

Dramatic Activities

SECTION 100: INTRODUCTION.

100-1-1 Sponsored Activity-The League sponsors a competitive interscholastic program within groups leading to district, regional and state recognition in one form of dramatic activity: Theatre Festival.

100-2-1 Purpose-The general purpose of this program is to stimulate interest and participation in dramatic art as a means of furthering the cultural and educational development of students in Virginia high schools. This purpose is best served when a large number of schools engage in the program on school and district levels. The theatre festival program is intended to motivate the development of a broad school drama program in which many students participate as well as to provide a means of evaluating and improving standards of school dramatic performance.

100-3-1 School Participation-Virtually all schools include in their offering some form of dramatic activity, usually of the cocurricular type, such as class plays, club skits and the like. Few are able to provide opportunities for participation in dramatic art for all who might enjoy or profit from this experience. The theatre festival serves as a means of stimulating school interest in a type of vehicle which can be produced in a comparatively short time at little expense, so that a number of plays, rather than a few, may be included in the school's drama calendar. A bill of three short plays, produced by the players of the same school or of neighboring schools, has proved to be a popular means of increasing the number of participants in the drama program as well as an effective means of providing general school and community entertainment.

100-3-2 The principal should formulate plans for his/her school's participation in the theatre festival early in the school year and he/she should select the teacher or sponsor who will be in charge of the program well in advance of the dates for the district/regional festivals. As a general rule, four to six weeks are required for preparation and preliminary presentations before school and community audiences. The principal should also allow students and faculty who are participating in district, regional and state festivals the time and opportunity to participate in the total festival as audience and observers or critiques.

100-4-1 Program-The League's dramatic art program consists of a series of theatre festivals conducted on optional district, required regional and state levels within groups. Each participating school selects a play, in accordance with the regulations and suggestions given in Sections 100 and 101, and enters it in the appropriate district festival, if available, or in the appropriate regional festival. Schools receiving first and second place awards in districts opting to hold a district festival and all interested schools in districts not opting to hold a district festival are eligible for participation in the regional festivals; schools opting to be rated for possible advancement to the state festival and receiving first and second place awards in the regional festivals are eligible for participation in the state festival. A school may not change plays between rounds of competition. If a first-or-second-place school is unable to advance to the regional or state competition, the third-place school in the appropriate district or regional festival may compete at the next level. No replacements beyond third-place schools shall be permitted.

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100-4-2 Schools in districts which do not hold a festival must make known their desire to participate. If possible, the League will arrange for a neighboring district to invite the school.

100-5-1 Aids to Coaches and Sponsors-Whenever circumstances make it possible, the League sponsors clinics on dramatic and forensic activities in various sections of the state.

SECTION 101: THEATRE FESTIVALS.

101-1-1 Selection-Any script, including musical theatre, children's theatre and mime, may be selected and used in theatre festivals provided it meets the following qualifications:

- (1) An entry may not exceed 35 minutes in playing time.
- (2) An entry may not have been presented at a VHSL district, regional or state festival by the same producing school during the last two years.
- (3) The school must have secured the necessary permission to perform a published selection, including payment of royalty if any, from the author or publisher.
- (4) The school submitting a play -- published or unpublished -- for theatre competition must fully credit the author(s). If unpublished, the following guidelines should apply:
 - (a) An original play must be conceived in full by the director and/or cast.
 - (b) An adaptation, in full or in part, must cite the written or oral source(s) of the story in the program. The dramatic/theatrical realization of adapted sources must be conceived by the director and/or cast; otherwise, images and moments seen from another production must have permission for creative use. Any part of the play taken from another original play, protected published work or work existing in manuscript form only must have permission from the source or author(s) and be acknowledged in the program.
 - (c) In entering original work, the director must sign off on these guidelines on the festival entry form. Appropriate sources/references must be given in the festival program. If the competing school is found to be in violation of these guidelines (i.e. theatrical plagiarism as opposed to copyright infringement for published works) the school would be disqualified from the festival.
- (5) Proof of required permission to perform a published play or an unpublished adaptation from another source must be presented to the festival director prior to performance.
- (6) If a school uses a cutting from a full-length script, it may not be a scene from a full-length production the school has performed or will perform during the current school year.

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

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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.

101-2-1 Rules and Regulations-In all theatre festivals both individual representatives and member schools are required to observe and comply with all League rules and regulations set forth in Sections 26 through 33 of this *Handbook*, with the exception of those that make specific reference to athletics, as well as with those rules and regulations which govern the theatre festival program as set forth in Sections 100 and 101. All members of the cast and crew, as well as any person providing live music as part of the performance, must meet eligibility requirements. Violations of any of these rules render the offender liable to such disciplinary action as the appropriate district, regional or state committee may impose.

101-2-2 Four critic judges shall be used at all League theatre festivals; however, if a festival director cannot secure four critic judges, or a secured judge cancels at the last minute, he/she may go ahead with the festival with three judges with the notification of all participating schools. Experience has shown that district and regions that pay judges an honorarium and travel expenses frequently obtain the services of better qualified judges.

