about the desired effect?
- What is my mood at the beginning of the speech?
- Has it changed by the end? If so, how?

The Sonnet

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets, all of which were published together in the same order in which they are read today. The first thing you will notice about these sonnets is their traditional form. The sonnets are almost all fourteen-line poems written in iambic pentameter, made up of three quatrains and a couplet. A quatrain is four lines of verse. The couplet is the final two lines of verse. Their rhyme scheme is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

It is also very important to pay attention to the rhythm of the verse. Shakespearean sonnets were written in iambic pentameter, which is a line made up of ten syllables or five iambic feet – an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Try to keep the rhythm of the speech in mind when you perform. Often it will help you to interpret the sonnet's meaning and aid your performance.

As you read over these sonnets to make your selection, you should notice that Shakespeare touches on the themes of love, death, art, beauty and the passage of time. You may find it helpful to think of the sonnet as a short scene, story or meditation. It explores and resolves a thought or an experience, and frequently contains a “turn” or change of thought. Lines 1-12 often develop an argument or give accumulating examples. The couplet (lines 13 and 14) draws a conclusion (sometimes witty), or acts as a zinger, ironically pointing out a paradox or contradicting the preceding twelve lines.

As you study your sonnet, try to be aware of its form and rhythm and bring your understanding of it to your performance. In preparing your sonnet, try to clarify this understanding by summarizing your sonnet in the shortest sentence possible. Then work on achieving the same clarity in delivering Shakespeare's words.

As you work on your sonnet, ask yourself:

- What is the central idea of the sonnet?
- How do the lines break down into an introduction, development of the theme and conclusion?
- Is there a turning point in the sonnet?
- How do the meaning and delivery of these words differ from my monologue?
- Can I strengthen the contrast?
- How should the examples and arguments be emphasized?
- How should the tone of the couplet be interpreted? Is it ironic? Witty? Contradictory?

In past years, movement during the sonnet had been discouraged. The rules of The ESU National Shakespeare Competition have changed to allow competitors to use movement and gesture if they feel it will enhance the delivery of the sonnet. As mentioned before, your sonnet will ideally be a counterpart to your monologue and help demonstrate your interpretive range.



The English-Speaking Union's 2011 National Shakespeare Competition

Suggested Monologues

These suggested monologues have been provided by The English-Speaking Union of the United States. **If students choose monologues not included on the list, they must make sure that their selections do not exceed 20 lines.** Students who perform longer monologues will be disqualified. The line citations are from THE RIVERSIDE SHAKESPEARE (2nd edition, 1997). N.B. Teachers in the Cincinnati and New York Branch Competitions should contact their local Branch Competition Coordinator for a different list of required monologues.

Play	Character	Lines	Start	Finish
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Oberon	2.1.249-67	I know a bank	first cock crow.
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Puck	2.1.42-58	Thou speakest aright	here comes Oberon.
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Helena	3.2.145-61	O spite! O hell!	all to make you sport.
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Bottom	4.1.200-219	When my cue comes	sing it at her death.
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Theseus	5.1.4-22	Lovers and madmen	suppos'd a bear.
All's Well That Ends Well	Helena	1.1.79-98	O were that all	Who comes here?
Antony and Cleopatra	Cleopatra	1.5.19-34	O, Chairman	on his life.
As You Like It	Duke Senior	2.1.1-17	Now my co-mates	in everything.
As You Like It	Phebe	3.5.8-27	I would not be thy executioner	That can do hurt.
As You Like It	Rosalind	3.5.44-63	I think she means	fare you well.
Coriolanus	Volumnia	3.2.52-69	Because that now	that want might ruin.
Coriolanus	Coriolanus	3.3.120-35	You common cry	a world elsewhere.
Cymbeline	Imogen	1.6.141-55	Away. I do condemn	What ho, Pisanio!
Cymbeline	Posthumus	5.5.209-27	Ay, so thou dost	Imogen, Imogen!
Hamlet	Claudius	3.3.36-55	O, my offense is rank	mine own ambition and my queen.
Hamlet	Hamlet	3.3.73-93	Now might I do it	kick at heaven.
Hamlet	Gertrude	4.7.166-83	There is a willow grows	to muddy death.
Henry IV, part 1	Henry	1.3.197-215	(Omit Yet) Herein will I imitate the sun	no foil to set it off.
Henry IV, part 1	Falstaff	2.4.466-80	But to say	all the world.
Henry IV, part 2	Rumor	1.1.1-20	Open your ears;	can play upon it.
Henry IV, part 2	Hostess	2.1.86-103	Thou didst swear	if thou canst.
Henry V	Hostess	2.3.9-26	(omit Nay sure,) he's not in hell;	as cold as any stone.
Henry VI, part 1	Joan de Pucelle	1.2.72-90	Dolphin, I am by birth	that I exceed my sex.
Henry VI, part 2	Queen Margaret	3.2.74-93	What, dost thou turn away	office unto thee.
Henry VI, part 3	Son	2.5.55-72	Ill blows the wind	have flow'd their fill.
Julius Caesar	Portia	2.1.237-56	Y'have urgently, Brutus	with your cause of grief.
Julius Caesar	Caesar	3.1.58-73	I could be well mov'd,	do remain to keep him so.
King John	Constance	3.4.44-60	Thou art not	of each calamity.
King John	Lewis	5.2.78-97	Your Grace shall pardon me	Am I Rome's slave?
King Lear	King Lear	1.4.275-89	Hear, Nature, hear,	a thankless child!—Away, away!
Love's Labour's Lost	Berowne	4.3.1-20	The King he is hunting the deer	God give him grace to groan!
Love's Labour's Lost	Rosalind	5.2.841-54	Oft have I heard	impotent to smile.

