

CHORAL SPEAKING 2018

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**Please read Regulations for Choral Speaking as in Syllabus, 2018**

- (d) Movement and gesture must be **LIMITED and RESTRICTED** and not detract from the form of the verse pattern and the quality of the speaking.*
- (e) The verse shape and pattern must not be distorted by addition of external words, song or music.*
- (f) A large percentage of the work must be choral.*
- (h) Class is for Boys, Girls or mixed groups.*

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**Please read Regulations for Action Verse as in Syllabus, 2018**

- (c) *Movement and gesture are permissible and RECOMMENDED.*
- (d) *The verse shape and pattern must not be distorted by addition of external words, song or music.*
- (e) *A large percentage of the work must be choral.*
- (g) *Class is for Boys, Girls or mixed groups.*

Choral Speaking 18 Years and Under

a}

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of fumbling  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime...  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori.*

Wilfred Owen.

Choral Speaking 15 Years and Under

a}

THE STONES

Worried mothers bawled her name  
To call wild children from their games.

“Nellie Mulcahy! Nellie Mulcahy!  
If ye don’t come home,  
She’ll carry ye off in her big black bag.”

Her name was fear and fear begat obedience,  
But one day she made a real appearance –  
A harmless hag with a bag on her back.  
When the children heard, they gathered  
together

And in a trice were  
Stalking the little weary traveller –  
Ten, twenty, thirty, forty.

Numbers gave them courage  
Though, had they known it,  
Nellie was more timid by far  
Than the timidest there.

Once or twice, she turned to look  
At the bravado-swollen pack.  
Slowly the chant began –

“Nellie Mulcahy! Nellie Mulcahy!  
Wicked old woman! Wicked old woman!”

One child threw a stone.  
Another did likewise.  
Soon the little monsters

Were furiously stoning her  
Whose name was fear.  
When she fell bleeding to the ground  
Whimpering like a beaten pup,  
Even then they didn’t give up  
But pelted her like mad.

Suddenly they stopped, looked at  
Each other, then at Nellie, lying  
On the ground, shivering.

Slowly they withdrew  
One by one.

Silence. Silence.  
All the stones were thrown.

Between the hedges of their guilt  
Cain-children shambled home.

Alone,  
She dragged herself up,  
Crying in small half-uttered moans,  
Limped away across the land,  
Black bag on her back,  
Agony racking her bones.

Between her and the children,  
Like hideous forms of fear –  
The stones.

Brendan Kennelly.

b}

Own Choice.

**Choral Speaking 6<sup>th</sup> Class**

a}

**TIMOTHY WINTERS**

Timothy Winters comes to school  
With eyes as wide as a football pool,  
Ears like bombs and teeth like splinters:  
A blitz of a boy is Timothy Winters.

His belly is white, his neck is dark,  
And his hair is an exclamation mark.  
His clothes are enough to scare a crow  
And through his britches the blue winds blow.

When teacher talks he won't hear a word  
And he shoots down dead the arithmetic-bird,  
He licks the patterns off his plate  
And he's not even heard of the Welfare State.

Timothy Winters has bloody feet  
And he lives in a house on Suez Street,  
He sleeps in a sack on the kitchen floor  
And they say there aren't boys like him anymore.

Old Man Winters likes his beer  
And his missus ran off with a bombardier,  
Grandma sits in the grate with a gin  
And Timothy's dosed with an aspirin.

The Welfare Worker lies awake  
But the law's as tricky as a ten-foot snake,  
So Timothy Winters drinks his cup  
And slowly goes on growing up.

At Morning Prayers the Master helms  
For children less fortunate than ourselves,  
And the loudest response in the room is when  
Timothy Winters roars 'Amen!'

So come one angel, come on ten;  
Timothy Winters says 'Amen  
Amen amen amen amen.'  
*Timothy Winters, Lord Amen.*

a}

**CAT!**

*Cat!*

Scat!

Atter her, atter her,  
Sleeky flatterer,  
Spitfire chatterer,  
Scatter her, scatter her  
Off her mat!

*Wuff!*

*Wuff!*

Treat her rough!

Git her, git her  
Whiskery spitter!  
Catch her, catch her  
Green-eyed scratcher!

Slathery

Slithery

Hisser,

Don't miss her!

Run till you're dithery,

Hithery

Thithery

*Pfitts! pfitts!*

How she spits!

*Spitch! Spitch!*

Can't she scratch!

Scratching the bark  
Of the sycamore-tree,  
She's reached her ark  
And's hissing at me

*Pfitts! pfitts!*

*Wuff! Wuff!*

Scat,

Cat!

That's

**Choral Speaking 4<sup>th</sup> Class**

a}

**THE BOGEYMAN**

In the desolate depths of a perilous place  
the bogeyman lurks, with a snarl on his face.  
Never dare, never dare to approach his dark lair  
for he's waiting . . . just waiting . . . to get you.

He skulks in the shadows, relentless and wild  
in his search for a tender, delectable child.  
With his steely sharp claws and his slaverling jaws  
oh he's waiting . . . just waiting . . . to get you.

