Speech Assignment #2: Oral Interpretation of Literature (100 pts.)

Oral Interpretation Speech (2-3 mins.) Purpose: To entertain and inform your audience through an oral reading of a poem or set of poems or an excerpt from drama or fiction in which you discover and interpret the author's meaning and communicate that message by using your voice and body language. This speech will help develop and hone delivery skills.

Selecting a piece: Because your aim in presenting this selection is to communicate as fully as possible the **author's** ideas, feelings, and imagery, choose a brief literary sample (2-2½ minutes) and writer with whom you are familiar and whose work you particularly enjoy. In grouping short poems, choose several by the same poet or which focus on a similar theme. For a challenge, choose a piece with multiple characters whom you will portray through differentiated voices and mannerisms as you transition between them. Consider listening to children's books on tape for ideas on how to project & distinguish among characters.

Preparing an introduction: (30 seconds) Be sure to include the title of the piece, the title of the work in which it is published, the author's name, background bio on the author, the author's style, and the overall theme of the larger piece and any subthemes highlighted in your selection Begin your intro with a **hook** that will engage your audience, perhaps a brief teaser line or two from the piece itself. Offer a brief silence after the introduction before beginning your oral interpretation of the piece and between pieces, if you include several.

Preparing your presentation: The success of your oral interpretation depends on how well you understand and communicate the content and meaning of the selection and how effectively your delivery communicates the emotion or attitude of the piece. You should mark your manuscript to reference areas where to speed up or slow down, raise or lower pitch, volume, or inflection, when to pause, smile, frown, scowl, laugh, or cry and for how long. You should answer the following sets of questions for listeners:
- Is the central theme clear? Are the various parts or division within the piece clear through groupings of ideas and transitions within the reading? Are key words emphasized within each sentence? Are denotative and connotative meanings of strange words made clear through vocalization or body language? Are changes in characters and scenes clearly differentiated?
- Are the main and secondary emotions and attitudes of the author clearly communicated? Can listeners see mental pictures of people, scenes, and actions? Does the reading hold listeners' attention & interest & elicit appropriate responses?
- Do vocal patterns offer variety in pitch, volume, and inflection? Are pronunciation and enunciation correct and appropriate? Is delivery conversational & spontaneous rather than theatrical & memorized? Does poetic meter and rhyme effectively support meaning & contribute to mood or humor?
- Do body language & facial expressions contribute to meaning & mood? Is eye contact direct and sustained, not over, through, or darting among listeners?

Have fun with this assignment! Your purpose is to entertain and enlighten.

Oral Interpretation of Literature Speech Evaluation Rubric

Rate the Speaker on each point: 5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Good Average Fair Poor	Speaker:_____ Speech #2 Topic: _____
Introduction before interpretation : _____hook gains attention/creates exigency/pause _____named author & title of piece/section _____background offered necessary context _____explained theme & stylistic impact of piece _____language clear and concise w/o fillers _____posture, movement, approach, depart w/authority _____sustained eye contact w/entire audience _____extemporaneous/not read from manuscript _____used approp. rate, pitch, volume, cadence _____used correct grammar & pronunciation _____paused after intro	Comments
Selection Pairing/Splicing Reveal literary merit: _____clearly distinguishable tone, mood, themes _____splicing/pairing well integrated, balanced _____adequate transition within/between pieces	
Delivery of poem/story: _____sustained eye contact w/entire audience _____gestures and body movement appropriate _____posture, approach, depart w/authority _____used approp. rate, pitch, volume, cadence _____vocal variation & pacing to reveal tone/mood _____used correct pronunciation	
Overall Effectiveness: _____selection fit purpose and assignment _____interpretation adapted to audience _____ speech completed in time limit:_____ _____interpretation interesting & convincing _____ **Total Points Earned/120**	