

# Andrew Bates

@mracademics

## UIL Social Studies Director *(all levels)*

SESSION 126



SCAN HERE FOR  
HOUSTON  
ROSTERS



And Lyon there  
say'd 'No,

If he will let the fangs to ease his wrongs  
that cryed out thus engaged, fit.

# BEFORE WE GET STARTED

Register your  
attendance.  
Session numbers  
are in the  
program **SESSION 126**



SCAN HERE FOR  
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# Where in the World?

You are in:

**Session 126 Social Studies: Introduction to the Contest. Room ACAD 226**

- Next: Session 127 - Social Studies: Advanced. Analyze the specifics of the 2024-25 UIL Social Studies Topic
- Session 110 - Current Issues & Events and Social Studies: Preparing to Write the Essay

**What is in the session?**

- Basics of Contest (nuts & bolts) parts of it and how to compete
- Intro of Topic - different sections 3-2-1 and types of questions
- Strategies and resources
- Questions answered

# And We're Back!

Who? - Former Principal and UIL Coordinator for 20 years - Coached State Competitors in Debate, Speech, OAP, Spelling, Current Events, and Social Studies - Won over 20 titles, including 10 overall academic state championships.

Follow along - Take notes - Ask questions - I will repeat - and hope to have posted or just tweet at me @mracademics or email abates@sabinepass.net - Twitter Poll for Topics, Tips, Resources

How many experienced? How many newbies? (show of hands)

# The Social Studies Contest

*PREPARING  
FOR  
COMPETITION  
(WHAT IS IT ABOUT?)*

# History of Contest

- 2003 - 2004 Gilded Age - Devil in the White City
- 2005 Fifties - The Fifties
- 2006 WWII - Citizen Soldiers
- 2007 Am. Revolution - 1776
- 2008 Supreme Court
- 2009 African Colonization - King Leopold's Ghost
- 2010 Civil War
- 2011 Space Race - The Right Stuff
- 2012 Latin America
- 2013 American Indians - Comanche - Empire of the Summer Moon
- 2014 Australia & Oceania - Commonwealth of Thieves
- 2015 Presidents - 1920 Year of the Six Presidents
- 2016 WWI - Guns of August
- 2017 US Constitution - Madison's Gift
- 2018 Former Soviet Union - Lenin's Tomb
- 2019 U.S. Civil Rights Movements - Race Beat
- 2020 East Asia - Everlasting Flower  
(The Topic that Wasn't)
- 2021 American Empire - Honor in the Dust
- 2022 Olympics - Rome 1960
- 2023 20s/20th - New World Coming
- 2024 Modern South Asia
- 2025 Partisanship and the Rise of Democracy

Pattern of CX (foreign/domestic), variety of geographic heavy -  
to straight history - to culture - to government and combos

# Purpose

The Social Studies Contest challenges students to *read widely and deeply* in the areas of social studies in order to: expand and apply their understanding of the nature of geography and the physical setting of the earth to physical and cultural environments; expand and apply their understanding of the governmental systems; and expand and apply their understanding of historical trends, movements and eras, the impact and significance of time and place, cause and effect, and change over time.

# The Contest

Individual  
Competition

Up to 6 students  
per school  
?

Team  
Competition

At least 3  
students per  
team



# Who Advances?



- Top three individuals
- All members (up to 4) of the top team
- The wild card team - **VERY** important  
(3x State before Region)

# The Test

*Objective Questions*

*45 questions = 80 points*

*Essay Questions*

*1 question = 20 points*

# **Important Reminder**

**Failure to submit an essay shall result in disqualifications.**

# The Test

*Top 8 objective scores  
(or more if ties on eighth)  
have their essays scored*

# The Test

## *Ranking*

*Individuals = Objective + Essay*

*Tiebreaker = judging of essays (scores then side-by-side)*

*Team = top 3 objective scores*

*Tiebreaker = score of 4th member*

*All the way to state!*

# Objective Questions *Categories and Points*

## UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE SOCIAL STUDIES CONTEST

CONTESTANT ANSWER SHEET

CONTESTANT #

*DO NOT write your name or school on any paper. Write the LETTER indicating the BEST possible answer to each question in the space below. Write clearly in CAPITAL letters. Write your essay response on scratch paper provided.*

Part I (1 point each)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Part II (2 points each)

21. \_\_\_\_\_

**OBJECTIVE PORTION:**

- Objective scores determine which essays are graded.

