Ventura County Office of Education

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Academic Decathlon
Rules and Guidelines

Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) programs are open to all Decathletes and educators without regard to race, sex, religion, physical abilities, economic status, or sexual orientation. VCOE does not discriminate against, or limit participation by, physically challenged Decathletes. VCOE staff will strive to accommodate Decathletes with special needs.

This rule book takes effect at the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year and supersedes all previous versions.

PLEASE READ THIS!
Before choosing to participate, Decathletes, educators and parents are required to read this Academic Decathlon Rule Book carefully. It contains rules that you must follow to compete in the Academic Decathlon. The most up to date version, as well as additional information about registration, necessary forms dates and deadlines is available at: www.vcoe.org/AcademicDecathlon.
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Dates and Deadlines

Nov. 22nd, 2019: SCRIMMAGE Registration Deadline
(www.vcoe.org/AcademicDecathlon)

Dec. 14th, 2019: Scrimmage

Dec. 19th, 2019: COMPETITION Registration Deadline
(www.vcoe.org/AcademicDecathlon)

Dec. 20th, 2019: All Paperwork completed and to VCOE

Jan. 25th, 2020: Competition Day 1

Feb. 1st, 2020: Competition Day 2

Feb. 3rd, 2020: Awards Ceremony

Mar. 26th-29th, 2020: State Finals in Sacramento, CA
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Overview

The Academic Decathlon is a unique opportunity for high school Decathletes to compete against like teams of Decathletes. The top team participates in the statewide Academic Decathlon competition. A California team then participates in the United States Academic Decathlon which is the premier scholastic competition for Decathletes in America from both public and private high schools. The Academic Decathlon consists of ten academic events.

The mission of the United States Academic Decathlon is to: Promote and recognize learning and achievement by emphasizing the value of academic excellence for all Decathletes.

REGISTRATION A TEAM

Only Team coaches may submit an application to register a team for the Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon and will be responsible for providing all forms and documents as outlined below:

The Following must be completed no later than 4:00 PM, Thursday, Dec. 19th, 2019
- Complete the Academic Decathlon COMPETITION Registration Online

The Following must be completed and delivered to the Ventura County Office of Education no later than 4:00 PM, Friday, Dec. 20th, 2019
- Voluntary Informed Consent, Liability Release, Acknowledgement and Assumption of Potential Risk, Permission & Request for Participation Form
- Student GPA Calculation Worksheet
- Student Transcripts
- Payment ($55 per student)

Deliver to:
Ventura County Office of Education
C/O Academic Decathlon
5189 Verdugo Way
Camarillo, CA 93012

The Online Academic Decathlon Team Registration Application as well as the Voluntary Informed Consent, Liability Release, Acknowledgement and Assumption of Potential Risk, Permission & Request for Participation Form and Student GPA Calculation Worksheet may be found at: www.vcoe.org/AcademicDecathlon.

SPACE IS LIMITED:
ONE TEAM PER SCHOOL WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE. TEAMS THAT DO NOT MEET THE DEADLINES MAY LOSE THEIR ELIGIBILITY AND THEIR SPOT WILL BE GIVEN TO A TEAM ON THE WAITING LIST THAT HAS MET THE DEADLINES. IF A SCHOOL HAS TWO or MORE TEAMS, THEIR “B” and “C” TEAM WILL BE PLACED ON THE WAITING LIST.
Program Overview

Curriculum

Participants should visit the website for the United States Academic Decathlon [www.usad.org](http://www.usad.org) to obtain complete and specific information regarding curriculum that will be used during the Academic Decathlon competition.

Region

VCOE Decathlete competitions are organized by a Regional Coordinator and recognized as such by the state affiliate office; usually designated by a geographical name (e.g., Ventura County). The VCOE region serves public and private schools and districts served by the Ventura County Office of Education. For the most part VCOE’s region follows geographic boundaries except for the Las Virgenes Unified School District which borders both Los Angeles and Ventura Counties and has the right to receive services from either VCOE and/or LACOE.

Participants

Each year approximately 250 Decathletes, in grades 9-12, actively experience the excitement of working in teams, exchanging ideas, setting goals, and examining issues while interacting with positive role models from their communities.

The winning team is then invited to the State Academic Decathlon to compete with their peers from across California where many of our past teams have then gone on to place 1st or 2nd in the USAD National Championship.

Judges

Approximately 100 business and education professionals from throughout Ventura County volunteer their time to serve as judges for the Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon.

Tradition

The Ventura County Office of Education inaugurated the first Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon in 1982 and has continued to coordinate this competition on an annual basis. Ventura county regional teams have enjoyed tremendous success in the Academic Decathlon.

- In 1999 Moorpark High School took 1st place at the state and national competitions.
• In 2000 Simi Valley High School took 1st at state competitions, and placed second in the national finals.
• In 2006 Moorpark High School was the first team in history to score 100% on the Super Quiz at state.
• In 2008 & 2009 Moorpark High School took 1st at state and nationals.

**REWARDS FOR PARTICIPATION**

The most important rewards are the skills and new knowledge that you will acquire as you move through the Academic Decathlon. At each level of competition, outstanding achievement also may be recognized through certificates, medals, trophies, scholarships, or monetary awards.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR DECATHLETES**

The Academic Decathlon is held at a public school site. You are solely responsible for the security and safety of personal items and artifacts. The Academic Decathlon program officials and sponsors will not be responsible for the loss of, or damage to, equipment, or personal belongings.
Eligibility Guidelines

Schools may participate in the Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon program with as few as six (6) Decathletes. Schools that do not have an official team as outlined below may not participate in the Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon.

Teams that advance to the state championship, either by winning their regional competition or by scoring high enough to receive an invitation from the California Academic Decathlon, will not be disqualified if their number drops below the minimum required to compete as an official team following the regional competition. This rule allows for unforeseen circumstances that may cause a Decathlete to withdraw from competition following regional competition and before the commencement of the state championship. If this occurs, teams will not be eligible for team awards at state.

TEAM PARTICIPATION

An official team consists of six to nine full-time Decathletes from the same high school (9th – 12th grade). A full-time Decathlete is defined as a Decathlete who is enrolled in four or more class periods per day. Each team is made up of two to three in each of the following categories: Honor, Scholastic and Varsity in accordance with the following GPA definitions:

- **Honor**: 3.750 – 4.00 GPA
- **Scholastic**: 3.000 – 3.749 GPA
- **Varsity**: 0.00 – 2.999 GPA

At the Regional Competition, each team may include three Alternates (1 Honor, 1 Scholastic and 1 Varsity) for a total of 12 Team Members.

Decathletes may compete in a higher category than their own grade point average category but not in a lower category.

Each team competes in all ten events of the Decathlon and is eligible for individual medals in all ten events. Only six scores count for the final team standing in the competition; the top two Honor scores, the top two Scholastic scores, and the top two Varsity scores.

Home-schooled Decathletes can participate in the Academic Decathlon if their school district allows home-schooled Decathletes to participate in other extracurricular activities. Home-schooled Decathletes can only participate in the Academic Decathlon program at the high school they would attend if they were not home-schooled. The GPA classification of home-schooled Decathletes will be made in accordance with state law pertaining to home-schooled...
Decathletes. The Regional Coordinator will have final authority regarding the participation and classification of home-schooled Decathletes.

The determination of the composition of each team is made by the State Academic Decathlon organization and is final. The Decathletes who attend the State Finals must be the same Decathletes who participated in and won the regional competition. In the case of an “extreme medical emergency” occurring after the state competition, the State Director may allow another Decathlete to replace the absent team member.

The California Academic Decathlon has the authority to declare the first-place team ineligible to attend the National Finals in accordance with the rules and practices of its state organization and may send the second-place team to represent its state. In such cases, the decision of the State Academic Decathlon organization is final. However, CAD will promptly notify USAD of such an occurrence.

**COMPUTATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE**

GPA calculations for ninth-grade students include only their grades earned while in the eighth grade and in the summer session between eighth and ninth grade. The “focus semesters” for GPA computation for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students go back two years prior to the present grade level of the contestant.

If the Decathlete is a twelfth grader in September of the competition year, then the semesters that are used for GPA computation are all of the tenth grade, all of the eleventh grade, and the summer sessions between tenth and eleventh grades and between eleventh and twelfth grades. Likewise, if the Decathlete is a tenth grader in the fall, the focus period for GPA computations includes the entire eighth grade, all of the ninth grade, and the summer sessions between eighth and ninth grades and between ninth and tenth grade. This same “two-year rule” applies to all 10th – 12th grade Decathletes. These criteria are to be followed to ensure uniformity and equity among all Decathletes in the Academic Decathlon.

