

Virginia High School League
1642 State Farm Blvd.
Charlottesville, VA 22911
434-977-8475 / 434-977-5943 (fax) / www.vhsl.org.

VHSL THEATRE MANUAL

Updated August 2015



THEATRE MANUAL

REVISED: August 2015

CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS HIGHLIGHTED PER THIS EXAMPLE

Virginia High School League, Inc.

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Ken Tilley, Executive Director

Lisa Giles, Assistant Director

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This official publication of the Virginia High School League has been prepared as an aid to high school theatre directors, lay judges, festival/tournament directors and persons who work closely with interscholastic theatre programs.

The general purpose of the League's theatre program is to stimulate interest and participation in the activity among Virginia high school students. This purpose is best served when a large number of schools and students engage in the programs. Through theatrical activities at the school level, young people are provided a means of furthering their cultural and educational development.

Rules and guidelines contained in this manual have been established by the VHSL Debate, Drama and Forensic Advisory Committee with approval of the League's Executive Committee. These policies are designed to ensure an equitable setting in which to conduct competitive activities and improve one's level of achievement.

Directors/coaches, participants, judges, event administrators and observers are expected to adhere to the regulations and procedures described herein. They are also expected to apply the principles of good sportsmanship which, according to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary is defined as, "Conduct becoming to a competitor, involving honest rivalry and graceful acceptance of results." VHSL sportsmanship rules as stated in the Handbook apply to academic activities just as they do to athletic activities. The procedure for addressing sportsmanship concerns is printed on the reverse.

Besides containing all rules for theatre events, this manual includes sample rating forms, judge's ballots and useful information so participants understand how events are administered and evaluated. Entry forms for conference and regional competitions are available under the appropriate activity on the League website (www.vhsl.org). State entry forms are also posted on the website and distributed by regional directors to coaches of students qualifying for that level.

Persons receiving this manual are urged to read it carefully and retain it for reference purposes. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact us at the League office.

We appreciate your continued support of theatre activities, and we welcome your suggestions for its improvement.

Ken Tilley
Executive Director

Lisa Giles
Director of Activities

ABOUT THE VHSL

When members of the Washington and Jefferson Literary Societies at the University of Virginia decided in the fall of 1913 to organize a debating league among the secondary schools of the state, they could not have comprehended how their small project would develop, expand and grow into what is now the Virginia High School League.

Twenty schools took part in that first state event. By the fall of 1914 one hundred schools were enrolled in the Virginia High School Literary League. Its program was expanded during 1914-15 to include a contest in oral reading. And in conjunction with the University's General Athletic Association, statewide competition began in baseball, basketball and track. Other sports and activities soon followed. Dramatic activities have been an integral part of the VHSL since the first One-Act Play competition in 1931-32.

Membership in the League increased so rapidly that the Extension Division of the University of Virginia, and later the Division of Continuing Education, had to be assigned greater responsibility for the conduct of League affairs.

By 1926, the League realized that, in the interest of democracy, the legislative responsibilities of the League should be vested in representatives of member high schools. All activities were coordinated under one organization. Control of the composite program was charged to a body of principals known as the Legislative Council, assisted by a smaller Executive Committee.

In March 1946, the League was reorganized as the first step in a significant postwar program. Its name was changed from "The Virginia High School Literary and Athletic League" to "Virginia High School League" to suggest a wider field of League interests. Finally, in 1995, legislative control was transferred from the Legislative Council to the Executive Committee.

For equalization of opportunities sponsored by the League, each school is classified according to its enrollment into a Group, 1A-6A. Each group is subdivided into two regions, each of which consists of four conferences with an average of seven schools per conference. Today the League membership consists of **315** schools, nearly all of the accredited three- and four-year public high schools in the state.

More than 150,000 students participate each year in VHSL athletic programs. The League conducts state championships in 28 different sports — 13 for boys and 14 for girls — ranging from football and field hockey to gymnastics and golf. An additional 25,000 students take part in VHSL academic programs. Besides debate, theatre and forensics, these include creative writing, scholastic media, Scholastic Bowl, and film festival.

Besides its sponsorship of individual and team activities for students, the League seeks to improve officiating and coaching by organizing and training more than 5,000 game officials, conducting rules clinics, providing information and materials and working closely with related organizations at the state and national levels. VHSL and the Virginia Association of Speech and Debate Coaches co-sponsor a speech, debate and theatre conference for coaches in early fall.

Through coordinated group action, the League has flourished. Thousands of men and women working with millions of boys and girls have provided wholesome, diverse activities that enhance the academic mission of schools. These activities provide valuable lessons that enrich an individual's high school experiences. They prepare students to lead more productive lives. They contribute to a unity of purpose within a team, a school, a community and the entire commonwealth. They help the League accomplish its main objective — service to Virginia's youth.

VHSL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SERVES IMPORTANT ROLE

The Constitution of the Virginia High School League authorizes the Executive Committee to appoint advisory committees for the purpose of giving technical or other advice and assistance as may be necessary in conducting statewide activities programs for the benefit of high school students. Among these advisory committees is the Debate, Drama and Forensic Advisory Committee.

This advisory committee is composed of active high school coaches (or administrators) — two debate, two drama and two forensic coaches. It meets annually to develop the terms and conditions for administering state events as well as to make recommendations for improving administrative procedures governing speech and drama activities.

Members are appointed to provide (1) balanced geographical representation, (2) knowledge and experience in their specific activity and (3) representation for both large and small schools. The term of appointment is three years with staggered terms allowing for a combination of continuity and new ideas.

A member of the VHSL administrative staff works with the advisory committee in developing the scope of the committee's work and in presenting the committee's recommendations to coaches at area rules clinics and to the Executive Committee and Membership. In order for legislative changes (Handbook amendments) to be implemented, they must be approved by the Executive Committee at two of four annual meetings.

Obviously the strength of advisory committees is that they give the League's Executive Committee direct access to sentiment from the "grass roots" level. Committee members are encouraged to express their personal feelings and observations as well as ideas from their colleagues in the field. Many of their ideas are also addressed at required speech rules clinics held annually across the state. It is important to bear in mind that all decisions are ultimately based on what will best serve the interests of boys and girls from across the state participating in the League's interscholastic activities.

For the 2015-16 school year, members of the DDFAC include:

Debate, Drama and Forensic Advisory Committee

Tina Tapp, Radford HS
Todd Necessary, Marion Senior HS
Carol Webster, William Byrd HS
David Noland, Woodgrove HS
Shelly Nowacek, Great Bridge HS
Terri Towle, Westfield HS

<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Term</u>
Forensics/Theatre	1A-West	Jan. 2014 – Dec. 2016
Forensics/Theatre	2A-West	Jan. 2014 – Dec. 2016
Theatre	3A-West	Jan. 2013 – Dec. 2015
Theatre	4A-North	Jan. 2015 – Dec. 2017
Theatre	5A-South	Jan. 2014 – Dec. 2016
Forensics/Debate	6A-North	Jan. 2013 – Dec. 2015

Ex Officio

Lisa Giles, VHSL Assistant Director

SIX CLASSIFICATION AT A GLANCE

Here is a snapshot of how six classification expansion affects theatre beginning the 2013-14 school year.

1. See Final Adopted Conference Alignment Plan on following page to determine what conference your school is in, and what schools your school competes with at the conference and regional levels. For example, Colonial Heights is in Conference 25, Region 3A-East and Class 3A.
2. Unless your region has elected to maintain a district competition, competition effectively begins at the conference level, which advances its top two schools to the region, and the region advances its top two schools to the state festival to compete in a four-school championship.

