

# Speaking and Listening Assessment Project

## Lesson Plans

# Oral Interpretation

This is intended as the ninth unit in a high school level oral communication course and is designed to help students understand the importance of oral interpretation.

**Probable Length:** One to two weeks of standard class periods

**Illinois State Goals/Standards Covered:** ELA Goal 1, Standard C, Benchmark 1.C.5b  
ELA Goal 1, Standard B, Benchmark 2.B.5a

**Knowledge Objectives:** After this unit students should know how to:

1. Prepare their own definition of oral interpretation
2. Discuss the six differences between an actor and interpreter
3. Identify and describe the three values of oral interpretation
4. Understand the criteria for good literature
5. Identify the five different types of focus
6. Identify differences between poetry and prose literature

**Behavior Objectives:** After this unit students should be able to:

1. Present their ideas to an audience
2. Reduce communication apprehension
3. Demonstrate their understanding of the four steps in preparing a selection
4. Perform an oral interpretation piece while being assessed on the basic criteria of public speaking
5. Practice and portray their understanding of an effective introduction and how to cut a piece that is too long
6. Design an Oral Interpretation model with all parts

**Content:** \*major assignment will be for students to bring in a prose or piece of poetry to study for a final interpretation performance \* Class periods researching in the library may be inserted as needed. \*Also, all items should be included for review in the portfolio assignment given in the Fundamentals of Communication Unit.

- A. Reduce communication apprehension
- B. Bridge to student activity to reduce apprehensions. **Mirror Affirmation**
- C. Definition of Oral Interpretation – the art of communicating a literary or oral selection in its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety to an audience to arouse a meaningful response.
- D. Bridge to student activity to create oral interp model **Oral Interp Model**
- E. Differences between and Interpreter and an Actor
  1. Acting:
    - a. Creates a world using literal effects
    - b. Uses one medium – drama

- c. Is memorized
  - d. Uses accessories (costumes, lighting, make-up, a stage, sound, etc.)
  - e. One person plays one role
  - f. Is directed
2. Interpretation
- a. Is suggestive – theatre is in your own mind
  - b. Uses all literary texts, not just one median
  - c. Does not have to be memorized
  - d. No accessories – you are the prop
  - e. Play multiple roles
  - f. Not directed – come up with your own concepts
  - g. Show video clips of interpretation performances
  - h. Bridge to student activity to begin to notice differences between acting and interpretation. **Cliché Activity**
- F. Values of Interpretation
- 1. Intellectual – mental stimulation
    - a. Expand knowledge of good literature
    - b. Expand knowledge of cultures
  - 2. Emotional – the feelings that are communicated; to arouse a response
    - a. Increases self-confidence
    - b. Entertainment
  - 3. Aesthetic – choices you make that help the audience understand your take on the literature
  - 4. Bridge to student activity. **All Boxed Up**
- G. Types of material \*acknowledge that drama exists
- 1. Prose (give examples of each)
    - a. Fiction- the material created in the imagination
    - b. Non-Fiction- is based in entirely on truth as the author understands it, real people, or on actual events.
  - 2. Poetry (give examples of each)
    - a. Narrative- tells a story or describes something that has happened
    - b. Lyric- deals with what happened or is happening inside the poet
- H. Criteria for good literature
- 1. Universality – a general meaning; a broad appeal across time and people (conflict, death, war, love)
  - 2. Individuality – stand out from the rest – how unique is the piece?
  - 3. Suggestion – the extent to which a piece triggers your imagination to supply meaning
  - 4. For the classroom environment: it should fulfill students interests and abilities and should be 6-8 minutes in length
  - 5. Bridge to student activity **Selecting Literature for Oral Interpretation**
- I. Cutting Material
- 1. Guidelines for prose:

- a. cut tag lines if characters are established.
  - b. Cut explanations of a characters state of mind
  - c. Condense/eliminate some description
  - d. Omit minor characters
  - e. Omit anything that would offend the audience
  - f. Cut repetitive material if it serves no purpose
- 2.Guidelines for poetry
- a. Preserve the rhyme and rhythm of poem
  - b. Cut only to shorten or eliminate offensive sections
  - c. Cut large segments such as stanzas
3. Bridge to student activity. **Freeze**
- J. Steps in preparing a selection
- 1. Select a piece of literature - How does it appeal to you and your audience?
  - 2. Look for Inner-textuality – How the text mixes with your personal experiences?
  - 3. Analyze it for meaning – What is your take on the piece?
  - 4. Make performance choices – voice, diction, nonverbal, blocking
  - 5. Bridge to student activity **Poem performance**
- K. Rehearsal and Performance
- 1. Introduction –an effective introduction prepares audiences for what they are about to hear. It will establish a relationship between the performer, the literature and the audience. Items to include in the introduction:
    - a. Factual – title of selection and name of author
    - b. Contextual – context of the story (where, why?) without “giving away the story”
    - c. Interpretive – what is your theme, angle, or thesis? Use this to justify why the selection was chosen.
  - 2. Types of focus
    - a. Off stage focus – characters are in the audience
    - b. Open focus – speak directly to the audience
    - c. Inner-closed focus – talk to yourself (think out loud)
    - d. Semi-closed focus – the character is not there, but you are talking to them
    - e. Closed focus – one character is off stage
  - 3. Bridge to student activity. **Get Into Focus**
- L. Analyzing a piece
- a. understand your selection
    - 1. know the meanings of every word
    - 2. importance of pronunciation
    - 3. know a bit about the author
  - b. Know the fictional speaker
  - c. Know the imaginary audience
  - d. Understand the relationship between the speaker and audience
  - e. Know the setting

1. place
2. time

#### M. Storytelling

1. Make the audience “see” what you are seeing – use imagery
2. Tell it as if it is happening for the first time
3. Use good vocal variety – tone, dynamics, rate, articulation, volume, dialects
4. Nonverbal cues are essential in performance
5. Punch line – the important part, or peak of the performance
6. Make it personal
7. Bridge to student activity **Character background**

#### N. Performance

1. When students have their selection prepared, begin the performances in groups of 3-4,
2. Perform in pairs
3. Final performance solo for the entire class.
4. These times periods and groups can be adjusted as time permits.

#### **Assessment:**

- A. The students will be able to reduce communication apprehension through in-class activities and preparation for their oral interpretation presentations. This will prepare them to be comfortable in front of the class before they perform their oral interpretation piece.
- B. The students will be able to analyze and defend an interpretation of their choice (Benchmark 1.D.5b). They will demonstrate their interpretation in the introduction of their selected literature.
- C. The students will analyze and express and interpretation of literary work (Benchmark 2.B.5a) through their performance of a selected piece.

#### **Materials:**

1. Video clips of one or two oral interpretation performances
2. An example (overhead) of an oral interpretation selection
3. Outline of the unit for presentation of new material
4. Definition of oral interpretation
5. Overhead of Oral Interpretation Model
6. Overhead comparing acting and interpretation
7. Multiple copies of examples of prose and poetry

#### **Resources:**

Lewis, Todd. *Communication Literature – An Introduction to Oral Interpretation*. Dubuque: Kendall, Hunt Publishing Co, 1995.