ZEBRAPAD

Creative Expression



is a student-written performance event that blends **storytelling**, **reflection**, and **performance**. Students create original material to explore an idea, experience, or perspective in a way that is meaningful and engaging for the audience.

The goal is not just to be funny or sad, it's to *use* original writing to help the audience understand something true about people or the world.

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CLEAR FOCUS

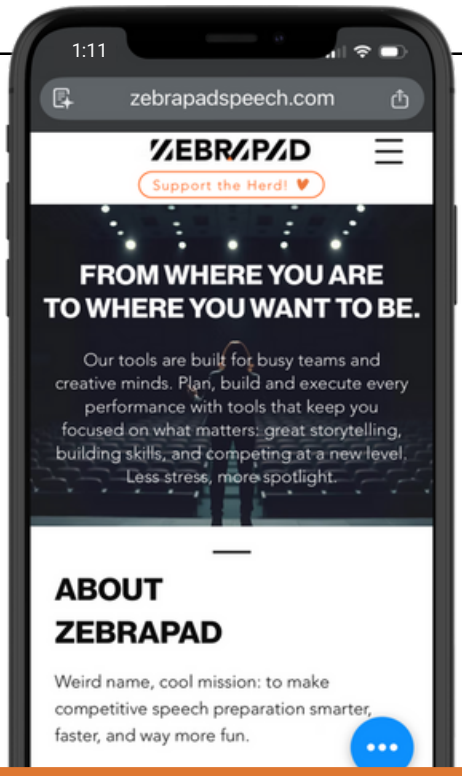
The performance has a clear story, central idea, and/or message. The audience understands what the piece is about and why it matters.

CREATIVE CHOICES & STRUCTURE

The student uses structure, language, and performance choices intentionally to shape the presentation. Creativity feels purposeful, not random.

TIMING & IMPACT

Performance is energetic, but not overwhelming. Pacing, pauses, and reactions are intentional. The speech demonstrates the speaker's understanding of how writing and delivery work together to deliver impact.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Anatomy of a Story:** Develop the building blocks of plot and understand the structure of a story.
- **Cutting Blueprint Generator:** Shape and test your story so the speech builds with purpose.
- **Interp Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Character Lab:** Create clear, distinct characters that stay consistent.
- **Sound Effects:** Play with your voice and find new ways to build story.
- **Environment and Pantomime:** Transform empty space into a real place by learning environment work and mime.
- **Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.
- **Polished vs. Clean:** Enhance your performance and control to bring your story to life.

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ZEBRAPAD

Discussion



uses **collaborative conversation** to explore a complex issue from multiple perspectives in order to complete an assigned task.

The goal is not to dominate the conversation or prove others wrong, it's to build understanding together through **listening, reasoning, and thoughtful contribution.**

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

REASONED CONTRIBUTIONS

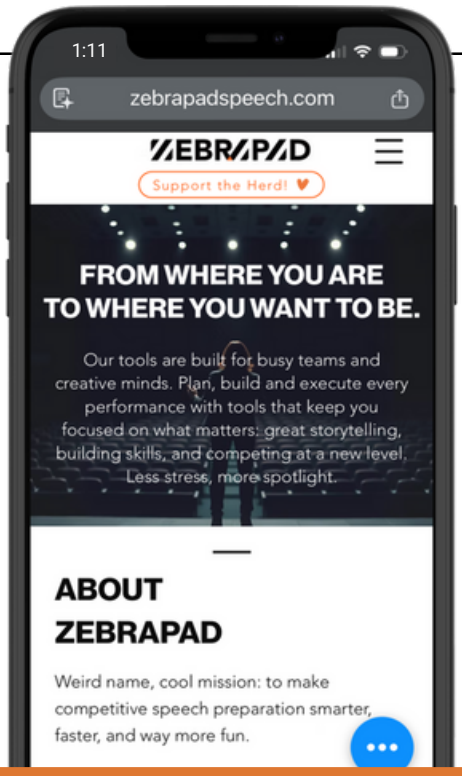
Comments are thoughtful, relevant, and supported by logic or evidence. The speaker adds value to the discussion instead of repeating others.

ACTIVE LISTENING & ENGAGEMENT

The speaker listens carefully, responds directly to others, and helps move the conversation forward.

LEADERSHIP & BALANCE

The speaker contributes confidently while also creating space for others, helping the group have a productive, respectful discussion.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Dynamic Influence in Discussion:** Learn how to lead, respond, and contribute meaningfully without dominating.
- **You+: Building Your Speech Persona:** Develop a confident, respectful presence that fits a discussion setting.
- **Eye Contact:** Use eye contact to engage peers naturally and respectfully.
- **Fixing Common Nervous Fidgets:** Replace distracting habits with calm, intentional movement.