~~**Note:** due to below benchmark participation numbers, Class 1A and Class 2A will be a combined championship. Conference festivals will not be disrupted; each school will compete in its assigned conference. Each conference will advance its top two schools to the region. Each region will advance its top two schools to the state for an eight-school championship. The top school will be named Class 1A/2A Combined Festival Champion, and the runner-up will be the Class 1A/2A Combined Festival Champion.~~

3. No more than four students per festival will receive Outstanding Actor recognition.

~~**Note:** In the 1A/2A Combined Festival, no more than eight students per festival will receive Outstanding Actor recognition.~~

Final Adopted Conference Alignment Plan for 2015-16 and 2016-17

Executive Committee Action noted in yellow

6A--South	6A—North	5A—South*	5A--North	4A—EAST	4A—WEST
Conference 1 (7)	Conference 5 (6)	Conference 9 (8)	Conference 13 (7)	Conference 17 (6)	Conference 21A (6)
Bayside	Centreville	Green Run	Edison, Thomas	Churchland	John Handley
Cox, Frank	Chantilly	Hickory	Falls Church	Deep Creek	Harrisonburg
First Colonial	Herndon	Indian River	Jefferson, T (S/T)	Great Bridge	Millbrook
Kellam, Floyd	Oakton	Kempsville	Lee, R. E. (Sp)	King's Fork	Sherando
Landstown	Robinson, James	Mauzy	Marshall, George	Lake Taylor	James Wood
Ocean Lakes	Westfield	Norview	Stuart, JEB	Wilson, Woodrow	Woodgrove
Tallwood		Princess Anne	Wakefield		
	Conference 6 (8)	Salem		Conference 18 (6)	Conference 21B (6)
Conference 2 (5)	Fairfax		Conference 14 (5)	Denbigh	Dominion
Granby	Hayfield	Conference 10 (7)	Briar Woods	Grafton	Heritage – LC
Grassfield	Langley	Bethel	Broad Run	Heritage – NN	Loudoun County
Smith, Oscar	Madison, James	Gloucester	Potomac Falls	Jamestown	Loudoun Valley
Woodside	McLean	Hampton	Stone Bridge	Lafayette	Park View – St
Western Branch	South Lakes	Kecoughtan	Tuscarora	Smithfield	Rock Ridge
	Washington-Lee	Menchville			
Conference 3 (6)	Yorktown	Nansemond Rvr.	Conference 15 (6)	Conference 19 (6)	Conference 22 (5)
Clover Hill		Warwick	Brooke Point	Caroline	John Champe
Cosby	Conference 7 (8)		Massaponax	Chancellor	Fauquier
Dale, Thomas	Annandale	Conference 11 (8)	Mountain View	Courtland	Freedom – SR
Franklin County	Lake Braddock	Deep Run	North Stafford	Eastern View	Kettle Run
James River – C	Mount Vernon	Freeman, Douglas	Potomac	King George	Liberty (Beal)
Manchester	South County	Glen Allen	Stafford	Louisa	
	West Potomac	Godwin, Mills			Conference 23 (5)
	West Springfield	Henrico	Conference 16 (6)	Conference 20 (6)	Amherst
Conference 4 (7)	Williams, T.C.	Hermitage	Albemarle	Dinwiddie	Charlottesville
Colonial Forge	Woodson, W.T.	Lee-Davis	Atlee	Hanover	E. C. Glass
Forest Park		Tucker, J.R.	Halifax	Huguenot	Jefferson Forest
Freedom (PW)	Conference 8 (5)		Henry, Patrick-A	Midlothian	George Washington
Gar-Field	Battlefield	Conference 12 (6)	Henry, Patrick- R	Monacan	
Hylton, C.D.	Jackson, Stonewall	Bird, L.C.	Orange	Powhatan	Conference 24 (6)
Riverbend	Osborn	Highland Springs			Bassett
Woodbridge	Osborn Park	Matoaca			Byrd, William
	Patriot	Meadowbrook			Carroll County
		Prince George			Fleming, William
		Varina			Pulaski
					Salem (S)

Final Adopted Conference Alignment Plan for 2015-16 and 2016-17

Executive Committee Action noted in yellow

3A—East	3A—West	2A—East	2A—West	1A—East	1A--West
Conference 25 (6)	Conference 29 (8)	Conference 33 (7)	Conference 37 (6)	Conference 41 (7)	Conference 45 (8)
Colonial Heights	Broadway	Arcadia	Appomattox	App. Reg. Gov.	Auburn
New Kent	Fluvanna	Bruton	Buckingham	Chincoteague	Bath County
Park View – SH	Fort Definace	King William	Chatham	Franklin	Covington
Poquoson	Monticello	Nandua	Dan River	Northampton	Craig County
Southampton	Spotswood	Walker, Maggie	Gretna	Surry County	East. Montgomery
Warhill	Turner Ashby	Washington & Lee	Randolph-Henry	Sussex Central	McCluer, Parry
	Waynesboro			Windsor	Radford
Conference 26 (6)	W. Albemarle		Conference 38 (5)		Narrows
Armstrong		Conference 34 (7)	Floyd County	Conference 42 (8)	
Hopewell	Conference 30 (5)	Amelia County	Giles	Central (L)	Conference 46 (6)
Jefferson, T. – R	Brookville	Bluestone	Glenvar	Charles City	Bland/Rocky Gap
Marshall, John	Heritage-Lyn	Brunswick	James River-B	Chesterfield Comm.	Chilhowie
Petersburg	Liberty (Bed)	Goochland	Martinsville	Cumberland	Fort Chiswell
Spotsylvania	Rustburg	Greensville		King & Queen	Galax
Wythe, George–R	Tunstall	Nottoway	Conference 39 (7)	Mathews	Rural Retreat
		Prince Edward	Graham	Middlesex	Wythe, George -W
Conference 27 (6)	Conference 31 (6)		Grayson	West Point	
Norcom, I.C.	Alleghany	Conference 35 (5)	Grundy		Conference 47 (7)
Lakeland	Lord Botetourt	Central (W)	Marion	Conference 43 (6)	Council
Phoebus	Magna Vista	Clarke County	Richlands	Colonial Beach	Henry, Patrick (GS)
Tabb	Northside	Madison County	Tazewell	Essex	Holston
Washington, B.T.	Rockbridge Co.	Mason, George	Virginia	Lancaster	Honaker
York	Staunton River	Strasburg		Northumberland	Hurley
			Conference 40 (7)	Rappahannock	Northwood
Conference 28 (8)	Conference 32 (6)	Conference 36 (7)	Battle, John	Rappahannock Co.	Twin Valley
Brentsville Dist.	Abingdon	Buffalo Gap	Central –Wise		
Culpeper	Blacksburg	East Rockingham	Gate City	Conference 44 (7)	Conference 48 (6)
Manassas Park	Cave Spring	Lee, R. E. (St)	Lebanon	Altavista	Burton, J. I.
Monroe, James	Christiansburg	Nelson County	Lee	Campbell, William	Castlewood
Monroe, William	Hidden Valley	Page County	Ridgeview	Galileo Magnet	Eastside
Riverside	Patrick County	Stuarts Draft	Union	Highland	Rye Cove
Skyline		Wilson Memorial		Jackson, S. – Q	Twin Springs
Warren County				Luray	Walker, Thomas
				Riverheads	

The September 17 Executive Committee approved John Marshall’s appeal to be placed in Conference 26, 3A East, instead of their placement in Conference 33, 2A East, in view of the certification of ADM figures.

VHSL ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES CALENDARS

The following calendars are provided to you in advance to assist in your planning your year and beyond. Please plan ahead to avoid conflicts with SATs, SOLs and other events. Keep in mind, deadline dates are just deadlines. Conference and regional tournaments may be scheduled prior to, but not after deadlines.

2015-16 ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES CALENDAR - ADOPTED

ACTIVITY	CLASS	CONFERENCE DEADLINE	REGION DEADLINE	STATE FINAL	LOCATION
Theatre	1A/2A	11/7/15	11/21/15	12/7/15	Monticello High School
Theatre	3A-4A	11/7/15	11/21/15	12/8/15	Monticello High School
Theatre	5A-6A	2/6/16	2/20/16	3/5/16	Dickinson Center
Scholastic Bowl	1A-6A	1/30/16	2/13/16	2/27/16	William & Mary
Forensics	1A-6A	2/27/16	3/12/16	4/2/16	Clover Hill HS
Debate	1A-6A	3/26/16	4/9/16	4/22-23/16	Liberty University

Note: Thanksgiving is November 26 and Easter is March 27

REGIONAL POSTPONEMENT POLICY

In case of extreme weather conditions which imperil travelers attempting to reach the regional event site, the regional director has permission to postpone the regional event, and therefore the state event entry form deadline, one day at a time until the day preceding the state event. If the regional event is delayed beyond the adopted regional deadline, the regional director is required to advise the Executive Director of the postponement and required to call in the regional results to the state event director as soon as the regional event is completed. In addition, the regional director is required to mail, deliver or fax the results to the state director and to the VHSL office.

2015-16 SAT TEST DATES

October 3, 2015
 November 7, 2015
 December 5, 2015
 January 23, 2016
 March 5, 2016
 May 7, 2016
 June 4, 2016

2015-16 ACT TEST DATES

September 12, 2015
 October 24, 2015
 December 12, 2015
 February 6, 2016
 April 9, 2016
 June 11, 2016

SOCIAL NETWORKING

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

The VHSL uses Twitter to communicate timely, short messages to its constituents. Follow us at: www.twitter.com/vhsl_activities.

