

## Official Bylaws for One Act Play

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### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**REGION:** The term "region" will refer only to the administrative region and all administrative functions of the region.

**SECTION:** The term "section" will refer to all geographic grouping of schools for competition. In some sections, there may also be subsection competition or section preliminary competition.

One Act Play section assignments may be viewed on the Home page of the MSHSL Web site. Click on "Competitive Section Assignments" link and select One Act Play. Schools will be placed into competitive sections every two years with an equitable number of schools in each competitive section based on the number of schools registered.

### I. CONTEST RULES

#### A. Play Selection

**A production may use any genre of literature except musical theater, operas, or operettas (as designated by the publisher and/or rights holder) so long as permission has been obtained from the author and/or publisher to produce, adapt and/or cut (if applicable), and perform.** Productions may be either serious or comic in nature. Plays composed by the production's director or cast should be identified in the author line ("by \_\_\_\_\_") as "Original Production."

Directors are expected to select, edit, and adjust subject matter, language, and gesture to local standards. The play is a representative of the school and community that support the activity, and it should reflect their standards. Be reminded that plays are seen by students younger than high school age. A statement certifying that the contest production is representative of the school and community standards in its use of subject matter, language, and gesture must be submitted to the Manager of the first level of MSHSL One Act Play competition by the participating School Principal or Superintendent and Director. **This certified form must be submitted to represent the school at ALL levels of competition for which the school qualifies, though production modifications may be made to reflect critiques received. (FAQs #4-8; 25)**

## B. Music

Except that the play selected shall not be a musical, an opera, or an operetta as signified by the publishing agent, all other uses of music are permitted.

**If questions exist regarding use of music, whether in a published script or an original or adapted work, League staff should be consulted well in advance of the contest.**

## C. Copyright

The participating school must certify (on the Play Safety & Selection Certification Form) that it has fulfilled its legal production responsibilities such as royalty payment, securing permission to perform, to produce, and/or cut, etc. Plays may not be performed if such permission has not been obtained. Directors must have this permission on file and a copy available at all competitions. (FAQs #4-8)

## D. Time Limits

The maximum playing time is thirty-five (35) minutes at all levels of competition -- i.e., Subsection, Section and State or Preliminaries and Finals. Timing begins with any lights, words, actions, or sounds that help to establish the mood. An adult (not a Director or Judge of the contest) shall be designated as the Official Timer and shall be provided with a stopwatch. Preset lighting is allowed. However, a black out must occur after the preset so official time can accurately begin at first light (not the preset). **PLAYS EXCEEDING THE TIME LIMIT MUST BE DISQUALIFIED.**

For each play, including the first play of the day and the first play following any break in the day's schedule, there is to be a ten (10) minute maximum setup and/or preparation time after the stage is clear. All technical aspects of a school's production must be completed during the ten (10) minute set-up time restriction. No permanent placement of technical aspects may occur until after the ten (10) minute time has begun. Time will be provided by the Contest Manager for schools to inspect and understand the site's lighting and sound equipment. **Failure to follow this setup/preparation time limit must result in disqualification.**

While there is no maximum time limit for clearing the stage after a production, the Director and his/her students are expected to clear the stage as quickly as possible after their production is completed.

## E. Company

**The official company (cast and support personnel) participating at MSHSL contests and festivals must not exceed twenty (20) students. The Director may determine the actor/support personnel breakdown as s/he wishes. If more than twenty (20) cast and support members are used, the play will be disqualified.**

Each cast member may play an unlimited number of roles.

Off-stage voices and/or musicians must be counted among the total twenty (20).

Substitution for originally designated Original Company members is permitted.

No more than a Director and one additional non-student adult representing the participating school may assist the students in setup and preparation for and during the performance at contests and festivals.

No other auxiliary members may assist in any way on or off stage, during the actual MSHSL contest or festival.

Eliciting on-the-spot and/or active audience involvement is not permitted (Participation in the performance is limited to the twenty (20) students designated as the "Official Company"). (FAQs #9-11)

## F. Royalty

Royalty and other expenses of production must be paid by the school presenting the play.

## G. Registration and Certification of Play

Data regarding the play must be submitted to the Contest Manager at least one week before the contest. This should include the following items:

1. Play Safety & Selection Certification Form from Principal or Superintendent and Director, verifying:
  - a. That safety measures have been observed;
  - b. That the play meets local standards; and
  - c. That royalty, permission to cut, etc., have been secured.

