

Sample Ceremony Scripts

Chapter Installation Ceremony (for new chapters)

CHAPTER ADVISOR TO CHAPTER OFFICER(S):

On behalf of the National English Honor Society, I present this charter to the [chapter name] at [school name]. You, your members, and those who will follow, are charged to accept it in the words of our motto, "Gelast sceal mid are," which is Old English for "Duty goes with honor."

This charter carries with it a commitment to the mission of the founders of the Society: to promote mastery of written expression, encourage worthwhile reading, and foster fellowship among students who excel in English studies. You are further charged to share your gifts by service to society and by fostering literacy. Do you accept these charges?

CHAPTER OFFICER(S):

On behalf of the members of the [chapter name] of [school name], we accept this charter from the National English Honor Society. We dedicate our chapter to the goals of the Society and our fidelity to the legacy left to us by our founders.

CHAPTER ADVISOR:

Then welcome into the fellowship of the National English Honor Society; may you find yourself, this chapter, and this school always responsive to the mission of the Society: to confer national distinction upon secondary school students for high achievement in English language and literature, to provide, through local chapters, cultural stimulation in secondary school environments, to encourage interest in the English language arts, to promote exemplary character and good fellowship, and to serve society by fostering literacy.

This short ceremony is followed by the induction of student leaders and/or student members (see below), closing remarks by Chapter Advisor or school official, and refreshments, if available.

Note: Although, during the ceremony, the charter is officially presented to chapter officers, the charter should be returned to the Chapter Advisor and kept in a prominent, secure place.

Chapter Officer Installation Ceremony

New officers should be installed with an appropriate ceremony to impress upon them the seriousness of their undertaking. With the exception of the chapter's very first installation of officers, when none precede them, this ceremony should take place when the outgoing officers will be present to pass on either a literal or metaphoric legacy to their successors. At the initial

installation of officers, or if outgoing officers are not available, the Chapter Advisor may perform the duties of the outgoing officers.

The outgoing officers should be seated at a long table or row of chairs in the front of the membership. The new officers sit among the society members.

CURRENT LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

(standing throughout the ceremony and addressing the membership) The lead chapter officer may briefly summarize the most important accomplishments of their tenure in office and give good counsel for the coming year. The lead chapter officer then continues:

We are now ready to install our officers for the coming year. Each officer has important duties; and each is, in their own sphere, responsible for the chapter's success. *(Pause)* We first give charge to the office of the [officer position].

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/TREASURER:

(stands) Will [new chapter officer's name] come forward?

The new chapter officer comes forward and stands before the outgoing officer.

My fellow member, the office of [Treasurer] is an important one, for you must accept the responsibility of receiving, recording, and distributing funds. It will be your duty to keep an accurate record of all monies paid into the chapter treasury. Working with our Chapter Advisor, you will pay all bills promptly so that the chapter maintains a reputation for honesty and efficiency. You will, at all times, be prepared to furnish information concerning the financial condition of the chapter. Are you ready to assume the duties for your office?"

NEW CHAPTER OFFICER/TREASURER:

I am.

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/TREASURER:

Then, as an emblem of your office, take this record of our finances into your safe keeping. Guard it well as part of your ongoing legacy to the officers and members who shall follow in years to come.

The new chapter officer/Treasurer accepts the record of finances and takes a seat in front of the membership, and the outgoing chapter officer/Treasurer sits with the membership.

CURRENT LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

We shall now give the charge to the [officer position].

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/SECRETARY:

(stands) "Will [new chapter officer/Secretary's name] come forward?"

The new chapter officer/Secretary comes forward and stands before the outgoing chapter officer/Secretary.

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/SECRETARY:

My fellow member, it will be your duty to keep an accurate record of all meetings of the chapter and, working with the Vice President, to keep the membership record accurate and up to date. Working with our Chapter Advisor, you will be responsible for notifying members of meetings and keeping them informed of other chapter events. You will also be responsible for all communication between the chapter and the school, other chapters, and any other persons. Are you ready to assume the duties of your office?