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ZEBRAPAD

Dramatic Interp



uses serious literature to explore **how people change when something meaningful happens**.

The goal is not to be sad or intense, it's to guide the audience through a clear emotional journey that reveals something about human experience.

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CLEAR STORY

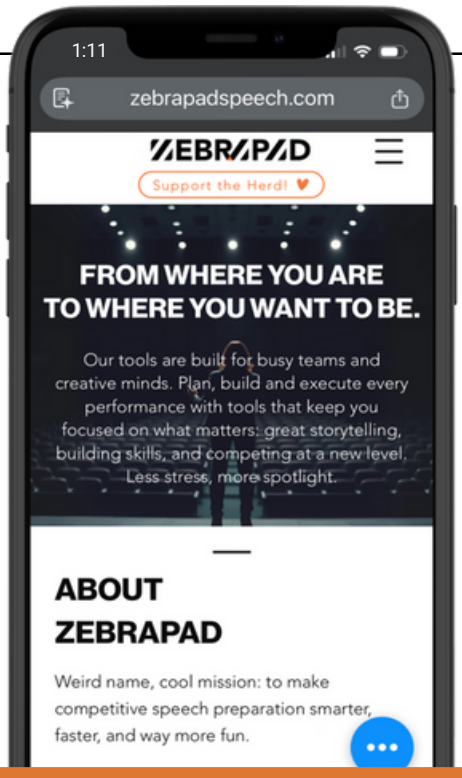
The selected script and cutting have a clear beginning, middle, and end. The audience can follow what's happening from start to finish, even when the moments are fast or intense.

EMOTIONAL CONTROL

The performer uses dynamic physical and vocal choices that make the story come to life. Characters are distinct and consistent, and the speech demonstrate the speaker's vocal, acting, and dramatic skills.

TIMING & IMPACT

Performance feels real and grounded, with choices that sharpen emotional appeals and deepen meaning. Pacing, pauses, and reactions are intentional. The speech demonstrates the speaker's understanding of how delivery enhances the story, message, and impact.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Casting Agent:** Define your search for literature that showcases your skills and message.
- **Cutting Blueprint Generator:** Shape your scene or story so the emotional journey builds with purpose.
- **Interp Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Character Lab:** Create believable and moving characters with distinct voices, bodies, and motivations.
- **Environment and Pantomime:** Transform empty space into a real place by learning environment work and mime.
- **Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.

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ZEBRAPAD

Duo Interp



is a partnered performance where **two students tell a story together** using characters, movement, and timing — without touching or making eye contact.

The goal is not just acting well, but working as a team to make the story clear and compelling.

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CLEAR STORY

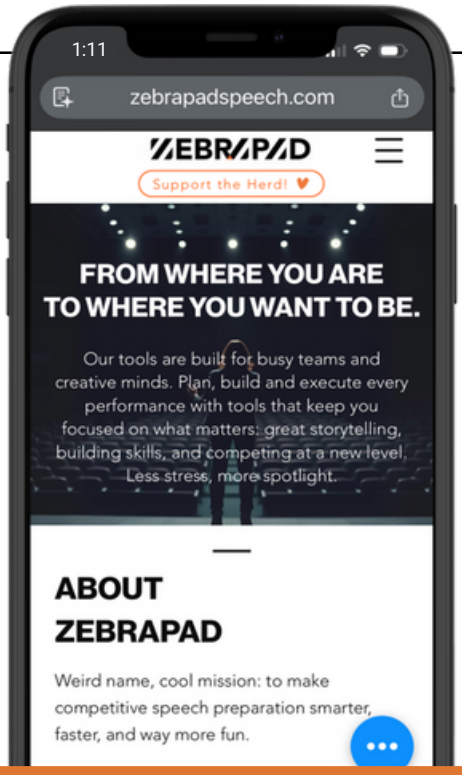
The selected script and cutting have a clear beginning, middle, and end. The audience can follow what's happening from start to finish, whether it is funny, serious, lyrical, or abstract.

TEAMWORK

Partners are balanced, coordinated, and intentional with their acting and reactions. Both performers stay fully engaged, making the audience believe they are immersed in the same world of the story.

MOVEMENT & TIMING

Movement and stillness are intentional and well-timed. Partners use space, pacing, and pauses to emphasize important moments and keep the story clear and engaging.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Casting Agent:** Define your search for literature that showcases both partners' skills and message.
- **Cutting Blueprint Generator:** Shape your script so the emotional journey or story builds with purpose.
- **Interp Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Character Lab:** Create clear, distinct characters that stay consistent.
- **Blocking Brainstormer:** Develop visual storytelling that strengthens important moments.
- **Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.

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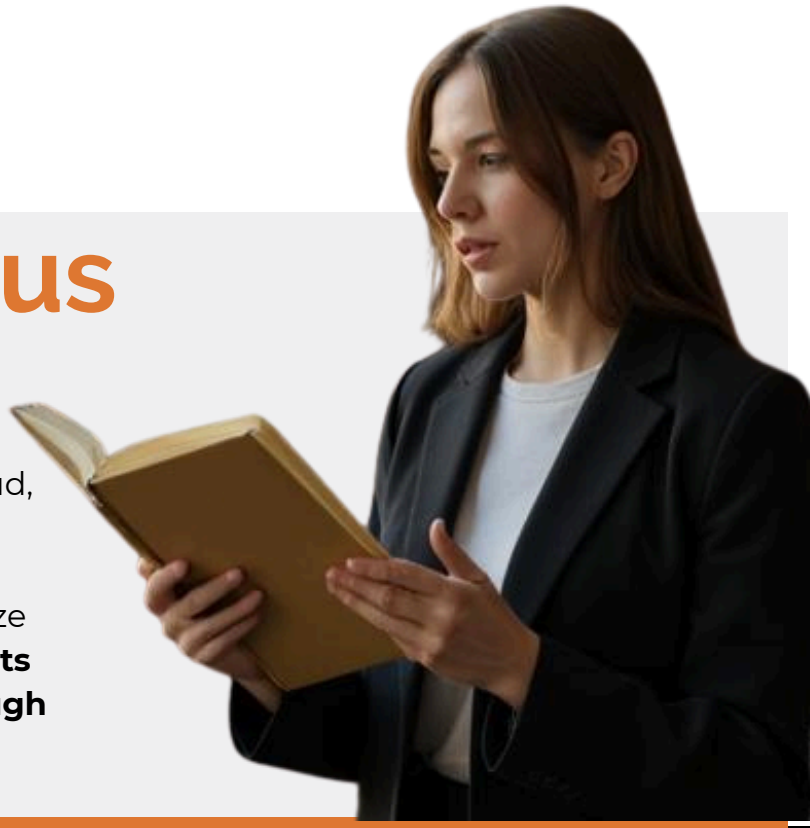
ZEBRAPAD

Extemporaneous Reading



uses excerpts from assigned literature, read aloud, to bring text to life with limited preparation.

The goal is not to act every moment or memorize the material, it's to **understand the text, share its meaning, and guide the audience clearly through the material.**

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CLARITY & MEANING

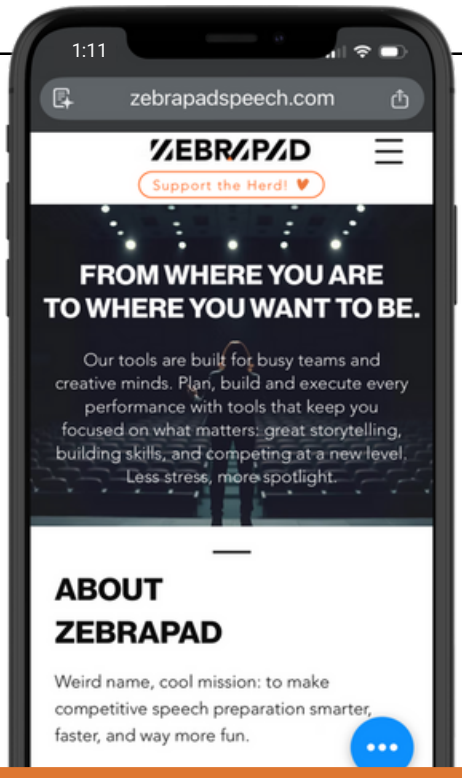
The reader clearly understands the text and helps the audience grasp what the text is really about, not just what happens.

VOCAL EXPRESSION & PACING

The reader uses voice, emphasis, and timing to bring the text to life without rushing or flattening important moments.

EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTION

The introduction sets up the text, gives context, and prepares the audience to understand why the piece matters before the reading begins.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Limited Prep Intro Lab:** Write a clear, purposeful introduction that helps the audience understand the text and its meaning.
- **Character Lab:** Develop distinct characterizations to support clarity and emotion in performance.
- **Speed & Energy:** Use pacing to improve understanding and emotional impact.
- **Spice Up Your Speech with Gestures:** Learn how to use purposeful gestures to emphasize ideas without distracting.
- **Eye Contact:** Build natural audience connection that feels confident and comfortable.
- **Fixing Common Nervous Fidgets:** Replace distracting habits with intentional, controlled movement.
- **Video Self-Coaching:** Train yourself with your own performances and make intentional improvements.

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ZEBRAPAD

Great Speeches

uses **historically significant speeches** to explore powerful ideas and moments from real people.

The goal is not to impersonate the original speaker or reenact history, it's to **analyze rhetoric and help the audience understand why the speech mattered then and why it still matters now.**



WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CONTEXT & IMPACT

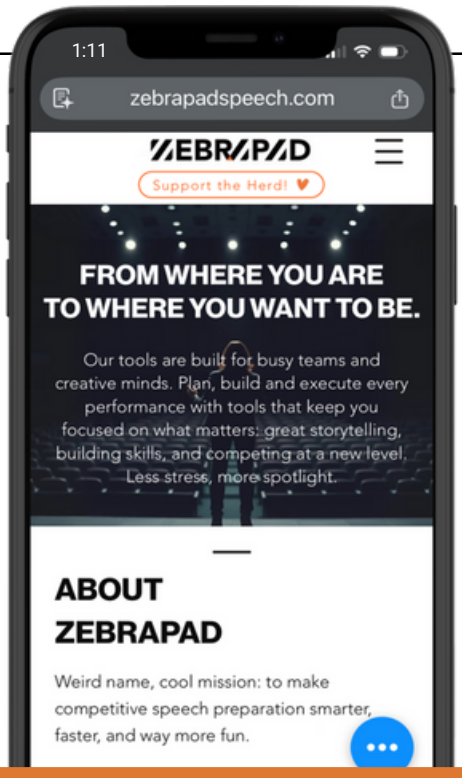
The speaker understands the original speech, its historical moment, and its purpose, and clearly explains that context to the audience.

MESSAGE & ANALYSIS

The performance highlights the central message of the speech and helps the audience dissect and understand its impact and relevance.

CLARITY & COMPOSURE

The speaker delivers the speech with confidence and intention, staying engaged with the audience while honoring the original words.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Intro Lab:** Draft the attention-getter, thesis, relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Character Lab:** While this is not an acting event, personifying your speaker means working with your voice and body to bring your source material to life.
- **Spice Up Your Speech with Gestures:** Learn how to use purposeful gestures to emphasize ideas without distracting.
- **Eye Contact:** Build natural audience connection that feels confident and comfortable.
- **Speed & Energy:** Use pacing to support emphasis and understanding.
- **Video Self-Coaching:** Reflect on performances and refine choices.
- **Fixing Common Nervous Fidgets:** Replace distracting habits with intentional, controlled movement.

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ZEBRAPAD

Extemporaneous Speaking (USX/IX)



asks students to analyze a current-events question based on domestic or international events and explain their answer clearly after a short preparation period.

The goal is not to know everything, it's to **think critically, organize ideas quickly, and communicate them clearly.**

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

ANALYSIS & INSIGHT

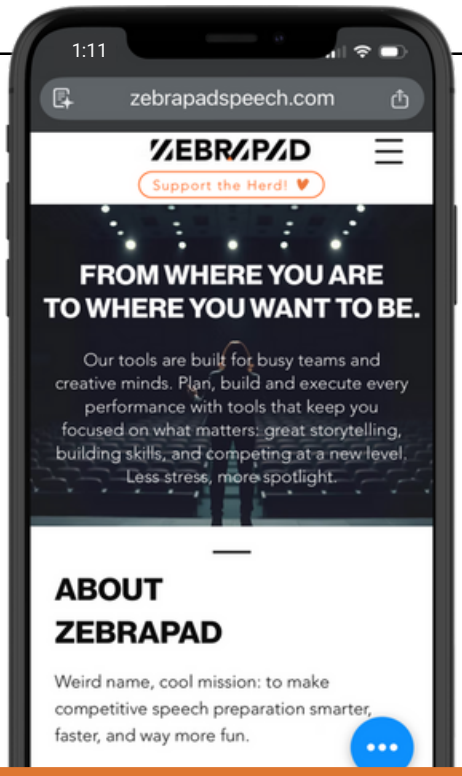
The speaker directly answers the question and explains why that answer makes sense, not just what happened.

ORGANIZATION UNDER PRESSURE

The speech has a clear structure, even though it was prepared quickly.

CLARITY & COMPOSURE

The speaker sounds calm, confident, and easy to follow, even when the topic is complex.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Prep Navigator:** Transform limited prep time into a clear, repeatable system to tackle the question and prepare your speech with purpose.
- **Limited Prep Intro Lab:** Draft the attention-getter, thesis, relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Spice Up Your Speech with Gestures:** Learn how to use purposeful gestures to emphasize ideas without distracting.
- **Eye Contact:** Build natural audience connection that feels confident and comfortable.
- **Fixing Common Nervous Fidgets:** Replace distracting habits with intentional, controlled movement.

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ZEBRAPAD

Humorous Interp



uses **storytelling** and **comedy** to explore an idea, relationship, or situation in a meaningful way.

The goal is not just to be funny, it's to *use* humor to help the audience understand something true about people or the world.

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CLEAR STORY

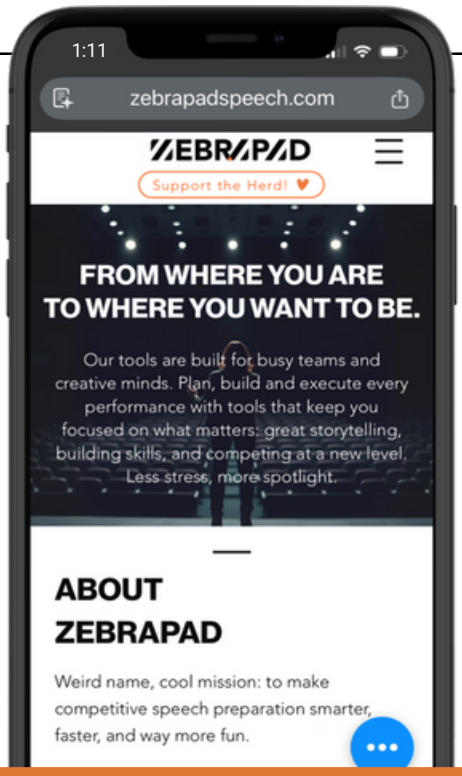
The selected script and cutting have a clear beginning, middle, and end. The audience can follow what's happening from start to finish, even when the moments are fast or funny.

CONTROL

The performer uses dynamic physical and vocal choices that make the story come to life. Characters are distinct and consistent, and the speech demonstrate the speakers's vocal, acting, and comedic skills.

TIMING & IMPACT

Performance is energetic, but not overwhelming. Pacing, pauses, and reactions are intentional. The speech demonstrates the speaker's understanding of how delivery enhances the story, message, and comedic impact.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Casting Agent:** Define your search for literature that showcases your skills and message.
- **Cutting Blueprint Generator:** Shape your story so the humor builds with purpose.
- **Interp Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Character Lab:** Create clear, distinct characters that stay consistent.
- **Blocking Brainstormer:** Develop visual storytelling that strengthens comedic moments.
- **Sound Effects:** Play with your voice and find new ways to build story.
- **Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.
- **Polished vs. Clean:** Enhance your performance and control to bring your story to life.

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ZEBRAPAD

Impromptu



challenges students to **think quickly and speak clearly** with little or no preparation time.

The goal is not to perform canned or pre-built speeches, it's to **respond thoughtfully to a prompt, organize ideas on the spot, and communicate with confidence.**

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

ANALYSIS & INSIGHT

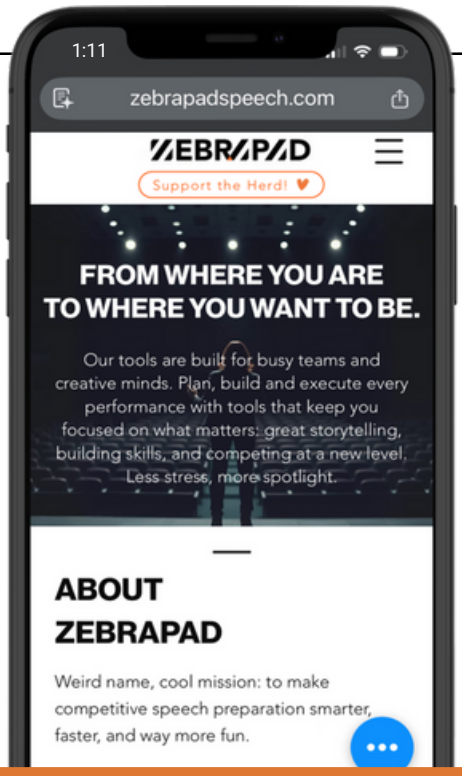
The speaker directly answers the question and explains why that answer makes sense, not just what happened.

ORGANIZATION UNDER PRESSURE

The speech has a clear structure, even though it was prepared quickly.

CLARITY & COMPOSURE

The speaker sounds calm, confident, and easy to follow, even when the topic is complex.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Limited Prep Intro Lab:** Draft the attention-getter, thesis, relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Spice Up Your Speech with Gestures:** Learn how to use purposeful gestures to emphasize ideas without distracting.
- **Eye Contact:** Build natural audience connection that feels confident and comfortable.
- **Fixing Common Nervous Fidgets:** Replace distracting habits with intentional, controlled movement.

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ZEBRAPAD

Informative

is a **teaching event**. The goal is to help the audience understand something new, complex, or misunderstood.

This event is not about persuading or proving a point, it's about making information clear, accurate, and engaging.



WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

STRUCTURE & STYLE

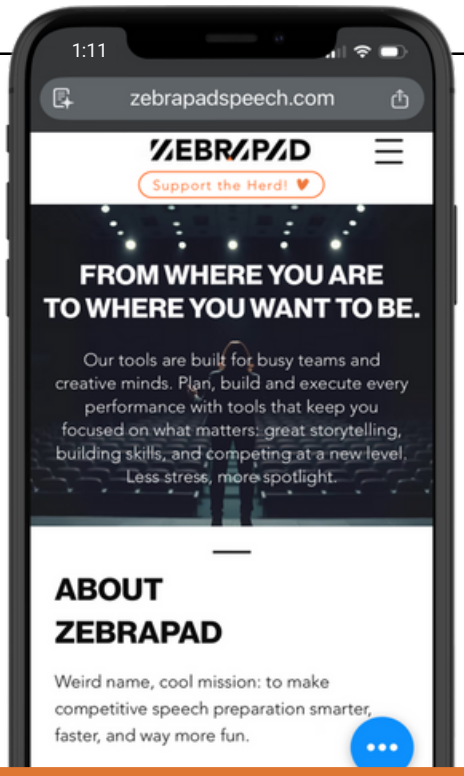
Ideas are organized clearly so the audience can follow the speech without getting lost. The writing of the speech demonstrates personality, use of research, and writing style.

VISUAL AIDS

The speaker is allowed to use poster (often called boards or VA's) to illustrate important concepts or aspects of their speech. These visuals are clear, purposeful, and used to help the audience understand, not to decorate or distract.

CLARITY & IMPACT

The speaker explains ideas in a way the audience can understand and demonstrates through analysis why their topic and information is the most important, interesting, or inspiring of the round.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Topic Telescope:** Clarify your ideas and define the topic that you want to educate your audience about.
- **Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Info Source Builder:** Organize research and key ideas into a clear teaching outline.
- **Intro Lab:** Draft the attention-getter, thesis, relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.
- **VA Brainstormer:** Learn about the language of visuals and design educational, emotive, and interactive visuals to bring your speech to life.
- **Beyond Words:** Build your VA's with guidance and clarity.
- **Eye Contact:** Hold natural audience connection that feels confident and comfortable.

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ZEBRAPAD

Original Oratory



use persuasive speaking to present a speech you design, research, and write yourself.

The goal is not to sound impressive, but to **convince the audience to think, feel, or act differently about an issue that matters**.

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

RESEARCH & ARGUMENT

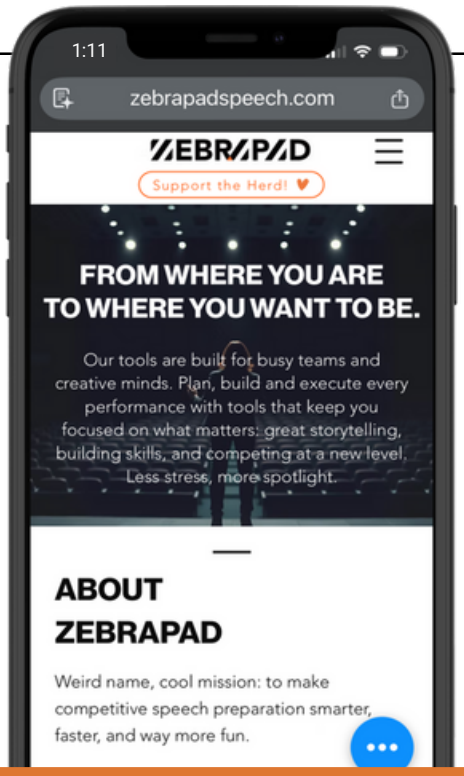
The speech is grounded in real evidence and examples, and the argument makes sense from start to finish.

STRUCTURE & STYLE

Ideas are organized clearly so the audience can follow the speech without getting lost. The writing of the speech demonstrates personality, strong use of rhetoric, and writing style.

AUTHENTIC DELIVERY

The speaker sounds confident, sincere, and natural. Delivery feels conversational and purposeful, helping the audience connect emotionally to the message, instead of feeling like the speech is memorized or robotic.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Topic Telescope:** Clarify your ideas and design the argument that you want to present.
- **Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **OO Source Builder:** Organize evidence and examples that support your argument.
- **Intro Lab:** Draft the attention-getter, thesis, relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.
- **Spice Up Your Speech with Gestures:** Learn how to use purposeful gestures to emphasize ideas without distracting.
- **Eye Contact:** Build natural audience connection that feels confident and comfortable.
- **Fixing Common Nervous Fidgets:** Replace distracting habits with intentional, controlled movement.

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ZEBRAPAD

Poetry

uses one or more published poems to explore ideas, emotions, and moments through performance.

The goal is not to be sad, dramatic, or abstract, it's to help the audience **understand the meaning of the poetry and experience how the words work together.**



WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

UNDERSTANDING & MEANING

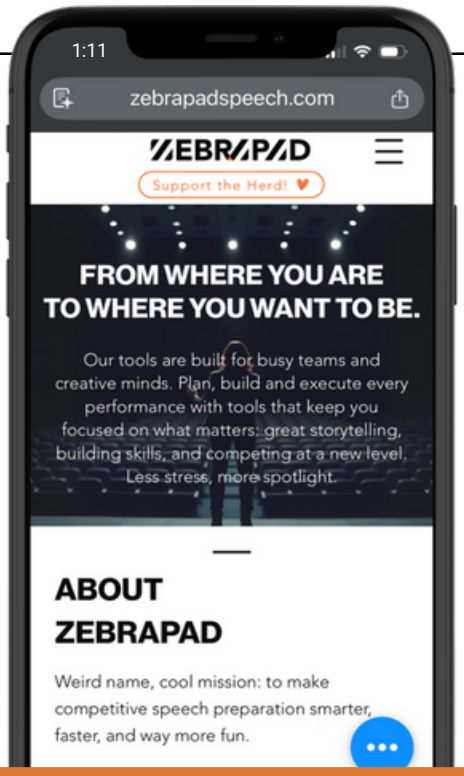
The performer clearly understands the poetry and communicates what the poems are about, not just how they sound.

STRUCTURE & FLOW

The chosen poems work together. Transitions, ordering, and pacing help the audience follow a clear emotional or thematic journey.

EXPRESSION & PRESENCE

The performer uses dynamic physical and vocal choices that make poems come to life. Each poem is distinct and consistent, and the speech demonstrate the speaker's vocal, performance, and pacing skills.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **POI Architect:** While POI is a separate category, program architecture is a shared skill between these two events. This tool helps define and design your program theme or argument, and develop the skeleton for your cutting.
- **Interp Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Character Lab for Programmed Events:** Create clear, distinct characterization for each piece of literature.
- **Blocking Brainstormer:** Develop visual storytelling that strengthens performance moments.
- **Speed & Energy:** Use pacing to support meaning, rhythm, and emphasis.
- **Eye Contact:** Balance audience connection with focus on the poetry.
- **Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.

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ZEBRAPAD

Programmed Oral Interp



combines and weaves multiple pieces of literature together to explore a single, unified argument, theme, or idea.

The goal is not just to perform variety, but to design a program where each selection works together to **say something bigger than any one piece could on its own.**

WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CLEAR MESSAGE

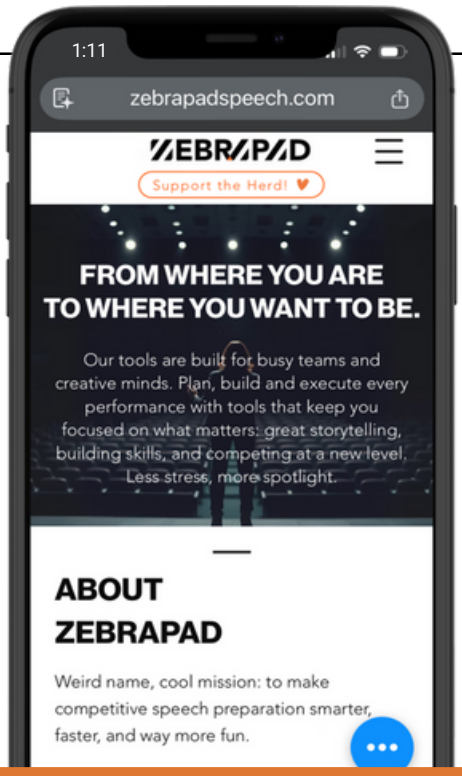
All selections clearly connect to one central theme or argument. They work together to create a narrative and bring new purpose to the literature, like a live documentary film.

STRUCTURE & VARIETY

The performer uses at least two genres (prose, poetry, drama, etc.) to create their narrative. The order of pieces and transitions feel intentional and help the audience understand why each piece belongs.

PERFORMANCE CONTROL

The performer uses dynamic physical and vocal choices that make the program come to life. Characters are distinct and consistent, and the speech demonstrate the speaker's vocal, acting, and dramatic skills.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **POI Architect:** Define and design the argument that you want to perform, and develop the skeleton for your program.
- **Interp Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Character Lab:** Create clear, distinct characterization for each piece of literature.
- **Blocking Brainstormer:** Develop visual storytelling that strengthens performance moments (especially useful for poetry).
- **Black Book 101:** Control your POI binder (the black book) with style and polish so it supports the performance.
- **Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.

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ZEBRAPAD

Prose Interp

uses serious literature to explore **how people change when something meaningful happens**.