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM

[VirginiaHSLeague](https://www.instagram.com/VirginiaHSLeague)

VHSL ACTIVITIES HAVE FACEBOOK GROUPS

In an effort to network and build community among the VHSL activities populations the VHSL in 2009 created Facebook groups. These groups are open to coaches, students, judges and others who are linked to the activities community and are intended to be a constructive, supportive environment where coaches/students may ask questions, share coaching tips and resources, solicit VHSL tournament officials/staff, etc. within the VHSL community. Official groups are:

- VHSL Forensics www.facebook.com/VHSLforensics
- VHSL Theatre www.facebook.com/VHSLtheatre
- VHSL Debate www.facebook.com/VHSLdebate
- VHSL Scholastic Bowl www.facebook.com/VHSLschobo
- VHSL Publications www.facebook.com/VHSLpubs
- VHSL Creative Writing www.facebook.com/VHSLpubs
- VHSL Film Festival www.facebook.com/VHSLfilmfestival

The VHSL reserves the right to remove any post or user from any group. The following are guidelines for group use:

- Obscene, abusive, insulting, hateful, racist or sexually explicit language is prohibited as are defamatory comments or personal attacks. Posts that may be construed as threatening may be deleted and made available to the proper law enforcement officials.
- Commercial solicitations and/or advertisements are prohibited.
- All posts must be in English.

VHSL IS ON YOUTUBE

Subscribe to our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/theVHSL.

Sportsmanship – It’s all about respect!

Good sportsmanship is a top priority of the Virginia High School League. The manner in which your school is represented is far more important than whether your cast wins or loses. Good sportsmanship is all about respect – respect for oneself, for castmates, opposing casts, directors, judges, audience and for theatre itself.

Inappropriate behavior is easy to identify. One need ask only two questions:

1. Is the observed behavior respectful of the targeted audience?
2. Does the observed behavior reflect positively on your school?

If the answer to either question is no, then the behavior is inappropriate and must not be tolerated. Respect must be a priority at all times and in all situations.

Each participating theatre director bears a huge responsibility for making sure that good sportsmanship is valued. Inappropriate behavior can be an embarrassment to students, directors, judges, administrators, the community and to the VHSL.

Each participating school is expected to provide administrators and other chaperones to actively supervise its student body and fans during the festival and address inappropriate behavior if or when it occurs. Individuals who are disruptive, disrespectful, fail to comply with facility and/or VHSL procedures or otherwise behave inappropriately will be escorted from the facility.

- Theatre directors and school administrators have primary responsibility for observing their student body and fans, and for taking corrective action when their students or fans behave inappropriately. Students will react more quickly and more positively to their own teachers and administrators than they will to an unknown security guard.
- VHSL staff is not responsible for making sure your students and fans behave. That is your responsibility.
- Watching the performances is secondary to your supervision. You are “on duty” during the festival, and your supervision must be active. VHSL and tournament staff will assist when necessary.
- Fans will not be permitted on the stage at any time. No one will be permitted on the stage except the cast, theatre directors and tournament personnel.

EXAMPLES OF UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR

The following list is by no means “all inclusive,” but is provided to draw attention to behaviors occasionally witnessed at theatre festival. Please review this list with your student body so that they will know what is not acceptable.

- Talking during a performance
- Booing, hissing or making any distracting noise
- Entering/exiting during a performance unless it is an emergency
- Taking pictures with flash during a performance
- Creating distractions of any kind
- Challenging a judge’s comments or rankings
- Antagonizing, intimidating or abusing participants, tournament staff or others
- Displays of temper, anger, boasting, use of profanity or arguing with festival staff or judges
- Frivolous, unfounded and/or unsubstantiated challenges or protests against other teams

The behaviors above must be addressed by school administrators if/when they occur. Failure to do so is a violation of the League’s Sportsmanship Rule.

Remember, good sportsmanship is all about respect. Win with humility; lose with grace; do both with dignity.

Sportsmanship Violations

27-11-11 Procedure: Academic Competition-Unsportsmanlike action must be reported to the League by any school or tournament official. The report should include any corroborating information or testimony available. A copy of the report complete with any supporting information shall be transmitted to the principal of the school or schools involved. Each principal concerned shall report such information or answers to the report as he/she deems appropriate to the League. Upon receipt of all reports and a review of any action taken, the League shall refer copies of all documents, including a staff recommendation as to whether the school's response is sufficient, to the school or schools involved and to the chairman of the League, who may in turn refer the matter to the Academic Sportsmanship Committee to investigate and adjudicate what appears to be a violation of this rule. The Academic Sportsmanship Committee shall review at a time and place set by the League office such available evidence as it deems necessary to reach a conclusion. The League is specifically directed to pursue any items which on the surface have implications of being sportsmanship violations. A League staff member or member of the Academic Sportsmanship Committee may be assigned the responsibility of holding personal interviews with the principal parties involved. Actions such as seeking reports and holding interviews are not to be interpreted in any way as casting reflection upon a school adhering to League regulations, but as an effort to keep all parties properly informed. Penalties up to and including suspensions of member schools may be imposed by the Executive Committee and/or the Academic Sportsmanship Committee. A copy of the Academic Sportsmanship Committee's action shall be filed with the chairman of the conferences concerned.

Protests

(3) The Virginia High School League permits the correction of clerical or scoring errors in each interscholastic activity as specified in that activity's specific rule book. In those cases in which there is no rule book for an activity or in which the rule book does not specify a definite time period for the correction of clerical or scoring errors and the results are not announced until the conclusion of the activity, clerical or scoring errors may be corrected within 60 minutes of the announced results. In debate, drama and forensics, a school which leaves the site prior to the end of the review period forfeits the right to appeal the results. No protests will be considered which are based upon the real or alleged failure of contest officials to interpret or apply game or contest rules properly, or to render correct decisions in matters of judgment. League rules provide that officials for all League athletic contests shall be mutually agreed upon by the faculty representatives of all schools concerned. When this has been done and the contest has been started, differences of opinion which arise during the progress of the contest must be considered on the spot, and the decision of the contest official shall be final. Games may not be played "under protest" for later review by a Committee; however, the Assistant Director shall render an interpretation to all parties involved as to the proper application of rules in cases of protests if complete facts are presented in writing to the League office. Such an interpretation will not change the outcome of the contest as the decision of a game official is final, unless the Assistant Director determines that the game official(s) has incorrectly permitted a contest(s) to be suspended, a tie(s) to be broken or a tie(s) to stand in contradiction to the game rules adopted by the League.

32-2-1 Procedure:

(1) Principals only may initiate protests. Protests shall be in writing, addressed to the district chairman or the Executive Director, as the case may be, and shall contain a digest of all the facts pertinent to the case. Protests shall be delivered in person or sent by special delivery or first class mail. They shall be delivered or postmarked not later than two working days after the contest or receipt of the information on which the protest is based. The Committee shall meet promptly to consider and act upon each protest properly filed with the district chairman. The Executive Director, when protests are filed with him/her, shall act promptly to initiate action through the Chairman of the League.

101-1-3 Each school participating in a conference, region or state festival must bring a copy of its script to the festival site. If a challenge of material, performance, royalty, publication, etc. is made, the tournament director deems the challenge is legitimate, and a script on hand can assist in the investigation of said challenge, a school representative must provide the script on the spot. If the script is not made available immediately, the school will be disqualified. All disputes will be settled at the conference, regional or state level where the challenge was made.

If school is producing a cutting from a full-length play, both the original full-length and the cutting must be brought to the festival site.



Sportsmanship. *It's up to you.*[™]

Sportsmanship Pledge

I, _____ ,
make a commitment today to support my school to the best of my
ability, to maintain a positive attitude and to be a role model for
students, fans and community members. I will exhibit appropriate
SPORTSMANSHIP behavior and lead by example.

I will accept the responsibility of representing my school and
community by:

- Adhering to the rules
- Respecting the authority and judgment of coaches/advisors
and officials
- Demonstrating self-control—both physically and verbally
- Treating opponents with respect
- Congratulating opponents following victory or defeat

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Virginia High School League

SCHOOL SPORTSMANSHIP INCIDENT REPORT FORM

This form must be filed with the VHSL Office within 5 working days of the incident. **The incident must be reported to Tom Dolan by fax (434-977-5943), Phone (434-977-8475) or email (tdolan@vhsl.org) the first working day following the incident.**

Listed below are some situations which must be reported. This is by no means an all inclusive list. It is the school's responsibility to report all unsportsmanlike situations.

