

Cold Reading Rules

Description: The competitor is given written material and, after a brief examination, reads it “cold” to the audience with no other preparation.

Goals: The competitor learns to quickly identify the ideas and context of the written word and presents the selection as appropriate to the material with the focus on voice presentation.

Cold Reading Administration Rules:

1. Prior to the tournament, the tournament staff will choose and cut written selections to be used for each round.
2. The selections should be between 450 and 550 words. 550 words are approximately 4 minutes. An attempt should be made to have each piece roughly the same number of words as the other pieces in the room.
3. Selections may come from a wide variety of genres including, but not limited to: Novels, short stories, poetry, children’s books, Scripture passages, newspaper articles, periodicals, textbooks, fables, magazines, and obituaries. Written pieces may all come from the same source if desired (e.g. book, play, etc.).
4. To ensure a level playing field, all of the pieces chosen for a particular round should be from the same genre, and as much as they are able, the tournament should try to equalize the type of content. Each round must have a unique selection for each competitor in the room.
5. Students may present in any order; selections need not be distributed by speaker order.
6. The written selections should be placed in a manila envelope before the round begins. An envelope will be distributed to one judge in each room at ballot administration.
7. In the room, the competitor will draw one script provided by the tournament.
8. Speaker may not add or delete words.
9. Students will leave the selection in the room after presentation. This selection will be returned to the judge.
10. If needed, the judges may refer to the returned scripts after the round.

Cold Reading Presentation Rules:

1. In the room, the competitor will draw one (1) selection provided by the tournament.
2. The competitor will be given a maximum of two (2) minutes of preparation time. Preparation time begins as soon as the competitor receives his or her piece. During this time the student may write notations that will not be spoken in the round.
3. The competitor may only read what is on the selection; they may not improvise by adding or deleting words in the script.
4. The timekeeper will start the digital timepiece when the competitor receives the piece and will give verbal countdown signals every thirty (30) seconds until two (2) minutes have elapsed.
5. When the two minute preparation time is complete. The competitor will begin his reading of the selection.
6. Presentation should be appropriate to the context of the piece.
7. The competitor may use whatever vocal and physical techniques are appropriate to present the selection, including but not limited to, gestures, voices, facial expressions, and movement. If visuals (e.g. pictures in a children's book) are provided in the piece, students may incorporate them into the presentation.
8. Use of additional props, costumes, and audio or visual aids is prohibited.
9. Only feet may touch the floor at any time.
10. Once presentation is over, the student must return the selection before leaving the room. In addition, the student may not tell other competitors what genre or category of writing is being used.
11. The competitor may not listen to other Cold Reading competitors speaking before him. Competitors may stay after giving their presentation to listen to subsequent speeches.
12. Since the scripts are pre-selected, there is no time limit; however, the timekeeper will still start the digital timepiece when the competitor begins and will stop the digital timepiece when the competitor finishes.