



United States Academic Decathlon

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ACADEMIC DECATHLON™

The premier scholastic competition for high school students.

Introducing
United States Academic Decathlon®
2017-2018
"Africa"

USAD Mission Statement

The mission of the U.S. Academic Decathlon® is to promote learning and academic excellence among students of varying achievement levels by developing and providing multidisciplinary academic competitions using U.S. Academic Decathlon®-based curricula.

The History of Academic Decathlon®

Academic Decathlon® was created in 1981 by Dr. Robert Peterson, former Superintendent of Schools in Orange County, California. He firmly believed that everyone's learning potential could be maximized through competitive challenge. Dr. Peterson set in motion the contest that has since come to be recognized as the most prestigious high school academic team competition in the United States.

What is Academic Decathlon®?

- It emphasizes the personal and academic growth of each student
- Encourages students to meet the challenges with honesty and integrity
- Helps students obtain greater self-knowledge and self-confidence
- Develops teamwork, competitiveness, communication and research skills, and a quest for life-long learning

Program Overview

Academic Decathlon® is a team competition wherein students match their intellects with students from other schools. Students are tested in ten categories:

Art

Economics

Essay

Interview

Literature

Mathematics

Music

Science

Social Science

Speech (prepared & impromptu)

Educational Experience

Based on the model of the athletic decathlon, AD requires participants to prepare for ten academic events. AD does not permit students to “specialize” but rather encourages academic versatility by requiring students to prepare for all ten events. AD stresses educational opportunity and academic excellence.

Competition Events

- Seven multiple choice exams – one in each of the following: Art, Economics, Literature, Math, Music, Science, and Social Science
- Three judged communication events: Speech, Interview and Essay

Multiple Choice Exams

- Art, Economics, Literature, Music, Science and Social Science each have 50 questions.
- Math exam has 35 questions.

Students are given 30 minutes to complete each of the multiple choice exams.

Communication Events

- Students are given 50 minutes to complete the Essay exam.
- Speech – students present one 3 ½ to 4-minute prepared speech and an impromptu speech lasting between 1 ½ and 2 minutes.
- Interview with a panel of 2 to 3 judges – the interview process usually last between 4 and 7 minutes.

Super Quiz

- The Super Quiz™ Relay is a stand alone event and scores will NOT be added to individual or team scores.
- Test items are derived from all of the objective testing areas including math in some instances.

Art

The art curriculum is an introduction to African art, with a focus on art from southern and eastern Africa, central Africa, western Africa and contemporary African art in addition to the art of African Diaspora.

Economics

The economics curriculum is an introduction to economics and the African economic history and development.

Topics covered include:

- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- African economic history & development

Literature

The literature curriculum will be an introduction to Anglophone African literature. Selections includes critical reading, one novel, and seven shorter works. The featured novel will be *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (published by Alfred A. Knopf/Random House)

Math

The mathematics curriculum is an overview of:

- General Mathematics
- Geometry
- Introduction to Differential Calculus

Music

The music curriculum is an introduction to the music of Africa, to the region and musical concepts including traditional music, modern music and current issues. The curriculum package includes a Music MP3.

Science

The science curriculum is an introduction to the biology of infectious disease including:

- HIV
- Malaria
- Ebola

Social Science

The social science curriculum is an introduction to the history of Africa including:

- Myth and Reality; Human Origins; Early African Civilizations; Islam, Christianity, and Traditional African Religion; The Atlantic and West African Slave Trade
- Imperialism, Colonialism and Revolution; the rise of Independent West Africa

Levels of Competition

- Online scrimmages
- Online regional
- Online and face-to-face state
- Nationals
 - (2018) – Frisco, Texas
 - (2019) – Bloomington, MN
 - (2020) – Anchorage, AK

National Competition

- Students compete in all ten events plus the Super Quiz™ event
- The state champion team advances to Nationals. These states may also send a team to compete in Division IV
- Teams compete with other states in their division based on school population
- 2018 Nationals will be held in Frisco, Texas

Awards

(both team & individual)

- Certificate of Participation
 - Medals
 - Plaques
 - Trophies
- Scholarships

State & National Competitions

Each team member competes in all ten events. Only six scores count towards the final team standing

- The top two Honor scores
- The top two Scholastic scores
- The top two Varsity scores

Regional, State & National Awards

Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded for individual event winners in each division (honors, scholastic, and varsity) and overall total high scorers.

The Academic Decathlon Team

A team consists of nine full-time students in grades 9–12 from the same high school. Each team is made up of three honor students, three scholastic students, and three varsity students:

- Honor 3.75 – 4.00 GPA
- Scholastic 3.00 – 3.74 GPA
- Varsity 0.00 – 2.99 GPA

How to Form A Team

- Identify a Coach (need good motivator)
- Discuss with students the idea of forming a team
- Recruit additional teachers to help with other subjects
- Recruit 3 "A", 3 "B" & 3 "C" students
- Prepare - let teachers in the classes that cover Decathlon topics know what you are working on

Team Selection

- Open up to all students - give tests (USAD scrimmage or other) to determine qualified students
- Get recommendations from teachers or other students
 - ◆ Talk to counselors
 - ◆ Get leads from other students
 - ◆ Survey teachers for names of students
 - ◆ Check test scores, IQ, standardized tests, etc.
 - ◆ Talk to Gifted & Talented Coordinators
 - ◆ Hold general meeting - discuss advantages/disadvantages of AD; determine student's availability; review course work as it relates to current Study Guide topics
 - ◆ Student Characteristics - intelligent, motivated, inquisitive, coachable, peer acceptance, team player

Team Recruitment

- Year round effort
- Coach is salesperson
- Talk it up in your schools and classrooms
- Active recruitment may be necessary to secure “varsity” level students
- Be honest with amount of time required
- Be alert to extra-curricular activities (especially jobs)
- Balance the team (freshman through seniors)
- Test students with last year’s Practice Test or this year’s scrimmage tests from USAD; have students write an essay test for writing ability

Coaches Responsibilities

- Team Recruitment
- Team Selection
- Secure Resource Materials
- Staff Involvement
- Coaching
- Team Preparation
- Register Team
- Verify GPA's
- Make Travel Arrangements for Competition(s)
- Communicate with State Director
- Chaperone Team

Why Academic Decathlon?

- Creates a climate on high school campuses, supporting and cheering a program devoted to the achievement of intellectual strength.
- Teachers from various disciplines and experts from public and private sectors work together in preparing the team.
- The “C” student – becomes empowered.
- The “A” and “B” student are given the chance to research and enrich learning.
- Music and Art appreciation study come alive.
- Encourages public interest and awareness of outstanding programs in American schools.

How to get started!

- Contact info@usad.org or your state director.
- Select a coach
- Apply for the first year supply grant
- Use official **USAD** curriculum and visit the USAD website www.usad.org for details
- Meet with interested students
- Recruit faculty and community co-coaches
- Select nine or more students for the team
- Prepare and practice
- **Compete!**



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Thank You for taking the time to
learn about this incredible
academic program