

111 年全國英文創意說書比賽心得

高中組第一名：胡凱婷

I have always loved books. From the picture books that my parents read to me as a child, to the three hundred-plus paged novels I enjoy today. When my mother told me about this Book Talk contest, I was immediately interested. At school, there wasn't really anyone to chat about English books with, so I had rather a lot of things to say.

The first step to making the submission video was already proving challenging: choosing the right book. Something that has the right elements to make my presentation stand out in a way that is intriguing because, at the end of the day, the end goal is to convince the audience to read the book. I ended up choosing *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern. Reading this book felt like walking into the darkness not knowing what to expect but ending up surrounded by fairy lights and stars. I wanted the atmosphere of my narrative to embody that kind of whimsical romanticism.

Filming the video wasn't without struggle: finding the right outfit and the right lighting, then doing multiple takes to make sure I have enough material to choose from when editing. The moment I could finally see everything taking shape and coming to life was when I added in background music. With some gentle Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff to set the mood, I felt really tempted to read the book again...

When the second round rolled around the corner, the new semester was already in full swing. Freshly in my first year of senior high school, I pretty much had my hands full. I wouldn't say it was a rushed job, but the script for the final was definitely not as well-rounded as the first one. Without the convenience of editing to cut out my

stumbles and music to enhance the energy, choosing the book to talk about was particularly tricky. I think that in this round, where competitors had to perform live via Google Meet under a ticking timer, the tone of voice and the intensity of your content was extra important.

With a much more eye-catching premise than my previous choice of book, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E Schwab was my final choice. As usual, I started out by setting the scene, but after that, I added another segment: who I would recommend this book to. As a die-hard reader of books, I have watched my fair share of booktube videos. When you search a book on YouTube, chances are you will find videos of people talking about it. I took my inspiration from how they point their audience to books they might love or might want to avoid. When watching them gush about their books, the cherry-on-top is always when they summarize the book in one sentence using the most dramatic words. That, to me, is what makes me really want to read a book.

In both rounds, I mentioned neither word count nor Lexile level, because I think that when choosing something to read people are more likely to put down a difficult-sounding book rather than read it because it sounds interesting. Preparing for this contest challenged me in ways I couldn't have imagined, but I definitely enjoyed it and learned a lot. From reading my reflections about the Book Talk contest, I really hope that this can inspire everyone to read more and take part in this event!