



The student will present a story from his/her own life experience, from folk literature, from his/her family's oral tradition, or from any other source.

Storytelling is unique from most other contest events in that it should have a **very spontaneous quality** encouraging audience participation/interaction. The presentation should have a clear beginning, middle, and end; and demonstrate the customary attributes of characterization, stage presence, body and facial expression, articulation, pronunciation, fluency, and eye contact. The presentation may include multiple characters and sound effects. Time Limit: 5-10 minutes Number of Participants: 1 Props: Single chair



Who'd Be Good at This?

- ... your students who don't memorize easily...
- ... your first-time speech students...
- ... your students who are highly experienced and need a new challenge...
- ... your students who won't shut up in class....
- ...your students who always have a story to tell you on Monday morning while you're

trying to get class started.

So What's the Difference ...

... between storytelling and a monologue?

- ★ A monologue is memorized; a story is paraphrased. It may change a bit from telling to telling.
- ★ A monologue has a few hard and fast rules; storytelling is more pliable.
- ★ In a monologue the speaker often speaks as if he or she is playing another character. A storyteller most often plays himself.
- ★ Monologues are often limited in the amount of direct dialogue that may be used; in storytelling there are no such limits.
- ★ A monologue is basically an acting event; a storyteller has **a conversation with the audience.**

But How Do I Coach It?

+Begin with brainstorming. Get others involved. Any Middle School or Elementary School teacher knows that one story leads to another.

+Let the story develop as you rehearse... let it grow... practice in front of a live audience and they'll tell you which bits work.

+And again, I'd suggest making it a class activity. This has been done successfully in many Illinois Schools, and it's been especially useful with students who have trouble expressing themselves in writing. Not everyone can write or write well, but few of us are without the ability to talk. Many teachers begin school or return from a holiday by asking kids what they did over the break. This is often the beginning of a good story.

Okay. Now How Do We Do This?

The IESA rules give you some indication... the student's life experience, folk literature, the family's oral traditions, or any other source. That pretty much opens it up to the entire world. I've found that while using folk literature... Paul Bunyon, the Little Mermaid, Johnny

Appleseed... is acceptable, the very best stories seem to come from personal experience or family stories.

There are several ways to come at this:

- Tell a mix of stories about a single person. "You wouldn't believe my grandpa. In fact, when he starts telling stories sometimes I don't believe my grandpa..."
- Tell one long story. "You would not believe our family trip to the Grand Canyon last summer..."
- Talk about one concept. "Ever since I was little certain things scared me. Like the time..."

So What's Holding Us Back?

Sorry, but the answer is simple and sad. either we don't understand the event (we can fix that today), or it's easier to hand a monologue to a student and say, "Memorize it."

And Some Miscellaneous Stuff...

- ✓ Don't worry about the "audience interaction" wording. This is not necessary. You don't have to use it or it might be as simple as asking the audience a question.
- ✓ This is only for the brave of heart, but I once judged a boy who got his entire speech from the audience on the spot. "There was this old man named... He lived way up on top of a hill in... One night the strangest thing happened. He'd just blown out his lantern for the night when he heard a knocking at the door. He opened the door and found...". His teacher sat in the back of the room and gave him a signal when he'd reached six minutes. I loved it.
- ✓ Most professional storytellers build a story like making a salad. They start with the lettuce (the gist of the thing) then add things as they go along.
- ✓ No IESA event is easier to work into a language arts curriculum.