1. Any incident which involves team personnel leaving the bench area during a physical or verbal altercation. (Schools are responsible for disciplining those involved regardless of whether the officials ejected all involved)
2. Any incident which involves contest officials being accosted verbally or physically before, during or after a contest.
3. Any incident which involves spectators.
4. Any incident which leads to a disruption in the progress of the contest or which leads to a premature ending of a contest.
5. Any incident which involves the destruction or damage to school property or facilities.
6. Any incident which involves multiple participants regardless of ejections.
7. Any incident which escalates beyond what a normal ejection would involve.



Host School: _____ Date of Incident: _____ Date of Report _____

Schools Involved: _____

Officials Association: _____ Sport: _____

Description of Incident:

Action taken by school:

Comments:

Signature: _____
Principal

F.A.Q. for Theatre Directors

1. Who is eligible to direct a VHSL competition play?

All coaches and sponsors of League activities shall be certified teachers regularly employed by the school board and responsible to the school principal. Theatre directors who use non-school employees to direct or assist with directing must request an exception to the Coaches' Rule as prescribed under Handbook rule 27-2-2 (4), have your principal endorse the form and file it with VHSL for approval. Forms may be obtained at <http://www.vhsl.org/forms>. An Approval Form for Non-Faculty Coaches is not required for non-school employees helping only with costumes or set design.

2. How much editing of a script is permitted?

The play will be presented as it appears in published form and the author's intent will be respected in production. No changes or deletions in the text, lyrics, music, title or gender of the characters shall be made for the purpose of production unless permission is granted by author or author's representative. This includes changes or updating the time and place/setting of the play.

Any editing of published work must be honest to the original text. It is important that directors review questionable content, language, use of firearms or other weapons or use of tobacco or other drug with the principal prior to performance. The principal's signature on the entry form will indicate approval of material to be performed. Competition directors will not disqualify a selection approved by the principal unless editing or performance decisions significantly alter the selection after approval has been given.

3. Who must be on my MEL?

All members of the cast and crew, as well as any person providing live music as part of the performance, must meet eligibility requirements.

4. Can anyone judge a VHSL theatre competition?

All judges used at VHSL theatre competitions must appear on the Approved Judges Listing in the rear of this manual. Judges are screened for education and experience prior to being listed. To get a judge approved who is not already on the list, send candidate's theatre-specific resume, which clearly indicates his/her credentials as a student, educator, performer or director to Lisa Giles at lgiles@vhsl.org.

5. Must students or others involved in creating stage sets, props and costumes meet eligibility requirements?

No. Only cast and crew participating during the competition.

Copyright and Use of Music in Your One-Act Festival Play

It is illegal for anyone to violate rights provided by copyright law. Copyright is a form of protection provided by United States law (title 17, U.S. Code) to the authors of “original works of authorship,” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and certain other intellectual works. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works. Copyrightable works include the following categories: literary works; musical works including any accompanying words; dramatic works including any accompanying music; pantomimes and choreographic works; pictorial, graphic and sculptural works; motion pictures and other audiovisual works; sound recordings and architectural works. Sound recordings are defined in the law as “works that result from the fixation of a series of musical, spoken or other sounds.” Common examples include recordings of music, drama or lectures.

Limited use, or “fair use” of copyrighted music is permitted without a license when performances (1) are for educational purposes, (2) are not for financial gain, and (3) include only a portion of an entire composition (substantiality). VHSL limits that portion to 30 seconds per song to ensure that schools are within the “fair use” guideline and do not improperly extend the substantiality.

- Any school that chooses to use more than 30 seconds per song of copyrighted music must provide proof of license to the festival director **prior to or upon** registering for the festival.
- Schools that use more than 30 seconds per song of copyrighted music and do not show proof of license will be disqualified.
- **Conferences and/or regions are reminded that charging admission into their festivals negates the “fair use” allowance and would require all participants using copyrighted music in their shows to obtain full licenses regardless of the length of the music used.**

ASCAP/BMI does not issue licenses for dramatic performances and recommends that required licenses be obtained directly from the publisher of the music.

This policy is designed specifically to address the use of popular music in shows, but also applies to any music protected by copyright. Music Theatre International (MTI) grants use and performance of all their music upon entering their license agreement. In addition, certain publishers of background music and sound effects are royalty-free or may permit use simply upon purchase. If in doubt, please contact the VHSL assistant director for clarification.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

It is the responsibility of the school theatre director to research and verify works they are using and claim are in the public domain and to present these findings to the VHSL assistant director prior to or upon registering for the festival. If there is doubt as to whether a work is in the public domain, the work shall **not** be used.

A good guide to copyright term and public domain can be found at <http://copyright.cornell.edu/resources/publicdomain.cfm>.

INSTRUCTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO CONFERENCE AND REGIONAL VHSL THEATRE FESTIVAL DIRECTORS

The VHSL Theatre Festival director is responsible for the conduct of the festival in accordance with League regulations.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

1. Review the VHSL Handbook, especially Sections 100-101 on Dramatic Activities.

30-4-4 Specific Penalty for VHSL Event Not Being in Compliance with Policies-In situations where a member school hosts an event in which all VHSL guidelines are not enforced the following can apply:

- The host and all participating member schools will receive a Warning.
 - The host school loses the ability to sanction that sport/activity tournament for three years.
 - The host will be subject to a fine of \$50 for each VHSL member school participating in the event.
2. Arrange for the use of an auditorium with adequate facilities. The stage often used in the state festival provides a proscenium opening of 32 feet; depth of set, 16 feet; maximum height, 10 feet; and entrances up center, right and left stage. While stage specifications for Conference and regional festivals need not conform to these, they should not vary too greatly.
 3. Plan for necessary dressing rooms, lighting, etc.
 4. Secure the necessary officials well in advance.
 - A. In theatre, **all judges must be approved**, either by inclusion on the list of approved judges distributed each year by the VHSL office or by faxing Lisa Giles a request for approval, including name, address, phone number, email or other contact information and qualifications (resume) of the proposed judge. **See pages at the end of this manual for the approved judges listing.** Tournament director must not also serve as judge at the same festival.

Four judges are required, with the low rank/score combination for each play dropped prior to tabulations. If the director cannot secure four judges or a secured judge cancels at the last minute and the director is unable to secure a replacement, he/she may go ahead with the festival with three judges with the unanimous notification of all participating schools, or petition the VHSL office which is authorized to permit individual exceptions when a valid reason for doing so is presented.

It is important that there be diversity within the judging panel. Perhaps a mix of judges from professional or community theatre, college or university theatre and high school theatre not involved in or affected by the competition.

Preferably, **the same judges should not evaluate the same competition each year** to reduce the potential that they come into the competition with preconceived notions of the quality – good or bad – to be expected from specific schools, and so schools get a fresh perspective each year.

Judges should not see the same play at more than one level of competition (regions need to be sure that judges have not seen any of the conference competitions feeding into that region that year). Judges need to evaluate the current performance and not consider what they saw in an earlier performance.

Avoid judges who are married, who are working or social partners or who come from the same theatre or school, simply because there is a tendency for people who share their love for theatre on a regular and continuing basis to see shows in very similar ways. Avoid a conflict of interest and **use judges who have no physical or emotional investment in any of the competing plays or schools.**

Because qualified judges are more available in some parts of the state than in others, these guidelines for diversity in the judging panel have not been mandated state-wide, but a festival director should be able to provide some evidence that it is not possible to meet these goals.

When you make your initial contact with the critic judges, explain to them carefully all aspects of the festival. Tell them what honorarium the conference or region offers and whether they will be reimbursed for expenses.

Recommended minimum compensation for theatre judges is \$75 for four or fewer participating schools, \$100 for five or six participating schools and \$150 for more than six participating schools. Well in advance of the festival, provide the critic with a sample critic's evaluation form and Sections 100 and 101: Theatre Festivals from the VHSL Handbook. It is also strongly recommended that you meet with the judges prior to the beginning of the festival to review judging criteria and procedures to be followed to assure all participants of fair competition according to VHSL rules. Conferences and regions may choose to have their critic judges give oral critiques at the end of the festival to all schools participating. Inform the critic judges that the written evaluation forms will be given to the schools and stress the importance of clear, specific supportive comments that can be used to improve the production. Share with judges, in advance of the festival, the enclosed Guidelines for Theatre Judges.