Macbeth	Lady Macbeth	1.5.38-58	The raven himself is hoarse	in the instant.
Macbeth	Macbeth	5.5.17-28	She should have died	signifying nothing.
Measure for Measure	Angelo	2.4.154-70	Who will believe thee	o'erweighs your true.
Measure for Measure	Isabella	2.4.171-87	To whom should I complain	his soul's rest.
Much Ado About Nothing	Benedick	2.3.22-36	May I be	in the arbor.
Othello	Roderigo	1.1.121-40	If't be your pleasure	for thus deluding you.
Othello	Iago	1.3.386-404	I hate the Moor.	to the world's light.
Othello	Othello	4.2.47-64	Had it pleased	grim as hell!
Othello	Emilia	4.3.86-103	But I do think	instruct us so.
Othello	Othello	5.2.1-20	It is the cause	was ne'er so fatal.
Richard II	Mowbray	1.1.49-68	The bitter clamour	doth he lie.
Richard II	Duchess	1.2.58-74	Yet one word	my weeping eye.
Richard II	York	2.3.86-105	Tut! Tut!	to thy fault!
Richard II	King Richard	4.1.162-76	Alack, why am I	sent for hither?
Richard II	Queen	5.1.1-15	This way the king	an alehouse guest?
Richard III	Lady Anne	1.2.50-67	Foul devil	arm hath butchered!
Romeo and Juliet	Prince	1.1.81-97	Rebellious subjects	the forfeit of the peace.
Romeo and Juliet	Juliet	2.5.1-17	The clock strook nine	pale as lead.
Romeo and Juliet	Capulet	3.5.176-95	God's bread!	I'll not be forsworn.
Romeo and Juliet	Romeo	3.3.29-48	'Tis torture, and not mercy	exile is not death?
The Comedy of Errors	Adriana	2.1.87-101	His company must do	I am but his stale.
The Comedy of Errors	Luciana	3.2.1-20	And may it be	with an evil word.
The Comedy of Errors	Aemilia	5.1.68-86	and thereof came	the use of wits.
The Merchant of Venice	Shylock	1.3.111-29	You call me misbeliever	I'll lend you thus much moneys"?
The Merchant of Venice	Shylock	3.1.54-73	He hath disgrac'd me	better the instruction.
The Merchant of Venice	Portia	4.1.184-202	The quality of mercy is not strain'd	the deeds of mercy.
The Merry Wives of Windsor	Falstaff	3.5.3-18	Go fetch me a quart of sack	a mountain of mummy.
The Taming of the Shrew	Petruchio	4.1.190-209	My falcon now	headstrong humor.
The Taming of the Shrew	Katherina	5.2.161-79	I am ashamed	do him ease.
The Tempest	Caliban	1.2.330-44	I must eat my dinner	the rest o' th' island.
The Tempest	Prospero	Epilogue	Now my charms	set me free.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona	Proteus	2.4.192-210	Even as one heat	my reason's light;
The Two Gentlemen of Verona	Silvia	4.3.18-36	Thyself hast loved	to depart alone.
The Two Gentlemen of Verona	Julia	4.4.91-109	Alas, poor Proteus	with Madam Silvia.
The Winter's Tale	Leontes	2.1.36-52	How blest am I	to play at will.
The Winter's Tale	Hermione	3.2.91-108	Sir, spare your threats	I should fear to die?
Titus Andronicus	Tamora	1.1.104-20	Stay, Roman brethren!	my first-born son!
Titus Andronicus	Aaron	5.1.125-44	Even now I curse the day	do ten thousand more.
Troilus and Cressida	Troilus	1.1.48-63	O Pandarus!	the knife that made it.
Troilus and Cressida	Cressida	3.2.117-33	Hard to seem won	Stop my mouth!
Twelfth Night	Orsino	1.1.1-15	If music be the food	is high fantastical.
Twelfth Night	Viola	2.2.17-36	I left no ring with her	What will become of this?
Twelfth Night	Sebastian	4.3.1-20	This is the air	I perceive she does.