Grades for courses shall be used in GPA computations for Academic Decathlon competition purposes if the courses focus more than 50% of the time on understanding ideas, concepts, and theories of a specific discipline and the assessments are objective in nature. Grades for courses that directly deal with the theoretical content covered in the Academic Decathlon curriculum and competitive events should be included in GPA computations. However, a grade for a course focused specifically on the Academic Decathlon should NOT be included in GPA computations.

Grades for courses shall NOT be used in GPA computations for Academic Decathlon competition purposes if they are hands-on, performance-based, skills type, non-book, lab-based, or more than 50% of course time is spent in service learning or internship. The skills
ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

that are developed in these courses tend to be more technical/vocational, and the majority of a Decathlete’s grade in these courses is subjective in nature. Please refer to the current “Acceptable Courses” document posted on the website: www.vcoe.org/AcademicDecathlon.

Inquiries regarding borderline courses should be referred to the State Director, who will make the determination based on the academic nature of the course, and who will then implement the decision uniformly throughout the state. The decision of the State Director with regard to which course grades are applied to the Academic Decathlon GPA tabulation is final.

For all alpha grades, all A’s will count as 4.0, all B’s will count as 3.0, all C’s will count as 2.0, and all D’s will count as 1.0. Anything below D will count as 0 points. When numerical grades appear on the transcript in place of alpha grades, they shall be converted to alpha grades according to the official conversion scale that appears on the school’s official transcript or in the school’s official profile.

The GPA for each Decathlete shall be calculated by dividing total points by total credits hours for the focus semesters. The total points shall include the alpha grade points multiplied by the credit hours. Unless a school’s curriculum defines the specific credit hours earned by a course, credit hours should be determined as 1.00 credit hours for a full-year grade, 0.50 credit hours for a half-year grade, 1/3 credit hours for a trimester grade, and 0.25 credit hours for a quarter-year grade.

If a Decathlete receives a Fail in any academic course, the F is counted in averaging the Decathlete’s grades even though no credit is given. When a course has been failed prior to the focus period for which the GPA is being computed but repeated during that period, only the repeat grade is counted. When a course is failed and repeated during the focus semesters, both grades are counted in the GPA.

A grade, regardless of whether it is advanced placement, honors, regular, or remedial classification, will count the face value of the final grade as reflected on the official transcript. No weighting of grades for honors classes will be included, even if this is the local district policy. An “A” grade, therefore, will count 4 points for Decathlon computation even if it counts 5 points within the local system. Under no circumstances may an “A” grade count three points. The letter grade shown on the transcript will be used in computing GPA regardless of any plus or minus. The State Director may determine standards for eligibility for Decathletes from schools with non-traditional grading systems. Such standards will be communicated to USAD for review and approval prior to the state competition.

Incomplete grades are not included in computing the GPA unless the Decathlete received an F that appears on the transcript. Once a grade is given to remove an incomplete, that grade must be used to determine the Decathlon GPA.
Pass/No Pass grades are included in computing the GPA. Once a grade is given in place of a Pass/No Pass, that grade must be used to determine the Decathlon GPA. If only pass/fail grades are assigned, then a Pass will be an “A” and a No Pass will be an “F”.

Schools must include all Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Grades from school transcripts on the GPA Calculation Worksheet. There will be (2) options:

**Option 1:** Pass = A and No Pass = F.

**Option 2:** In order to change a P/NP to a grade you feel is more appropriate, a coach “must” obtain proper verification and present findings to the Regional Coordinator for review. Proper verification must include approval from school site administration and school district. The Regional Coordinator may assist the coach in obtaining the proper verification. The Regional Coordinator will present findings to the state Director for final review and approval.

Foreign Decathletes are eligible to participate in the Academic Decathlon. A foreign Decathlete who does not possess a valid transcript may participate in the Honor category. If a coach wishes to qualify a foreign Decathlete for the Scholastic or Varsity categories, the coach must provide adequate evidence that the Decathlete performed at a relative B or C status within the foreign system during the two years prior to participation in the Decathlon. The state Director will have final authority regarding the participation and classification of foreign Decathletes.

College courses are included in the GPA only if high school credit is given and the course is listed on the official high school transcript.

Without a copy of a Decathlete’s IEP and history of how the Decathlete has been accommodated in previous competitions, Decathletes are not allowed to bring any other materials or aides into the testing room other than a calculator for math. “Decathletes are NOT permitted to bring books, notes, purses, backpacks, coats, hats, mascots, electronic devices, cell phones, or any other items, except for approved calculators and wrist watches (timers) that produce no noise, into the testing room.”

If a Decathlete wishes to use words or phrases from a foreign language in his/her speech or interview, then he/she is responsible for translating those words and/or phrases into English, and this must be done within the given time limit. Foreign language interpreters are prohibited.

GPAs will be calculated by each high school using the GPA Calculation Excel Worksheet which will automatically calculate a Decathlete’s GPA and identify the lowest division in which a Decathlete may compete. Each high school will submit the GPA Calculation Excel Worksheet and official transcripts to verify eligibility of team members to the Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator shall check the GPA computation in accordance with the above guidelines and verify eligibility of each team member. The school certification of transcripts will be the final indication of a Decathlete’s eligibility and GPA category.
Teams attending the CAD Championship must submit official transcripts (stamped by the school, signed by the registrar and sealed) with a date that is NO earlier than January 1.

The coach must verify with the Regional Coordinator that all Decathletes remain eligible in their categories before the Regional Coordinator submits the team’s regional highlighted transcripts, GPA Computation Worksheets and a certification guaranteeing that all team members are eligible for the categories as indicated in their GPA Computation Worksheet.

CAD will compare the official, sealed transcripts with those transcripts submitted at the regional competition to ensure that category eligibility has not changed for any decathlete. If CAD’s Review Team finds an ineligible Decathlete that was not reported by the Regional Coordinator or coach, the team will be disqualified for not reporting the ineligibility in a timely manner.

If a Decathlete is ineligible, and the Regional Coordinator is notified before the third week of February, only the Decathlete would be disqualified and the team could still advance to the state competition. The Review Team will review the transcripts of Varsity and Scholastic participants and confirm that all Honor Decathletes are enrolled as full-time Decathletes during the time of competition.
Team Participation Agreement Information

Decathletes and coaches are required to comply with the competition rules as stated in this rule book. Failure to adhere to these policies could result in the disqualification of the participant and/or his/her team at the discretion of the Regional Coordinator.

The standard of conduct for coaches, decathletes, parents, and teachers shall be no less than the expected standard of conduct for any off-campus activity. Appropriate conduct of Decathletes is the sole responsibility of the team coach. The coach has the legal responsibility of chaperone for his/her team Decathletes at all times. Decathletes shall be under the supervision of the coach, or another adult designated by the coach, during all excursions, activities and facilities. In addition, the following rules will be enforced.

The standard of conduct for coaches, decathletes, parents, and teachers are required to comply with the competition rules. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in the disqualification of the participant and/or an entire team.

**DRESS CODE**

As representatives of Academic Decathlon, Decathletes are expected to present a positive appearance and dress appropriately during all academic decathlon associated events. A participant could be excused from competition or from receiving recognition during the awards ceremony if inappropriately dressed.

Decathletes are allowed to wear casual attire or wear their school/team/spirit attire during Academic Decathlon so long as it does not include answers associated to the current theme (i.e., map with locations, math formulas, art associated with the art curriculum, etc.) and remains respectful to the appearance of their school and to Academic Decathlon.

During objective testing and Super Quiz, Decathletes:
1. Will not be allowed to wear caps, sunglasses or anything that restricts a proctor’s view of the participant’s eyes.
2. May wear hoodies; however, the hood must be turned inside-out.
3. Will not be allowed to wear distracting apparel of any kind.
4. Will not be allowed to have any digital devices or other type of electronics.

For Speech and Interview, it is recommended that Decathletes dress in business professional or business casual attire.

If violations of the dress code are observed by the Regional Coordinator, the Decathlete will be given the opportunity to comply with dress standards. Failure to comply with dress standards may result in disqualification. The decision of the Regional Coordinator is final.

FINANCIAL LIABILITY

Financial liability for all damage incurred by action of participant/Decathlete shall be the sole responsibility of that Decathlete and his/her parents.

