



PA ACADEMIC COMPETITION GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines apply to the Pennsylvania State Academic Competition for the 2021/22 season only. These guidelines are a combination of NAQT guidelines and PA Academic Competition guidelines, so please review carefully.

A. General Information

1. Schedule positions will be determined by lottery prior to the competition.
2. There will be no penalty for questions answered incorrectly.
3. All cell phones must be turned off to avoid disruption during the competition.
4. Students must dress appropriately for competitions without any distracting or inappropriate clothing or accessories. Business casual attire is appropriate. The student's ability to participate based upon dress is at the judge's discretion.
5. Matches tend to move quickly once the day has begun, however, some matches may run over and cause the competition to be delayed and the championship match and awards ceremony to start and end later than anticipated. Students who have evening commitments for competition day, should be aware that they may not be able to keep them and should plan accordingly.
6. At this time, we are requiring that all participants and attendees must wear masks, covering their nose and mouth.

B. Tournament Officials

1. The academic competition coordinator will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the competition.
2. The academic competition judge will be responsible for the decisions made during matches, including disputes regarding correctness of answers, incorrect scoring, time-keeping, etc. All decisions by the academic competition judge are final.
3. The term academic competition judge includes the coordinator's designated agents or committees.
4. Each match will have a quizmaster. The quizmaster will read the questions, enforce time limits, determine the correctness of answers, award points, and otherwise enforce the rules of competition.

5. Each match will have a scorekeeper and timekeeper (may be combined when necessary).

C. Equipment

1. Matches should be played with a “buzzer,” electronic equipment that determines which player signals first. Should no working buzzers be available, tournament officials may require players to signal by physical means. If the equipment fails during a fanfare round, ten (10) seconds will be allotted for each question remaining.
2. Teams may agree to use a partially working buzzer system. If any team objects, the game will be played or resumed without a buzzer.
3. In the absence of a completely functioning buzzer system, the academic competition judge will be the final judge of which player signaled first. These determinations are not protestable.
3. Each player is responsible for monitoring whether his or her own buzzer is operating properly throughout a match. If a buzzer malfunctions, only the current question or the just completed question can be replayed, subject to the judge's ruling that the malfunction affected play of that question.
4. Timed matches will use a clock clearly visible to all teams.

D. Participants

1. All participants are responsible individuals and will be treated as such. Players and schools are responsible for any liability arising from their conduct while at the competition, or while traveling to or from such events.
2. Each competing team may bring up to six (6) high school students to compete. Four (4) students compete in each round. All six (6) students need not compete. Other students and family members may attend as spectators but may not participate in game play.
3. Substitutions may only be made between rounds.
4. No player may play for two different teams.
5. All participants must currently be enrolled in a Pennsylvania school in grades 9 – 12.
6. An adviser is a person who acts in a recognized advisory role to a particular team. An adviser may not be a player for any team in the competition. A team can have an unlimited number of advisers or no adviser, but only one may be designated the official adviser prior to each match. The person who is to be the designated official must be announced to the academic competition coordinator prior to each match.

7. It is the responsibility of the designated adviser to ensure that all members of his/her school's team fully understand the competition's rules and code of conduct.
8. Students are not permitted to bring anything to the contestant tables, i.e. pens, pencils, paper, cell phones, communications devices, etc. Students who bring these items to the contestant tables risk being disqualified from the competition and having their team forfeit the match. All needed items will be provided.

E. Questions

1. Questions will be generated from the following areas:
 - Literature / Fine Arts / Grammar
 - American History / Geography / Economics
 - Contemporary Events
 - Science
 - World History / Geography
 - Potpourri (any subject)

During competitions and throughout the handbook, these categories may be referred to by the names listed below or other similar name. This does not exclude the other categories listed above and is used only as an abbreviation for the categories above.

- Literature
 - American History
 - Contemporary Events
 - Science
 - World History
 - Potpourri
2. All questions are worth 5 points.
 3. Great effort will be made to ensure the consistency of questions asked from round-to-round. The toss-up questions will be NAQT questions and will cover a variety of topics.

The sequence of questions for the fanfare will be:

Contemporary Events - World History - Literature - American History - Science - Potpourri

F. Time

1. A match consists of two (2) rounds. Each round consists of a toss-up section and a fanfare section.
2. When the clock sounds the end of time, the question will end, except:
 - a. If a player has buzzed in before the end of the clock buzzer, the player will be permitted to answer the question within three (3) seconds.
 - b. During Fanfare, if the quizmaster has begun reading the question, the team will be permitted to hear the entire question and will be given three (3) seconds to give an answer.

