



# ESU National Shakespeare Competition

The English-Speaking Union of the United States

144 East 39<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10016

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## From The Judges: What They Look For

Since the goal of the Competition is to encourage you, the student, to meet and develop a relationship with Shakespeare, our best advice comes from the man himself: “Suit the action to the word, the word to the action” (*Hamlet* 3.2).

The judges include teachers, actors, directors, and scholars. They look for performances that bring Shakespeare’s words to life with deep understanding, compelling truth, and unique personal style. The particulars of such a presentation vary greatly, but should demonstrate:

- a thorough understanding of the text, including language, character, and plot;
- an effective delivery of the interpretation;
- an unaffected, artistic range that demonstrates an individual point-of-view and avoids fixed notions about how Shakespeare should be performed.

### **A reminder about the competition rules:**

- You should speak naturally. We urge you to use your own voice rather than affect a British accent.
- You will not be allowed to wear costumes. Your clothes should not distract from your performance and should allow you to move easily on stage. You cannot use props, including chairs, hair and hair clips, articles of clothing, and jewelry.
- Your monologue must not be more than 20 lines according to *The Riverside Shakespeare* (1997). You should give a copy of your piece to the coordinator of your Branch competition, who will then send it to the National Office. If your piece is too long, we will contact you and arrange for the appropriate cuts to be made.
- You must be enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, or 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Contestants should not perform for pay in television, the stage, or in film during the school year in which the competition takes place.