Many have entered his dreary domain  
but not even one has been heard from again.  
They no doubt made a feast for the butchering beast  
and he's waiting . . . just waiting . . . to get you.

In that sulphurous, sunless and sinister place  
he'll crumple your bones in his bogey embrace.  
Never never go near if you hold your life dear,  
for oh! . . . what he'll do . . . when he gets you!

Jack Prelutsky.

b}

Own Choice.

Choral Speaking 3<sup>rd</sup> Class

a} THE PIRATES ARE WALKING THE PLANK

The pirates are walking the plank,  
The pirates are walking the plank,  
At the old Dogger Bank  
Where it's wet and it's dank  
The pirates are walking the plank.  
SPER-LASH!

Those peg-legged,  
Patch-eyed,  
Pig-tailed,  
Hair-dyed  
Pirates  
Are walking the plank today  
HEY!

Those big-nosed,  
Bristle-chinned,  
Earringed,  
Wide-grinned  
Pirates  
are walking the plank today.  
HEY!

The pirates are walking the plank,  
The pirates are walking the plank,  
At the old Dogger Bank  
Where it's wet and it's dank  
The pirates are walking the plank.  
SPER-LASH!



**“The Musgrave Perpetual Challenge Cup”**

**Action Verse 18 Years and Under**

a}

**COLONEL FAZACKERLEY**

Colonel Fazackerley Butterworth-Toast  
Bought an old castle complete with a ghost,  
But someone or other forgot to declare  
To Colonel Fazak that the spectre was there.

On the very first evening, while waiting to dine,  
The Colonel was taking a fine sherry wine,  
When the ghost, with a furious flash and a flare,  
Shot out of the chimney and shivered, 'Beware!'

Colonel Fazackerley put down his glass  
And said, 'My dear fellow, that's really first class!  
I just can't conceive how you do it at all.  
I imagine you're going to a Fancy Dress Ball?'

At this, the dread ghost made a withering cry.  
Said the Colonel (his monocle firm in his eye),  
'Now just how you do it, I wish I could think.  
Do sit down and tell me, and please have a drink.'

The ghost in his phosphorous cloak gave a roar  
And floated about between ceiling and floor.  
He walked through a wall and returned through a pane  
And backed up the chimney and came down again.

Said the Colonel, 'With laughter I'm feeling quite weak!'  
(As trickles of merriment ran down his cheek).  
'My house-warming party I hope you won't spurn.  
You MUST say you'll come and you'll give us a turn!'

At this, the poor spectre - quite out of his wits -  
Proceeded to shake himself almost to bits.  
He rattled his chains and he clattered his bones  
And he filled the whole castle with mumbles and moans.

But Colonel Fazackerley, just as before,  
Was simply delighted and called out, 'Encore!'  
At which the ghost vanished, his efforts in vain,  
And never was seen at the castle again.

'Oh dear, what a pity!' said Colonel Fazak.  
'I don't know his name, so I can't call him back.'  
And then with a smile that was hard to define,  
Colonel Fazackerley went in to dine.

Charles Causley.

Action Verse 15 Years and Under

a}

THE STORY OF FIDGETY PHILIP

"Let me see if Philip can  
Be a little gentleman;  
Let me see if he is able  
To sit still for once at table."  
Thus Papa bade Phil behave;  
And Mamma look'd very grave.  
But fidgety Phil,  
He won't sit still;  
He wriggles  
And giggles,  
And then, I declare,  
Swings backwards and forwards  
And tilts up his chair,  
Just like any rocking horse; -  
"Philip! I am getting cross!"

See the naughty, restless child,  
Growing still more rude and wild,  
Till his chair falls over quite.  
Philip screams with all his might,  
Catches at the cloth, but then  
That makes matters worse again.

Down upon the ground they fall,  
Glasses, plates, knives, forks and all.  
How Mamma did fret and frown,  
When she saw them tumbling down!  
And Papa made such a face!  
Philip is in sad disgrace.

Where is Philip? Where is he?  
Fairly cover'd up, you see!  
Cloth and all are lying on him;  
He has pull'd down all upon him!  
What a terrible to-do!  
Dishes, glasses, snapt in two!  
Here a knife, and there a fork!  
Philip, this is cruel work.  
Table all so bare, and ah!  
Poor Papa and poor Mamma  
Look quite cross, and wonder how  
They shall make their dinner now.

Heinrich Hoffman.

b} Own Choice.

Action Verse 6<sup>th</sup> Class

a}

POLITE CHILDREN

May we have our ball, please  
 May we have it back?  
 We never meant to lose it  
 Or give it such a whack.

It shot right past the goalie  
 It shot right past the goal  
 And really then what happened next  
 Was out of our control.

It truly was such rotten luck  
 For all concerned that you  
 Were halfway up a ladder  
 When the ball came flying through.

We also very much regret  
 What happened to your cat  
 It's tragic when an animal  
 Gets landed on like that.

Your poor wife too we understand  
 Was pretty much upset  
 When phoning for the doctor  
*And* phoning for the vet.

She quite forgot the oven.  
 It simply is no joke  
 When your husband's half unconscious  
 And your house is full of smoke.

The fire-brigade, of course, meant well  
 It wasn't their mistake  
 That there was no fire to speak of  
 Just a bit of well-done steak.

