

## Humorous Interpretation- Introductions

Rules and regulations may change across events and leagues, but one constant is the introduction. Introductions tend to be the one universal across the Speech world. Though, however similar they may be across events, there are nuances for writing an introduction per event. Humorous Interpretation has a few introduction "rules" that any HIer should know.

**Time.** Keep an introduction to under a minute. Actually, some leagues have a rule that a Humorous Interpretation can only have up to one minute of original material (introductions, transitional material) anyway. Most effective introductions are between 30-45 seconds. Besides, how much time do you really need to give the author's name and the piece's title?

**Necessities.** What needs to be in any introduction is an attention getter, necessary background information, the author's name, the title of the piece, and if needed a transition back into the performance (some introductions work best with the end sentence involving the author's name and title). There is no set outline for how an introduction should flow, but these bits of information are required.

**Tone.** Any introduction should be told in a tone that reflects the piece. Thus, a Humorous Interpretation introduction should have a lighthearted air (unless your HI is dark comedy of course!). Tell a joke. The comedy does not stop and turn into a serious, History Channel-esque 45 second preview of what is on next. Does that give you permission to be a goof? No. Just do not turn the Humorous Interpretation mood you have established into Dramatic Interpretation.

**Gimmicks.** Those involved in Humorous Interpretation, and Duo/Duet, feel that it is their right to be ridiculously hilarious in introductions. This may involve gimmicks such as raps or extreme salesmanship (you feel transported into a Billy Mays or Vince Shlomi infomercial). Be warned, gimmicks that are just that--with nothing of real substance--may get a laugh but might ultimately leave the audience feeling as if you are attempting to overcompensate for your piece. Crazy introductions can work if they mesh and support the piece, and might actually enhance the work, but if you are doing a rap just for the sake of being different, then your introduction will be empty.

**Be yourself.** The introduction is the only place in the piece where you can be yourself. In fact, it is better if you can display your confidence by not hiding behind a persona and being you in the introduction. This leaves a good impression of you for the audience and shows them why you own the room (aside from your unbelievable interpretation skills!).

**PRACTICE AND WRITE IN ADVANCE!!!!** DO NOT be the person that writes their introduction on the bus ride to the tournament. The introduction might be passable, but passable is not good enough. Passable eventually breaks down into weak and substandard. The elements might be in the introduction, but most often it will lack heart.

Introductions are an annoyance to all in Speech, but they are a required nuisance. And a great Humorous Interpretation introduction can be that little something to set you above the competition. Take some time, be clever, and write an introduction that complements your HI.