G. Toss-ups

1. A Toss-up section contains ten (10) questions.
2. All teams have ten (10) seconds to buzz in after the question has been completed.
3. Team members may not engage in verbal or nonverbal conferral once their team has buzzed in.
4. If the answer given is incorrect, the remaining teams have whatever time is remaining on the clock to buzz in.
5. An answer to a toss-up question must begin within three (3) seconds after the team has been recognized. An answer begun after the academic quizmaster and/or competition judge has said "Time" will be treated as no answer.
6. A player may signal to answer a toss-up question at any point after the quizmaster has begun reading the question.
7. When a player has buzzed in, the quizmaster will recognize the team by name. A player is not to answer a question until his/her team has been recognized by the quizmaster.
8. If a player buzzes in before the quizmaster has finished reading the question, the quizmaster will stop at that point. If the answer given is incorrect, the quizmaster will begin re-reading the question. The remaining teams may buzz in to answer the question.
9. If a player who was not the first to signal gives an answer:
 - a. The quizmaster will ignore the answer, and will recognize the player on another team who actually is the first to signal. In the event the player answers the question incorrectly, only the one remaining team that has not yet answered will still have the opportunity to buzz in and answer the question.
 - b. If the player who answers is a teammate of the first player to signal, the quizmaster will treat the response as an incorrect answer from that team.
 - c. If a player answers because the quizmaster incorrectly identified who signaled first, the question will be replaced, and no points will be awarded regardless if the question was answered correctly or incorrectly.

H. Fanfare

1. A Fanfare consists of six (6) questions that are asked and answered by all three teams with the use of white boards. All teams have 15 seconds to write down their answers on the given white board. All writing must stop when timer sounds. If a team is writing after the timer has sound, their answer will be invalid. When the question is completed, the moderator will call on each team to show and state their answers. The team(s) with the correct answers are awarded 5 points.
2. The time clock does not start counting down from 15 seconds until the questions are completely read.
3. The designated team captain will be required to give the answers a loud, but may defer to a teammate by saying "defer" to give the answer. If another team member responds without the captain's deferral, the response will not be accepted until the captain has given the answer. No other player may defer.
4. Teams may “pass” on any question; however, they will not be given an opportunity to answer “passed” questions after time has expired.

I. Correct Answers

1. The quizmaster will accept only the first answer given by a player.
2. The following are generally acceptable for persons, unless the question indicates otherwise: last names for real persons, nicknames that are nearly universally (For example, “Babe” Ruth may be accepted while the “Home Run King” might not), pseudonyms, birth names, unmarried or married names, and regnal names. If a last name is not acceptable outright, it will at least be promptable. If a full name is given voluntarily, it must be completely correct.
3. In rare cases, an otherwise acceptable (or promptable) answer may be ruled incorrect when it creates ambiguity with another plausible answer (e.g., even though first and last names are almost always sufficient, **John Adams** would not be acceptable--or promptable--for **John Quincy Adams**, as it creates confusion with the full name of his presidential father).
4. Players will be prompted if they give part of a compound last name (e.g., saying **Webber** for **Andrew Lloyd Webber**.)
5. First names of real people are rarely acceptable or promptable, except where they coincide with regnal names. Among the exceptions to this rule are figures like Galileo, Raphael, and Dante who lived in eras when the use of surnames was less well established.
6. Acceptable answers for fictional characters depend on the way in which they are referred to in the book and related scholarship. It is common for just the first name or the last name of a character to be acceptable. Occasionally, identifying phrases (e.g. **Tess of the d'Urbervilles**) may also be acceptable.

A person's first name alone will only be accepted when it is sufficient information to indicate specifically which person to whom the student is referring. For example, in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, giving the answer "Juliet" would be sufficient, as there is only one Juliet in the play. The answer "Juliet Capulet" would also be accepted.

