

**Oral Reading Concepts™**  
New Revised Edition  
Includes Roald Dahl’s Poem “The Porcupine”

Written by  
**Linda Collard**

Congratulations! We salute you!  
You are traveling down the road that will clarify and crystallize your skills  
for the UIL Oral Reading Contest and beyond!

For students seeking to hone their reading skills, this *Concepts* book should give you the foundation to become an experienced and capable oral reading speaker. It is designed for students seeking to go beyond the classroom level for in-depth study.

*Oral Reading Concepts* author, **Linda Collard**, has served as a UIL Coordinator for eleven years capturing nine first place titles and sweeping the oral reading finals for twenty-two years on a team that has won eighteen first place trophies at district. *Oral Reading Concepts* outlines the cutting-edge attributes that make a performance look polished and gives students the tools they need to recreate the speakers and the scene of the selection. This book also includes a suggested bibliography of winning selections with plots that paint a vivid mental picture and have brought judges to laughter or tears. This new book by Linda Collard is the key to leading a student to a mesmerizing performance and can end the illusive search for that perfect winning poetry or prose piece.

*We are a small company that listens! If you have any questions or if there is an area that you would like fully explored, let us hear from you. We hope you enjoy this product and stay in contact with us throughout your academic journey.*

~ President Hexco Inc., Linda Tarrant

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## Introduction

Reading is magical. It opens the doors to a person’s imagination. As an oral reader, you hold the key! You can color your audience’s imagination as you want it shaded. You create the mood, you set the scene, you mesmerize with your body language, your vocal variety and that special piece of literature you select. Your selection, your voice, your body language can take you to a district blue ribbon and leave your judge delightfully entertained, awestruck, in tears, or laughing joyfully.

If you enjoy reading for an audience and aspire to capturing a person’s emotions, UIL Oral Reading may be the academic competition for you. It can give you an opportunity to benefit your school with competitive points and accolades, and of course, fill you with pride knowing that you are developing that rare and special gift called charisma that will help you throughout your entire life.



## Audition

In most schools getting on the UIL Oral Reading academic team is very competitive. Early in the school year the oral reading coach will announce auditions for the team. The sponsor (or coach) will narrow down to four contestants per grade level. Often in auditions you read for multiple teachers to have a fair and objective judging team.



The audition can seem intimidating, but be prepared and go for it! Read this *Oral Reading Concept Booklet* from cover to cover before you try-out so you will have the confidence, the enthusiasm, and the tools to do your best. Know the savvy secrets and those extra optional tips that help you prepare for the competition.

Your oral reading coach will probably have a variety of literary selections for you to choose from with which to try-out, or she may just hand you a poem or prose selection of her choice to read. Take it home, read it for your family, read it in front of the mirror, but don't fall into the old familiar pitfall of racing through it with no planned pauses. Yes, you will probably feel a little bit nervous (or very, very nervous), but take your time. Mark your pauses with a single up and down line after the word where you want to pause. Also don't be afraid to write brief notes to yourself in the margins. Have a copy made for yourself if your coach does not want you writing on her copy. Use eye contact, plan your pauses, and read slowly in some places and faster where it is appropriate. Build to a climax or (high point) and then conclude. Change your voice if different characters have different things to say in the selection. Most importantly, guard against "sing-songiness." Don't let that trap snare you. Remember, you want the reading to be memorable for your audience so shine with the tools you use from this booklet.

## Selection

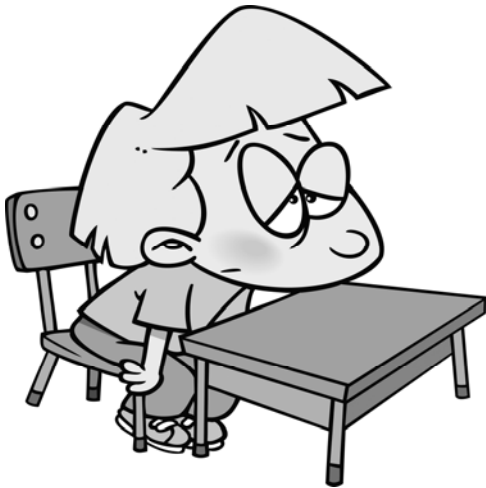
Now that you have the joy of knowing you are on the team, glow! You have something special about your presence. Cooperate with your UIL coach. When he/she calls meetings, be there. Listen to him/her and learn. One of the first things you will do will be to choose the literary piece that fits your personality. We call this “the selection.”

## Poetry or Prose?

For those of you who are in the fourth, fifth or sixth grade, your selection will always be poetry, but for the seventh and eighth graders, yours will rotate each year between poetry and prose. Prose is anything that is not poetry. Prose can be a short story, or it can be a cutting from a novel.

## Length of Presentation

You may read for six minutes, including your introduction. If you read longer than six minutes, you will be penalized and lose one ranking. For example, if the judge places you first and you go over six minutes, you will be demoted to second place. It is very important to time yourself regularly and cut anything that can be excluded from the piece without losing the mood of the selection so that you do not go over the time limit. There is no minimum time limit.



It is allowable in the guidelines of The *Constitution and Contest Rules* for UIL academic competition for the contestant to read two short pieces, but I don't recommend it. You lose the momentum of capturing your audience's attention. One three to five minute poem or prose reading can be more effective in mesmerizing your audience's mood or emotions.

She drove me quickly into town,

*speed up*

And then they turned me upside down

Upon the awful | dentist's chair,

While two strong nurses held me there. ||

Enter the dreaded Mr. Myers

*for dentist, talk  
through your nose  
and laugh*

Waving a massive pair of pliers.

"This is," he cried with obvious glee,

"A new experience for me. |

Quite honestly I can't pretend

*make a face  
here and laugh  
wickedly*

I've ever pulled things out from this end." |

He started pulling one by one

And yelling, "My, oh my, what fun!"

I shouted, "Help!" I shouted, "Ow!"

*shout quickly*

He said, "It's nearly over now.

For heaven's sake, don't squirm about!

Here goes! The last one's coming out!" |