

## Prose Interpretation- Picking A Piece

Part of what makes for a great Prose performance is finding a good piece. Somewhat a subjective task, searching for a Prose piece that can help take you to State/Nationals is one of the first steps every Forensicator of the event must take. It's frustrating, devours time, and often ends in disappointment from pieces that look good but ultimately fail. While piece finding *is* hard, it is not impossible and does not require Indiana Jones' assistance. To find the piece suitable for you, take note of these guidelines of criteria:

**What interests you?** Just because most Prose pieces center around dramas of death, disease, and destruction (The Three D's) does NOT mean your piece must. What genres and topics interest you? Are you a strong comedic performer? Find a humorous Prose. Is Gothic Literature your favorite? Try horror. Like coming-of-age tales? Go for it. Select a piece that interests you and will hold your attention. If you're bored, the audience will know. Besides, Forensics should be fun and not a chore.

**What is your type?** You might love that story of a young boy on an adventure, but if you cannot do the voice of a young boy it is not even worth pursuing. Try to think of what you could be cast as. Are you a motherly sort? Rebellious teen? Think of roles you can fit; voices you can do. Much of Prose is about the voice, so if you are unable to work it things will not go favorably.

**Comfort zone.** As stated, Prose has this nasty habit of hovering around The Three D's. There is a belief that dramas dealing with tearful subjects are better stories and of higher difficulty. THAT is a discussion for another article, but for this all you need to know is that if there is a particular subject you are uncomfortable using, DO NOT DO IT. Being uncomfortable shows. You will look distressed, your audience will feel the awkward vibe, and everyone suffers. Your Prose will never have an opportunity to even become good because you will always have reservations. It's a lose-lose for everyone.

**Challenging VS safe.** When selecting a piece you have to think long term as well. Can this story keep you challenged and encourage your growth throughout the season, or will you plateau mid-way through? Is it a Prose that is slightly risky as well and gets the audience thinking? Or are these words a safe bet of sappiness that will get you the response you desire

with minimal work? If all you care about is rank, and not the art, certainly go for safe. If you want to become a better Prose Reader then test your abilities.

**Can this be cut?** If a piece cannot be cut to fit time (or to fit the basic storytelling structure: Exposition (introduction of characters, setting, etc.) --> CONFLICT and Rising Action (the issue is discovered and problems arise due to the conflict) --> Climax (the height of conflict and highest tension; everything is unleashed!) --> Falling Action (things begin to settle down and a solution is sought) --> Dénouement (the resolution/conclusion; things come to an end happily or not)) place it aside. You want practical pieces, not Epics of *Ben-Hur* proportions. Unless this is your dream Prose of all pieces, scrap it. If this is your Red Ryder then best of luck!

**Universal.** NEVER, EVER cater to an audience. However, do try to select a piece that most people can connect to and enjoy. Even if you chose a risky piece, one rarely seen, it can still have appeal to the masses. How many tiny films have gone on to be HUGE success stories because the audience saw something in them (*My Big, Fat, Greek Wedding, Juno, Saw, etc.* ). It is possible to turn a little something into a BIG something if there is a story an audience can relate to.

**Do you love it?** This is self-explanatory. Why bother working on a piece if you do not love it? No reason.

Many questions to ask yourself as you seek out a Prose, but these questions do need answering. There is no formula for selecting a piece. Every Prose Reader has different needs and wants. To base choosing a piece on what will help you win is ridiculous. Find a piece that is best for you and the breaks and rankings will follow.