STATEMENT OF COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Decathletes and coaches are expected to follow the highest standards of honesty and integrity while participating in the Academic Decathlon. If necessary, a Decathlete may be required to participate in any test designed to validate the test results.

The Statement of Competency Standards will serve to prepare the Academic Decathlon coach and his/her Decathletes for competition. Each Decathlete will have achieved a level of competency through an established study program (formal class and/or extra-curricular program preparation) for all ten events.

Also, every Decathlete attending the state championship will have participated in all (10) decathlon events (not including Super Quiz) at their Regional Academic Decathlon competition.

In addition, each Decathlete will have met the minimum standards of achievement by:
   1. Studying the USAD Study Guide subject area outlines that are tested by the objective exams.
   2. Using the format and rubric of the Expository Essay writing style to write practice essays prior to the local competition and an essay for the local competition, all of which are scored holistically using the California Academic Decathlon provided rubric.
TEAM PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT INFORMATION

3. Writing and presenting a three and a half to four (3 ½ - 4) minute prepared speech before a panel of adult judges. Preparing for and presenting a one and a half to 2 (1 ½ - 2) minute impromptu speech before a panel of adult judges.

4. Participating in a six to seven (6 - 7) minute interview before a panel of adult judges.

5. Participating in seven objective exams including Art, Economics, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Science and Social Science.

The coaches and Decathletes will be mentally prepared for the primary purpose of competing in an exemplary manner at the Academic Decathlon.

Coaches and Decathletes will know, follow, and participate in the Academic Decathlon scheduled events at the designated times. It is the team’s responsibility to review the schedule and know the surroundings (i.e., location of testing, assigned speech & interview rooms and Super Quiz seat, etc.) of competition ahead of time. There will be no provision for making up lost time.

POLICY REGARDING CHEATING

It is understood that cheating, in any form, is not tolerated. Any act of cheating will be promptly brought to the Regional Coordinator for review, evaluation and imposition of possible sanctions. If someone is proven to have cheated, it is within the Regional Coordinator’s power to disqualify not only the person caught cheating, but also the entire team. To act otherwise, could compromise the integrity of the competition. Decathletes are not to have any testing material at any time during any portion of testing.

If a Decathlete is disqualified, the Decathlete will not be eligible for any awards, and his/her scores will not be included in the team’s total score.

RULE INFRACTION: A violation of any of the rules stated in this Contest Rule Book. Judges will take any rule infractions into consideration in their final rankings. Failure to comply with the rules will count against the Decathlete but will only result in disqualification as delineated below.

DISQUALIFICATION: Removal of a Decathlete from competition. Reasons for disqualification from the contest include, but will not be limited to:

1. Misrepresenting grade point average and competing in a lower category than their own grade point average category
2. Cheating, providing untrue information (lying): possessing any testing material at any time during any portion of testing, pre-knowledge of test questions, using a prohibited calculator and plagiarism
3. Unsportsmanlike conduct (i.e., booing, rude comments, celebratory behavior endangering safety, and/or interfering with the competition): The standard of conduct
for all Decathletes shall be no less than the expected standard of conduct for any off-campus activity. Appropriate conduct of Decathletes is the sole responsibility of the team coach.
CALCULATOR POLICY

Decathletes May Use Calculators for the Mathematics Test
If competitors wish to use calculators on the Mathematics Test, they are responsible for bringing them to the test. Calculators will not be provided for decathletes who do not bring their own. Calculator use is permitted only for Mathematics; competitors will not be allowed to use calculators on any other test.

CAD no longer requires decathletes to clear the memory of their graphing calculators. Teams will be required to submit a roster that lists the student and the type of calculator, including all back-ups, s/he will be using in competition.

Permissible Calculators
If a competitor wishes to use a calculator, it can be a basic, four-function, scientific, or graphing calculator, provided it has none of the features listed in Prohibited Calculators. Decathletes that are found guilty using a prohibited calculator will be disqualified from competition for that year.

Prohibited Calculators
Calculators with any of the following features are NOT allowed in CAD competitions:
- pocket organizers
- hand-held or laptop computers
- electronic writing pads or pen-input devices
- models with an alphabetic (QWERTY) keypad, e.g. TI-92 or HP-95
- models with paper tape
- models that make noise
- models that can engage in wireless communication (transfer data or information with other calculators)
- models that require a power cord
- models with CAS (computer algebra systems), e.g. TI-89
- NOTE: USAD has approved the TI-Nspire calculator so long as it does not have the (CAS) stamped on the back side of the machine.

Because companies are continuously introducing new products, it would be impossible for CAD to maintain an up-to-date list of specific model numbers that possess these features. If a competitor is uncertain whether a particular calculator will be allowed, the student should bring a backup that does not possess any of the features in question. No backup calculator will be provided for any competitor whose calculator is disallowed.

Competing without a Calculator
Competitors may opt to take the Mathematics Test without a calculator; however, CAD is suggesting competitors use a basic, scientific, or graphing calculator for solving the
trigonometry test items.

**Calculator Failure During a Test**
If a competitor’s calculator stops working during a test, the student should continue taking the test without a calculator. No additional calculator will be provided, and the competitor will not be allowed to take the test again later. However, as noted in Section III above, a competitor may bring a backup calculator and/or spare batteries to the test. Decathletes are prohibited from using multiple calculators during a test (i.e., a backup calculator can only serve as a replacement for a calculator that stops working).

**Calculator Use Form**
Teams advancing to the state championship will be required to submit a Calculator Use Form. Check with your Regional Academic Decathlon Coordinator to confirm whether the Calculator Use Form will be required for local competition.

### GENERAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

**Written Tests:** Coaches will be responsible for assuring all Decathletes’ backpacks, purses and other possessions are secure and kept out of the testing area. The proctor will supply all printed and writing materials necessary for taking written tests. All additional materials, including cellular and other devices that have Wi-Fi accessibility, must be left outside of the testing room. The only items Decathletes may bring into the testing area is an acceptable calculator for the math test and a watch or miniature timer (timers must not make any type of noise or be a distraction to other Decathletes). Please review the Code of Conduct for appropriate dress during the objective tests.

**Leaving the Testing Room:** A Decathlete leaving the testing room for any reason must first secure the permission of a proctor, turn in the test and material and understand that they will not be allowed to return to the testing room until the next test. Decathletes will not be dismissed from the test before a break and the final test until the end of the testing period.

**Tardiness:** Decathletes are charged with the responsibility of being in the testing room on time. Decathletes will not be allowed to enter the testing room once the test begins. The Decathlete will not be allowed to make up a test.

**5 Minute Warning:** Decathletes will be given a five minute warning before time is called during objective testing.

**Essay:** Two essay judges will read each essay. If the scores differ by 200 points or more, the essay will be read by a third reader. The final score of the essay will be the average of the two closest scores.
Speech and Interview: Decathletes are encouraged to find their assigned room for speech and interview before their scheduled time. Judges have a very full schedule and late arrivals may not be allowed to make up their time if they are late. Coaches and Decathletes should not congregate in the halls. Only those waiting to be next should be in the halls. Excessive noise will not be tolerated.

Meals: Teams will be responsible for all their meals and snacks.

Special Needs: If any Decathlete on your team has a special need requiring special arrangements at any of the competition sites, please let the Regional Coordinator know by Dec. 13th, 2019.

Super Quiz Relay: At no time during the Super Quiz Relay will coaches and Decathletes be allowed to have study materials in their possession. The policy begins in the waiting area to march-in and includes Decathletes waiting to take their test and following their testing period. Absolutely no test materials are to be accessible to the team during the relay.

 Providing School Name to Judges: Decathletes are not required to give their school name to any judge during speech or interview, although there is no penalty for revealing the school name or location.

Team Selection: Teams selected for state competition are those teams comprised of at least 6 (no more than nine) Decathletes who participated in all (10) events (not including Super Quiz) in their regional competitions.

Test Scoring: The SCORING CENTER is off limits to everyone except designated staff.

Decathlete ID and Emergency Information: Every Decathlete will be issued a name badge that will include their official ID and schedule of activities for the competition. Decathletes are responsible for wearing their ID Badge at all times during competition. The Academic Decathlon recommends that Decathletes bring a picture ID and medical card to place in the backside of their nametag in case of an emergency.

EXPLANATION OF SCORING

The Academic Decathlon has ten events and a Team Super Quiz. Ten events are weighted at 1,000 points per event for a possible 10,000 points, per Decathlete. However, only six scores per team are counted for the team ranking, (top two Honor, top two Scholastic, and top two Varsity).