- B. Select a small, efficient and courteous crew to assist with all set, light and prop changes during the festival.
 - C. Select such assistants (house staff, technicians, host committees and the like) as may be required to conduct the festival, and instruct them as to their duties.
5. Conference Director: Get a list of interested schools from your conference chairman, clarify with them the date, time and place for the competition and follow-up to see that all submit entry forms promptly. Check entries to see that no school enters an ineligible play and that all schools have paid required royalties and secured the publisher's permission to perform the play. Check also for original work to ensure that the school has secured permission to use any adapted material or staging and that the school has given appropriate credit as required in Handbook section 101-1-1.

Regional Director: Each conference director will send you a copy of the Conference Director's Theatre Festival Report. First- and second-place schools will send entry forms to you. Check entries to see that no school enters an ineligible play and that all schools have paid required royalties and secured the publisher's permission to perform the play. Check also for original work to ensure that the school has secured permission to use any adapted material or staging and that the school has given appropriate credit as required in Handbook section 101-1-1.

- 6. Notify all participating schools that they must submit with their entry forms or in advance of taking the stage necessary proof of permission to perform published scripts and adapted material.
- 7. All members of the cast and crew, as well as any person providing live music as part of the performance must meet eligibility requirements. Adult directors' participation at VHSL festivals must cease when timing begins and may resume when timing ends; therefore, adult directors must not assist backstage or in the sound/light booth during the performance. Adult directors may take part in pre-performance production meetings, set and strike. **Ensure that each participating school has submitted an MEL verifying the eligibility of every student appearing on stage or as part of the technical crew.** (Recorded music or accompaniment need not be created or performed by eligible students.)
- 8. Notify directors that if a play includes adult themes or content that may offend some viewers, notification is to be prepared by the director and included in the printed program. A play approved by the school principal may not be disqualified by a festival director or by a judge for inappropriate content.
- 9. Prepare a festival program. Using information contained on the entry forms, prepare a printed or photocopied program. Include the names of schools participating, the title, author, cast and publisher of each play, the time schedule, names of the critics and other officials. Unless special circumstances dictate otherwise, to ensure a fair assignment of program slots you should use either a rotation system approved by the conference/region or a random drawing open to all participants to determine the order of performance. The time schedule should be developed carefully; ten minutes should suffice for the interval between plays (five minutes for set, five minutes for strike).
- 10. Send an acknowledgment of entry, a program and instructions to each participating school. This information should be furnished as soon after the receipt of the entry form as possible. Give full details, and (if possible) supply a floor plan of the stage, showing dimensions.
- 11. Advertise the festival. Provide local newspapers with copy, and prepare and distribute posters and other advertising material. Conduct a publicity campaign; get a good audience for the festival.

12. Plan for an information and registration desk. In addition to the attendant at the information desk, a student host or hostess assigned to serve each cast will do much to ensure a hospitable reception and to promote friendly relationships throughout the festival.
13. **Conference and Regional Directors who are considering charging admission to their festivals should first consider the cost of royalties to each participating school. Often the rate is higher for a play that is produced for profit versus an educational, competition performance. For-admission festivals also affect fair use of music.**
14. **ACCOMMODATIONS:** The VHSL is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities at its academic tournaments. Any competing student requesting special accommodations must submit comprehensive, written information at least two weeks in advance of conference tournament to VHSL Assistant Director. This information must include (1) specific nature of disability as diagnosed by a qualified professional, (2) specific functional limitations of student and (3) accommodation requested as recommended by diagnosing professional. VHSL may provide the accommodation recommended, or such other accommodation as it deems reasonable to address the identified functional limitation. Any accommodations provided will be with the intent to provide an equal but not advantageous opportunity for student to compete and is not intended to alter the fundamental nature of the activity.

CONDUCT OF FESTIVAL

1. Provide the critic judges with a program, a score sheet and one evaluation form for each play in the festival. Ensure that they review the "Information for Theatre Festival Critic Judges" and "Suggestions for Theatre Festival Critics." See that they are comfortably and advantageously seated in different parts of the theatre. They should not sit together. Provide flashlights if they need them. (A conference with your critics well in advance of the festival date plus meeting before the festival start will help to eliminate confusion. Emphasize the importance of independence in evaluating productions. Judges should not sit together or discuss the plays with each other prior to completing their evaluations and ranking/scoring. The competition director or other responsible person should join the judges during lunch and/or the evaluation period in order to verify that no discussion of the plays has taken place.)
2. Start the program promptly. Briefly welcome the audience and participants, introduce the critics, explain the purpose of the festival and the general rules governing it, emphasize sportsmanship, explain how the plays will be timed and what action will be taken if there is a violation, announce that no one will be permitted to enter or leave the auditorium during the progress of a play except in an emergency. Remind the audience to turn off all electronics and explain that the first- and second- place plays will be eligible to participate in the Regional Theatre Festival. Plays that finish first or second at the Regional Festival will advance to the State. Announce the date and site of the Regional or State Festival.
3. After all plays have been given, each critic judge shall rank, score and rate productions without consulting with the other judges. The festival director shall then compile the cumulative results, using cumulative rank of the three highest evaluations as the basis for determining final results (lowest rank is best); cumulative scores are to be used only to break ties in cumulative rank (highest cumulative score is best among plays with same cumulative rank). Any ties which exist if cumulative ranks and scores are equal shall be broken in accordance with procedures established by the VHSL and each conference/region (see enclosed page describing VHSL procedures, and check with your conference/region chairman for those respective procedures). If there is a concern over the director manipulating the results to favor his/her own production, another coach should assist with tabulations and confirm the results. A play's overall rating is the average of the judges' three highest ratings. Ratings are used for information on the level of performance but are not used in determining the results.

THEATRE SCORING AND TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURES

Principals and Coaches: Handbook references for Debate, Drama and Forensics events specify that no first-, second- or third-place ties shall exist in VHSL competition and we urge you to become familiar with these sections as well as other regulations governing your activity.

Special Note: Districts and regions are expected to establish additional tie-breaking methods to be employed if a tie still exists even after the procedures below are followed. Such additional methods could include, but are not limited to, (1) a judge's ballot, (2) restage head-to-head competition and (3) coin flip or draw.

Independently and without conferring, judges shall rank each ensemble production 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., assigning Rank 1 to the best overall production, Rank 2 to the next best production, and so on, being careful to avoid any ties in

ranking. They shall also assign each production a numerical score from 100-70. Fractions of points in either rank or score are not permitted. The relative numerical scores of the plays must be consistent with the relative ranking of the plays. The festival director will tabulate the results and prepare a cumulative score sheet. The first criterion for determining the order of finish is each production's cumulative ranking based on the three best evaluations. The school with the lowest overall ranking is the first-place finisher, the next lowest ranking is second, etc. In the event of a tie in total ranking, the cumulative numerical scores based on the three best rank/score combinations of the tied productions will be compared, with the greatest score being the highest finisher and so on. The dropped ranks (first) and the dropped scores (second) would be reinserted as tiebreakers in the event there is a tie in rank and scores in the original tabulations. **In the event there is still a tie, the judges shall confer to determine first and second places.** Ratings are for information purposes and are not used in determining results. See **Special Note** above.

OUTSTANDING ACTOR

Up to four individuals will be recognized and awarded medals for outstanding performances in a festival containing four schools, eight individuals for a festival containing eight schools. Judges, without consulting, should rank the top five individual acting performances from 5 to 1 in descending order (5 ranks 1st, 4 ranks 2nd, and so on). There must be no ties in ranking. If judges feel a sixth, seventh or eighth actor should be considered, he/she should list that person as an Honorable Mention. Honorable Mention acting will be recognized only if there are fewer than eight actors who receive top-five ranking points. The festival director will tabulate the results.

4. Invite the audience to remain for the oral critique session. Ask the judge(s) to critique each play. Point out that the other judges may add brief comments if they wish, but that the session should not become an argument among the critic judges.
5. Awards Assembly: After the oral critique is completed, announce the first- and second-place winners.

Conference Directors: Explain to the directors of first- and second-place plays that the Regional Festival entry form is found under theatre on the VHSL website (www.vhsl.org). Urge that it be prepared and submitted immediately in order to meet the established deadline. Make it clear that the announcement of eligible plays does not constitute an entry in the Regional Festival and that the official entry form must be submitted by the school. Send a copy of the Conference Director's Report to the regional director.