**NOTE:** Directors must obtain royalty agreement and permission to cut or adapt. Directors must have a copy of this permission on file and at all competitions.

2. Two copies of Registration Form including:
  - a. Title and author of play
  - b. Name of Director
  - c. The official cast and support personnel (limit of 20)
  - d. A well-drawn floor plan
  - e. Playing time
  - f. Sound requests
  - g. Plot of lighting desired
  - h. Statement regarding firearms, potentially dangerous weapons, and live flame (See H.11-12 below.)
  - i. Credit line: "Produced by Special Arrangement with \_\_\_\_\_."

#### H. Special Rules (At all levels of competition: Subsection, Section and State)

1. The Director and up to one other designated adult may assist in all preparations for the play during the competition. (FAQ #9)
2. Prompting from the wings will be permitted. (FAQ #10)
3. Each cast must provide its own makeup, costumes, set, and properties.
4. The one act plays shall be judged for general effectiveness (which include audience appeal), stage picture, blocking, characterization, stage business, pacing, interpretation, technical elements, and any other points which will help students to improve their craft.
5. The use of a sealed Director's Critique by a judge is optional. (This allows a Judge to communicate with the Director on production aspects which may not be appropriate for other forms currently in use.)
6. Schools are urged to exercise moderation in the design and construction of scenery and lighting. Host schools are obligated only to provide the six (6) basic lighting areas. Schools may bring their own lighting equipment. If this is done, the school must contact the host school. Any lighting additions or adjustments must be done within the 10-minute set-up time. **NOTE: All electrical equipment must be in good repair. (FAQ #21)**

Schools are reminded that, because of safety concerns, materials and substances that may spill or break are prohibited. If questions exist regarding what materials are permissible, contact MSHSL staff.

*It should be noted that plays at all levels of competition are expected to store their sets in a 10' x 10' or equivalent space. The host school and director must agree in advance to additional accommodations.*

#### **In addition to other disqualifiable violations listed elsewhere in these Rules, failure to conform to the rules listed below will result in disqualification:**

7. Because of safety and clean-up concerns and out of respect for host sites, materials and substances that are spilled, thrown or dropped (such as all liquids, sprays, straw, glitter, confetti and any other items and substances that are not completely picked up and/or cleaned up) are prohibited at all levels, as are the use of any real food or beverages and deliberate breaking or smashing of objects during performances. When each play is finished, the performing school must sweep the stage, if necessary, to bring it back to neutral. This must be done within the 5-minute guideline. It should not be necessary to mop, or vacuum the stage floor or the area in front of the stage because of actions or substance deliberately used in contest performances. If questions exist regarding what materials are permissible, contact MSHSL staff. (FAQ #12, 17)  
*It should be noted that plays at all levels of competition are expected to store their sets in a 10' x 10' or equivalent space. The host school and director must agree in advance to additional accommodations.*
8. Live or dead animals may not be used in performances. (FAQ #29)
9. No curtain calls are permitted. (FAQ #20)
10. No videotaping or photographing of productions (including recording done on cell phones and other electronic devices) is allowed at any level of competition. (FAQ #30)
11. Firearms, live ammunition (including bullets used as props), blank cartridges, or potentially dangerous weapons are prohibited. No real gun, cap gun, rifle, or pistol (including starting pistols) may be used in any way, regardless of whether the firing pin is removed. Use of any of these weapons will result in immediate disqualification. Prop or mock-up weapons are permitted. (FAQ #12, 14, 15, 18)
12. The use of any live flame or fireworks is prohibited. (FAQ #13)
13. Strobe lights or anything creating a strobing effect, smoke, hazers, and fog shall not be permitted in MSHSL One Act Play productions at any level of competition. (FAQ #19, 28)
14. Eliciting on-the-spot and/or active audience involvement is not permitted. (FAQ #10)

