



Where Speech and Theater Converge...

ART

Is Bound To Occur!

**2008 National Conference / National Championship Tournament
Information and Registration Package**

March, 2008

Dear Fellow Educators:

The American Readers Theater association (ARTa) is back for its eighth exciting year – in an exciting new location! We invite you and your students to attend the ARTa National Conference on May 2, 2008 followed immediately by the American Readers Theater Championships May 3-4, 2008 at El Camino College in Southern California.

Our host Jason Davidson and his colleagues at El Camino College have worked hard to make this year's ARTa events memorable. Our conference features a new format and special travel grants to selected presenters (details at readerstheater.org), and the tournament hotel and performance venues have been carefully selected for a great experience for all.

ARTa remains the only national forensics conference and competition open devoted exclusively to readers theater. Students at any level are eligible to compete. Not merely an elimination tournament, ARTc will once again feature its distinctive specialty awards nominated and selected by a jury of judges. And continuing the tradition, the top four finalist theaters will compete on a theater stage for final evaluation by a panel of entertainment industry professionals as well as the coveted audience award in a community-wide presentation.

ARTa and its national tournament continue to welcome new teams each year, and we hope that this year again brings new friends and more great performances. Be part of the exciting tradition where speech and theater converge...and ART is bound to occur!

James D. Nguyen, 2008 Tournament Director

2008ARTa Conference – May 2, 2008

The 2008 ARTa conference will be held Friday, May 2nd from 10:00am - 5:00pm at El Camino College in the Alondra Meeting Room (located in the Cafeteria/Bookstore building). El Camino College is located at 16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, California, 90506. For directions, please visit the ECC website at <http://www.elcamino.edu/about/directions.asp>

This year's conference will feature a series of academic presentations and follow-up discussion forums. ARTa is seeking presenters who wish to present papers or lead forums on topics related to the following subjects:

- Readers Theater (any facet)
- Oral interpretation
- Tournament design and management
- Competition rules and norms
- Judging
- New competition events
- Educational aspects of forensic competition

**Selected presenters from more than 200 miles from El Camino College are eligible for a \$400 stipend toward travel costs in exchange for tournament judging at ARTa. Apply at ReadersTheater.org.*

Students are welcome to participate in the day's events. The conference fee is just \$20 per person and includes lunch. Please register by April 22, 2008. Professional development documentation available upon request.

Contact Jason Davidson of El Camino College with questions:

Email: jdavidson@elcamino.edu

Office Phone: (310) 660-3725

ARTa MEMBERSHIP AND FEES

Membership in ARTa is open to any individual or school interested in advancing the art of Readers Theater. School membership is required to enter teams in competition. Individual memberships are available for those interested persons currently unaffiliated with a competition team.

Membership dues support the ARTa national conference, the ARTc national tournament, and creation and management of the ARTa website.

Through May 2, 2008, membership dues are as follows:

Annual school membership	\$30
Annual individual membership	\$15
Lifetime school membership	\$150
Lifetime individual membership	\$60
ARTa Conference	\$30

Membership, Entry and Judging Fees (same for the past 8 years):

Annual school membership	\$25
Annual individual membership	\$15
Participant fee	\$20 per person (judge, student or coach) to cover breakfast Sat. and lunches on Sat. and Sun.
Entry fee:	\$100 per theater
Judging:	\$100 uncovered fee per theater. One judge covers theater.

HOTEL INFORMATION

The Tournament Hotel:

**The Courtyard Los Angeles Torrance/Palos Verdes
2633 Sepulveda Boulevard Torrance, CA, 90505
310-533-8000**

The ARTa block of rooms are specially priced at \$89. However, this block (and price) expire on Fri., April 11th, 2008.

DIRECTIONS AND TRAVEL

The Host School:

El Camino College is located at 16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA, 9050 - close to many Southern California attractions like Disneyland, Hollywood, the beach and more.

Contact Jason Davidson of El Camino College with questions:

Email: jdavidson@elcamino.edu

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LAX is the closest airport (roughly ten minutes from the campus). Long Beach and Orange County are also viable options.

Visit readerstheater.org for links to maps and directions.

Entries

Enter via email to forensics@mtsac.edu with the following information:

- School name, address and phone
- Contact person name, email and phone
- Name of each theater and all cast members
- Name of judge(s)
- Name of additional guests (if any) for whom you are buying a meal package.

The tournament entry deadline is 5:00 p.m. PST on MONDAY, APRIL 28th, 2008. However, to help ARTa and our host school make arrangements, please send a preliminary entry estimate as soon as you know you will attend ARTa.

