

VARIATIONS ON A THEME COMPETITION

RULES

The competition will be held in the North and the South in alternate years as follows:

NORTH - North, West Highland, North East and Central areas

SOUTH - South East and South West areas

1. **Theme** Each year a theme for the competition will be chosen by the Education and International Committee and will be intimated to the competing Federations at least nine months prior to the final.

2. **Teams** A team shall consist of four members. Two Institutes from the same Federation may join together to form a team if they wish.

3. **Procedure** Each team will choose its own selection, and make up its own programme, of prose and poetry readings based on the given theme. The team must use a minimum of **six** and a maximum of **nine** separate pieces within the total time limits of **12** and **15** minutes.

At least one piece must be in verse.

One piece must use all voices ie.

(a) You can have all four speaking together through all/part of the piece **or**

(b) Each voice speaks a verse or part of the piece **or**

(c) As dialogue and narration (eg. The Owl & the Pussycat, etc.) **or**

(d) Any combination of these

The idea of this part of the programme is to see how all four voices can be combined. (It need not be the only piece to use more than one voice).

The choice of pieces (which may be whole works or extracts) should offer variety in mood, pace, etc and may be in local dialect if wished. Teams are encouraged to include their own written material.

Your 6 to 9 pieces or extracts can be used in any way you wish, ie you can break up one piece to interlink the others. You must detail this when you send in your programme for the adjudicator.

Although there will be an audience present, think of your programme in terms of radio entertainment ie. All pieces may be read – they need not be committed to memory (no extra marks will be given for this) but you must read them fluently. Teams may stand or sit, as they wish, but there must be no emphasis on acting or miming. Hand gestures as required would be acceptable. There should be no use of ‘props’, background music or effects. The voices do all the work!

A copy of the chosen pieces, in reading order and with source details, should be submitted to Headquarters at least a month before the final so that the adjudicator has time to study them.

The competition programme will detail the names of the performers and the extracts used, so there is no need to introduce either unless you wish to. If you do, it must all be contained within your 12 to 15 minutes.

Copyright must be observed and permission to perform a piece of prose or poetry must be obtained unless the author has been dead for seventy years or more. Application should be made to the Permissions Department of the publisher of the book from which your extract is taken giving the following information: author, title, a photocopy of the imprint page containing the copyright date, page numbers, number of words, and for what purpose the extracts are being used, and you will be put in touch with the copyright holder. It can take up to 28 days to get this information back.

Publishers' names and addresses can be obtained from Head of Library Services, Central Library, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, Telephone 0131 242 8000.

4. **Marking** Team members will not be marked individually - this is a team effort and the scoring will be very simple. A total of 30 marks will be awarded for the choice of pieces, i.e. suitability to theme, variety, suitability for voices, originality, etc, and 70 marks for presentation, i.e. clarity, variety and harmony of voices plus the team's ability to hold and entertain the audience. Two marks will be deducted for every full minute under 12 minutes, or for every full minute over 15 minutes, for total performance.

Federations will run their own competitions - based on the current year's theme - and the winners will go forward to the final. Any Federation having six or more Institutes taking part will be entitled to send their winners and runners-up to the final.

The final will normally take place on the second Saturday in November and will be arranged by Headquarters, who will also appoint an adjudicator.

At the national final, the Adjudicator will announce the top two teams, and will give a short overview of all team performances. The full range of marks for every team taking part in the final will be sent later.

5. **Expenses** At Federation level - to be met by Federation or Institutes.

Final – Hall rent, administration and judges' expenses will be met by Headquarters Committee. A decision will be taken on the amount of travel expenses which will be refunded at the November 2015 Central Council meetings. Claims must be made within **28 days** after the event. Contributions from supporters on buses should be deducted from the total cost so that HQ pays 100% of the cost **less contributions**.

Headquarters will reimburse cost of engraving of trophies. Please send claim with receipt to headquarters within 6 weeks of the event.

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USEFUL HINTS

1. Make as **wide** a choice of material as you can, ie humorous and light-hearted, as well as more serious and moving, pieces.
2. In the same way, vary the **pace** of the extracts.
3. As stated, all pieces may be read but eye-contact with the audience, or other team members, when appropriate, makes the performance more interesting. There must be no "acting". The voices create all the sense and atmosphere of the pieces. **It will be stressed to the adjudicator that the competition must be judged by the rules set out by SWI and not by his/her own interpretation or inclination.**
4. You can stand or sit as required. Chairs will be provided. **No other 'props' are allowed.**
5. The audience will want to applaud after each piece, so allow for this when you time your programme.
6. You can have a great deal of fun choosing the pieces to suit your own members' voices - and don't forget local dialect. If you can't find just the right piece, then write your own!
7. Aim to interest and entertain the audience - but the main thing is for you to enjoy it! Happy rehearsing!
8. Although a team would not be disqualified if one team member could not take part in the competition due to illness, we recommend that teams consider having an understudy.