Regional Directors: Give two copies of the State Entry Form to the directors of the first- and second-place plays and explain that they must be submitted to the League office. Send the Regional Director's Report to the League office.

6. Present the critics' signed evaluation forms for each play to the respective schools.
7. Present a copy of the cumulative score sheet to each school.

NOTE: The last two duties (6, 7) are extremely important, because schools must have an opportunity to check the accuracy of results. All clerical and scoring errors must be corrected within 60 minutes of the announced results. A school that leaves the competition site before the review period is complete forfeits the right to appeal or correct results. Only one person from the school is required to stay for the review period, but that person must retain possession of any awards in the event that an error is found and awards have to be redistributed. Please make sure that all schools are aware of this policy when you announce the results.

POST FESTIVAL DUTIES

1. Provide the appropriate newspapers with a story on the festival and the results.

VERY IMPORTANT: Complete the Director's Report Form, which is contained in the kit.

Conference Directors: Within 24 hours after the festival, send one copy to the Regional Festival Director and one copy to the VHSL office. Report any sportsmanship violation to administration of offending school and copy to VHSL Assistant Director Tom Dolan. Retain copies of all reports for your records.

Regional Directors: Within 24 hours of the festival, send one copy to the VHSL office. Report any sportsmanship violation to administration of offending school and copy to VHSL Assistant Director Tom Dolan. Retain copies of all reports for your records.

Guidelines for Theatre Judges

1. When asked to judge, reveal any other judging commitments you have made for that year. The festival director should ask you of any judging conflicts; but if he/she doesn't, please inform him/her. **You should not judge any play twice during the school year.**
2. Clearly mark your judging commitment on your calendar. Student and schools are counting on you! One of a festival director's greatest fears is to have a no-show judge.
3. Read the festival rules sent to you prior to the festival. Even though you may have judged theatre festivals many times, sometimes there are rules changes. Also, it never hurts to brush up.
4. The emphasis in the evaluation is on acting, execution of direction and ensemble effect – NOT on technical concerns such as sets, lighting, sound, costumes and special effects. Do not grade down a play for a technical glitch in a theatre they have never used before. Do not grade up for wonderful technical theatre (many schools cannot afford high tech and should not be handicapped), although the technical production may be a factor in the ensemble impact.
5. DO NOT consider the choice of play in terms of personal taste. ALL forms of theatre are permitted and the question is what they do with what they have chosen. Consider only whether the play is appropriate for this cast. Questions of appropriate content are determined locally, and a play approved by the school principal may not be disqualified.
6. Do not consider whether a director's interpretation or choices agree with your own, but whether they work for the play.
7. **Arrive at the festival 45 minutes before the plays are scheduled to begin.** The director probably needs to go over some festival procedures with you.
8. If you recognize a director or student participant, avoid a "huggy reunion scene." Even though you may be capable of being completely unbiased to that person's show, it will be perceived by others as an unfair advantage.
9. Do not sit near the other judges as you watch the plays.
10. Do not even speak with the other judges in public. Perhaps you are describing your son's magnificent performance in last night's ball game, but the participants will assume you are discussing the plays. If you are sharing downtime with other judges, as at lunch, the festival director should join you. Judges are not to discuss plays with other judges until after they have completed their evaluations and turned in rankings and scores.
11. Write as much as you can on the critique sheets. Give specific constructive compliments and suggestions. Comments like "good job" and "nice work" aren't helpful. Directors and participants will pour over these sheets to try to improve future plays; so give them as much help as possible.
12. Refrain from giving individual compliments to actors before the winners are announced (as you pass them in the theatre, lobby, etc). Even though these comments are usually well-intentioned, students assume they mean that their play won. "The judge complimented me in the hall! I know we've got it now!"
13. Keep oral critiques short. By the end of the day, students and directors are exhausted and want to know the results. Make a few positive comments on each show. Suggestions for improvements may be made, of course; but it's best to write these on the critique sheet. Do not use the oral critique session as forum for your views on theatre or your theatrical achievements. No one cares about that at this point in the festival!
14. Make yourself available after the awards are presented to speak with directors or students. They may have questions regarding your comments, or they may want your ideas on how to improve their show. This relaxed repartee helps to diffuse tension and humanizes the "dreaded judge."

Information For VHSL Theatre Festival Critic Judges

(Festival Director should also review this form)

I. GENERAL:

You will be serving on a panel of at least three critic judges for VHSL Theatre Festivals. Please do not discuss the productions with the other critics until after you have turned in your evaluation forms and critic judge's score sheet to the festival director.

II. CRITERIA:

Criteria for judging include (but are not limited to): Acting, execution of direction and ensemble effect.

1. **ACTING** -- Characterization, interpretation, concentration, voice and articulation, movement, timing. **(Up to 50 points)**
2. **EXECUTION OF DIRECTION** -- Interpretation of dramatic values, realization of playwright's intent, composition, tempo. **(Up to 30 points)**
3. **ENSEMBLE EFFECT** -- Smoothness, cooperation and understanding among actors, rhythm. **(Up to 20 points)**

NOTE: The focus of the critic judges' evaluation must be on the above criteria rather than such incidental elements as costumes, sets, properties, lighting and sound. Schools should not be handicapped by technical problems in an unfamiliar facility or rewarded for technical abilities not common to all participants.

III. EVALUATION FORM:

The evaluation forms for each play will be given to the respective schools at the conclusion of the festival. Please write specific comments succinctly, clearly and in a positive manner that schools can use constructively for improvement. Avoid vague notes such as "good" or "effective" in favor of specific comments the director and students can use to improve the production.

IV. SCORE FORM:

After you have seen all productions, complete the critic judge's individual and ensemble score sheets using the following guidelines:

1. Rank each ensemble production 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., assigning Rank 1 to the production you felt was best overall, Rank 2 to the next best production, and so on, being careful to avoid any ties in ranking.
2. Assign each production a numerical score from 100-70. The relative numerical scores of the plays must be consistent with the relative rankings of the plays. Please do not award fractions of points in either rank or score.
3. At the state level, and in conferences and regions which have approved such recognition, awards will be presented to individuals selected by the judges for their outstanding performances. Conferences and regions should check with their respective chairman to see if and how many individual awards are authorized. Using the individual score sheet, list the actors you feel gave the most outstanding performances and rank them from top to bottom. Turn in your individual score sheet to the festival director who will compile the cumulative results and announce the winners. Example: At state, up to (but no more than) four individuals will be recognized and awarded medals for outstanding performances in a festival containing four schools, eight individuals for a festival containing eight schools. . Each judge picks the top five (best = 5 points, next = 4, etc.) and one or two honorable mentions if they want (each honorable mention gets 1/2 point). These points are tallied and a minimum score (usually 3 points) is required to be considered for an individual award.

Turn in the evaluation forms and the critic judge's score sheet to the festival director who will tabulate all results and prepare a cumulative score sheet.

The first criterion for determining the order of finish is each production's cumulative ranking based on its three best evaluations. The school with the lowest overall ranking is the first-place finisher, the next lowest ranking is

second, etc. In the event of a tie in total ranking, the cumulative numerical scores of the tied productions will be compared, with the greatest score being the highest finisher and so on. If the tied productions' numerical scores are also identical the first tiebreaker is to reinsert any dropped ranks and then any dropped scores from extra judges. If there is still a tie, the judges shall confer to break the tie.

V. ORAL CRITIQUE:

Oral critiques of the productions will be given following the completion of all participating productions; however, it is impractical and counterproductive for each critic judge to orally critique each production.

The festival director may ask you to present the oral critiques. The other judges may add brief comments if they wish, but the oral critique must not become an argument among panel members. Critiques should be specific, constructive, supportive and tactful. Whenever possible, find something about each production that you can commend. Try to devote the same amount of time to each critique. Avoid comparisons. Treat each production in terms of how it measured up to standards. Keep your personal opinions of the playwright to yourself. Comments on the quality of cuttings or adaptations of long plays are recommended.

Critiques between plays are prohibited. Such critiques alert schools performing later to judges' concerns and may bias other judges' scoring.

VI. AWARDS ASSEMBLY:

The results will be announced and awards presented after the oral critique. Attend the assembly, and remain after the assembly to talk with individual directors if you have the time and desire to do so.

Thank you very much for your help!

