



One-Act Play

2026-2027
Area ♦ State

GRADES: 6-8 | ENTRIES: 1 PER SCHOOL | TIME: 7 MIN SET-UP, 40 MIN RUN TIME, 7 MIN STRIKE

The following guidelines include rules and specification for administration at Area and State levels. Complete instructions for OAP may be found in the 2026-2029 edition of the *PSIA Middle School One-Act Play Handbook*.

ENTRIES. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are eligible to participate in One-Act Play. Exceptions may be made for a few students in grades 4 and 5 on a limited basis. No more than 20 cast and/or crew members in any combination may participate.

REGISTRATION PROCESS. (1) PSIA member schools ONLY may register. School memberships end on December 15. (2) Notify your PSIA Campus Coordinator as early as possible that you wish to compete in OAP and ask that your school register for OAP during membership registration. (3) **Acceptance into an AREA is on a first-register basis. A school is registered ONLY when your play title has been submitted and approved by PSIA. This form MUST list an approved play title or a play that has been submitted for review and approved by PSIA. If an Area is full with 5 OR 6 member schools, a different open Area must be selected. Space is available for only the first 36 PSIA schools that officially register their play titles.** (4) Complete "Play Title Registration Form" online For plays not on the official approved list in the OAP Handbook (online version), submit original (not photocopied) play script, including original plays produced by the campus students and/or teachers. Include the Play Title Registration Form with this submission.

PLAY TITLE REGISTRATION DEADLINES

November 1: Inform Area and State Directors of your school's intent to participate in OAP and deadline for play registration and approval.

December 1: Late deadline for play approval. (\$100 late fee)

NOTE: A \$20 reading fee per play is required if more than one play is submitted for approval.

December 15: Last day to submit additions to the approved set to PSIA State Office.

January 1: Last day to drop out of OAP without full penalty-divided cost of tournament.

COMPETITION SCHEDULE / ADVANCING TO STATE

- Area OAP competitions may be held between **January 4 and February 15, 2027.**
- At most, **eight plays advance to State (date and location TBD, planned for Monday, March 1st rehearsals and Tuesday, March 2nd performances).** Refer to *OAP Handbook* for detail.

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Area Director:** Books facilities, collects Area Meet fees, communicates with participating schools. This position may be filled by a coach.
- Coach/Director:** Instruct students - anyone may serve (preferably, a certified drama instructor)
- Contest Director/Stage Director:** Know all aspects of the stage (dimensions, lighting, curtains, props, rules, etc.) Refer to "One-Act Play Checklist..." and Handbook detail for additional information. A knowledgeable person who is NOT a coach of contestants may serve to officiate the contest on tournament day.
- Judges:** Three certified drama teacher(s) or certified critic judges required. PSIA State Office **may assist with the selection** of a judge or judges and enforcing rules of the contest. Refer to *OAP Handbook* for detail.
- Time Keepers:** 2 people from 2 different participating schools **OR preferably**, 2 people representing no school (may be high school or college students with experience in OAP)
 - a. 1 backstage
 - b. 1 in audience

PLAY SELECTION

- OAP coaches may select a short or long play from list provided in *PSIA OAP Handbook*.
- Criteria for another play not on the list:
 - a. Original plays written by students/schools under teacher direction
 - b. Must meet standards in length (with approved

cuttings) and content as described in rules of the *PSIA OAP Handbook*.

- Consider plays that more closely match student abilities and interests. Consider number of students available to participate.

ROYALTIES

- Proof of payment of royalties must be submitted at each level of competition to the Director.
- A publisher letter of approval is now required for all changes and adaptations made to a play script, even scripts that are on the Approved List.

TIME LIMITS

- **Rehearsals:** A minimum of 45 minutes to a maximum of 60 minutes on stage for each school. Rehearsal times will be arranged by distance from the venue. The school closest to the venue will rehearse first. (A different color spike tape for marking the stage should be used by each school)
- **Playtime:** presentation not to exceed 40 minutes including scene changes
- **Set Up and Strike:** Up to 7 minutes each for set up and striking the set, and is separate from play presentation time
- **Music / Sound Effect Elements:** up to 10 minutes (optionally documented)

STAGE SET

- Refer to appendix of *PSIA OAP Handbook* for instructions on building the basic OAP set. NOTE: Detailed stage set instructions have been provided.
- Refer to Tables A&B for list of approved items and dimensions.
- Host school may provide the stage set, or an individual school may bring pieces needed
- Each school will have **up to 10'x10'** (if available) of space backstage to store stage pieces

THE BASIC SET

- Used for all OAP contests and may consist of . . .
 - a. Standard box set of draperies,
 - b. Stage lighting equipment and controls,
 - c. Intercommunication system,
 - d. Standard stage door and window units,

- e. Approved unit set as described in the current PSIA OAP Handbook
- Refer to the *PSIA OAP Handbook* for specifications on additions to the basic set that do and do not require approval.

