



## 2009 National Shakespeare Competition Instructions for the School Competition

The English-Speaking Union of the United States

The purpose of the Competition is to develop students' speaking and critical thinking skills and their appreciation of literature as they explore the beauty of the language and the timeless themes in Shakespeare's works. Participants should be encouraged to bring Shakespeare to life in their own way and to express his words with understanding, clarity and feeling. Gesture and movement should be natural and not exaggerated.

We hope that by offering the Shakespeare Competition in your school, the program will benefit entire classes rather than become an after-school activity in which only a few students participate. From our past experiences, we have learned that school competitions held in a general assembly generate the most enthusiasm.

The following are rules to which each school competition must adhere:

- In order to qualify for The English-Speaking Union's Branch Competition, a school must first hold its own competition involving no fewer than 3 students.
- Students must be in the 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade to be eligible for the competition. *Please note this is the first year the competition is open to students in the 9th grade.* Contestants cannot act for pay on television, the stage, or in film during the 2008-2009 school year.
- Each student must select, memorize, and present a monologue. It is strongly recommended that students be familiar with the play from which the speech is taken.
- Students must select their monologue from the official text. *Please note that the official text and suggested monologues will be posted on [www.esuus.org](http://www.esuus.org) in September.* All monologues must be limited to **20 lines (verse or prose)**. Students performing longer monologues will be disqualified.
- Students should speak naturally. We urge them to use their own voice rather than affect a British accent.
- Students cannot wear costumes or use props of any kind; including chairs, jewelry, items of clothing, and hair/hair clips.
- Prompting, if necessary, is allowed.
- The competition should be judged by a panel of at least three individuals, to be drawn from teachers, actors, directors, or other people in the community who are both interested in and knowledgeable about Shakespeare.
- The winner of the school contest must also memorize and present a sonnet for the ESU Branch Competition.
- 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 of any such disabilities prior to the Branch Competition.