Suggestions for VHSL Theatre Festival Critics

The purpose of the VHSL Theatre Festival is to give students a chance to focus on their craft. Because they do not have to worry about being commercially successful, students can concentrate on artistic expression, often taking risks they would not take in a normal high school production. Your job as a theatre critic is to help these students by teaching them, by rewarding their risk taking and by encouraging them to continue their involvement with the theatre.

Evaluating drama is subjective; consequently, you cannot help but bring to your judging some personal preconceptions or prejudices about some of the plays. Please be aware of as many as possible of those views before you enter the theatre and try not to let them interfere with the objectivity of your evaluation. Remember, this is an evaluation of the production of the play they have selected, not an evaluation of the play. **Don't let incidental aspects such as costumes, sets, properties, lighting, sound, technical problems, and regional dialects cause you to lose sight of the dramatic values the students are trying to accomplish.**

Students want and need constructive criticism that is positive and encouraging. Remember that the purpose of the festival is to provide an educational experience; students are there to learn and to improve.

Following are some past comments that examples of the kind of judgments that discourage students or that penalize them for aspects that may be beyond their control.

"High school students should play adolescent characters. They shouldn't play old people; they lack the experience."

"Schools should not attempt original work; they cannot compete with the classics."

"Plays about victims (suicide, mental illness, high school angst, etc.) do not make good theatre."

"I've directed this play before and I don't care for your interpretation."

Following are some ideas to consider when completing evaluation sheets and when giving oral critiques.

1. EXECUTION OF DIRECTION (21 to 30 points)

- a. **Interpretation:** *Does the director have a clear vision (not necessarily the same one as yours) for this play and has he/she employed appropriate techniques to communicate that vision effectively and consistently? Are there effective pauses, builds, climaxes? Has the director demonstrated freshness, originality and creative execution of the script?*

Interpretation is especially subjective, but you should be careful not to allow your opinion of the production or of the script to color the way you view the performance.

- b. **Realization of Playwright's Intent:** *Does the director establish a clear vision that has unity and that is rooted in the text of the play?*

You should focus on the director's vision of what the author was trying to say, not on your preconceived or personal interpretations.

- c. **Composition:** *Has the director made choices that are interesting to view? Does he/she use the movement and placement of actors to create pictures that will effectively communicate his/her vision? Has the stage been used effectively? Is the blocking natural and motivated? Does the blocking distract, or does it support the dynamics of the play and contribute to the director's goals?*

You should be careful not to bring to this performance previous experiences with a play or a preconceived idea about how the play should be done. Instead, you should look at this director's composition and evaluate whether it works or not.

2. ACTING (35 to 50 points)

- a. **Characterization:** *Does the student understand the character? Does he/she portray a unique individual? Is the character believable? Does the actor honestly portray the character without relying on clichéd mannerisms?*

Do you see the character rather than the actor? Is there a freshness, immediacy and crispness about this performance, a feeling that these events are happening for the first time? Does the actor have appropriate energy? Does the characterization fit the style or intent of the play?

There are no roles that are inherently taboo for student performers. Students should be commended for trying challenging roles and should not be penalized for attempting roles that are beyond their experience, age or physical appearance. Of the categories under acting, characterization is perhaps the most important; therefore, you need to be especially careful when criticizing characterization. Your purpose is to show students what they do well, to reward them for their taking risks and to teach them stage craft that will build on their performance. For many students, this is the first time they have stepped on a stage; encouraging them is crucial to their continuing to enjoy participating in theatre.

- b. **Interpretation:** *Does the student convey the director's vision of the script and the characters?*

You need to be careful not to let preconceived ideas about how a character should be portrayed or about how you think a script should be interpreted to interfere with your judgment.

- c. **Concentration:** *Does the actor break character or does he/she stay in focus? Does the actor stay within the environment of the play? Does the actor telegraph, i.e., appear to be preparing for his/her next movement, speech, etc.? Do you forget that a student actor is creating the character?*

- d. **Articulation:** *Can the student be heard and understood? Does he/she utilize appropriate diction and projection?*

Regional dialects and speech impediments should be criticized only when they adversely affect a performance. When you feel that you must comment on speech patterns, accents, etc., please be as tactful as possible.

- e. **Movement:** *Is the movement appropriate to the character? Does the student use natural gestures and avoid clichéd and stereotypical movements? Does the actor make you see a person rather than draw attention to technique?*

- f. **Timing:** *Is the pacing natural? Does it fit the style of the play? Is there honest interaction among characters; is each person in tune with the other characters on stage? Is there variety in the pacing with appropriate builds and valleys? Are actors crisp with coming in on their cues?*

3. **ENSEMBLE EFFECT (14 to 20 points)**

Are students working toward the same goals, with no one person stealing focus? Is there a commitment among the actors toward common goals? Are students more concerned with the play and others on stage than they are with themselves?

- a. **Tempo:** *Does the pacing fit the style of the play? Is there variety? Does the tempo move appropriately towards builds, climaxes? Does the play rush? Drag?*

NOTE: Choice of selection is not a specific point of evaluation but should be appropriate to the talents and abilities of the group and to the audience for which it is performed. *Do the students seem to enjoy performing this work? Are they comfortable with and able to relate to the subject matter/theme of the work, rather than being overwhelmed by the script?*

Allowing your personal prejudices to color your evaluation in this area is very easy. You need to be careful not to let your opinion of the script affect your opinion of the performance. For example, students should not be penalized for attempting challenging roles and should not be discouraged from trying to portray characters with ages or experiences beyond their own.

What follows are the VHSL guidelines on play selection. We do not spell out approved or inappropriate content, leaving that to the schools' discretion.

101-1-2 The choice of the script is important. Schools should select material which is honest in its fundamental concept, which is suited to the emotional development of the cast and which is handled with taste and restraint. Content should be appropriate to the audience for which it is performed and in support of contemporary community standards. Any editing of published work must be honest to the original text. It is important that coaches review questionable content, language, use of firearms or other weapons or use of tobacco or other drug with the principal prior to performance. **The principal's signature on the entry form will indicate approval of material to be performed.** Competition directors will not disqualify a selection approved by the principal unless editing or performance decisions significantly alter the selection after approval has been given.

Theatre Festival Organization Guidelines

Production Meeting

1. Timing

Performance time is 35 minutes. Timing begins with the first theatrical effect – a sound, a light, movement, spoken line, etc. Timing ends when the last effect ceases. There will be two timers (tournament director and the stage manager). The school's director will be informed if BOTH times are over. A play in violation cannot place first or second. Rules do not call for disqualification. **Judges will not be informed of a time violation until their critiques and ballots are complete.** If the play in violation placed third or lower, there is no penalty. If the play placed first or second, it is to be dropped to third.

There will be no curtain call unless it is integrated into the performance, which will count toward the time limit. Performing group should strike immediately and take no more than 5 minutes to do so.

The cast waiting to perform should wait in the wings quietly during the preceding show. When the stage manager has given permission, cast may set, taking no more than 5 minutes to do so.

2. Tech

The use of firearms and/or weapons in a performance must first be cleared with the stage manager. Sets should be designed with festival guidelines in mind. Most facilities have limited storage space and with set/strike guidelines; grandiose sets should be avoided.

3. Conduct

In the past, there have been problems with casual abuse of the facility—things like litter, spilled drinks or sandwich remains. This type of problem makes us an unwelcome guest. Please clean up any mess and use appropriate trash receptacles. **All food and beverage is banned from the auditorium.**

Participants are also limited somewhat in movement since facilities may have several activities going on at once. All theatre festival participants must remain in the confines of the festival boundaries.

4. Outstanding Actors

A few plays feature ensemble casts or individuals playing multiple roles. The festival director may need help identifying actors who judges are considering for acting awards. School directors should be available during the lunch break for this purpose. It must be understood that if a festival director inquires as to an actor's identity, such action shows interest, but does not guarantee enough points for recognition.

Judges' Meeting

1. Seating

Judges should sit in different parts of the theatre to get different perspectives on the show and to discourage communication.

2. Ranking/Scoring

Each judge will rank and score each play independently. There must be no consultation between judges—keep lunch talk to other things. A rank of 1 is the best; a rank of 8 is the poorest.

Cumulative scores (70-100) are used only to break ties. Scores must coincide with rankings; do not give a lower score to a play you ranked higher than another show. Plays very close in quality might be separated by a point or two; more points separating plays farther apart in quality. Because this is state theatre, low scores should be used sparingly.

The low rank/score combination for each play will be dropped. If there is a tie for low rank, the rank with the lowest score will be dropped. If there is a tie for both rank and score, the dropped rank and then the dropped score for the plays involved in the tie will be re-added to break the tie.