DIRECTOR DURING PERFORMANCE

- No adult permitted backstage or offstage during contest performance
- One director or assistant is permitted in the light booth
- Directors permitted on stage during set and strike periods

LIGHTING / SOUND ASSISTANCE

- One adult assistant in lighting and/OR sound booth is permitted during play presentation.

STANDARDS FOR JUDGING

- 60% based on acting (voice, characterization, movement, contrast, ensemble, timing, and motivation)
- 40% based on direction and stage mechanics (set, lighting, sound, make-up, costume, business, tempo, composition and theme)
- Elaboration of these criteria found in *OAP Handbook*

AWARDS

- Plays ranked to third place. Remaining plays are not awarded.
* If only 4 plays compete, 1st and 2nd are awarded. Remaining two plays are not awarded.
 - Individual awards: Individual awards are determined by a single "Acting Judge."
 - a. 2 Best Performer Awards
 - b. Up to 10 All-Star Cast Members
 - c. 10+ Honorable Mention All-Star Cast
 - d. All-Star Tech Crew (one from each school) plus one Best Tech Award to the school with the best tech team.
 - Present awards from lowest to top ranking
- Note: OAP is a separate PSIA program. Points are not added to district/state academic rankings.

FEES

- **Participation Fees:**
 - a. State sign-up participation fee of **\$200 min.**
 - b. Area fee – divided cost of hiring judge(s), renting facilities (Negotiation may be necessary to keep cost down for schools.)
 - c. Zone fee (if the Area is divided - amount to be determined on an individual basis)

The maximum allowable fee has been removed due to increasing costs.

- **Admission Fee:** A fee **may** be charged each time plays are presented to public for a campus fund raisers (fee to be determined by school). PSIA Zone, Area, and State contests fees are limited to up to **\$10** for adults and **\$5** for students.
- **NO-SHOW fee:** Schools that have been scheduled to compete and are unable to attend tournament will be assessed the proportional **divided cost** of the play facilities rental and judging fees if notice is not given **by January 1.**

DISQUALIFYING ACTIONS

- Refer to the PSIA One-Act Play Handbook for a list of disqualifying actions. A signed copy of this form must be sent to the state office and copies should be provided to all parents of participants.

DRAMA DIRECTOR RULES CHECKLIST

- Refer to one of the following for important time-line checklist and rules for drama coaches:
**Page iv of PSIA One-Act Play Handbook for Middle Schools*

RULE CHANGES for 2025-2026:

- Schools are not allowed to bring replacement pieces for pieces already available in the Basic Set.
- Props and Basic Set items must be carried on and off stage—no dragging, no rolling on caster wheels. Casters can still be used, but not on stage.

RULE CHANGES for 2026-2029:

- **WILDCARD.** Up to eight schools will participate in the State Competition. The first place winners from each area will automatically advance. From the second place winners, the top schools based on judges' ranks will advance so that there are eight schools competing. The criteria to determine which second place schools will advance is (1) ranking sum (smaller sum beat larger sums), (2) decimal sum (take the reciprocal of the judges' ranks and add; larger decimal sum beats smaller decimal sum), and then (3) random draw from all schools tied after decimal sums.

If the 1st place school from an area is unable to attend the State Competition, the 2nd place school will automatically advance.

Third place schools are not eligible for advancement to the State Competition, via the withdrawal of both 1st and 2nd place schools nor the withdrawal of the 2nd place school after winning a wildcard.

- The area director will select one judge as the "Acting Judge" who is responsible for selecting the 2 top performer awards, all-star cast, and honorable mention cast. The Contest Manager along with guidance from the Stage Manager and advice from the Drama Directors will select the All Star Tech Crew winners and the Best Tech school award.

The programs for the performances should include setting information about the play (time, place, etc.).