7. United States president's last names will be accepted unless the last name is not sufficient to distinguish the president. In that case, the moderator will prompt. The first name and/or middle name, or initial must be used in a manner that makes clear to which president the student is referring. In keeping with the first answer rule, the order of the name must be first name followed by middle, if applicable, then last name. Abbreviate names such as "JFK", "MLK" or "FDR" are accepted. The only nicknames that will be accepted are commonly accepted first name nicknames such as "Bill Clinton", "Teddy Roosevelt", and "Abe Lincoln". Nicknames such as "Honest Abe" and "Dubya" will not be accepted. The correctness of an answer is at the discretion of the judge.
8. First names of kings and queens will be accepted without their corresponding number; however, if a number is given, it must be correct.
9. Extraneous information preceding a response is disregarded (e.g., "What is a wombat?" or "They're all Californians") unless the quizmaster and/or academic competition judge determines that the extraneous information was given in an unsportsmanlike attempt to delay the game, in which case the response is treated as incorrect. Harmless or inadvertent embellishment of responses will not be penalized, so long as the embellishment does not make the response wrong.
10. Dates must be exact (e.g. the year **71** will not be accepted if the answer is **1971**). Years given will be assumed to be AD/CE unless otherwise modified. However, if the question explicitly or implicitly indicates that only a particular century, decade, or other limited interval is under consideration, abbreviated dates will be interpreted in that context.
11. When expressing a mathematical or chemical formula, the students must use "quantity" or "open and closed parenthesis" as necessary. For the mathematical formula $(x + y)^2 = x^2 + 2xy + y^2$, only "the quantity x plus y squared is x squared plus two xy plus y squared" OR "Open parenthesis x plus y close parenthesis squared is x squared plus two xy plus y squared" would be accepted. An example of an acceptable chemical formula answer that includes parenthesis would be: "Q: Give the chemical formula for Ammonium Phosphate. A: The quantity N, H, 4 taken three times, P, O, 4." Another acceptable answer would be "Open parenthesis, N, H, 4, closed parenthesis, 3, P, O, 4."
12. Titles of works must be exact, except that leading articles may be omitted. All words other than leading articles must be correct (e.g., **Bridge of San Luis Rey** is acceptable, but **Bridge over San Luis Rey** is not.) Rarely will subtitles or working titles be accepted for the published title.
 - a. If an incorrect leading article is used, the response is incorrect (e.g., **A Bridge of San Luis Rey** is not acceptable.)
 - b. Insertion of a leading article before a title where none exists will not invalidate an answer (e.g., **The San Francisco Chronicle** for **San Francisco Chronicle**), so long as no other ambiguity is introduced (e.g., **Invisible Man** by H. G. Wells is acceptable; **The Invisible**

- Man** by Ralph Waldo Ellison is not.)
- c. Commonly used titles may be accepted if the actual title is long and cumbersome (e.g., **Wealth of Nations** in lieu of **Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations**).
 - a. Players are not prompted if they give a partial title (e.g., saying **San Luis Rey** for **The Bridge of San Luis Rey**); partial titles do not count as "accurate and precise knowledge" except in the cases listed above (or when directed by specific notes on the question).
13. Common acronyms and abbreviations for organizations are generally acceptable.
 14. Acronyms and abbreviations for other answers may or may not be acceptable, depending on how widespread their use is and possible ambiguity. If commonly used, they will usually at least be promptable.
 15. Postal abbreviations are *not* acceptable for the names of states.
 16. Neither chemical symbols nor atomic numbers are generally acceptable for the names of elements.
 17. Answers relying on highly specialized knowledge, such as the ISO 3166 codes for countries, are not generally acceptable despite their international use and uniqueness.
 18. Common names, formulas, and IUPAC names are generally acceptable for chemical compounds, but in some cases one or more may be ambiguous and require resolution.
 19. Answers that are religious figures or concepts belonging to more than one tradition may generally be given in the corresponding form of *any* of the traditions unless the question is specifically about differences or similarities among the various traditions. For instance, **Ibrahim** is generally acceptable for **Abraham**. It would not be acceptable, however, if the question were specifically asking for Biblical equivalents of given Qur'anic figures.
 20. Questions that refer to "Greek myth" or include unambiguous references to Greek mythological characters generally require that the Greek forms of names be given as answers (e.g. **Poseidon** rather than **Neptune**). Similarly, questions that specifically mention "Roman myth" or include unambiguous references to Roman mythological characters generally require that the Roman forms of names be given as answers. The names of corresponding figures from other mythological traditions will not generally be prompted.
 21. Both common and official English names are always acceptable for modern-day countries and other political entities. Foreign-language names for countries and other political entities are generally not acceptable unless specifically requested by the question. Historical questions may require the contemporary names of political entities and may or may not specify prompting on other names depending on the nuances of the question. Historical names of countries, cities, and other political entities are generally not acceptable if the question does not involve the time period in which they were in use.
 22. Fractional answers must be given in lowest terms, unless otherwise specified in the question. They may, however, be in improper form.
 23. Questions which ask for a physical quantity will specify the units of the answer in the question; answers given without units will be assumed to be in the units specific in the question, even if

that part of the question had not been read when the answer was given. Physically equivalent answers given in different units are acceptable so long as, in the moderator's judgment, the answer was not given with the intention of delaying of the game.