The Team Super Quiz is an oral relay event. There will be 14 questions per GPA category which will be worth 70 points each (14 x 70 = 980). The Overall Super Quiz team ranking is
determined by the six Decathletes with the top two scores in each round. It is not necessary that the six Decathletes whose scores count for the Super Quiz be the same six Decathletes whose scores count for the team ranking. The Super Quiz is a “Team Score” and will not count towards an individual’s score.

The highest possible Overall Team Score is 65,400 points. Team Ranking [60,000 points] + Super Quiz Team Score [5,880 points] = 65,880 points.

Six of the objective tests have 50 items. The raw score for these tests is converted to 1,000 points with each item worth 20 points. The math test has 35 items with each item being worth equal points.

The essay is scored based on a rubric. Each essay is independently read twice. If there is a divergence of 200 points or more in the two scores, the essay is read and scored by a third judge. The third score replaces the divergent score. The two scores are averaged for the final score.

The speech and interview are performed before a panel of at least two (2) judges. The judges complete the appropriate Scantron forms independent of one another. These are scanned directly into the computer. The scoring program computes an average score based on a maximum of 1,000 points.

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**EXPLANATION OF DIVISIONS**

There will be three (3) divisions for the Ventura County Regional Competition if Space Permits.

The Red Division is comprised of the primary teams from each of the schools with the highest average scores over the past two years.

The White Division will be all remaining primary teams from each school not in the Red Division. All new schools as well as schools returning after an absence of two or more years will be in the White Division.

The Blue Division will be all secondary teams from each school. If Space Permits

The Green Division will be non-competing Alternate Decathletes. You must have one competitive team in the competition before Alternates may be added. You may add: 1 Honor, 1 Scholastic and 1 Varsity Alternate for each competitive Team.
The coach, student and parent/guardian requesting participation in the Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon Competition agree to the following:
Agree to conduct ourselves in a responsible and respectful manner, follow the rules of competition as outlined in the Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon rules and guidelines, California Academic Decathlon rules and guidelines and United States Academic Decathlon Handbook and will accept the interpretations and decisions made by the Regional Coordinator.

Affirm there are the minimum required two Decathletes for each division: Varsity, Scholastic, and Honors and that the Decathletes will participate in all ten events.

Affirm that the Decathlete(s) transcripts and GPAs are accurate and violation of these rules may result in disqualification of the Decathlete.

Understand that changing Decathlete transcripts is a violation of the rules and may result in disqualification of the entry.

Understand that any special assistance needed at the competition must be requested in writing no later than December 13th, 2019.

Agree that violation of the Academic Decathlon rules and guidelines, in any form, is neither acceptable nor tolerated. Any act of cheating will be promptly brought to the Regional Coordinator for review, evaluation and imposition of possible sanctions. It is within the Regional Coordinator’s discretion to disqualify not only the person caught cheating, but he/she may also disqualify the entire team in order to protect the integrity of the competition.

Expressly grant authority and indicate consent to the release of educational information about or relative to the participation of the Decathlete in Academic Decathlon activities.

Such information shall include, but not be limited to, the release of photographs, test results, the reproduction of sound, motion picture or videotape recordings, etc. Consent is likewise given to the use of such information by an institute of higher learning, recognized educational study group or educator for the purposes of study comparison and the furtherance of knowledge in the field of education. The Ventura County Regional Academic Decathlon shall have the right to reproduce, use, display and disseminate in such manner as they see fit, without obligation of any kind to any person, the results from Competition Day activities.

In addition to the above the student and parent/guardian agree to the following: I authorize my son/daughter, named herein, to participate in the indicated student competition events or activities. I understand and acknowledge that certain extracurricular events or
activities, such as these, have associated potential risk of serious injury and/or illness to the individuals who participate in such extracurricular events or activities. The Academic Decathlon poses some inherent risk of a participant being seriously injured during travel or while competing. These injuries could include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Sprains and strains
2. Fractured bones
3. Lacerations, abrasions, and avulsions
4. Unconsciousness
5. Paralysis
6. Disfigurement
7. Head injuries
8. Death

I understand and acknowledge that participation in the Academic Decathlon is completely elective and voluntary and as such is not required by the Ventura County Office of Education, the School or District for completion of graduation requirements.

I understand that all participants are to abide by and accept all rules and requirements governing conduct and safety in the student competition events or activities. To the extent permitted by the Education Code, any participant determined to be in violation of behavior standards may be removed from student competition events or activities.

I understand and acknowledge that in order to participate in these activities, I and my son/daughter agree to assume liability and responsibility for any and all potential risks that may be associated with participation in student competition events or activities.

I agree to, and do hereby release and hold the Ventura County Office of Education, School, District, and Program Organizers and Sponsors and their respective governing boards, officers, agents, employees and/or volunteers harmless for any and all claims; demands; causes of action; liability; damages; expenses; or loss of any sort, including bodily injury or death; because of or arising out of acts or omissions with respect to student competition events or activities.

I acknowledge that I have carefully read this VOLUNTARY INFORMED CONSENT, LIABILITY RELEASE, ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF POTENTIAL RISK, PERMISSION & REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION form and that I understand and agree to its terms.

I agree that in the event of illness or injury, I hereby consent to whatever transportation, x-ray, examination, anesthetic, medical, dental, or surgical diagnosis or treatment and hospital care from a licensed physician as deemed necessary for the safety and welfare of my child or ward. It is understood that the resulting expenses will be the responsibility of the child or ward’s parent(s)/guardian(s).
General Information
You will proctor approximately 30 Students for 50 minutes as they pre-write, plan, organize, draft, and write a final version of an essay in response to a specific prompt.

Please be sure that the students write, their name and student ID on their Blue Book, and that they check the box for the prompt that they will be answering.

After the allotted 50 minutes has elapsed, you will collect the essays and take them to the essay scoring room. Essay readers should be aware of the time that is allotted for students to take the essay exam, so their scoring standard is set at an appropriate level, given the circumstances limiting the writing task, the standard of scoring for an essay written on demand in 50 minutes is clearly different than that for a paper written over the course of several days.

Essay Prompts
Most all of the prompts used require students to write an expository essay, i.e., an essay that exposes information by explaining, defining, or interpreting the given subject. Prompts may also solicit an argumentative, or persuasive, essay, i.e., an essay that seeks to convince the reader of the truth or falseness of an idea.

Essay Scoring Procedure
- Separate the essays by the prompt responded to.
- The reader should not place marks or write comments on the essay. The reader is to evaluate the essay as a “whole” using the round number contained on the Scantron sheet.
- Each essay will be read independently by two readers, and the average of these two scores will be the student’s final essay score.
- Readers should score each essay independently, should refrain from looking at one another’s scores, and should not discuss their scores.
- All readers must score each essay in accordance with the assigned rubric.
- If the scores given by two readers differ by 200 or more points, then the essay will be read by a third reader. The final score of the essay will be the average of the two closest scores. The essay coordinator will review the scores to determine which essays require a third read. Readers do not need to compare their score with that of the previous reader.
- Each essay will have two Scantron forms (one form per reader) assigned to it. Before entering his/her scores on the Scantron, the reader should check that the student ID number on the Scantron is the same as that on the student’s essay cover page.
- The reader will mark two scores on each Scantron sheet. One score indicates the reader’s rating for Table A of the rubric. The other score indicates the reader’s rating for Table B. Readers are not responsible for calculating the sum of these two scores.
- If the essay does not address the given prompt, then the reader must consult with a second reader. If the second reader agrees that the essay is off-prompt, then both readers must mark the “Off Prompt” box on their respective Scantron forms. No score should be indicated in Tables A or B, as all off-prompt essays should receive a zero score. If the two readers do not agree on whether the essay is off-prompt, then a third reader must read the essay. The scores of the two readers who are in agreement will be considered the final scores for that essay.
- If the essay is illegible, insufficient, or a blank paper, then the reader must consult with a second reader. If the second reader agrees that the essay is illegible or insufficient, then the readers must mark the “Nonscorable” box on their respective Scantron forms. In such cases, no score should be indicated in Tables A or B, as all illegible, insufficient, or blank essays receive a zero score. If the two readers do not agree on whether the essay is illegible or insufficient, then a third scorer must read the essay. The scores of the two readers who are in agreement will be considered the final scores for that essay.
scores for that essay.

**The Scoring Rubric**
The rubric is analytic insofar as it requires the reader to provide two separate scores for the essay. One score evaluates the focus, scope, organization, content, and development of the essay. The second score evaluates the language, style, and conventions of the essay. The first score accounts for 80 percent of the student’s final essay score, and the second score accounts for 20 percent of the student’s final essay score.