NEW CHAPTER OFFICER/SECRETARY:

I am.

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/SECRETARY:

Then, as an emblem of your office, take this secretary's book into your safe keeping. Guard it well as part of your ongoing legacy to the officers and members who shall follow in years to come.

The new chapter officer/Secretary accepts the book and takes a seat in front of the membership, and the outgoing Secretary sits with the membership.

CURRENT LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

We shall now give the charge to the [officer position].

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/VICE PRESIDENT:

(stands) "Will [new chapter officer/Vice President's name] come forward?"

The new chapter officer/Vice President comes forward and stands before the outgoing chapter officer/Vice President.

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/VICE PRESIDENT:

My fellow member, it will be your duty to perform all of the duties of the President in their absence and to cooperate with them to promote the chapter's interests. It is also your duty to prepare and instruct inductees for the induction ceremony, and to serve, with the Chapter Advisor, as program co-chair. Working with the Treasurer, you are to maintain accurate membership records for the chapter. Are you ready to assume the duties of your office?

NEW CHAPTER OFFICER/VICE PRESIDENT:

I am.

CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICER/VICE PRESIDENT:

Then, as an emblem of your office, take this membership book into your safe keeping. Guard it well as part of your ongoing legacy to the officers and members who shall follow in years to come.

The new chapter officer/Vice President accepts the book and takes a seat in front of the membership, and the outgoing chapter officer/Vice President sits with the membership.

CURRENT LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

I will now give the charge to the [officer position]. Will [name of the new chapter officer/President] come forward?

The new chapter officer/President comes forward and stands before the officiating chapter officer/President.

CURRENT LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

It will be your duty to preside at all chapter meetings, to fill, with the advice of the Chapter Advisor, all appointive offices, appoint all committees, order drafts on the treasury, and exercise general supervision over the chapter's activities. Are you ready to assume the duties of your office?

NEW LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

I am.

CURRENT LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

Then, as an emblem of your office, take this gavel into your safe keeping. Use it well to guide those whom you both lead and serve. Guard it well as part of your ongoing legacy to the officers and members who shall follow in years to come.

The new chapter officer/President accepts the gavel and remains standing in front of the membership, while the outgoing chapter officer/President sits with the membership.

NEW LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

Officers rise.

All of the new officers stand.

CHAPTER ADVISOR:

(facing the new officers) You have been duly elected to your office in accordance with the uniform bylaws of the [chapter name] of the National English Honor Society. I now have the honor to act as its representative and to induct you as Executive Committee members. Will you, therefore, repeat after me as you affirm the election to your office? *(pause)*

I accept the office / to which I have been elected, / and promise to carry out my duties / to the best of my ability / and to abide by and support / the bylaws of this chapter. / In the execution of my duties, / the guiding principle shall always be / *gelast sceal mid are* / Duty goes with honor.

(addressing the audience) Let us welcome the new officers. *(leads applause)* Let me ask last year's officers to stand once more as we recognize them for their leadership this past year. *(leads applause)*

Everyone, please be seated. *(lead chapter officer/President remains standing).*

The new lead chapter officer/President will give a short speech outlining their plans and hopes for the coming year. The meeting will adjourn in the usual manner.

Student Member Induction Ceremony

The ceremony should be ordered in the following way:

1. Welcome by an appropriate school official, to include the introduction of the Chapter Advisor.
2. A brief keynote address by the Chapter Advisor. The topic may be anything appropriate to the field of English and/or the installation of a national honor society.
3. Installation of new chapter officers (by the Chapter Advisor).
4. Presentation of the charter to the chapter President (or Advisor) by the Chapter Advisor.

Note: New members appreciate formal recognition for their accomplishments. This ritual may be adapted to fit a particular school and specific setting; many schools will find such particularizing (by including favorite and meaningful literary references), both an appropriate and meaningful endeavor.

