Oral Interpretation

The Oral Interpretation session offers classes in 8 different events. Choose from any of the following events: Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Original Oratory, Program Oral Interpretation, Duo Interpretation, Duet Acting, Oratory and/or Informative Speaking.

During the five days at speech camp students will be focused in different directions depending on what you want to accomplish. If you want to focus on an acting event we will allow you to read pieces that we feel will fit you and stretch you for you to decide which interests you most. In that choice you will sit with the coaching staff and sell to them why this piece is the best piece for you. Our hope is that you begin to become advocates for your performance choices. The more you know, the more you own and can continue to build yourself up as a competitor. We will work on acting technique, making big bold choices, understanding why one choice over another, accepting that sometimes the things in our head just don’t work, and finally and possibly most important accepting that this activity is about getting better, becoming a champion is a decision that is wrapped up in how much work you are willing to do to achieve greatness.

Work ethic and team ethics will also be a topic of discussion as we will treat the camp group as it’s own supportive entity. You will assist each other, support each other and coach each other. The best way to grow yourself is to positively evaluate others. By the last week of the camp you should have a piece, cut to time, memorized with an introduction, blocked and ready for competition. If you want to do Info or Oratory you will spend your early time deciding on your topic, pitching them to the coaching staff then you will be put on a writing schedule that will allow you to write, receive feedback, edit and push forward so that by weeks end your oratory has been fully worked through. You will have all of the pieces in order and perfected for the season.

Our overall goal is not just to give you a story to tell, but rather to teach you how to take a piece of literature and work it into the greatness that the stories we tell are. My business theme is simple, “Tell your story, it is the best story ever told.” This rings true in all I do. At my core I want all students to have access to a great camp experience that gives them a sense of ownership and success in their own success. We will have fun, laugh hard, work even harder and constantly share our discoveries of our stories. A week at camp with Kristy Thomas of Always Writing 4 U is an experience that no one should miss!

What to Expect

Each student should expect to work hard, bring you’re a game daily because myself and my staff will bring ours, learn daily, take intense notes that should be used throughout your performance career on any and every piece of literature that is put in your hand, tell a story, create a story, build a character and to love what you do. This camp experience should give you a new appreciation for this activity that you commit so much of your time to on a yearly basis and all of the coaches that affect your life. Here is a short list of the many things that we will cover at camp:

1. We will work on every aspect of interpretation. First, we will focus on piece selection. If you are coming to camp with a piece in hand you will begin to work on your selection. DO NOT memorize before camp begins, that is a part of the process. In piece selection you will discuss with clinicians why this piece, why now and why you? These are things that we tend to not discuss.

2. You should expect that the clinicians are a sound board, if you are thinking something, share it. With that...
comes the responsibility of you, the performer to come in with trust in the knowledge, background and proven success of the clinicians working the speech camp.

3. We will work on doing a proper cutting which goes into plot diagrams and how they work. You will have an understanding of story structure.

4. We will focus on the climax: identifying it, building up to it, hitting it and coming off of it to create the perfect emotional ride.

5. You will be asked to answer the essential question of, “Why?” A lot! If right now you don’t understand why it’s so important that’s great, you will.

6. We will work on character analysis, because knowing how you are and where you’ve been in essential. These are whole people not just people who only live for ten minutes.

7. We will dive into the works of Stanislavski and Michael Shurtleff for a better understanding of how to create characters and breathe life into them

8. By the end of camp, you should have a solid arsenal of information to hold onto and attack every piece you are given with a sense of confidence and understanding of DOING THE WORK. Everyone wants to be a champion but very few want to do the work necessary to get there.

9. If you are in oratory or informative person, we are here for you as well. We will work on grabbing a hold of a dynamic topic. Accepting that this is a living, breathing document that should be changed and updated as the competitive season moves, and you should be able to do this without fear.

10. You will work to find the best information that supports your argument and all of the elements needed to create a strong piece of literature to present as a persuasive and informative speech.

11. The goal for oratory and informative students is to follow a very clear laid out schedule for the days of camp and by the end of camp the oration/ informative speech will be written, clean and ready to memorize.

