

What to Expect Competing in Program Oral Interpretation

*In Program Oral Interpretation, students use selections from Prose, Poetry and Drama to create a ten minute performance around a central theme. POI is designed to test a student's ability to intersplice multiple types of literature into a single, cohesive performance. A manuscript is required and may be used as a prop within the performance if the performer maintains control of the manuscript at all times. Performances can also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the title and the author of each selection. **Jeremiah Brown** of Cabot High School explains his love for POI.*

Why did you choose your event?

I originally chose the event POI because I'd found a perfect prose piece, but it'd be even better if I could move. So, I decided to add poeteries and dramatic interpretations to make it a POI, and I got third at the tournament. I continued to do POI because I fell in love with the freedom that it gives you.

What skills are important in POI?

It is important to have very clearly defined characters. Because you are taking multiple characters from various backgrounds, the audience needs to be able to tell 1) what story it is and 2) what character is talking. It's also important to have creativity, you should move around a little. Use every bit of creativity that you have to make your script come to life. It's also important to have a very unique program, or a unique way of performing that program. I've noticed the unique and different programs always seem to have a little bit higher chance of breaking.

What kind of challenges did you face in round?

POI is the hardest event I've ever done. Within my own POI, there's a moment where I'm silent and I just march in place, and it's difficult knowing how long is too long, but you've gotta just trust in yourself and your own acting capabilities. My program is slavery, and there are some times where I'd get 1st from one finals judge and 5th from the other because

they didn't like the certain parts but I'm not going to make slavery sound beautiful, I'm going to perform it how it was written.

What does a typical tournament look like for someone in POI?

You go to your room and once the performances start, the atmosphere completely changes. You watch performances that'll blow your mind and see actors and actresses do things that you could've never imagined. When it's your turn to perform, you get up and do the best you can. Once the round is over, you do it all over again in the next round. Then when semifinals are posted, you pray that you broke, and you get happy if you do, or you walk away knowing that you did a good job. If you broke, you perform semis and pray for finals. And in finals, you hope for the best. It's stressful doing POI, but getting to accept that trophy at the awards show with some of the greatest performers at the tournament by your side makes it all worth it.



“Use every bit of creativity that you have to make your script come to life.”

— Jeremiah Brown, student,
Cabot HS, AR