2011 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Instructions for the School Competition

The English-Speaking Union of the United States

The purpose of The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition is to develop students' speaking and critical thinking skills and their appreciation of literature as they explore the beauty of the language and the timeless themes in Shakespeare's works. Participants should be encouraged to bring Shakespeare to life in their own way and to express his words with understanding, clarity and feeling. Gesture and movement should be natural and not exaggerated.

We hope that by offering The ESU National Shakespeare Competition in your school, the program will benefit entire classes rather than become an after-school activity in which only a few students participate. From our past experiences, we have learned that school competitions held in a general assembly generate the most enthusiasm.

The following are rules to which each school competition must adhere:

- In order to qualify for The English-Speaking Union Branch Competition, a school must first hold its own competition involving no fewer than 3 students.
- Students must be in the 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade to be eligible for the Competition. Contestants cannot act for pay on television, the stage or in film during the 2010-2011 school year.
- Each student must select, memorize and present a monologue. It is strongly recommended that students be familiar with the play from which the speech is taken.
- Students must select their monologue from *The Riverside Shakespeare (1997)*. All monologues must be limited to **20 lines (verse or prose)**. Students performing longer monologues will be disqualified. Please note that the 2010 list of suggested monologues adheres to this rule.
- Students should speak naturally. We urge them to use their own voice rather than affect a British accent.
- Students cannot wear costumes or use props of any kind, including chairs, jewelry, items of clothing and hair/hair clips.
- Prompting, if necessary, is allowed.
- The Competition should be judged by a panel of at least three individuals, to be drawn from teachers, actors, directors or other people in the community who are both interested in and knowledgeable about Shakespeare.
- The winner of the school contest must also memorize and present a sonnet for The ESU Branch Competition.
- For students with documented hearing, learning, physical and/or visual disabilities, appropriate arrangements will be made for the Branch Competition. Advise the local English-Speaking Union of any such disabilities prior to the Branch Competition.



2011 ESU National Shakespeare Competition

The English-Speaking Union of the United States

144 East 39th Street
New York, NY 10016

From The Judges: What They Look For

Since the goal of the Competition is to encourage you, the student, to meet and develop a relationship with Shakespeare, our best advice comes from the man himself: "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action" (*Hamlet* 3.2).

The judges include teachers, actors, directors and scholars. They look for performances that bring Shakespeare's words to life with deep understanding, compelling truth and unique personal style. The particulars of such a presentation vary greatly, but should demonstrate:

- a thorough understanding of the text, including language, character and plot;
- an effective delivery of the interpretation;
- an unaffected, artistic range that demonstrates an individual point-of-view and avoids fixed notions about how Shakespeare should be performed.

A reminder about the Competition rules:

- You should speak naturally. We urge you to use your own voice rather than affect a British accent.
- You will not be allowed to wear costumes. Your clothes should not distract from your performance and should allow you to move easily on stage. You cannot use props, including chairs, hair and hair clips, articles of clothing and jewelry.
- Your monologue must not be more than 20 lines according to *The Riverside Shakespeare* (1997).
- You must be enrolled in the 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade.
- You cannot have acted for pay on television, the stage or in film during the 2010-2011 school year.



2011 ESU National Shakespeare Competition

The English-Speaking Union of the United States

144 East 39th Street
New York, NY 10016

Notes for Judges

In response to feedback from judges past, we have developed this Judges' Evaluation Sheet, and would like to offer some explanation and suggestions to old hands and new.

The Evaluation Form is only a guideline. If you are new to judging you will find the need to use shorthand for your written responses because each student presentation is relatively short. We also encourage each panel of judges to develop a shared basis for discussion. Some panels have found it helpful to use a grading scale of 1 to 5 (pluses and minuses optional) as a reference before discussing results. Using this sheet you might give one grade for monologue and sonnet in each of the three categories of **Understanding, Communication and Expression**, and an overall grade for the presentation. This grading system need not be absolute, but should be useful in narrowing the field of contenders.

We recommend that you write in the student name and choice of material before the Competition begins. A few notes as the student begins, to fix APPEARANCE in your memory, will immeasurably aid subsequent recall.

Below are the three categories of evaluation:

- **UNDERSTANDING (by the student)**
A thorough understanding of the text, including language, character and plot.
- **COMMUNICATION (to the audience)**
An effective delivery of the interpretation so that the audience understands and believes what is said and felt.
- **EXPRESSION (artistic skill)**
An unaffected, artistic range that includes the effective use of body and voice, and demonstrates an individual point-of-view.

We hope this sparer and more flexible Evaluation Form eases your task. But please feel free to customize it. Just make sure your categories are shared with fellow judges and are in tune with the sheet you've received headed "From the Judges: What They Look For," which was also given to students.

Thank you for your good will and hard work.



**2011 ESU NATIONAL SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION
JUDGES' EVALUATION FORM**

NAME:

MONOLOGUE:

SONNET:

MONOLOGUE

SONNET

UNDERSTANDING
(BY THE STUDENT)

COMMUNICATION
(TO THE AUDIENCE)

EXPRESSION
(ARTISTIC SKILL)

OVERALL IMPACT:

NOTES: