

Non-Traditional Event Ideas for Speech/Forensics In-Class Activities or Tournaments

**Summarized from Facebook's [Speech & Debate Coach Forum](#)*

Here are some great distance-learning or in-class activities . . . maybe even for home tournaments once we find our "new normal"

1. **Retold** - Students draw 3 children's books and present one after 30 min of prep. They simply retell the story, but memorized! This limited-prep event could be run in a solo or duo format.

--Robin Lee Christensen, Highland High School, ID

2. **Wildcard** - Each round has a different theme (and I tried to get progressively weirder as things went on) . . . so we did things like

- **Impromptu Bedtime Storytelling** - (for the late-night Day 1 round . . . my judges were the members of a local girl scout troop)
- **Klingon Love Poetry**
- **Sales** -- where students had to market some random item I'd scrounged up at local garage sales
- **Head-to-Head Haiku Battle**

-- Randal Horobik, Kamehameha Schools, HI

3. **Extemp Topics Based on Fictional Universes**

- "What should the ministry of magic do to address school safety concerns at Hogwarts?"
- "Should the federal government establish greater regulatory oversight of Stark Industries?"

--Leeann Hutson Solice, Hebron High School, TX

4. **Extemporaneous Prose** – Prepare a cash of random cuttings in performance folders. Students draw 3 and pick one. 15 minutes prep time allowed before the performance.

--Blair Erin Waite, Abilene High School, KS

5. **Original Slam Poetry** – Could be set up as a bistro, complete with "snaps" and cappuccinos available.

6. **Karaoke** - Put up a poster that says, "Even if you do bad you do good!"

-- Jim Payne, Attucks Middle School, FL

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7. **Scream or Shout (SOS)** - A partnered event. Two students must pretend they are stranded or trapped somewhere and must signal somebody at a distance for rescue (I rotate through 4 scenarios so that nobody can use the exact same performance from one year to the next). They have just two minutes to call for help, and they're evaluated based on three criteria (1-Creativity, 2-Visibility, & 3-Volume).

-Wesley Rice, Maize South High School, KS

*The following event ideas are provided by the
Massachusetts Middle School Speech League*

8. **Haiku in a Hurry** - Each student draws 3 prompts, selects one and has five minutes in which to prepare and present a Haiku poem (3 Lines: 5 Syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables) inspired by the prompt. Students may use a 3x5 index card. The prompt will be the poem's title. Time limit: 5 minutes with a 30-second grace period including both the preparation and delivery. Sample Haiku prompts can be found here:
<https://mmsl.weebly.com/haiku-in-a-hurry-instructions-and-prompts.html>
9. **Impromptu Children's Literature** - Each student draws 3 short, one-page stories and selects one. Focus should be on voices, pops, gestures and tone. Time limit: 7 minutes with a 30-second grace period, including both the preparation and delivery
10. **Impromptu Sales** - Each student will draw an image of an object (which may be familiar but most likely unknown) from a "for sale bag" and then have 5 minutes to both prepare and present a short, coherent "sales pitch" inspired by the picture. Students may use one 3 X 5 card to prepare. The presentation may be humorous or serious in nature and knowledge of the true function of the item is unnecessary. Be creative and imaginative. Time limit: 5 minutes with a 30-second grace period, including both the preparation and delivery
11. **Original Literature** - A performance of an original piece of writing in any literary style: prose, children's literature, free verse/poetry, dramatic performance or duo delivered from text, notes or from memory by one or two students. Material may be humorous or serious in nature, and both the writing and the delivery will be evaluated. The authorship may be collaborative but must be only student written and totally original. Time limit: 7 minutes with a 30-second grace period.

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12. **Team Improv (aka Impromptu Duet Acting)** - A two-person event. After pulling character, location and activity slips the team will create a skit utilizing the prompts. Performers may not use notes, props or costumes. The skit should be well-organized and balanced with a beginning, middle and end. It may be either humorous or serious in nature. Time limit: 30 minutes prep time with a maximum of 7 minutes performance time. **NOTE: 4N6 Fanatics has a free generator for this event at <https://4n6fanatics.com/ida.php>**
13. **Tongue Twister Races** - In this solo event, students check in, give their ballots to the judges, and are informed of the speaker order. All but the first speaker will leave the room. The first student will be given the short tongue twister and and have 30 seconds to practice it before judging. Students will be judged on clarity, diction, reading for meaning and with correct pronunciation. **NOTE: Accuracy is more important than speed.** Once the student has finished, the next speaker enters the room. Contestants must remain in the room after their performance through the end of the round. Time limit: 30 seconds for preparation; performance has no time limit – self-limiting by length. **More details and sample tongue twisters can be found here (Scroll to the bottom): <https://mmsl.weebly.com/tongue-twister-races-instructions-and-choices.html>**
14. **You're the Expert** - Each student will draw 3 "expert" titles/ professional expertise areas written on the outside of folded envelope and select one. Inside the sealed envelope are 5 interview questions. The student will hand the chosen interview question envelop to the judge before performing. The judge will read the interview questions aloud one at a time, pausing to allow the student to answer each in turn. Note: Knowledge of the expert's field is not required and the responses may be humorous or serious in nature. Students will be evaluated on content and delivery. Time limit: 7 minutes with a 30 second grace period or 5 questions, whichever comes first. **Sample Expert options and questions for each can be found here: <https://mmsl.weebly.com/pls-read-first-online-fling-events-instructions.html>**