24. Titles and names in the original language of the answer are generally acceptable unless specifically disallowed by the question. English titles under which translations have been published will also be accepted (e.g., for the Camus work, **L'Etranger** is acceptable, as is **The Stranger** or **The Outsider**--the original British translation--but **Der Fremde** is not, as the work was not originally written in German.) Potential translations of foreign-language titles into English that have not been used for published editions of the work are generally not acceptable.
25. If a question asks to identify an answer from a list, the player must give an exact or very similar answer to the form included in the list (e.g., saying **Mississippi** instead of **Mississippi River** is acceptable, but **the second thing you read** or **the one that started with F** are not).
26. Pronunciations do not have to be exact. A plausible or phonetic pronunciation is usually acceptable, unless it demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding about the correct answer (e.g., **Malcolm the Tenth** is not acceptable for **Malcolm X**). As a general rule, while leeway may be given to vowel sounds, consonants should be in the correct order (e.g., **Olduvai** is not the same as **Olvudai**), and syllables should not be added or omitted.
27. It is not the case, however, that "vowels do not matter." Correctly pronounced answers are always acceptable. Plausible pronunciations of answers according to standard English phonetics are acceptable, so long as they do not create ambiguity. Plausible pronunciations of answers according to other languages may or may not be acceptable depending on the exact context. For instance, **mee-jee**, **mye-jye**, and **may-ih-jee** would all be acceptable for **Meiji**. **Moo-joo** or **may-jay** would be incorrect. The intent of this rule is to avoid penalizing players for learning by reading without an opportunity to hear words pronounced correctly.
28. A player may be prompted to spell a phonetically close response. In such cases, the exact spelling is not always required (e.g., a player says **muh-NAY** and is prompted. A response of **M-A-N-A-Y** would be sufficient to remove ambiguity with **Monet**.)
29. The academic competition team will strive to avoid ambiguity with regards to questions referencing Britain, the United Kingdom, and countries therein.

If the question is looking for a specific country (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), we will not accept Great Britain, Britain, British Isles or the United Kingdom (UK). The United Kingdom was established in 1707, so we will not accept the United Kingdom as an answer for any question of an event preceding 1707.

If the answer is the United Kingdom, we will not accept England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. We will accept Britain or Great Britain depending on the context.

When referring to ethnicity, a person from the United Kingdom may be referred to as "British," as well as their specific country of origin.

30. If the quizmaster inadvertently reveals the answer to a question after a team has given an incorrect answer, but before the other teams have had a chance to answer, the quizmaster will read a replacement toss-up question for the remaining teams only. If none of the teams

have had a chance to answer, the toss-up will be replaced with a new question.

31. If the quizmaster, the academic competition judge or any official member of the academic competition staff believes he or she has heard the answer to the question called out from the audience, the question will be replaced and no points will be rewarded for the replaced question.
32. Only the answer on the quizmaster's card will be accepted as the correct answer, whether or not it is correct, and whether or not a team can "prove" that it is incorrect. However, the academic competition judge may rule to accept an answer even if it is not on the card, if he/she determines the answer was correct.

J. Prompting (see Correct Answers for more information)

1. A moderator may prompt for a clarified response if a player gives an answer that could be interpreted as compatible with the clues that have been read, but which is ambiguous, the moderator will prompt by saying something like "more information, please" (e.g., a player says **Bush**, and the answer sought is **George H. W. Bush**).
2. Prompting for a clarified response is governed by these rules:
 - a. Unless otherwise noted by the question, the moderator will not state what type of information is sought by the prompt (e.g., it would be inappropriate for the moderator to say "I need a first name.")
 - b. A moderator will only prompt once.
 - c. A player who has been prompted on a tossup question has an additional 2 seconds to provide a revised response.

K. Appeals

1. Mistakes happen no matter how hard everyone tries. Take a deep breath and treat the academic competition staff and the opposing teams calmly. We all want a perfect tournament, and will do our best to correct errors with your cooperation.
2. No appeals regarding validity of answers will be accepted. All decisions by the academic competition team will be final. Coaches and team members are expected to accept the decision graciously. As in all team competition, unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and may result in ejection from the tournament, forfeiture of the game, or both.
3. During matches, the academic competition judge may only be approached by the coach between rounds to report a perceived error.
4. If it is determined that the scorekeeper inadvertently awarded points to a team that it did not earn, then the points will be removed and, if warranted, added to the score of the team to which they were to be originally awarded.
5. It is impossible to foresee every circumstance that may arise during competition. In the event a situation arises that is not covered in these guidelines, the academic competition judge will use their discretion to resolve the situation. The academic competition judge's

decision is final.