Eligibility

All theaters entered in ARTc must consist of students who are currently enrolled in an accredited university, college or community college. Enrollment is subject to verification at the Tournament Director's discretion. "Hybrid" theaters, consisting of students from multiple schools, are permitted. Please note on entry.

Competition Rules

Generally, readers theater involves the performance of single or multiple original or existing literary works developing a theme or themes. Performance technique often includes the use of manuscripts. These are guidelines that competing theaters should be familiar with, but are not explicit rules of the tournament.

In keeping with ARTa's goal of advancing the art form, ARTc supports only the following strict rules:

ARTc Rule 1: All readers theaters entered must consist of three or more students.

ARTc Rule 2: The time limit for each performance is 25 minutes. Reasonable time for set up and take down shall be permitted and shall not be counted in the 25 minute time limit.

Therefore, use of any objects beyond the performers and the literature shall be at the discretion of the competitors and their directors. Artistic choices should be evaluated by their effectiveness, rather than compliance with explicit rules or norms.

Competition Format and Scoring

Since it is difficult to anticipate the number of entries and therefore the optimal competition format and schedule, we will ensure the following for the tournament:

Preliminary Rounds

- Each theater will be guaranteed a minimum of 3 preliminary round performances, but may have more.
- Theaters will compete in panels of preferably 3 and, at most 4, theaters. Judges will allow a 5-minute intermission after the 2nd theater.
- Each preliminary round will have a panel of judges. Depending on judge availability, we anticipate using 2-3 3 judges per preliminary round.
- After each round, judges are required to confer with each other in a private session that is to last a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes. The goal of this discussion is not for judges to influence each others decision of placement, though ARTa recognizes that such changes may occur and welcomes them.
- Judges will rank each theater in their round. If a preliminary round contains 4 theaters, judges will rank only down to 3rd place. Judges will also assign each theater rating points based on a 50 point scale (with a minimum rating score of 30 points). A judge's rating points must correspond with the judge's ranks (*i.e.*, higher rating points cannot be assigned to lower-ranked theaters).
- So that both rank and rating points have meaning, ARTa uses a unique system that combines the two. A judge's individual rank will be converted to a point value: a 1st place rank is worth 50 points; a 2nd place rank

is worth 45 points; and a 3rd place rank is worth 40 points. The point value for that rank will be added to that judge's rating points for the theater for a total "Score". Therefore, each individual judge's ballot will be worth a possible 100 points. Here is an example of the effect of one judge's ballot:

Entry	Rank	Rank Points	Rating Points	Total Score
RT A	1	50	49	99
RT B	2	45	48	93
RT C	3	40	40	80

- After the preliminary rounds, a theater's lowest overall score will be dropped. The remaining judges' scores will be added together. The theaters with the highest point totals advance to elimination rounds. (Semi-Finals are possible if entries warrant)
- Ties for advancement to the elimination rounds will be broken as follows: (1) If tied theaters met in preliminary round(s), judge's preference based on ranks in such round(s); (2) Best ranking points only (i.e., rating points are dropped); (3) Successive dropping of high and low scores.

Semi-Finals

- If held, Semi-Final rounds will be judged by panels of 3-5 judges.
- Judges will assign a rank and rating points, under the system used for the Preliminary Rounds. Before scoring, judges are required to engage in a discussion of at least 5 minutes and no more than 10 minutes.
- A theater's lowest score in the Semi-Final Round will be dropped. The remaining scores from the Semi-Final Round will be weighted so that the Semi-Final Round is equal in weight to the Preliminary Round, and then **added** to the Preliminary Round scores. The four theaters with the highest cumulative point total from both the Preliminary and Semi-Final Rounds will advance to the Final Round.
- Ties for advancing to the Final Round will be broken in the following order: (1) Scores from the Semi-Final Round only; (2) If tied theaters are in the same Semi-Final Round panel, judges' preferences from ranks in that round; (3) Ranking points only from the Semi-Final Round; (4) If tied theaters met in preliminary round(s),

judge's preference based on ranks from such preliminary round(s); (5) Cumulative point total from the Preliminary Rounds.

- If entries are insufficient to warrant semi-finals, an additional preliminary round may be held in their place.

Final Round

- The top four theaters will perform in a final round showcase, open to the public, in a theater-type performance space.
- The Final Round will be evaluated by a panel of 9-11 judges including no more than 50% entertainment industry professionals (casting directors, actors, authors, musicians, etc.).
- In the Final Round, all scores from the Preliminary and Semi-Final Rounds are discarded.
- Final Round judges will assign each theater a rank from 1 to 4. No rating points will be assigned.
- No discussion session among the judges is required before ranks are assigned in the Final Round.
- If a theater receives 1st place ranks from a majority of the Final Round judges, that theater is automatically designated Champion of the tournament. Otherwise, all placements in the Final Round are determined by the cumulative total of ranks in the Final Round.
- Ties will be broken in this order: (1) Judges' preference; (2) Number of 1st place rankings; (3) Number of 2nd place rankings; (4) Number of 3rd place rankings; (5) Cumulative point totals after the Semi-Final Round.