Following are brief explanations of each of the domains of the rubric. To ensure fair and consistent scoring it is essential that all essay readers understand these domain descriptions.

**Focus/Scope:** This domain assesses how thoroughly the student addresses the given prompt and how successful he/she is in establishing a clear thesis or purpose. The student should make a specific point about a specific topic and should maintain this focus throughout his/her essay. This domain also calls for judgment on the student’s range of understanding of the given topic.

**Organization:** This domain assesses the manner in which the student presents his/her ideas to the reader. This domain calls for judgment on the clarity, logic, and sequence of the ideas presented and the degree to which these ideas are developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using traditional devices. This domain also assesses the quality of the student’s introduction and conclusion and the effectiveness of thee paragraphs in presenting and reinforcing the student’s main point(s).

**Content/Development:** This domain assesses the quality of the student’s ideas and the degree to which they are fully developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons, and/or explanations. The reader will also assess the relevancy of the information presented to the overall focus of the essay.

**Language/Style:** This domain assesses the effectiveness and appropriateness of the student’s choice, use, and arrangement of words and sentence structures. The student’s use of language should serve to create an effective and appropriate tone and a consistent and powerful voice. The student should use language to communicate his/her ideas clearly and effectively. The reader will need to consider the student’s choice of words, range and specificity of vocabulary, as well as sentence variety.

**Conventions:** This domain assesses the correctness of the student’s grammar, mechanics (spelling, capitalization, and punctuation), usage and sentence formations.
APPENDICES: JUDGE/PROCTOR GUIDELINES

U.S. Academic Decathlon
Essay Evaluation Form

Directions: Select one performance category in Table A. Within the range of points for that category, record the points scored in the space provided.

A. Focus/Scope - Organization - Content/Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTSTANDING</th>
<th>85 - 100 pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>70 - 84 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>55 - 69 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>40 - 54 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>15 - 30 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>0 - 14 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Select one performance category in Table B. Within the range of points for that category, record the points scored in the space provided.

B. Language/Style - Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTSTANDING</th>
<th>95 - 100 pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>70 - 84 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>55 - 69 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>40 - 54 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>15 - 30 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>0 - 14 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Off Prompt (OP) de = Zero Score
Prompt is not addressed

Nonscorable (NS) de = Zero Score
Essay is: illegible, insufficient, a blank paper

Total for A

Total for B
Judging Format
A group of two to three judges and one Speech Room Chair will comprise a judging team. The room chairperson will be responsible for welcoming and dismissing the decathlete, and distributing, collecting, checking, collating and delivering each set of completed scoring forms to the Coordinator. In addition, he/she will be responsible for timing each speech and keeping the team of judges on schedule. Each judge will evaluate the decathlete individually, only the speech judges (not the Speech Room Chair) will evaluate the speeches.

Schedule
Each decathlete has an assigned Speech time and room assignment. Judging teams must adhere to the time limits to ensure a fair competition. Decathletes must be excused on time. All decathletes are guaranteed the same amount of time for their speeches, 3 ½ - 4 minutes for the prepared speech and 1 ½ - 2 minutes for the impromptu speech.

General Guidelines for Decathletes:
- Note card may be used. The speech should not be read.
- Gestures are acceptable. Props are not allowed.
- Speech must be given while standing, unless a handicapping condition prevents this.
- Speech must be researched, written and delivered by the decathlete. Any suspicion of plagiarism should be reported to the event coordinator.
- Speech cannot have been used at any other competition of any kind.
- Judges should not ask a decathlete what school or area he/she is from, nor should a decathlete offer such information (there is no penalty for this).
- Decathletes are asked to dress professionally.

Time Rules:
Each decathlete is allotted a maximum of 10 minutes in the speech room. The Speech Room Chair is responsible for maintaining the time schedule. A total of 15 minutes is allocated the judges and Room Chair to hear and score each decathlete, and then prepare for the next presenter.

- 1½ minutes Introductions, general instructions, guidelines for Prepared Speech
- 3 ½ to 4 min. Prepared Speech
- 1 minute Instructions for Impromptu Speech
- 1 minute Impromptu Speech preparation by decathlete
- 1½ to 2 min. Impromptu Speech
- ½ minute Dismiss the decathlete
- 5 minutes Complete scoring, place Scantrons in box for collection, prepare for next presenter

Speech Room Procedures
1. Chairperson welcomes decathlete and introduces him/herself, additional judges introduce themselves. The chairperson then asks the decathlete to introduce themselves to the panel of judges by stating their name and Decathlete ID Number. Check that this information coincides with the roster/schedule and name on Scantron.
2. Judges print their name on their Scantron score sheet.
3. Chairperson explains the timing procedure and the use of timing cards to the decathlete.
4. Begin the Prepared Speech by saying, “You may begin.” Start the stopwatch when the decathlete begins speaking.
5. Utilize appropriate timecards during Prepared Speech. Allow 3 ½ - 4 minutes for the speech and end at 4 minutes. If the decathlete goes beyond 4 minutes assess appropriate time penalty.
6. Chairperson then instructs the decathlete to go to the Impromptu Table to prepare his/her impromptu speech. Once the decathlete turns over the Impromptu Card, start stopwatch, he/she will have one minute to prepare an impromptu speech. At the end of 1 minute announce, “time.” Impromptu cards/topics are rotated for each decathlete.
7. Chairperson collects the impromptu card from decathlete and explains the timing procedure for their impromptu speech.
8. Begin the Impromptu Speech by saying, “You may begin.” Start the stopwatch when the decathlete begins speaking.
9. Utilize appropriate timecards during Impromptu Speech. Allow 1 ½ - 2 minutes for the speech and end at 2 minutes. If the decathlete goes beyond 2 minutes assess appropriate time penalty.
10. Acknowledging Decathlete Effort:
   - Applause: Judges should applaud at the conclusion of the Prepared and Impromptu presentations of each and every decathlete. Applause is intended to acknowledge effort put forth by the decathlete, not the outcome of that effort.
   - Comments to decathlete: Judges are not to offer performance feedback of any kind, other than with applause and a verbal “thank you”.
11. Chairperson thanks and dismisses decathlete immediately after the speeches.
12. Chairperson announces both speech times and notifies judges of any timing penalties to be assessed.
13. Judges have 5 minutes to score each decathlete, collect and collate the score sheets.
14. Chairperson resets the Impromptu Table for the next decathlete

Score Sheets
- Print your name in the designated space.
- Check the name and decathlete ID number of each decathlete on your preprinted Scantron for accuracy.
- For those decathletes who do not appear, write No Show or Absent at the top of the score sheet and submit it to the room chairperson.
- Mark all answers clearly and completely erase all errors. One item/bubble should be penciled in for each of the ten (10) categories on the Scantron.

Guidelines & Reminders for Speech Judges
- Do not argue with a decathlete’s ideas or get into a discussion with the decathlete by stating your ideas. Do not talk about yourself.
- The Speech Room Chairperson should make sure that judges do not engage the decathletes in discussion about judge’s beliefs, ideas, etc. If this occurs, please address the problem before the next decathlete enters. If necessary, seek assistance from the Speech Event Coordinator.
- The decathlete should not reveal anything that might be interpreted as identifying information regarding their high school, school district, or city in any manner, either in informal conversation, speech content, apparel, or insignia of any kind, there is no penalty if they do.
- Judges should not leave the room at any time except during breaks and lunch. Turn in score sheets to chairperson at the end of speech. Use the new Speech Evaluation Form for each decathlete that has the decathletes preprinted information on it.
• Be an objective judge, you may discuss the speech with one another, but your score should be your individual decision, not a consensus. If the chairperson notices that a particular judges scores are inconsistent with other judges in the room, then a discussion regarding norming scores should be had with the judges to bring the scores more into alignment.

• Maintain a professional judging environment. Disqualify yourself if you know a decathlete.

• Be sure to treat each decathlete in the same manner. Maintain your objectivity.

Speech Room Chairpersons
The Speech Room Chairperson will coordinate the Speech Room, support and assist the other judges, monitor the process and provide “quality control” to this event.

The Speech Room Chairperson’s responsibilities are:
• Meet and greet each decathlete. Decathletes should be ready at the designated time. They will be waiting in the hallway for the Speech Room Chairperson to call them in. Bring each decathlete into the Speech Room, introduce yourself, have the other judges introduce themselves, the chairperson will then asks the decathlete to clearly announce their name (introduce themselves to the panel of judges) and Decathlete ID Number. The decathlete is not to let anyone know what high school he/she represents, nor should any judge inquire.