The Central Office highly recommends that membership certificates be distributed at the time of induction; these need to be ordered at least three weeks prior to the date set for the induction. National English Honor Society pins, royal blue and gold ribbons, and white carnations are optional but highly recommended.

When the facility has been selected and reserved, seating should be arranged in two sections, one for members, and one for non-members (including inductees and their guests).

Chapter officers should have the certificates and other (optional) materials for each inductee. These, the official membership book, and a pen, should be on a small table at the front of the facility. One chapter officer should have a list of names of all inductees. All officers should be

seated at a table, or on chairs, in the front of the assembly, but behind or next to the table containing the membership materials.

The following text can be adapted to the needs of a particular school:

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

(standing) The meeting of the [chapter name] of the National English Honor Society is called to order. *(pause)* Have we any new business before us?

CHAPTER OFFICER 2:

(standing) We have.

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER :

The chapter officer, [name], is recognized.

CHAPTER OFFICER 2:

[Name of lead chapter officer], I have the honor of bringing forth, before you and this membership, [number of candidates] candidates seeking membership in the [chapter name] of the National English Honor Society.

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

You may present the candidates.

CHAPTER OFFICER 2:

When I call your name, please come forward to be recognized.

The chapter officer reads the names as they have been sent to the Central Office.

Candidates, upon careful examination of your academic accomplishments in the field of English, in recognition of what you have already done, and in hopeful anticipation of what you will continue to do, I present you to this assembly, to our Chapter Advisor(s), and to our chapter officers.

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

(to chapter officer 2) [name of chapter officer], have these candidates satisfied all of the requirements for membership?

CHAPTER OFFICER 2:

Each has satisfied all chapter requirements for membership.

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER: *(to chapter officer 3)* [name of chapter officer] are their membership documents in order?

CHAPTER OFFICER 3:

Each has membership documents in order.

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

Candidates, having been presented and verified by our chapter officers, and approved by the general membership, you may now take upon yourselves the honors and obligations of membership in the [chapter name] of the National English Honor Society. If you are ready to do so, answer, 'I am ready for membership.'

CANDIDATES:

(in unison) I am ready for membership.

Two chapter officers move to position themselves by the small table holding the membership book, and the optional certificates/pins and ribbons/carnations. Inductees will move from one part of the stage to the other, where as a group they remain standing, facing the audience.

LEAD CHAPTER ADVISOR:

Only persons of high scholarship in English are admitted to our fellowship. We join with others from across the country in celebration of all the fields of English and in acknowledging that a life in which literature and good writing are a significant part, is a life worth living. To accept membership into the [chapter name] of the National English Honor Society, you must say your name as you sign the permanent roll of this chapter, adding your name to the company of colleagues who have preceded you. It is the first part of your ongoing legacy to the officers and members who shall follow in years to come.

Here the ritual will vary, depending upon the chapters and the schools.

Each candidate signs the membership book and says their name aloud. If certificates are available, then:

LEAD CHAPTER ADVISOR:

[Candidate name] accept this certificate of membership. It is your outward symbol of membership, not only now, but also in years to come. *(Presents a certificate to each new member.)*

CANDIDATE:

Thank you.

If pins are available, then:

CHAPTER OFFICER 2:

Take this pin into your safe keeping. It is your outward symbol of membership, not only now, but in the years to come. As a token of new membership, and as a recognition to others in this fellowship, I charge you to wear it daily for the next week. *(Presents a pin to each new member.)* The pin displays the emblem of our Society.

CANDIDATE:

Thank you.

If ribbons are available, then:

CHAPTER OFFICER 3:

Take this ribbon into your safe keeping. It is your outward symbol of membership, not only now, but in the years to come. As a token of new membership, and as a recognition to others in this fellowship, I charge you to wear it daily for the next week. *(Presents a set of ribbons to each new member.)* These royal blue and gold ribbons display the colors of our Society. The royal blue has long been associated with creativity and inspiration and the gold represents excellence and nobility of spirit.