12. Lastly, oratory and informative students will learn tips and tools on presentation styles that work best for them and are best practices for others.

Oral Interpretation Daily Schedule 2020

Director's Statement

I love what I do; I do it well and I do it with a great deal of preparation and pride. Now I want to assist you to tell your story. My motto is simple: Tell your story - it is the best story ever told. I am, at my core, an actor and an educator. I have a Bachelors of Science in Secondary Speech and Theatre Education from Missouri State University, Masters of Fine Arts in Acting and Directing from University of Missouri Kansas City and a Masters of Business Administration in Educational Leadership with Principal Certification from LeTourneau University.

My achievements in forensics began when I was in high school as a competitor and was a semifinalist at the NSDA National Tournament in 1996 in duo interpretation. My greatest accomplishment as a performer occurred on the college level when I was in the final rounds of five events at the state tournament placing second in poetry and prose, and first in duo, dramatic, and program oral interpretation at the Missouri state tournament. As a coach in Texas I had state finalists in duo, duet, oratory, and dramatic; semifinalists in the aforementioned events as well as humorous, prose and poetry; and two duo state champions and one in dramatic. I have also had state finalists in University Interscholastic League (UIL) prose and poetry, NSDA semifinalists in duo and dramatic and a second place finalist in poetry at the 2012 NFL National Tournament. Since the creation of this
business I have had multiple students in finals and champions at state tournaments across the country as well as in the final round an national tournaments, including middle school NSDA. At NSDA in we have had finalists in: DI, DUO, Prose and POI as well as National Champions in DI and Prose (3).

Division Director

Kristy Thomas

Kristy Thomas began her journey in the speech world in 1992 when she was a freshman in high school. She competed all four years, was a state finalist in Duet Acting and a semi finalist at NSDA in duo interpretation. She has been coaching since 1996. Coaching finalists in Missouri in her early career then moving to Texas where she had multiple finalists in every Speech area including Oratory and Texas state champions in DI and two in Duo. Upon starting her business Always Writing in 2013 she has had a National finalist as a writer every year with her first TWO National Champions in 2017 in Prose (Gentle Giant) and Dramatic Interpretation (Animal). She has had the National Champion in Prose for the last three years. She loves this activity, coaching, writing and publishing. She is excited to work with students in class at summer and school year camps as well as online sessions. Best of luck this competitive season and she hopes to see you at Nationals.
Divison Staff

Nathan Cole

Nathan is a tenured professor of Theatre Arts at Ventura College in Ventura California. As an undergraduate at the University of Texas at Arlington, Nathan competed in individual events for four years and was a DSRTKA national champion in both Duo and Program Oral Interpretation. For AFT, he was a semi-finalist in Program Oral Interpretation and Poetry. After graduation and during graduate school, Nathan coached interpretation events for both the University of Texas at Arlington and Rice University.

Amberley Tanner

Started her career while attending University Texas at Arlington where she was a member of a top twenty nationally ranked speech program. She began in policy debate, but as an actress, she soon switched over to Oral Interpretation. She was the TIFA State Champion in Poetry and in Duo was the State Champion for two years back to back. Additionally, she was a national finalist in Duo, Dramatic interpretation, Poetry, Program of Oral interpretation, After Dinner Speaking, and she was National Champion in Prose and runner up in Duo. Amberley graduated with a BA in Communications from UTA and she continued on to TWU to get MA in Performance and Directing. In 2001, she began teaching at Northwest High School just out of Fort Worth. Amberley has taught theatre for over twenty years and she has competed on all levels of OAP from District to State. Currently, Mrs. Tanner is a clinician and an adjudicator for OAP and has been judging since 2008. In 2005, she started a Speech team there, where she has coached students on every level from the UIL State finals, TFA State finals, and NIETOC/NSDA National finals. Mrs. Tanner loves to coach and she wants to help students take the literature and bring it to life. She fundamentally believes in an organic process when it comes to interpretation. The truth is in the story and the journey is about using various techniques and strategies to access the best performance.

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