• Check that this is the correct decathlete at the correct time. The decathlete’s name and decathlete ID number should already be “pre-slugged” on the scantron Speech Evaluation Form.

• If a wrong decathlete shows up, check the time and room number on the decathlete’s name-tag and direct him/her to the proper area.

• The judges should print their name on the evaluation form in the space entitled: Judge’s Name. The judges are to select a number (either 1, 2, or 3) and use the Scantron throughout the day that has their chosen number preprinted on it.

• Welcome decathlete and set a comfortable tone, have judges introduce themselves and explain the format being used. You have 1 ½ minutes for instructions and introductions.

• The prepared speech should be 3 ½ - 4 minutes in length and the impromptu speech should be 1 ½ - 2 minutes in length. The Speech Room Chairperson should time the speeches (discreetly) using the stop-watch that has been provided.

• The Chairperson will begin the speech by saying, “You may begin.” Start the stopwatch when the decathlete begins speaking. The Chairperson needs to monitor the time in a discreet, but accurate manner. Each speech should last the appropriate time (the “Quality Control” aspect of their responsibility).

• The decathlete’s time for each speech must not be shortened or expanded. This allotted time is to remain the same regardless of how the room is doing schedule-wise.

• Keep your judges on schedule. Release the decathlete to the hallway when the speeches are over. The decathlete should be in the room for 10 minutes. The judges will then have 5 minutes to score the speech. If you get off schedule and take more time than allotted the schedule will become “backed-up.”

• At the conclusion of the speeches, dismiss the student, collect scoring forms from all judges, check that the forms have been properly filled out, put in order (1, 2, and 3), and place in the cardboard box-top placed near the classroom door. If a particular judges scores are inconsistent with the other judge’s scores, please discuss this with the judges in your room in an attempt to norm the scoring process and bring the scores more into alignment.
Speech Room Set-up

- Judges Area
- Impromptu Topic Preparation Area
- Completed Scantrons
- Classroom Door

10 Feet

Decathlete Speaking Area

APPENDICES: JUDGE/PROCTOR GUIDELINES
Judge’s Speech Script

1. “Welcome to the speech room. My name is ___________________________, and I am the Room Chairperson.”
2. "I would like to introduce the judges. They are:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

3. "Please tell us your name and your decathlete ID number."
4. “You’ll be speaking from the front of the room. You will give two speeches: a 3 ½ to 4-minute prepared speech and a 1 ½ to 2-minute impromptu speech. I’ll give you a list of topics to select from for the impromptu speech after you have finished your prepared speech.”
5. "During your prepared speech, I will hold up a blue 1 minute card (show card to decathlete) when you have 1 minute remaining and a pink 30 seconds card (show card to decathlete) to let you know you have 30 seconds remaining. When 4 minutes have transpired, I will hold up the white “time” card.” (show card to decathlete).
6. "Ready, please begin." Start stopwatch when the decathlete begins speaking. If decathlete doesn’t begin promptly, ask him/her to start. Raise the 1-minute card at 3 minutes, the 30 seconds card at 3 ½ minutes, and the TIME card at 4 minutes. Stop the decathlete if he/she continues past 4 minutes and 10 seconds by saying, “Stop.” Log the decathletes speech time to be reported to the judges after decathlete leaves the room.
7. “There is a sheet with several impromptu topics located on the table/desk (point to the table/desk). You are to turn over the sheet and select one of the topics. After turning the impromptu sheet over, you will have one minute to select and prepare your impromptu speech. When you begin your speech, please be prepared to let the judges verbally know which topic you have chosen. Your time will begin once you have informed us of your speech topic and you begin your speech ...(after student has let the judges know which topic they have chosen.) I will raise the blue 1-minute card to let you know when you have 1-minute remaining and the pink 30-seconds card to let you know when you have 30-seconds remaining. I will raise the white TIME card when 2 minutes have expired.” (Stop the decathlete if he/she continues past 2 minutes and 10 seconds and log the decathletes speech time to be reported to the judges after decathlete leaves the room.
8. After the decathlete turns over the impromptu sheet, “You now have one minute to select and prepare your speech. There is paper and a pencil on the desk, (which you have placed there) which you may use to write down some quick thoughts.” Call time after one minute and Reset the stopwatch.
9. “Before you begin your speech and time begins, please let the judges know which topic you have chosen. Your time will begin once you begin your speech, after you let the judges know which topic you have chosen.”
10. “Ready, begin.” Start the stopwatch when the decathlete begins his/her speech. Raise the 1-minute card 1 minute into the speech. Raise the 30 seconds card at 1 ½ minutes and the TIME card at 2 minutes. Stop the decathlete if he/she continues past 2 minutes and 10 seconds. Record the time to be shared with the judges after the decathlete has left the room.
11. "Thank you. You may now leave the room and go to your next assignment." Inform the judges of the amount of time used by the decathlete for his/her speeches and assess any penalties if necessary. Give judges the remaining time to complete their scoring before admitting a new decathlete to the room. Keep strict adherence to the time schedule. Reset the Impromptu Table.
Objectives

- To assess the decathlete’s ability to present a speech prepared in advance in accordance with specific written criteria.
- To assess the decathlete’s ability to make an impromptu speech.

Criteria for Prepared Speech

Content

- There is no required speech topic.
- Speeches must be the original work of the decathlete and must not have been used in any previous competition other than the Academic Decathlon for this year.

Time

- Length is three and one-half (3.5) to four (4) minutes. The room manager (timekeeper) gives signals when one (1) minute remains (signified by blue sheet); again when thirty (30) seconds remains (signified by pink sheet); and when no (0) time remains (signified by white sheet).
- A courtesy time of 10 seconds will be extended past the four minutes to allow the decathlete to wrap-up the speech, but he/she will be assessed a penalty if 4:00 minutes is exceeded. If the speech is not within the proper time limit (i.e. 3:30 to 4:00), a time violation penalty is assessed. Penalty for the prepared speech is “–7.”

Delivery

- Over reliance on note cards, where decathlete actually read some parts of the speech, represents a poorly prepared speech and may not be scored above the Fair range in Speech Development category.
- Glancing at note cards as an occasional guide, especially if it does not detract from the presentation, should not be penalized in any way.
- Gestures are acceptable, but props (including uniforms and costumes) are not permitted. The decathlete must stand while delivering his/her speech; a disability which prevents standing will be taken into consideration.

Evaluation

- The Speech Evaluation Scantron shows specific items for the decathlete’s evaluation.
Criteria for Impromptu Speech

Content

- The decathlete is given a card with three speech topics written on it. The decathlete picks one of the three topics and speaks on that topic.

Time

- The impromptu speech is delivered immediately following the prepared speech.

- The decathlete has one minute to select and prepare the topic selection once the Impromptu Card has been turned over by the decathlete. The decathlete must remain at the Impromptu Table while preparing the impromptu speech. Note cards and pencils will be provided on the Impromptu Table. The decathlete may not leave the room during the speech preparation time.

- The length of the speech is one and one-half (1.5) to two (2) minutes. The timekeeper gives signals when one (1) minute remains (signified by blue sheet); again when thirty (30) seconds remains (signified by pink sheet); and when no (0) time (signified by white sheet).

- A courtesy time of 10 seconds will be extended past the two minutes to allow the decathlete to wrap-up the speech, but he/she will be assessed a penalty if 2:00 minutes is exceeded. If the speech is not within the proper time limit (i.e. 1:30 to 2:00), a time violation penalty is assessed. Penalty for the Impromptu speech is “−3.”

Delivery

- Same guidelines as the prepared speech.

Evaluation

- The Speech Evaluation Scantron shows specific items for the decathlete’s evaluation.

SPEECH PENALTIES

There is no penalty for disclosing a decathlete’s school name or location.

After the decathlete has completed both the prepared and the impromptu speeches and left the room, the room manager will announce to the judges the decathlete’s prepared and impromptu speech times and declare if a penalty time must be assessed. The Homeroom Manager is the final arbiter in the case of time violations. All Scantrons must reflect the same penalty for all judges.

Students should be familiar with the Speech Rules and Guidelines as outlined in the USAD Study Guide.
Descriptors for Prepared Speech

Evaluation Form Rating Scale:

**Speech Development** is the way the speaker puts ideas together, so the audience can understand them. The speech is structured around a purpose and this structure must include an opening, body, and conclusion. A good speech immediately engages the audience’s attention and then moves forward toward a significant conclusion. This development of speech is supported by relevant examples and illustrations, facts, and figures delivered with such smoothness that they blend into the framework of the speech to present the audience with a unified whole.