## II. SUBSECTION and SECTION REGULATIONS

- A. At all levels of competition, a Rules Committee shall be designated to enforce contest rules. The Rules Committee / Contest Manager at each level of competition must enforce all contest rules. When a rule has been violated, disqualification must be the result. The Rules Committee will receive and act upon any and all protests PRIOR to the tallying of results. (FAQs #24-25)
- B. The number of plays to advance from Subsections shall be determined by the Region Committee. Recommendation: No more than eight schools should be involved in any competition. When more than eight, it is strongly recommended that a Subsection (or an additional Subsection) be created.
- C. Only one play shall advance from the Section to the State Festival.
- D. The time and date for holding the One Act Play Contest will be determined by the Region Committee.
- E. When two or more judges are employed, Judges shall rank the competing plays, numerically, without conferring.
- F. **Oral critiques at Subsection and Section Contests:**  
Oral critiques are optional at all levels of competition prior to the State Festival. Each section can determine whether to use oral critiques. IF oral critiques are used, the following procedure must be used at every level of competition:
1. Oral critiques are limited to the official company (up to 20 students and 2 adults).
  2. One judge presents the critique.
  3. Other judges are not present during the critique.
  4. Judges may rotate critique assignments throughout the day.
  5. Audience members are never present for the critique.
  6. There is a ten-minute time limit for the critique.

G. **Information Relating to Plays**

At all levels before the State Festival, no information shall be given to identify the play with the school. The name of the play and author must be included in the program.

H. **Rules Committee**

In advance of the Subsection or Section contest, the Rules Committee shall be selected by the Contest Manager from participating One Act Play Directors. The Committee must include at least three participating Directors who are, **knowledgeable in the contest rules**. An alternate Committee Member must also be named. If any of the Committee Members cannot serve due to a conflict of interest, the alternate must serve on the Rules Committee. (FAQs #24-25)

At the State Festival, the Rules Committee shall include the One Act Play Rules Clinician (or designee), and two other individuals who are knowledgeable about the One Act Play Rules.

I. **Protests**

All protests involving One Act Play contest rules must be presented to the One Act Play Contest Manager **prior to the announcement of results for that level contest. No results shall be announced until the dispute is resolved by the Rules Committee.**

The Contest Manager will convene the Rules Committee to review the allegation. Protests raised after the announcement of results will not affect the outcome of that contest, but may affect advancement to the next level of competition. The final decision is made by the Region Committee.

J. **Procedure for Dealing with Disputes**

All disputes involving the One Act Play Contest shall be directed to a Contest Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will review the allegation and make a recommendation to the One Act Play Contest Manager, who must disqualify an entry for a confirmed violation of the rules. Such procedures must be completed prior to the announcement of results for that contest.

The Rules Committee may consult with the Timekeeper, Contest Manager, Judges, or backstage personnel about the alleged violation. Rules Committees may also contact MSHSL One Act Play officials for assistance in reaching decisions.

A decision must be made and communicated to the Director prior to the announcement of results for that contest.

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## RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT

In order to elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, member schools, fans and school personnel, the MSHSL held a Sportsmanship Summit and asked student participants to identify behavior expectations they felt should be in place at every school event.

These minimum behavior expectations provide a foundation upon which member schools, conferences, administrative regions and the League's Board of Directors can build specific guidelines for activities under their control.

MSHSL Bylaw 409, **RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS, STUDENTS AND SPECTATORS**, speaks to this issue, directly, and Bylaw 409-2 specifically states that, **"School officials shall be held responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held."**

In all MSHSL activities, each participating school shall designate a person or persons from that school to serve as crowd control supervisors or chaperones. MSHSL tournament staff may require school administrators to contact the tournament manager prior to the start of the tournament game so that they can be immediately contacted to respond to behavioral issues regarding their team members, students and/or spectators at the tournament site. Each supervisor or chaperone should be immediately identifiable to the students and to the tournament site ushers and other security personnel. This will help to coordinate crowd control between school supervisors and tournament site personnel.

## MSHSL MINIMAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR REGULAR AND POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT COMPETITIONS:

Respect the American flag and the National Anthem.

Spectators must wear clothing that covers the entire torso. Those who do not comply or who wear clothing that is vulgar, obscene or that in some other way inappropriate, as determined by school/tournament personnel, will be removed from the arena/stadium if they do not cooperate with this behavior expectation.

The use of appropriate language is expected at all times. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable and must be immediately addressed by school and/or tournament administrators.

Respect the game/contest. Under no condition shall anyone other than the members of the official squad enter the playing surface. No one may interfere with the contest in any way.

Hand held signs, which do not obstruct the view of others, will be permitted provided they are in good taste. Signs, message boards, "white" boards or other similar items contest/tournament officials deem to be in poor taste will be removed.

Signs on sticks, balloons, or any other type of artificial, celebratory items are not permitted.

Artificial noise makers (i.e. megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks, and other similar items) are not allowed.

Laser lights are strictly prohibited.