Still clouds have silver linings  
 And pains are soon forgot  
 While your lawn will surely flourish  
 From the hosing that it got.

The game of life is never lost  
 The future's not all black  
 And the ball itself seems quite  
                   unmarked.

So... may we have it back?

Allan Ahlberg.

b}    Own Choice.

Action Verse 5<sup>th</sup> Class

a}

SLINKY MALINKI

Slinky Malinki  
was blacker than black,  
a stalking and lurking  
adventurous cat.  
He had bright yellow eyes,  
a warbling wail  
and a kink at the end  
of his very long tail.

He was cheeky and cheerful,  
friendly and fun,  
he’d chase after leaves  
and he’d roll in the sun.

But at night he was wicked  
and fiendish and sly,  
Through moonlight and shadow  
he’d prowl and he’d pry.  
He crept along fences,  
he leaped over walls,  
he poked into corners  
and sneaked into halls.

What was he up to?  
At night, to be brief,  
Slinki Malinki  
turned into a  
THIEF.

All over town,  
from basket and bowl,  
he pilfered and pillaged,  
he snitched and he stole.  
Slippers and sausages,  
biscuits, balloons,  
brushes and bandages,  
pencils and spoons.

He pulled them,  
he dragged them,  
he HEAVED them until...  
he’d carried them home  
to his house on the hill.

Lynley Dodd.

b} Own Choice.

Action Verse 4<sup>th</sup> Class

a}

BYE, CAT

Cats.  
Hate ‘em.

All fur and fluff  
and spit and eyes in the dark.

Hate them.  
*Grrr!*

At least think I do.  
Never caught one.

Always up trees,  
or tops of walls,

or leering from windows,  
milk on their whiskers,

slipping through hedges  
and me on my lead –

always  
out of reach.

*Never caught one? Never?  
A big dog like you? I don’t believe  
a word of it!*

OK, I tell a lie  
(never told my best friend this).

Caught one once.  
Surprised it in the garden.

Up I rushed,  
all fangs and claws,

bark like a police siren  
promising blue murder.

Didn’t move, stupid thing.  
Sat there blinking.

What can you do  
when a cat won’t fight back?

Lick her on the nose.  
Bark, “Got you, kitty.”

Retreat on tip-claw.  
“Bye, cat. Bye, cat.”

Brian Morse.

Action Verse 3<sup>rd</sup> Class

a}

AS FIT AS A FIDDLE

Grandfather George is as fit as a fiddle,  
As fit as a fiddle right up from his middle,  
Grandfather George is as fit as a fiddle,  
As fit as a fiddle right down to his toes.

Grandfather George whenever I meet him  
Nips my right ear and asks me a riddle,  
And when Mother questions him how he is keeping,  
He slaps his left leg and says “Fit as a Fiddle.”

Once I said “Grandfather George, why a fiddle,  
Why is a fiddle especially fit?”  
He laughed very loud and said “Hey diddle-diddle,  
I’ll give you a sixpence if you’ll answer that.”

So now I ask everyone, friends and relations,  
People I talk to wherever I go,  
I ask them on buses, in shops and at stations:  
I suppose, by the way, that you do not know?

Pauline Clarke.

b}

Own Choice.

Action Verse - 8 Years and Undera} WAKING

My secret way of waking  
 is like a place  
 to hide.  
 I'm very still,  
 my eyes are shut.  
 They all think I am sleeping  
 but  
 I'm wide awake inside.

They all think I am sleeping  
 but  
 I'm wiggling my toes.  
 I feel sun-fingers  
 on my cheek.  
 I hear voices whisper-speak.  
 I squeeze my eyes  
 to keep them shut  
 so they will think I'm sleeping  
 BUT  
 I'm really wide awake inside  
 – and no-one knows!

Lilian Moore.b} THE WIND

The wind is a wolf  
 That sniffs at doors  
 And rattles windows  
 With his paws.

Hidden in the night,  
 He rushes round  
 The locked-up house,  
 Making angry sounds.

He leaps on the roof  
 And tries to drive  
 Away the house  
 And everything inside.

Tired next morning,  
 The wind's still there,  
 Snatching pieces of paper  
 And ruffling your hair.

He quietens down and in the end  
 You hardly notice him go  
 Whispering down the road  
 To find another place to blow.

Stanley Cook.

c}

### THE SPANGLY DRAGON

The spangly dragon, he flies through the air,  
He hasn't a worry, he hasn't a care.  
He flaps high above on his bumbly wings  
And with crumbly voice he joyfully sings:

*"I'm the spangly dragon,  
I'll weave you a spell,  
I'll tell you a fib  
And a story as well.  
I'll eat all your gumdrops,  
I'll drink all your fizz,  
I'm the soangliest dragon  
That ever there is."*

On his bumbly wings he flies to the moon  
And he nibbles away while humming this tune  
Then when he has finished, he's had his last bite  
The spangly dragon flies into the night.

Mark Burgess.

d}

### maggie and milly and molly and may

maggie and milly and molly and may  
went down to the beach (to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles, and

milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles: and

may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

e. e. cummings.