**Effectiveness** is measured in part by the audience’s reception of the speech, but a large part is your subjective judgment of how the speech came across. You should ask yourself such questions as “Was I able to determine the speaker’s purpose?” “Did the speech relate directly to that purpose?” “Was the speaker able to hold the interest of the audience?” “Was the speech subject appropriate for this particular audience?”

**Correctness** of language insures that attention will be directed toward what the speaker says, not how it is said. Proper use of grammar and correct punctuation will show that the speaker is the master of words being used.

**Appropriateness** of language refers to the choice of words that relate to the speech purpose and to the particular audience hearing the speech. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and should fit the occasion precisely.

**Speech Value** justifies the act of speaking. The speaker has a responsibility to say something meaningful and original to the audience. The listeners should feel the speaker has made a contribution to their thinking. The ideas should be important ones, although this does not preclude a humorous presentation of them.

**Voice** is the sound that carries the message. It should be flexible, moving from one pitch to another for emphasis, and should have a variety of rate and volume. A good voice can be clearly heard and the words easily understood.

**Non-Verbal** presentation of a speech carries part of the responsibility for effective communication. The speaker’s appearance should reinforce the speech whether profound, sad, humorous, or instructional. Body language should support points through gestures, expressions, and body positioning. The speaker’s manner should indicate an interest in the audience and confidence in their reactions.
### PREPARED SPEECH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPEECH DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
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<td>• ORGANIZATION</td>
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<td>• BODY</td>
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<td>• OPENING/CLOSING</td>
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<td>EFFECTIVENESS</td>
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<td>• ACHIEVEMENT OF PURPOSE</td>
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<td>• INTEREST</td>
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Interview Judge Guidelines

Judging Format
A team of two to three judges will interview and evaluate one decathlete at a time. Determine who will be the room chairperson. The room chairperson will be responsible for welcoming and dismissing the decathlete, and distributing, collecting, checking, collating and delivering each set of completed scoring forms to the Coordinator. In addition, he/she will be responsible for timing each interview and keeping the team of judges on schedule.

Schedule
Each decathlete has an assigned Interview time and room assignment. Judging teams must adhere to the time limits to ensure a fair competition. Decathletes must be excused on time. All decathletes are guaranteed the same amount of time for their interview, 7 minutes.

Time Rules
Time interviews precisely. Admit and dismiss decathletes according to schedule.
- 1-2 minutes for introductions and instructions
- 7 minutes for the interview
- Decathlete exits room
- 5 minutes for scoring, collecting, and collating Scantrons

Interview Room Procedures
1. Chairperson welcomes decathlete and introduces him/herself, additional judges introduce themselves. The chairperson then asks the decathlete to introduce themselves to the panel of judges by stating their name and Decathlete ID Number. Check that this information coincides with the roster/schedule and name on Scantron.
2. Judges print their name on their Scantron score sheet.
3. Chairperson explains the timing procedure to the decathlete.
4. Topics for interview questions must be within the established topic areas. Please do not veer from the topic areas; this may unfairly disadvantage a decathlete.
5. Begin interview process. Allow 7 minutes per decathlete. When 6 minutes have passed, chairperson announces that one minute remains and asks for final questions. The chairperson should not allow another question to be asked after 6 minutes and 45 seconds and should “wrap up” any answer that goes beyond 7 minutes and 15 seconds. Look for a good stopping time but do not stop abruptly at the 7 minute mark. If the decathlete goes beyond 7 minutes assess the appropriate penalty.
6. Chairperson thanks and dismisses decathlete immediately after the interview.
7. Judges have 5 minutes to score each decathlete, collect and collate the score sheets.

Score Sheets
- Print your name in the designated space.
- Check the name and decathlete ID number of each decathlete on your preprinted Scantron for accuracy.
- For those decathletes who do not appear, write No Show or Absent at the top of the score sheet and submit it to the room chairperson.
- Mark all answers clearly and completely erase all errors. One item/bubble should be penciled in for each of the ten (10) categories on the Scantron.
Guidelines & Reminders for Interview Judges

- Do not argue with a decathlete’s ideas or get into a discussion with the decathlete by stating your ideas. Do not talk about yourself.
- The Interview Room Chairperson should make sure that judges adhere to the topic areas and do not engage the decathletes in discussion about judge’s beliefs, ideas, etc. If this occurs, please address the problem before the next decathlete enters. If necessary, seek assistance from the Interview Event Coordinator.
- The decathlete should not reveal anything that might be interpreted as identifying information regarding their high school, school district, or city in any manner, either in informal conversation, interview content, apparel, or insignia of any kind, there is no penalty if they do.
- Judges should not leave the room at any time except during breaks and lunch. Turn in score sheets to chairperson at the end of interview. Use the new Interview Evaluation Form for each decathlete that has the decathletes preprinted information on it.
- Be an objective judge, you may discuss the interview with one another, but your score should be your individual decision, not a consensus. If the chairperson notices that a particular judges scores are inconsistent with other judges in the room, then a discussion regarding norming scores should be had with the judges to bring the scores more into alignment.
- Maintain a professional judging environment. Disqualify yourself if you know a decathlete.
- Be sure to treat each decathlete in the same manner. Maintain your objectivity.

Interview Room Chairpersons
In addition to judging decathlete interviews the Interview Room Chairperson will also coordinate the Interview Room, support and assist the other judges, monitor the process and provide “quality control” to this event.

The Interview Room Chairperson’s responsibilities are:
- Meet and greet each decathlete. Decathletes should be ready at the designated time. They will be waiting in the hallway for the Interview Room Chairperson to call them in. Bring each decathlete into the Interview Room, introduce yourself, have the other judges introduce themselves, the chairperson will then asks the decathlete to clearly announce their name (introduce themselves to the panel of judges) and Decathlete ID Number. The decathlete is not to let anyone know what high school he/she represents, nor should any judge inquire.
- Check that this is the correct decathlete at the correct time. The decathlete’s name and code # should already be “pre-slugged” on the scantron Interview Evaluation Form.
- If a wrong decathlete shows up, check the time and room number on the decathlete’s name-tag and direct him/her to the proper area.
- The judges should print their name on the evaluation form in the space entitled: Judge’s Name. The judges are to select a number (either 1, 2, or 3) and use the Scantron throughout the day that has their chosen number preprinted on it.
- Welcome decathlete and set a comfortable tone – have judges introduce themselves and explain the format being used. You have 1-2 minutes for instructions and introductions.
- Participate in judging and make sure that inappropriate questions are not asked.
- The interview should be 7 minutes in length. The Interview Room Chairperson should time the interview (discreetly) using the stop-watch that has been provided. The chairperson should not allow another question to be asked after 6 minutes and 45 seconds. The chairperson should also conclude any answer that goes beyond 7 minutes and 15 seconds.
- The Chairperson will begin the interview by saying, “Let’s begin. Please tell us a little about yourself.” (Decathlete’s Self Introduction) and then start the stopwatch. The Chairperson needs to monitor the time in
a discreet, but accurate manner. Each interview should last the same time (the “Quality Control” aspect of their responsibility).

- The decathlete’s time of 7 minutes must not be shortened or expanded. This allotted time is to remain the same regardless of how the room is doing schedule-wise.
- Keep your judges on schedule. Release the decathlete to the hallway when the interview is over. The decathlete should be in the room for **9 minutes**. The judges will then have **5 minutes** to score the interview. If you get off schedule and take more time than allotted the schedule will become “backed-up.”
- At the conclusion of each interview, dismiss the student, collect scoring forms from all judges, check that the forms have been properly filled out, put in order (1, 2, and 3), and place in the cardboard box-top placed near the classroom door. **If a particular judges scores are inconsistent with the other judge’s scores, please discuss this with the judges in your room in an attempt to norm the scoring process and bring the scores more into alignment.**

**Final Reminders**
- Be an objective judge, you may discuss scoring with one another, but your score should be your individual decision, not a consensus unless a particular judges scores are inconsistent with the other judges in the room, then the chairperson should lead a discussion to norm the scoring process and bring the scores more into alignment.

- Maintain a professional judging environment. Disqualify yourself if you know a decathlete (do not reveal the decathlete’s “location” – school/district/city – should you need to disqualify yourself).

- Be sure to treat each decathlete in the same manner. Maintain your objectivity.