2008 ARTc Tentative Tournament Schedule

A detailed competition format and schedule will be set after entries are confirmed and will be emailed to all teams by Friday, May 2nd (or sooner). The following is the tentative competition schedule:

Saturday, May 3, 2008

8:30 am	Classrooms unlocked for practice. 25 minutes per theater if other teams are waiting.
9:00 am	Breakfast and Tournament Registration (Continental Breakfast provided by ARTa)
9:30 am	Opening Meeting for Directors, Performers, & Judges
10 to 11:45am	Round I
11:45 to 1:30pm	Box Lunch (provided by ARTa)
2 to 3:45 pm	Round II
3:45 to 5:30 pm	Round III

NOTE: The Saturday schedule may be extended based on entries but will not go begin earlier than listed and will not go later than 7pm.

Sunday, May 4, 2008

10:00 to 11:45am	Round IV <classrooms will not be open early for practice>
11:45 am	Lunch (provided by ARTa)
12:15 pm	Announcement of semi finalists and Nominees for Jury Awards
12:30 pm	World Premiere Final
1:30	Semifinal Round
3:30 pm	Final Round (top four theaters) The final round is open to the public.
5:30 pm	Reception
6:00 pm	Awards Ceremony

ARTc Awards

ARTc distinguishes itself by providing unique and distinctive awards:

Tournament Awards

Tournament awards will be given to each readers theater that advance to the semi-finals and beyond.

A “World Premiere Award” will be given to the highest placing theater that makes its first competitive appearance (at any forensics or readers’ theater competition). Scripts should be substantially revised if previously performed in readers theater competition.

The “Audience Award” will be given to the audience’s favorite theater in the Final Round, as determined by audience vote.

Jury Awards

ARTa recognizes that the art form of readers theater encompasses skills in a variety of areas and rewards those different achievements through the following special “jury” awards. Jury Awards are determined during prelim performances and advancement to elimination rounds is not required to be eligible. Jury Awards include:

Outstanding Female Performer

for the female performer whose individual performance is deemed the most outstanding

Outstanding Male Performer

for the male performer whose individual performance is deemed the most outstanding

Outstanding Ensemble Cast Performance

for the theater cast which creates the most outstanding ensemble effect

Outstanding Achievement in Script

for the theater script deemed most effective

Outstanding Achievement in Music or Sound

for the theater which demonstrates the most effective use of music/sound

Outstanding Achievement in Set

for the theater which demonstrates the most effective use of set and/or set pieces

Outstanding Achievement in Blocking

for the theater which demonstrates the most effective use of movement and blocking

Outstanding Achievement in Costuming

for the theater which demonstrates the most effective use of costume or ensemble dress

Special Award for Thematic Excellence or Creative Innovation

for the theater which presents an innovative and/or challenging theme OR best advances the art form through innovation

These honors will be determined by a special jury, whose members will view all of the readers theaters entered. (Each theater will be viewed by as many jury members as possible, but may not necessarily be viewed by the entire jury). The jury members may or may not serve as judges for the actual tournament depending on the depth of the available judging pool.

Digital Video Recordings of ARTc Performances

ARTa will record at least one performance by each theater using a digital video camera. This recording will be done at no charge to the theater, and each theater entered will receive a free digital recording of its performance.

ARTa will maintain copies of all video recordings for archive purposes.

We're sorry, but tapes of other teams' theaters cannot be provided due to copyright laws.

Entry into the tournament constitutes consent to ARTa's recording of each Readers Theater performance and recording of each individual performer. Recordings will not be sold for profit.

Judging:

For the final round only, ARTa may use entertainment industry professionals as judges. Entertainment industry judges will not comprise more than 50% of the final round panel, and shall be selected at the Tournament Director's sole discretion. This year's invited critics include active members of the film, television, publishing and music industries.

Given ARTa's goal to make ARTc the fairest national tournament and its unique competition format, numerous judges will be needed. (In past years, each theater was evaluated by as many as nine judges throughout preliminary rounds, and eleven judges in the final round, as well as the special Jury panel of judges). It is imperative that each entrant's judging commitment be fulfilled.

Contact Information

Contact Information

You can contact **ARTa** by e-mail at **ARTchamps@aol.com**.
Our web address is **www.readerstheater.org**

You can also reach Tournament Director James Nguyen at:

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