

What to Expect Competing in Duo Interpretation

*In Duo Interpretation, competitors team up to deliver a ten-minute performance of a published play or story. Using off-stage focus, competitors convey emotion and environment through a variety of performance techniques focusing on the relationships and interactions between the characters. No props or costumes are used. Performances can also include an introduction written by the students to contextualize the performance and state the title and the author. **Julia Thompson** gives her take on Duo.*

Why did you choose your event?

I chose Duo because it was something one of my best friends and I were extremely interested in. It was something we had dreamed of doing since day one of speech. My Duo partner and I were both dedicated speech members and after spending the majority of the year working on our own individual events, we agreed it would be cool to try something new. Through the encouragement of our team president we tried it out, and I've doing it ever since!

What skills are important in Duo?

Trust and patience. One of the wonderful things about Duo is that it doesn't fit into one category. Whether it's delivering a well-timed joke or making your audience feel a certain emotion, Duos need energy and intensity. A lot of that relies on the team dynamic and partners need to have trust. They must be able to discuss what looks good and what doesn't, and to build each other up. Partners need to be prepared to work together on all aspects of the piece. It can get frustrating trying to create something stage-worthy, especially when two people have to mesh their talents. Patience is an important skill to have while spending long hours blocking. You have to stay calm and keep working because it's truly worth it in the end.

What challenges do you face in a round?

Duos rely on passion and intensity, and sometimes by the time you get up to perform after a long day, it's difficult to deliver with the most energy possible. One of the biggest

challenges I face is not just performing for myself, but for someone else too. My Duo partner and I have our own responsibilities and I always do my very best so not to let them down. Partners are dependent on each other and it becomes my main goal in every round to remember all my lines and know what the correct blocking is.

What does a typical tournament look like for a Duo?

A Duo's typical tournament begins in the early morning. When the bus arrives at the hosting school, we and the rest of the team exit the bus and find a place in the cafeteria. Sooner or later the two of us go off into an empty hallway and perform our piece in full to a wall. Shortly after that, we are to attend our first round. This is where we get the first idea of our competition. More often than not, all the Duos we see are incredible! It can be a little intimidating but entertaining nonetheless. When it's finally our turn to perform, we give it our all. This is the most fun part of the whole day! Even if we don't place high, it's a great learning experience to be able to watch the Duos that do. After our three preliminary rounds, we wait until final rounds are posted. Finaling in Duo is so fantastic! Nothing beats jumping up and down scream-hugging your Duo partner. After awards we get back on the bus and break open our ballots. Then we congratulate each other and talk about our strengths and our weaknesses.



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—Julia Thompson, student,
Matawan Regional HS, NJ