

PA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Competition 2026

Guidelines for Coaches and Students

Material

- All selections must be from the plays of William Shakespeare. Sonnets are allowed with administrative permission.
- Monologues must be 1.5 to 3 minutes.
- Duo/Trio Scenes must be 3 to 5 minutes.
- Timing begins after the introduction. Any participant going more than fifteen seconds under time or over time in two of the three rounds will be penalized in the final tabulation of their score.
- For monologues, feel free to combine two or more short speeches from the same scene or make an internal cut, as long as connections are smooth and logical. Internal cuts are allowed in scenes as well.

Preparing

- Seek roles that you connect with and material you feel comfortable with.
- Discover what your character wants and who they want it from. In playing the scene, fight for it, using the words as one of the primary mechanisms for achieving that aim.
- Make sure you are familiar with the whole play and know it well.
- Memorize your piece and perform it multiple times for people prior to the competition. Prompting or starting over will not be permitted.
- For monologues: Do not direct your focus to the adjudicator. A downstage focus to the slight left, slight right, or over the adjudicator's head is best.
- Simple staging is best. A chair will be available for you to use.
- Props should not be used unless it is essential to the action and something you might normally wear or carry such as a handkerchief, a watch, a letter in your pocket, a scarf, a jacket, etc.
- Students should speak clearly but naturally. (We want to hear your own voice rather than an affected British accent.)

Format

- You will perform three times at the competition – once in each of three rounds.
- Each round is split into Panel A and Panel B. The first 30 minutes* of the round, Panel A will present their pieces and then the adjudicator will give feedback. The second 30 minutes of the round are then for Panel B to present and receive their feedback. **The time of the rounds are subject to change depending on how many participants are registered.*
- You will be assigned a Participant Number such as "B15" which should be used in your introduction rather than your name.

Sample Monologue Introduction: "Hello I am B15. My piece is from Hamlet, Act 1 Scene 2 and I will be playing Claudius."

Sample Scene Introduction: "Hello we are B21. Our scene is from Measure for Measure, Act 3 Scene 1. I will be playing Isabella and I will be playing Claudio."

- Please wait for the adjudicator to write this information down and invite you to begin.
- After you perform, transition out of character and say, "Thank you," and return to your seat.
- Coaches, parents, classmates and friends are welcome to observe in each round as long as they maintain a quiet respect for each of the participants.
- Clapping, cheering, and photography/video recording are not permitted.

Evaluation

- Each participant will receive written and (time permitting) oral feedback on their work.

- Adjudicators will be observing voice, movement, character choices, and text, giving a score to each element. (Fair = 1, Good = 2, Great = 3, and Excellent = 4.) *See adjudication sheets for reference.*
- Each element will contribute to the Final Score.
- Adjudicators will also recommend each monologue or scene for Showcase by giving a score of 1 - 4. (1 = slightly recommend, 4 = highly recommend.)
- These two scores from each of the three rounds will be tabulated to establish Showcase participants and Award recipients.
- Showcase will help determine DeSales University Scholarship recipients. These may or may not be the same participants as the Award recipients.

What to Wear and Bring

- Dress should be neat, comfortable, presentable. Do not try to costume yourself, yet be mindful of your character and physical actions.
- A dress shirt, blouse or sweater, slacks, or solid colored dress/skirt and flat shoes work well.
- Make sure we can see your face... keep your hair is off your face for example.
- You may be traveling to different buildings on the DeSales University campus during Competition and Showcase. Bring comfortable shoes and appropriate seasonal outerwear.
- The cafeteria at the University Center will likely be CLOSED for DSU's spring break. We recommend packing your lunch, but there are also several quick options in close proximity to campus. *See Lunch Time Suggestions for options.*
- Please do not attend the event if you are feeling ill or are displaying a fever/cough/nausea/etc.