**THANK YOU** for supporting your student athletes and fine arts participants and for providing a positive environment in which educational activities are conducted.

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## III. ONE ACT PLAY JUDGES (FAQs #22, 23, 27)

### A. Judges Registration Information

A listing of registered One-Act Play Judges is available on the MSHSL web site. Judges working at the Subsection, Section and State levels must be fully "Registered."

#### 1. Requirements and Qualifications:

- a. The judge must have a minimum of three (3) years teaching and/or directing experience.
- b. The judge should possess a personality which will assure the giving of constructive criticisms and encouragement to the young actors/actresses; and
- c. The judge should possess a vocabulary that will make it possible for her/him to record her/his impressions clearly and concisely.

#### 2. Judges must complete and return a current registration form along with an annual fee, pass a written test, and have attended an official MSHSL workshop in order to be a "Registered" Judge.

## B. Selection of Judges (FAQs 22, 23, 27)

**ALL Judges at all levels of competition must be selected from the MSHSL published list of Registered Judges.**

1. Judges for the Subsection and Section One Act Play Contests are selected by the Region and/or Section Committee. Directors should have input in the selection of judges for competitions in which they are involved
2. A list of at least twenty judges and/or oral critics for the State Festival shall be recommended by the One Act Play Advisory Committee each spring. Based on that recommendation, judges for the State "A" and "AA" One Act Play Festival should be contracted by September. Section Judges should be contracted by November 1.

It is strongly recommended that the judging panels be composed of high school and college judges. **Members of the Judging panel should not all be from the same high school, college, or university.**

## C. Instructions for One Act Play Judges

The Section Contests are designed to stimulate interest in theatre, but it is necessary that they also have as one of their purposes the elimination of contestants for the State Festival. However, it should be remembered that neither a Section Contest nor State Festival is strictly a competitive event. Rankings and ratings will be made solely based on performance and not on choice of play or theatrical style. Judges should have a well-established set of standards before judging the first production.

In judging the contests, Judges should adhere to the following:

1. Each critic is employed to aid in a program of theatre education. The results of her/his judging can either be a help or a hindrance. Care should be exercised in the wording of his/her statements in order that they may be detailed, **constructive** and helpful. There is no place in Minnesota contests for unkind, sarcastic, caustic or other objectionable remarks. Be considerate in the type of comments given orally or written. Adverse criticism should be given when needed, but presented in a constructive and helpful manner. **Comments should be detailed enough to qualify the ranking and rating given in order that directors and students may have sufficient suggestions to improve their works.**
2. Judges must keep in mind that they are judging high school students and not college, university or professional groups.
3. Judges should give close attention to the performance. Psychologically, students will accept an adverse decision if they feel the Judge has given them fair and unbiased attention.
4. **Critique Sheet** - All judges must use the approved critique sheet for all levels of competition -- Subsection, Section, and State. Rubrics have been established to help guide the judges in their evaluation of the play. A description of what to look for is included on the critique sheet. Judges will also include written comments to support their rankings. Each play is to be evaluated on its own merit. At the end of each contest, each Director will receive a copy of the critique sheets for her/his school's production. Judges will still independently rank each play to determine the outcome of the contest.
5. The Judge must explain on the comment sheet what the performers need to do to improve their performance. There should be a definite correlation between the ranking and rating and the criticism and suggestions made. **JUDGES SHOULD AVOID GENERALIZED STATEMENTS AND BE SPECIFIC.**
6. The use of the "Director's Critique" is optional. This form allows the Judge(s) to communicate with the Director about aspects of the production which may not be appropriate. Director critique forms are presented to the Director in a sealed envelope.
7. Judges should arrive at contest site at least one-half hour before the first production and should help the Contest Manager keep the program on schedule.
8. Judges are to rank and rate all plays without consulting with the other Judges.
9. The Contest Manager is responsible for enforcement of contest rules; however, **Judges and Directors must report rule violations or rule concerns to the Contest Manager. This must be done prior to the tabulation of results for that contest. (Judges do not decide whether there is a rule infraction, but must report possible infractions to the Contest Manager). (FAQ #25).**

## IV. CONTEST SCORING AND RANKING FOR ONE ACT PLAY

(Subsection and Section Contests)

### A. Scoring Procedures

1. Although both rating (i.e., A, B, C) and ranking (i.e., 1, 2, 3) systems may be used, advancement to the next contest **must be based on RANK**.
2. The plays shall be ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and all others 5th.
3. If a play is disqualified, the results shall report NO judge ranks for that play and all other plays' rankings by individual judges shall be adjusted accordingly.
4. To determine the final ranking of several Judges, the Contest Manager shall total the rankings of each play and award **1st place to the play receiving the lowest total points**, second place to the second lowest, etc.