CANDIDATE:

Thank you.

If white carnations are available, then:

CHAPTER OFFICER 4:

Take this flower into your safe keeping. It is your outward symbol of membership, not only now, but in the years to come. White carnations are, historically, symbols of distinction and truth." *(Presents a flower to each new member.)*

CANDIDATE:

Thank you.

When all the inductees have received their materials, the lead chapter officer addresses them:

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

I now declare you to be members in full standing in the [chapter name] of the National English Honor Society. We welcome you into the fellowship of this chapter and to the larger fellowship of

members throughout the country. (*Turns to audience*) Will everyone please join me in welcoming our new members? (*Applause*)

The new members then take seats among the other members of the chapter.

LEAD CHAPTER OFFICER:

Will all members, new and old, please stand. As our new members affirm their membership for the first time, let all the members join them, thus reinforcing our own commitment. Everyone, please repeat after me: As a member of the National English Honor Society, / I shall endeavor to advance the study / of all areas of English / and to foster a spirit of fellowship / among students excelling / in all facets of the English Language Arts, / ever keeping in mind our national motto, / as our guiding principle / 'Gelast sceal mid are' / 'Duty goes with honor.'"

Members are then seated. The Chapter Advisor or lead chapter officer may wish to explain the Society emblem, a copy of which appears on the membership certificates and on Society pins.

CHAPTER ADVISOR:

As we prepare to draw this ceremony to a close, . . ." (*Here there may be final words, an invitation to share in refreshments, and any other part of the ceremony the chapter has prepared—in keeping with individual school policy and tradition. The meeting should then be adjourned in the normal manner.*)

Alternative or additional materials may be inserted into, or substituted for, parts of the induction ceremony. The following selections may be appointed for reading by any of the officers, the Chapter Advisor, or visiting official(s):

"Being honored for your work in language studies, whether in literary examination or fine writing, goes hand in hand with a responsibility to use one's abilities to shape a better world, to help others, to turn being honored into honoring a future rich with possibilities and a world laden with potential. Our national motto, 'Gelast sceal mid are,' was purposely selected in part because it represents one of the earliest forms of the language we celebrate, and in even greater part because its meaning—duty goes with honor—represents the high calling to which each of us must respond. Just as being honored empowers us, so we empower others. Membership in the National English Honor Society implies that we accept the responsibility of sharing the best of language and literature with others. There is no fixed way of doing this; each must find a way to share and to foster the rich use and enjoyment of our language."

"Henry David Thoreau once said, 'It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak, and another to listen.' As members of the National English Honor Society you understand the importance of communication, the value of listening, and the significance of expression. You have proven yourselves capable of serious study of the English language and of pursuing the truth in works of literature or in your own creative expressions of poetry or prose. Being a member of this organization, and of the English community as a whole, requires that you continue these efforts and prepare yourselves to take into the world the truths you have found here, sharing with

others your joy and appreciation of our discipline. Truth cannot exist in a vacuum and, like art, it must be shared to be understood."

"William Shakespeare, in his play *Henry V*, wrote:

'As many arrows, loosed several ways

Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town;

As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea . . .

So may a thousand actions, once afoot,

End in one purpose, and be all well borne

Without defeat.'

We are like those many arrows, each coming from a different source, each with unique talents and varied interests; but as members of the National English Honor Society we all promise to support one another and to focus our energies on the Society's goals. We follow the design laid out before us, assured that our strength of intent and clarity of purpose will assist us in our aims."

A possible end of the ceremony:

"New members, in honor of your accomplishments and in anticipation of your bright future, I end this ceremony with these words by Emily Dickinson. Please commit them to yourself as you grow in our Society, in our community, and in our mutual dedication to a life of letters:

'We never know how high we are

Til we are called to rise

And then, if we are true to plan

Our statures touch the skies'

Congratulations to you all. Our ceremony is concluded."