L. Semifinal Matches

The teams will be seeded as follows:

Match 1:	1 - 6 - 9
Match 2:	2 - 5 - 8
Match 3:	3 - 4 - 7

M. Championship Match

The winners of each semifinal match will compete in the championship match.

N. Tie Scores

1. Tie scores are possible in the following instances:
 - a. At the end of the two preliminary rounds which determines the teams in the Semifinal matches.
 - b. At the end of a Semifinal match.
 - c. At the end of the Championship match.
2. If a tie exists between two or more teams at the end of the preliminary rounds, and only affects their placement in the top nine teams entering the semifinals, a numbered slip of paper will be drawn by each team to determine their placement in the semifinals.
3. In the event of a tied score at the end of a semi-final or final match that would impact the selection of a final champion, the competition will proceed as follows:
 - a. First tie-breaker "Toss-Up"

A special tie-breaker toss-up round of 5 questions will be immediately held for the tied teams. At the end of the round, the quizmaster will announce "Thank you. This concludes our match. Please hold your seats. The judges will announce the winners momentarily. The team with the highest score at the conclusion of the tie-breaker round will win the match.
2. In the event of a tied score at the end of a semifinal or final match that would impact the selection of a final champion, the competition will proceed as follows:
 - a. First tie-breaker "Toss-Up"

A special tie-breaker toss-up round of 5 questions will be immediately held for the tied teams. At the end of the round, the quizmaster will announce "Thank you. This concludes our match. Please hold your seats. The judges will announce the winners momentarily." Any appeals will be considered using the standard competition guidelines for appeals. The team with the highest score at the conclusion of the tie-breaker round will win the match.

b. Second tie-breaker “Sudden Death”

If a tie still exists at the end of the first tie-breaker, a sudden death tie-breaker competition will begin. Both teams will be asked the same question; whoever is the first team to buzz in with the correct answer is declared the winner. If they do not answer the question correctly, then the other team has a chance to answer. If both teams do not give the correct answer, then the Quizmaster will ask continue to ask questions until one of the teams answers correctly.

CODE OF ETHICS

It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure the members of his or her team are aware of and adhere to the code of ethics.

1. Good sportsmanship is required.
2. Use of profanity, temper tantrums, and other unsportsmanlike behavior will be considered grounds for removal from the match.
3. Students exhibiting unsportsmanlike behavior may be removed from the game with or without prior warning.
 - a. No mid-round substitution will be allowed if a student has been removed for unsportsmanlike behavior.
 - b. Teams will continue to play with the remaining three players until normal substitution time.
 - c. The player that has been removed from the game may not re-enter the round of which he/she was removed and must also sit out the following round.
 - d. Depending upon the severity of the student’s behavior, he/she may be suspended for more than one match or for the entire season.
4. Coaches are expected to serve as role models for their students. Therefore, coaches exhibiting unsportsmanlike behavior may be removed from the room with or without prior warning. The coach that has been removed from the competition room may not re-enter the room for the remainder of the match from which he/she was removed.
5. The school districts will be held responsible for the actions and behavior of the students and coaches representing their school. Misbehavior, vandalism and unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated and will be the responsibility of their school district.
6. At the discretion of the academic competition judge, a spectator may be removed from the competition room.
7. Further violations of the above rules will result in the team’s forfeiture of the remaining rounds of that match.
8. All players, coaches, institutional representatives and other persons associated with a team are bound by an honor code to behave responsibly and ethically. This includes, but is not limited to: treating all other participants and staff with courtesy, not receiving or giving impermissible assistance, not creating the temptation for another to cheat, not taking excessive time to answer a question in an attempt to prevent others from answering, abiding by all decisions of the academic competition judge and the tournament staff, not colluding with another person to “fix” a match result, not intentionally “throwing” a match, honestly reporting details of game situations to tournament

officials, and promptly reporting violations of the honor code to a tournament staff member.

9. Violation of any game rule can be construed as unsportsmanlike conduct and may result in the coach, player, or spectator being removed from the room for the remainder of the match, and/or forfeiture of the match.

AWARDS

Championship Team:

- A first-place trophy will be given for permanent display in their school.
- The Championship Revolving Trophy will be displayed in the winning school for one year and returned to the PA Academic Competition the following year.
- The school of the championship team will receive a \$2,000 scholarship to be presented at graduation to a recipient of its choosing.
- Each team member will receive a commemorative medal.

Finalist Teams:

- A trophy will be given to each Finalist team for permanent display in their school.
- Each Finalist school will receive a \$500 scholarship to be presented at graduation to a recipient of its choosing.
- Each team member will receive a commemorative medal.

All Participants:

- Each participating team member will receive a commemorative pin.