***Exception for SECTION CONTESTS: At Section Contests (Finals) ONLY, any play receiving first place rankings from a majority of judges shall be declared the Section Champion regardless of total ranking points and that play shall advance to the State Festival. Other plays will then be ranked according to items 3-6 listed here. If no play receives a majority of the first place rankings at Section Finals, the procedures outlined here in items 3-6 shall be used to determine all plays' final places. (FAQ #27)***

5. In the event of a two-way tie for a given place, the play preferred by two of three Judges shall be awarded that place.

**EXAMPLE (Because, in the example below, Play B is preferred by two judges (Judge X and Judge Y), Play B is awarded the higher ranking):**

Judges' Ranks				
	X	Y	Z	(total)
Play A	2	4	1	7
Play B	1	2	4	7

6. If a tie still exists or a tie involves more than two plays, it shall be broken by converting the judges' separate rankings of the plays to reciprocal fractions: 1 equals  $\frac{1}{1.00}$ ; 2 equals  $\frac{1}{2.00}$ ; 3 equals  $\frac{1}{3.00}$ ; 4 equals  $\frac{1}{4.00}$ ; 5 equals  $\frac{1}{5.00}$ . Rank the plays according to the highest total. If any Contestants are still tied, use the Judges' preference.

**EXAMPLE:**

Judges' Ranks					
	X	Y	Z	(total)	(place)
Play A	3	5	3	11	5
Play B	4	5	2	11	3
Play C	2	4	1	7	2
Play D	1	1	5	7	1
Play E	5	3	5	13	5
Play F	5	2	4	11	4

The tie for first place is broken in favor of Play D as a result of Judges' preference. The triple tie for 3rd place is broken by converting the ranks to fractions: Play A has  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{5}$  and  $\frac{1}{3}$  for a total of  $\frac{1}{.86}$ . Play B has  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{5}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  for a total of  $\frac{1}{.95}$ ; Play F also has a total of  $\frac{1}{.95}$ . Thus, B and F are tied for 3rd place. That tie is broken in favor of Play B as a result of the Judges' preference. Judges X and Z preferred B over F, while only one Judge, Judge Y, preferred F.

7. If a three or four-way tie occurs with all plays having identical ranks, the tie is unbreakable. It will then be necessary for the Judges to confer and award the places to the tied plays.

## V. AWARDS

**Only MSHSL awards may be presented at Subsection, Section or State Contests.**

### Board Policies

- A. It will be a violation of League policy for a member school or a representative of a member school to establish, distribute or accept any awards not provided by the MSHSL for Section or State Tournaments.
- B. All-star casts/performers will not be named in any MSHSL Tournaments.

	Trophies	Plaques	Medals	Certificates
Subsection	1st & 2nd place casts		1st & 2nd place casts	
Section	1st & 2nd place casts		1st & 2nd place casts	
State		Each production		All participants (20) Directors (2)

## VI. REPORTS OF CONTESTS

- A. Immediately after a Section Contest, the manager must complete and submit the results electronically to the League Office
- B. Immediately after a Section Contest, the manager must send a certified report to the Region Secretary.

## VII. MINIMAL EQUIPMENT & FACILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ONE-ACT PLAY CONTEST

All schools may host a one act play contest if these equipment requirements are available. These facilities must be available in a school in order to host a contest.

- A. Lighting equipment to cover six basic acting areas with individual area dimming control.
- B. Masking for wings (drapes, preferably black)
- C. Masking for upstage area (across the back a traveler with curtains, preferably black, or a cyclorama of scrim or muslin)
- D. Individual rooms for each participating school to use for costumes and makeup preparation
- E. Adequate storage area for scenic units with adequate space for shifting between shows
- F. A public-address system with quality sound equipment is recommended. The sound equipment that is available and any limitations must be communicated to the directors of the competing schools.

## VIII. MSHSL STATE FESTIVAL

- A. At the State Festival all performances shall receive constructive written criticism and suggestions from each of the three judges. Performances considered to be of superior quality by a minimum of two of the three judges shall receive a starred (\*) rating.
- B. Each production will be orally critiqued by the appointed Critic who is not one of the Judges.