



The English-Speaking Union  
National Shakespeare Competition  
**CONDITIONS OF ESU BRANCH PARTICIPATION**



*In order for a Branch of The English-Speaking Union of the United States to participate in The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition, its Competition must meet the criteria listed below. Only those ESU Branches whose competitions meet these criteria will be eligible to send contestants to the National Competition.*

**BRANCH ELIGIBILITY:**

- The Branch must meet all the national deadlines and pay the Branch Participation Fee (listed on Page 9).
- The Competition must be open to all public high schools in the area the Branch targets for the program. It may be open to independent and parochial schools and home-schooled groups.
- A minimum of 6 schools must each agree to hold a school competition from which a winner will be selected to advance to the Branch competition. (Exceptions can be made for smaller communities, but requests must be approved by ESU National Headquarters).
- All stages of the Competition must be judged by a panel of at least 3 individuals familiar with Shakespeare's works. For the Branch Competition, a substitute judge should be considered in case one member of the panel unexpectedly cancels. We also recommend that a Branch representative be present during the judges' deliberations.

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*All schools in the Competition should meet the following criteria. The Branch is responsible for ensuring that the schools participating in their competition are eligible for the program.*

**SCHOOL/HOME SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY:**

- The school must register with its local English-Speaking Union Branch Shakespeare Coordinator.
- The school competition must be open to all students enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades or an equivalent (for home school students).
- The school competition must involve a minimum of 3 students. Home-school participants must also emerge from a competition of three or more students.
- School and home school competitions must be judged by a panel of at least three individuals familiar with Shakespeare's works.

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*All students in the Competition should meet the following criteria. The Branch is responsible for ensuring that the students participating in their competition are eligible for the program.*

**CONTESTANT ELIGIBILITY:**

- Contestants must be enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade or an equivalent (for home school students).
- Contestants *cannot* act for pay on television, the stage or in film during the 2015-2016 school year.



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- Contestants should be available to represent their Branch at the National Competition in New York City. If, for any reason, a Branch winner is unable to fully participate, the Branch should send the runner-up from their Branch Competition to advance to the next level of competition.

FOR PREVIOUS SCHOOL WINNERS ONLY: Previous school winners can compete in the school competition in succeeding years and are eligible to advance to the local ESU Branch Competition.

FOR PREVIOUS BRANCH WINNERS ONLY: Each Branch individually decides whether a former Branch winner is eligible to compete in their Branch Competition in succeeding years and/or represent the Branch at the National Competition in New York. Branches should make a decision on this issue early and continue their stance in following years.

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*The Branch must adhere to the following rules at their Branch Competition.*

### **BRANCH COMPETITION RULES:**

Students must select, memorize and perform two pieces at the Branch Competition:

- a) one monologue of **no more than 20 lines** (verse and prose) from one of Shakespeare's plays;
- b) one sonnet from Shakespeare's 154 sonnet cycle.

**Length of a monologue is determined by the [Folger Shakespeare Library editions](#) of the plays (Simon & Schuster, 2003-2013). Students performing longer monologues will be disqualified.**

For more on selection eligibility rules, visit the [Rules & Eligibility](#) section of the ESU website.

NOTE: ESU National Headquarters provides *Suggested Monologue and Sonnet Lists* as well as accompanying packets to the Branches, which may also be sent to the schools. The Branch determines whether these selections should serve as a suggestion or a requirement at their Branch Competition (i.e. students must pick from them).

- Students' order of performance should be determined by lot.
- Students should introduce themselves *only* by name.  
They should **not** state where they are from or which school they attend.
- Students should identify their selections before they begin their presentation.  
They may perform their pieces in whatever order they prefer.
- Students *cannot* wear costumes or use props of any kind (including chairs, jewelry, items of clothing and hair/hair clips).
- Students should speak naturally in their own voice (rather than affect a British accent).
- Students are expected to memorize their pieces. If necessary, however, prompting is allowed.  
If students require prompting, they must say "Line."