

Crafting and Effectively Using an Oral Interp Binder

A Prose/Poetry/POI binder can be used to either enhance or cripple a performance.

CRAFTING AN ORAL INTERP BINDER

Color and Size

- The color of a Prose/Poetry binder can subconsciously alter an audience's perspective of a reader. For presentation purposes, the binders used in these events should be black. Black is the color of professionalism. It is neutral and less likely to distract an audience.
- As far as size for binders, 5" x 8" x ½" (NSDA Store) or 7" x 9" x 1" The Black Book Depot
 1. The NSDA: 5" x 8" x ½" (\$8.00 each)
<https://www.speechanddebate.org/product/interpretation-black-book-binder/>
 2. The Black Book Depot: 7" x 9" x 1" (\$5.95 each)
<https://www.theblackbookdepot.com/product-p/1001.htm>

Paper and Protective Covers for Pages

- You can make your own rather than purchasing book pages. Black construction paper is recommended due to its thickness and durability. Measure all pages being cut to ensure uniformity. Pages must not hang beyond the binder.
- Black paper should be the only color to consider. (Note, the text itself will be printed on white paper. Cut close to the text to minimize the amount of whiteness. If done well, the ratio of white to black per page will be negligible.)
- For covers there are 3 options.
 - No covers. May result in damage during the season; however, if the binder is well-cared for the pages may last.
 - Laminate pages for durability
 - Plastic sheet protectors.

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- **NOTE:** These tend to be slippery and might cause challenges when effectively turning pages.
- **TIP:** Create page tabs with a simple piece of tape. stick one end of the tape to the edge of the page being sure to leave excess, fold the tape in half, and tape the other end to the backside of the page.
- If you choose to purchase sheet protectors, check out these on-line options.
 1. The NSDA: Interp Black Book Page Protectors (Set of 10)
\$6.00 for 5" x 8" x ½" binders (black backing paper **not** included)
<https://www.speechanddebate.org/product/interp-black-book-page-protectors-set-of-10-inserts/>
 2. The Black Book Depot: Professional Interpreter's Book Pages (Set of 25)
\$16.00 for 7" x 9" x 1" binders (black backing paper included)
<https://www.theblackbookdepot.com/product-p/2001.htm>

Text - How text is distributed affects the rhythm and motions of a performance.

- Do not overcrowd a page with text. Overcrowding leads to a feeling of the story dragging. Page turns are interesting and symbolize progression.
- For words on a single page, break up the text into manageable paragraphs. It becomes easy to get lost within a full page's worth of print.

EFFECTIVELY USING A BINDER FOR PERFORMANCE

- **Most interpreters choose to hold their binder in their non-dominant hand, using their dominant hand for gestures.**
- **Your arm CAN move** - Do not assume because you are using one arm to hold your binder that it must remain at a fixed location.
- ◀ • **Cradle your binder** - Hold the spine near the bottom at a comfortable "V" shape. Support the cover pointed towards the audience with your fingers; support the cover pointed towards you with your thumb. To add extra support the cover pointing towards you can be nestled in the crease of your elbow at times you are moving that arm around.

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- **Don't fear extending out** - Extending your book away from your body creates massive space. Not only are you open but the binder adds visual weight and makes the gesture look larger.
- **Hug your binder** - To give the impression of drawing into yourself and hiding. Or that you are fond of an item/moment/person/etc. and wish to embrace that moment lovingly. For an extra touch, take your gesturing hand and place it on your binder to fully close the space.
- **Levels** - Your binder can move up and down in elevation. NEVER block your face. Try to keep the book at one constant level throughout, but if there is something in the interpretation that cries for a gesture of varying height don't be afraid to use this option.
- **Balance eye contact with the appearance of reading** – We all know you will have your selection memorized, but you must give the appearance of reading during Prose, Poetry or POI. Plan when you will look at your manuscript and when you will focus on your audience.
- **Page turns** – Used to set the tempo, emphasize pauses and for dramatic effect. This is why what you have on each page is important.
- **Opening and Closing the Binder** – Should be closed during your introduction. But consider how and when you open and close your binder. Don't rush either one. Use this for dramatic impact, much like the opening and closing of the curtain in theatre.
- **Practice with your binder** – Make it an important part of your performance.
- **Using your binder as a prop?** – Some say YES! And others say NEVER! These rules vary from state to state and tournament to tournament. Always check the rules for your event as you are preparing for competition.

SOURCES:

<https://www.forensicscommunity.com/prose/crafting-successful-binder>

<http://www.forensicscommunity.com/poetry/how-maneuver-your-prose-or-poetry-book>