



The English-Speaking Union  
National Shakespeare Competition  
**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL COMPETITION**

**COMPETITION PURPOSE:** To develop students' critical thinking, close reading and public speaking skills through the reading, analysis and performance of Shakespeare as well as increase their self-confidence and overall appreciation of literature (by exploring the beauty of Shakespeare's language and the classic themes found in his works).

**COMPETITION AIM:** Students bring the timeless works of Shakespeare to life each in their own way and learn to express his words with understanding, clarity and feeling.

**For more complete information, please view the 2016-2017 *Teacher Handbook* online at [www.esuus.org](http://www.esuus.org).**

**SCHOOL COMPETITION GUIDELINES:**

- The school competition must involve a minimum of three (3) students.
- Each student must select, memorize and present a monologue from one of Shakespeare's plays. Students should be familiar with the play from which the speech is taken.
- Students are limited to a monologue of no more than **20 lines (verse or prose)**. Length is determined according to the Folger Shakespeare Library editions of the plays (Simon & Schuster, 2003-2013). Students performing longer monologues will be disqualified. The selections included in our *Suggested Monologues List* (and its accompanying packet) adhere to this line count rule.  
NOTE: The Folger editions of the plays are available for free online at: [www.folgerdigitaltexts.org](http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org).
- Students cannot wear costumes or use props of any kind (including chairs, jewelry, items of clothing and hair/hair clips).
- Students' order of performance at the school competition should be determined by lot.
- Students at the school competition should introduce themselves *only* by name.
- Students should identify their selection before they begin their presentation.
- Students should speak naturally in their own voice (rather than affect a British accent).
- Students are expected to memorize their pieces. Prompting, however if necessary, is allowed. If students require prompting, they must say "Line."
- The winner of the school competition must also memorize and present a sonnet (in addition to their monologue) for their local English-Speaking Union Branch Competition. The student must select a sonnet from Shakespeare's 154 sonnet cycle. Please note editing of the sonnet is *not* allowed (i.e. the student must present the complete sonnet).  
NOTE: All the sonnets are available for free online at [www.folgerdigitaltexts.org](http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org).
- 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 Branch of any such disabilities **prior** to the Branch Competition.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Some English-Speaking Union Branches require students to perform set selections rather than pick their own selections from the Suggested Monologues. Please check with your local ESU Branch Shakespeare Coordinator.