



## English in Action

### The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition

**To: High School Principals & Administrators Across the Country**  
**From: Education Department, ESU**

#### **2019 Memo to Administrators Interested in Participating in the ESU National Shakespeare Competition**

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Dear Administrator,

The English-Speaking Union is pleased to invite you, your staff, students and school community to participate in the **English-Speaking Union (ESU) National Shakespeare Competition!**

Since 1982, the **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** has partnered with educators and schools to make Shakespeare's work come alive. This unique, performance-based education program provides your students with multiple points of entry to engage with rigorous material and allows them to practice essential, college-readiness skills such as critical thinking and close reading.

The ESU National Shakespeare Competition provides an engaging opportunity for student-centered learning. In a recent poll by Teach-Plus, over 27% of teachers cited student empowerment as the most important condition affecting student learning. In the thirty-six year history of the competition, the ESU has helped educators empower nearly 350,000 students to create and convey their own unique perspectives to an audience. High school students from across the country read, analyze, perform and recite Shakespearean monologues and sonnets. They connect with like-minded peers and increase their self-confidence.

In another Teach-Plus poll, teachers cited the provision of additional classroom resources as the most effective teacher-retention strategy available to administrators. Open to 9th through 12th graders, the ESU National Shakespeare Competition is designed for high school teachers. An easily implemented activity that integrates seamlessly into existing curriculum, it is aligned with state and national standards. Participating schools are provided with lesson plans, judging guides and preselected monologues and sonnets for ease of use. These resources facilitate collaboration across departments, competition across grade-levels and help to create an opportunity for community involvement.

Winners of the branch-level competitions will travel, all expenses paid, to New York City for the finals. Past winners have received full scholarships to attend the Young Actor's Summer School at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, full scholarships to the American Shakespeare Center Theatre Camp in Staunton, Virginia and cash prizes. To learn more about this exciting, educational program online, please visit at [www.shakespearecompetition.org](http://www.shakespearecompetition.org)

The English-Speaking Union of the United States was founded in 1920, on the conviction that a shared language could bring individuals together, despite differences in nationality or background. Approaching its second century, ESU is dedicated to supporting educators and learners of English through programs such as the National Shakespeare Competition. Please visit our website at <https://www.esuus.org/esu/> for all of the details.

Please read on to learn more!



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#### FAST FACTS

**What:** A nation-wide competition open to high school students. Please see the [Teacher Handbook](#) for specific rules and information.

**When & Where:** Classroom and school competitions can begin as soon as you'd like! Please contact your local branch, visit the website or refer to the [Teacher Handbook](#) for deadlines, dates and locations.

**Why:** Because we believe that teachers deserve support in their mission to educate and engage students. And because we believe it's never too early to develop their love for reading, analyzing, and speaking the English language, especially Shakespeare!

**Who:** For almost 100 years, The English-Speaking Union has been a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting teachers and learners of the English language. The **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** is just one of many programs that help us achieve that goal.

**How:** Participating in the **ESU National Shakespeare Competition** is easy! In order to participate in the program, your school should:

- Sign up with your local ESU Branch.
  - You can find your local ESU Branch by visiting our [Branch Directory](#).
  - Fill out the [School Participation Form](#).
  - Confirm with your local ESU Branch Shakespeare Coordinator that your school is registered for the program. *Your registration is not complete until you receive this confirmation.*
- Visit [ESU National Shakespeare Competition](#) to review competition materials, including the [Teacher Handbook](#).
- Your teachers will use the provided resources to plan lessons and hold classroom competitions.
- Hold a school-wide competition to determine your school's representative at the Branch Competition. Student monologues **must** be selected from the [2019 Monologue Packet](#).
- Submit the [School Winner Entry Form](#) to qualify your student for the Branch Competition.

The [Teacher Handbook](#) includes everything your teachers need to get students ready, including:

- Conditions of school participation
- Organization of the school competition
- Judging materials
- Lesson Plans
- Connection to national standards

Thank you for your interest in the English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition. Please contact us at [shakespeare@esuus.org](mailto:shakespeare@esuus.org) or 212-818-1200 ext. 212 with any questions. We look forward to working with you this year.