**Interview Room Set-Up**
Conducting a Successful Interview

General Recommendations: The success of the interview depends on how well and how quickly you can create a pleasant understanding with the decathlete, treating them at all times with respect.

1. **Determining Environment**: Manner, attitude, and tone of voice are important in creating the proper interviewing climate. In the short time available, establish a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in which the decathlete is assured of your sincere interest and attention. Encourage the decathlete to talk about himself/herself.
   - Ensure privacy without interruptions - closed door, etc.
   - Maintain an attitude of pleasant receptiveness, quiet confidence, and intelligent objectivity.
   - Establish rapport and put candidate at ease.

2. **Managing Interview**: The judges are in charge of the interview process. Control, direct, and guide the interview. Set a steady pace and ask the questions according to the structured interview format.
   - Keep initiative but be responsive.
   - Cover all of the topics and devote enough time to each part.
   - Conduct the interview so the decathlete plays the dominant role and the interviewer is the stage manager.
   - Steer the conversation without intruding on it--refrain from expressing your personal opinion or values--be objective.
   - Encourage decathlete to talk openly and freely.
   - Pace questions so that decathlete can give adequate replies without dwelling on irrelevant information.
   - Indicate when the interview is coming to a conclusion.

3. **Listening Intelligently**:
   - Concentrate on what the decathlete is saying.
   - Allow decathlete to complete remarks without interruption or second-guessing.
   - Listen attentively.
   - Show interest.
   - Give decathletes the time they need to think of examples and answer the questions.

4. **Coming To The Conclusion**:
   - Empathy, fairness, and good judgment are working tools for a good interview.
   - Bring interview to an end gracefully and naturally without rushing to a close.

5. **Silent Gaps**:
   - Summarize points made by the decathlete and lead into the next question.
   - Keep asking for specific examples.
   - Give encouragement by rephrasing question.
Judge’s Interview Script

Introductions and Instructions (1-2 minutes):

1. "Welcome to the interview room. My name is __________________________, and I will be participating as a judge and timekeeper."

2. "I would like you to meet your other judges."
   (Judges Self Introductions) 1. __________________________
   2. __________________________

3. "Please tell us your first name and your decathlete ID number."

4. "Please have a seat. The interview will last approximately 7 minutes."

5. “When 6 minutes have passed, I will notify the judges that a minute remains and will ask for conclusion.”

6. “At the end of 7 minutes, I will notify the judges that time has expired, and no more questions can be asked.”

Begin the Interview (7 minutes):

7. "Let's begin. Please tell us a little about yourself." Start stopwatch (Decathlete’s Self Introduction should take approximately 20 – 30 seconds)

8. The judges first set of questions should focus on follow up questions to the Student’s self-introduction.

9. Following the self-introduction questions, nod to the judge who will be asking the first standard question from the Topics for Oral Interview Questions.

10. Notify the judges and the decathlete when there is a minute left in the interview by saying, “1 minute.” Avoid interrupting a decathlete when he/she is speaking. Wait until he/she has completed a statement. To make announcements adjust time notification accordingly.

11. When time - 7 minutes - has expired and the decathlete completes the question, the chairperson will say, “time.”

12. "Thank you. You are excused, and we wish you the best of luck in the competition."

Decathlete Scoring (5 minutes):

Judges may discuss their impressions of the decathlete’s interview and then score the decathlete’s interview individually. Chairperson collects scoring forms from all judges, check that the forms have been properly filled out, put in order (1, 2, and 3), and place in the cardboard box-top placed near the classroom door.
Topics for Oral Interview Questions

Interview topics should be based on or a variation of the topics listed below. The questions that follow are examples of what you should ask, or you may simply use these as your questions.

1. Personal Objectives and Academics
   a. “What do you enjoy most about school?”
   b. “How do you like to spend your time after school?”
   c. “Describe your biggest challenge at school?”
   d. “Do you feel it’s important to be involved in extra-curricular activities? Please explain.”
   e. “What did you do as a member of __________________________?”
   f. “How has participation in __________________________ affected you personally?”

2. Activities (During and After School)
   a. “Describe the type of community service activities that you are involved in or would like to be involved in?”
   b. “What meaningful experiences did you have as a __________________________?”
   c. “What kinds of skills have you acquired as a __________________________ that will help you in a future job?”
   d. “In what other activities would you like to have participated: how would they help you in the future?”

3. Community Interests and Activities
   a. “How do you feel your current activities (school and/or out-of-school activities) will benefit you in the future?”
   b. “What would you like to accomplish in the next five years?”
   c. “Perhaps you would share with us some of your dreams for the future.”
   d. “What are some of the things you would like to do upon graduation?”

4. Achievements
   a. “How did you become interested and/or involved in the Academic Decathlon?”
   b. “What is the most difficult event in the Academic Decathlon?”
   c. “What have been the benefits of being a Decathlon team member?”

5. Influences and Values
   a. “Who do you consider to be the most influential person in your life?”
   b. “How has this person influenced your personal growth?”
   c. “What values do you consider to have most strongly influenced your life?”

6. Miscellaneous Ideas
   a. “What personal quality do you possess that will benefit society or your community and why?”
   b. “If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?”
   c. “If you could solve a social problem, what would it be, and how do you think you would solve it?”

DO NOT ASK A DECATHLETE WHAT SCHOOL THEY ATTEND OR AREA THEY REPRESENT. ALSO, AVOID ANY QUESTIONS THAT PROBE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, DATING HABITS, PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS, ETC.
Description of Interview Evaluation Form

Delivery:
- **Voice** is the way a speaker controls volume, flexibility, and expressiveness of voice to gain greater audibility. Voice should have a variety of rate, volume, and pitch to engage interest, hold attention and convey self-assurance.
- **Language Usage** refers to the appropriate choice of words, grammar and correct enunciation. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and be appropriate for the occasion.
- **Interpersonal Skills** means that there is rapport and involvement between the candidate and the judges.
- **Non-verbal Language** refers to the manner in which the candidate uses gestures, facial expressions and physical involvement for effective communication.
- **Manner** the candidate should speak with enthusiasm and assurance, showing interest in the interviewers and confidence in their reactions.
- **Appearance** the candidate is appropriately dressed for the interview. Team uniforms are not allowed. It is strongly recommended that the candidate refrain from mentioning his/her school location.

Content:
- **Listening Skills** is the ability to analyze and interpret what is being asked. In order to answer skillfully and address the issue being considered, the candidate must listen carefully and attentively. The candidate’s response to the questions will give an indication of his/her level of attention and ability to identify, sort, and process information being requested.
- **Answering Skills** is the ability to: Address the issue being considered; present information in a clear, concise manner; organize information in a logical and sequential order; adjust response appropriately to a variety of audiences; and pace conversation to convey necessary information and achieve purpose. Order, logic, imagination, intelligence, and other personal qualities are reflected in the way answers are given.
- **Responses** engage the interviewers attention and gives insight into the candidate’s personal qualities, skills, goals, and experiences. The answers are supported by relevant examples and illustrations. All information presented should be relevant to the question being asked.
- **Overall Effectiveness** measures the: Nature of information provided; manner in which it was communicated; overall impression it created; and rapport established between the interviewer and candidate. Some of the questions to consider are: Did the candidate provide the information requested in a skillful manner? Was the information relevant and meaningful? Was the candidate able to achieve a positive impression of his/her skills, experiences, and personal qualities?

Through the interview process, the individual reveals:

- Problem Solving Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Creating/Developing Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Organizational Skills
- Promotional Skills

When asking questions of the candidate, keep these skills in mind. Help the decathlete to develop experience in answering questions that reveal these skills.
### U.S. Academic Decathlon

#### INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

**DIRECTIONS**
- Use No. 2 pencil only.
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#### INTERVIEW

**VOICE**
- Volume
- Flexibility
- Expressiveness

**LANGUAGE USAGE**
- Grammar
- Enunciation
- Appropriateness

**INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**
- Rapport
- Interaction
- Involvement

**NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE**
- Movement
- Gesture
- Posture

**MANNER**
- Assurance
- Enthusiasm
- Directness

**LISTENING SKILLS**
- Appropriateness of responses
- Attentiveness

**ANSWERING SKILLS**
- Clear
- Complete
- Appropriate

**RESPONSES**
- Thoughtful
- Insightful
- With conviction

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**
- Purpose achieved
- Interest
- Reception

**APPEARANCE**
- Appropriate for an interview

- Good: 2
- Fair: 1
- Poor: 0