Rate each show as superior, excellent, or good. The rating is helpful in telling the school what you thought of the show overall, but this rating is not a factor in determining results.

Note 5 outstanding acting performances and 3 honorable mentions. If you do not know the name of the student who might deserve recognition, identify the person who will be verified with the school director. Do not ask if he/she is not a serious consideration. We do not want to give false expectations. Of your 5 selections, rank the best as 5, the next best as 4, etc.

3. **Written Evaluations**

Since this is the state championship and a school's final performance, you cannot do a lot with suggestions, but be constructive! Casts count on specific feedback and scrutinize these critiques. Inform them what they did well. Also let them know where they fell short. Your comments should coincide with your ranking/scoring and also speak directly to acting, directing and ensemble effect—not on technical (sets, lighting, sound, costumes, special effects, etc.).

Do not downgrade a play for a technical glitch in a theatre they have never used before. Do not upgrade for wonderful technical theatre, as many schools cannot afford high tech and should not be handicapped as a result.

Do not consider the choice of the play in terms of personal tastes—all forms of theatre are permitted, and the question is what they do with what they have chosen. Is this play appropriate for this cast? Questions of staging and appropriate content are determined locally, and if a principal approves it, we do not question it.

Do not consider whether a director's interpretation or choices agree with your own but whether they work for the play.

4. **Oral Evaluations**

One judge should take the lead on each play while others may add a point or two. Keep oral critiques short since there is no time for a full evaluation from each judge. Keep the critiques upbeat. Casts that were not the best of the day should be told what they did well in addition to what they did not do well. The oral critique should leave the casts understanding why they received what they received on the written evaluation. Do not argue or compare shows.

Recommended Rotation

1. **Set Rotation**

All performances should take place in front of the mid-stage traveler. At the start of the day, the cast/crew of Show #1 should place their props/set behind the mid-stage traveler and not set until given the cue by the stage manager. When the cast/crew for Show #1 is setting, the cast/crew for Show #2 should place their props/set behind the mid-stage traveler in anticipation of their turn to set. Once Show #1 is over and strikes, the cast/crew of Show #2 should wait for the cue by the stage manager before setting. Once the cue is given, the cast/crew for Show #3 should place their props/set behind the mid-stage traveler in anticipation of their turn to set, and so on. This would be the procedure for all shows for the day. If there is a break, the next show should not set during the break, but should place their props/set behind the mid-stage traveler in anticipation of their turn to set when given the cue by the stage manager five minutes prior to the scheduled start of their show. Each school has five minutes to set and five minutes to strike. Enclose a diagram for the layout of the theatre and ask schools to review it carefully so they will be prepared when they arrive.

2. **Dressing Room Rotation**

When Show #1 is on stage, the cast of Show #2 should be in the dressing rooms. When Show #2 is on stage, the cast of Show #3 should be in the dressing rooms, and so on. Casts that are in the dressing rooms should use the schedule provided in the event program to anticipate the end of the show on stage before them and be prepared to set as soon as the previous show finishes and strikes. When leaving the dressing rooms, casts should take care to remove all belongings in preparation for the next cast's use.

VHSL Theatre Festival Critic Judge's Ensemble Score Sheet

GROUP: _____

NAME OF CRITIC JUDGE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: After you have seen all productions in the festival, complete this form. Do not consult with other judges. First you must rank each production 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. (best play -- rank 1, 2nd best -- rank 2, etc.). You must not have any ties in ranking. Second, assign each school a numerical score from 100-70. The relative scores must conform to the relative rankings you determined. Third, rate each play as superior, excellent or good. A production with a lower ranking must not be given a higher rating than another production. Give the completed form along with the critic judge's evaluation forms to the festival director, who will tabulate results using cumulative rank as the basis for determining the final results (lowest rank is best) cumulative scores are to be used only to break ties in cumulative rank (highest cumulative score is best among plays with same cumulative rank). Only if there is a tie in both cumulative ranking and score for any productions and after dropped ranks/scores have been reinserted shall judges confer to resolve the order of finish or shall other specified methods be employed to break the tie. Ratings are for information only and are not a factor in final results.

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TITLE OF PLAY</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>RATING</u>

CRITIC JUDGE'S SIGNATURE: _____

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE: _____

VHSL Theatre Festival Tabulation Results Sheet

IMPORTANT: Drop the low rank/score combination. That may not be the low score. The overall rating is an average of the 3 best ratings.

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>JUDGE 1 RANK / SCORE</u>	<u>JUDGE 2 RANK / SCORE</u>	<u>JUDGE 3 RANK / SCORE</u>	<u>JUDGE 4 RANK / SCORE</u>	<u>TOTAL OF 3 BEST RANKS</u>	<u>TOTAL OF 3 BEST SCORES</u>	<u>AVERAGE OF 3 BEST RATINGS</u>
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			
	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:	/ Rating:			

VHSL Theatre Festival

Critic Judge's Individual Score Sheet

(For State Only: Conference and Regional Use Optional)

GROUP: _____

NAME OF CRITIC JUDGE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: After you have seen all productions in the festival, complete this form. Do not consult with other judges. First you should rank the top five individual acting performances from 5 to 1 in descending order (best actor -- rank 5, 2nd best -- rank 4, 3rd best -- rank 3, 4th best -- rank 2, 5th best -- rank 1). You must not have any ties in ranking. If you feel that a sixth, seventh or eighth actor should be considered, please list that person on the Honorable Mention line. Give the completed form to the festival director who will tabulate results. No more than four (eight in a festival containing eight schools) individuals will be recognized, based on the highest cumulative ranking. Honorable mention actors will be recognized only if there are fewer than eight actors who receive top-five ranking points.

<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TITLE OF PLAY</u>	<u>CHARACTER</u>	<u>RANK</u>

<u>HON. MENTION: INDIVIDUAL</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>TITLE OF PLAY</u>	<u>CHARACTER</u>

CRITIC JUDGE'S SIGNATURE: _____

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE: _____

VHSL State Theatre Festival

Outstanding Actor Tabulation Form

Actor	School	Play	Character	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Judge 4	Total
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								
11.								
12.								
13.								
14.								
15.								

VHSL Theatre Festival Critic Judge's Evaluation Form

Title of Play: _____

School: _____ Director: _____

ACTING TECHNIQUE

35 to 50 points _____

Superior Excellent Good Fair
(Please check appropriate box)

Voice – Volume, Tempo/Rate, Articulation				
Vocal/Physical Character Development				
Appropriate Action/Reaction				
Use of Body/Movement (controlled to preclude injury)				
Focus/Concentration				
Spontaneity (illusion of first time)				
Interpretation/Motivation				
Timing				

Major Strengths:

In Need of Development:

EXECUTION OF DIRECTION

21 to 30 points _____

Superior Excellent Good Fair
(Please check appropriate box)

Interpretation of Play				
Clear Focus				
Imaginative Blocking/Stage Pictures				
Development of Key Plot Elements				
Attention to Details				

Major Strengths:

In Need of Development:

ENSEMBLE EFFECT

14 to 20 points _____

Superior Excellent Good Fair
(Please check appropriate box)

Ensemble Performance				
Overall Impact of Performance				
Integration of Actors in Ensemble				
Clear Communication Among Actors				
Tempo/Pacing				

Major Strengths:

In Need of Development:

RANK (order of finish): _____

TOTAL POINTS (range 70-100): _____

RATING (overall quality): Superior ___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___

NOTE: Total points and overall rating must follow same order/sequence as the judge's ranking of the plays.

FOR THE DIRECTOR: On the reverse, we invite comments specifically for the play director that address non-student issues affecting the overall quality of a production.

Signed: _____, Critic Judge

VHSL Approved Theatre Judges Listing

Judges may participate in any number of conference-level festivals; however, a judge may not evaluate a single play twice during the school year (conference then subsequent region or state performance, or region then subsequent state performance).

Judges on this list have presented evidence of theatrical training and/or experience that qualifies them to serve. In most cases, judges' resumes are available for a festival director's reference upon request. **Highlighted judges have state-level judging experience.** This list was last updated: **February 2, 2016.** To get a judge approved who is not already on this list, send candidate's theatre-specific resume (acting, directing, education, etc.) as an attached document to Lisa Giles (lgiles@vhsl.org). **Please do not send bios.**

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Joel Bailey, Big Stone Gap, 276-523-2400 (work), jbailey@me.vccs.edu

Katie Becker – no longer available 11/11/13

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