101-2-3 Each critic judge shall rank and score each production without consulting with the other judges. The tournament director or designee shall then compile the results, dropping the low rank/score combination for each production (rank/score is not dropped if fewer than four judges are used). The production with the lowest total of three ranks shall be declared the winner and the school with the second lowest total the runner-up. In the event of a tie in total rank, the decision will be given to the tied production with the highest total of the three scores. In the event there is still a tie, the dropped ranks will be added for the tied productions, and if there is still a tie, the dropped scores will be added. If there is still a tie, all judges will consult in making a decision.

101-2-4 Each judge shall also rate each production as superior, excellent or good, and the three highest ratings will be averaged to determine an overall rating for each play.

101-3-1 District Festivals-Failure of a school to compete in a district festival, if held, shall disqualify the school from participation in the regional festival. Failure of a district, opting to conduct a festival, to conduct said festival on or before the deadline date shall disqualify its schools from participation in the regional festival.

101-3-2 Each school is limited to one entry in the district festival. Festival regulations and procedures are given in this section. The specific time, place and date for the festival is determined by the festival director, who is approved by the district council. The names of the festival director and critic judges must be reported to the League Office at least two weeks in advance of the district festival. Approval or disapproval of the critic judges selected if not on the list of recommended critic judges sent to the district festival director will be sent within 48 hours if the backgrounds of the persons selected are given. Failure to do this will disqualify entrants from participation in the regional festival. The director is responsible for the conduct of the festival in accordance with League regulations. He/she is supplied by the League Office with a festival kit, containing all necessary instructions, critic judges' rating forms and supplies, well in advance of the deadline date for the festival.

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101-4-1 Regional Festivals-Regional theatre festivals for all groups shall be held at sites chosen by the festival directors. A festival director for each region shall be chosen by the regional officers. The name of the festival director must be sent to the League office at least two weeks before the regional festival. The director is responsible for the conduct of the festival in accordance with League regulations. He/she is supplied by the League office with a festival kit similar to the district festival director's kit well in advance of the deadline for the festival.

101-4-2 Schools whose productions receive first and second place awards in districts opting to hold a festival and up to two schools in districts opting not to hold a festival are eligible to participate in regional festivals. However, a Region Council may, prior to the beginning of the season, approve more than two schools advancing from districts which do not hold festivals. If a district does not hold a festival and the region does not opt prior to the beginning of the season to permit more than two schools to advance, it is up to the district to determine by some other system which schools will advance. A qualifying school may not change plays between rounds. (See 100-4-1.)

101-5-1 State Festival-A state theatre festival for all groups shall be held annually on dates specified on the Activities Calendar (inside front cover of the *Handbook*). Only those schools opting to be rated for possible advancement to the state competition and whose productions receive first and second place awards in the regional festival shall be eligible to perform those plays in the state festival. (See 100-4-1.) Regions shall not advance more than two schools to the state festival; therefore, they must resolve ties or disputes in accordance with policies in the VHSL Speech and Drama Manual since only two schools may qualify from each region to state.

101-5-2 Each school participating in the state festival should carefully adapt its production for presentation on the festival stage. Because of the tight scheduling involved in the state festival, schools are reminded that there will be no time for rehearsal at the festival stage. Each producing group will set up immediately before it performs.

101-6-1 Festival Regulations and Procedures-Only entries submitted on the official entry form (included in the Principal's Workbook), properly certified by the school principal, and postmarked not later than the deadline date for entry, shall be accepted.

101-6-2 A production shall be eligible for entry only if (1) it does not exceed 35 minutes in playing time and (2) it has not been presented at a VHSL district, regional or state festival by the same producing school during the last two years.

101-6-3 The order of presentation shall be determined by the festival director.

101-6-4 Specifications of the festival stage will be sent to all entering schools. All productions shall, if possible, be presented before a curtain backdrop.

101-6-5 Elaborate stage sets shall not be used, and only such incidental scenery as is essential to the production shall be authorized. Such incidental scenery shall be provided by the participating school.

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101-6-6 Participating schools shall provide their own costumes, make-up and all stage and hand properties. All items must be self-supporting. The festival director shall provide a trained stage crew to assist the group's technical staff.

101-6-7 All expenses of travel, board, lodging and royalties shall be defrayed by participating schools or their participants.

NOTE: The foregoing regulations and procedures shall govern district, regional and state festivals.

101-7-1 Bases for Critic Judges' Evaluations-The criteria for evaluation shall include, but not be limited to: direction, acting and ensemble effect.

101-7-2 Direction shall include: casting, blocking, interpretation of dramatic values and realization of the playwright's intent.

101-7-3 Acting shall include: characterization, interpretation, focus, concentration, articulation and movement.

101-7-4 The focus of the critic judges' evaluation shall be on the above criteria rather than on such incidental elements as costumes, sets, properties and lighting. An oral critique of each production shall be given after all schools have completed their performances.

101-8-1 Penalties-Any production that exceeds the maximum playing time of 35 minutes at any district or regional festival shall not be eligible to receive a first or second place ranking. Any school that does not secure permission from the publisher to produce the competition play and pay relevant royalties will be disqualified from competition.

101-9-1 Awards-Each district and regional council shall adopt a program of awards for its theatre festival competition. The Virginia High School League shall present trophies to first and second place productions at the state festival, and medals shall be presented to individuals whose number shall not exceed eight selected by the judges for their outstanding performances.