2016 Harold W. Wise Declamation Contest

Student Guidelines

In order to successfully prepare for this year’s Declamation Contest, it is important that you read and follow the guidelines below. Remember that it is NOT the length of your poem that matters most but how well you express the poem’s meaning while declaiming it. Declamation Finals: Thursday, May 5th, 2016 at 9:15 a.m.

1. Poetry is defined vaguely as “not prose.” Excerpts from Shakespeare’s plays are appropriate to declaim.

2. Poetry may not include music lyrics.

3. Adaptations of classics may not be declaimed.

4. Poems by “Anonymous” should not be declaimed.

5. Poems written by students may not be declaimed. Poems that have made the finals for the last three years may not be declaimed. (See list of “Off-Limits Poems” provided.)

6. Speeches may not be declaimed.

7. Poems must meet the minimum and maximum line requirements below.

   5th and 6th grades: A minimum of 14 lines/maximum of 48 lines.

   7th and 8th grades: A minimum of 20 lines/maximum of 60 lines.

Below are some helpful tips to remember when learning to declaim your poem.

1. Work to express the tone, mood, and meaning of the poem with your voice and gestures. To do this successfully, you must understand your poem and attempt to capture the poet’s meaning through expression.

2. Read punctuation as it is written by the poet-- know when you need to pause or stop. 3. Try to avoid overemphasizing rhyme.

4. Pronunciation is important. All words should be properly pronounced, so learn how to say tricky words and names correctly.

5. Speak loudly, and clearly. (You will not have a microphone when you present.) Work on appropriate pace.

6. Review the evaluation rubric to understand the areas in which you will be graded.

7. Practice, practice, practice!