The goal is not to be sad or intense, it's to guide the audience through **a clear emotional journey** that reveals something about human experience.



WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

CLEAR STORY

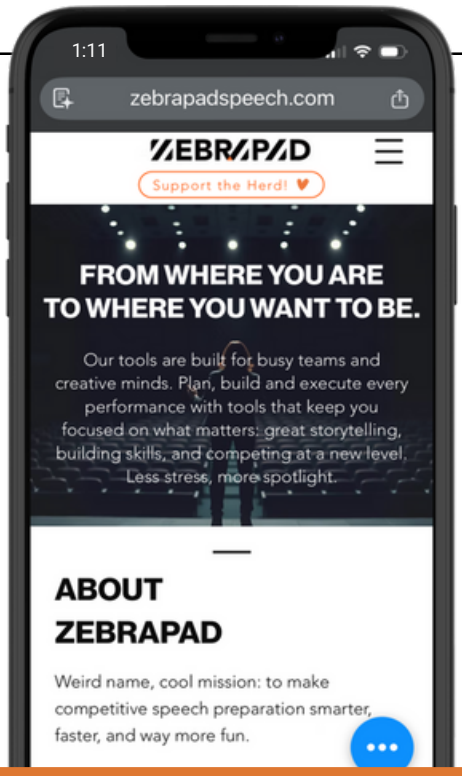
The selected script and cutting have a clear beginning, middle, and end. The audience can follow what's happening from start to finish, even when the moments are fast or intense.

EMOTIONAL CONTROL

The performer uses dynamic physical and vocal choices that make the story come to life. Characters are distinct and consistent, and the speech demonstrate the speaker's vocal, acting, and dramatic skills.

TIMING & IMPACT

Performance feels real and grounded, with choices that sharpen emotional appeals and deepen meaning. Pacing, pauses, and reactions are intentional. The speech demonstrates the speaker's understanding of how delivery enhances the story, message, and impact.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Casting Agent:** Define your search for literature that showcases your skills and message.
- **Cutting Blueprint Generator:** Shape your scene or story so the emotional journey builds with purpose.
- **Interp Practice Planner**: Grow your speech from page to performance faster and with more focus.
- **Character Lab:** Create believable and moving characters with distinct voices, bodies, and motivations.
- **Environment and Pantomime:** Transform empty space into a real place by learning environment work and mime.
- **Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.

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ZEBRAPAD

Storytelling

uses **narration, characters, and interpretation** to share an assigned story with an audience with limited preparation.

The goal is not memorization or acting out every moment, it's to **recreate a story clearly, vividly, and engagingly so the audience can imagine it and follow along.**



WHAT JUDGES LOOK FOR

STORY STRUCTURE & CLARITY

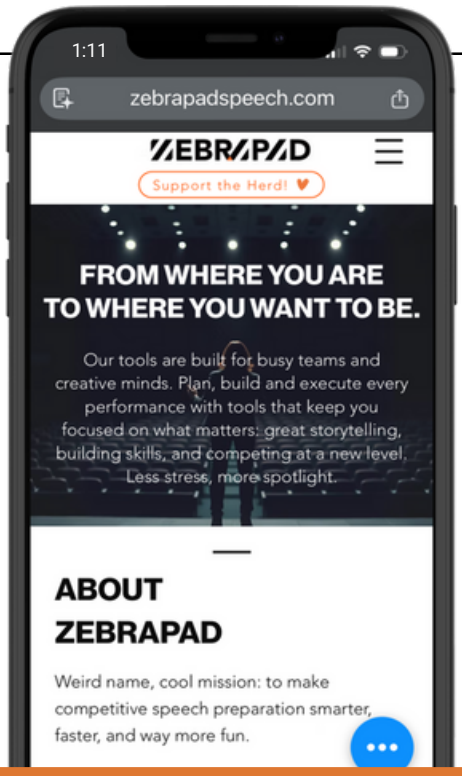
The story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. The audience always understands what is happening and how events connect.

VOCAL EXPRESSION & DESCRIPTION

The storyteller uses voice, pacing, and descriptive language to create imagery and keep the audience engaged.

CONNECTION & PRESENCE

The storyteller connects naturally with the audience, using eye contact and presence to invite listeners into the story.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS

- **Anatomy of a Story:** Develop the building blocks of plot and understand the structure of a story.
- **Character Lab:** Create clear, distinct characters that stay consistent.
- **Sound Effects:** Play with your voice and find new ways to build story.
- **Environment and Pantomime:** Transform empty space into a real place by learning environment work and mime.
- **Limited Prep Intro Lab:** Build relevance and context to help your speech mean more.
- **Memory Gym:** Discover new ways to solidify your memorization.
- **Polished vs. Clean:** Enhance your performance and control to bring your story to life.

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