# Section One

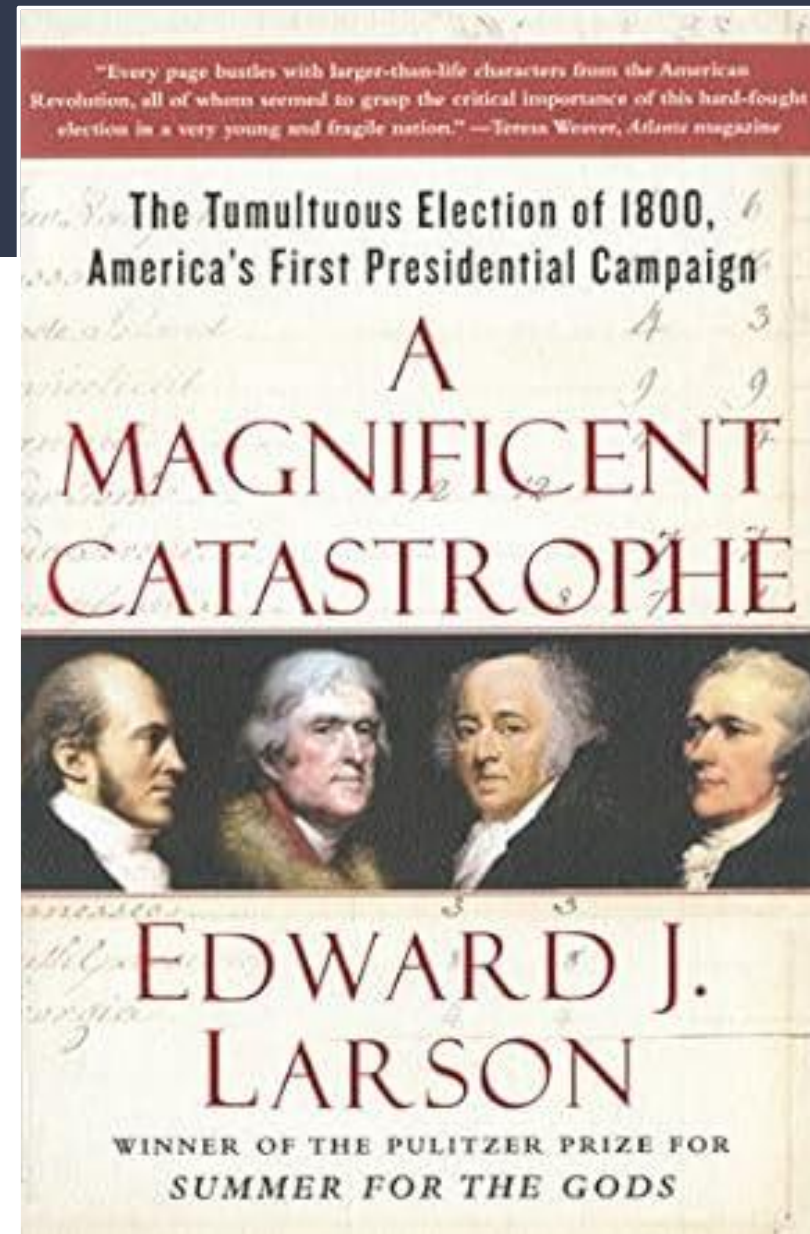
*20 questions*

- **General Knowledge and Terms**
- **1 point each**

# Section Two

*15 questions*

- (Mostly) Primary Document (Book)
- 2 points each





# Section Three

*10 questions*

- **(Mostly) Supplemental Readings & Documents**
- **Court Cases, Legislation, Primary Sources, etc.**
- **3 points each**

# Tips on Writing an Analytical Essay for the UIL Social Studies Contest

- This is the **KEY** to the individual component and very much acts as the determining factor in deciding the best of the best
- I didn't use to focus on this
- Shows true extensive knowledge
- Subjective/Objective Balance (Objective has random/luck aspect)

# More Essay Tips

First read the prompt carefully. Examine the question in a variety of contexts: social, political, scientific, cultural, and economic. We recommend that you outline your essay before writing.

Make sure to have a

**THESIS** and

**ANSWER THE**

**QUESTION**

(no matter how much you wish it was about something else)

# PROMPTNESS COUNTS

## ESSAY PROMPT:

NOTE: Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified. Any essay that does not demonstrate a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic will be disqualified. The rankings of essays will be based primarily on how well the topic has been addressed. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay. Proper grammar and organization should be used to aid clarity, but should not be considered a major factor in scoring. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical. Avoid including personal editorialized opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published.

*“The Valley was now clearly under military occupation and if not technically a war zone was certainly a ‘dirty war’ zone. ...Hindu fundamentalism and Islamic fundamentalism were feeding off one another. The two processes began independently, yet legitimized and furthered the other.”*

*-excerpt from India: A History by John Keay*

*“Once the idyllic pleasure ground of the British Raj and later a tourist resort..., Kashmir is now a war zone – the disputed territory fought over by two hostile nations that were once one...Those writers who go to Kashmir are...journalists covering...conflict that rumbles, flares up, dies down and rumbles on year in and year out... Kashmir, a place of minor material or economic importance...possesses enormous significance to Indians’ and Pakistanis’ conflicting, irreconcilable conceptions of the subcontinent.”*

*-excerpt from Indira: The Life of Indira Nehru Gandhi by Katherine Frank*

**In many ways the modern story of the ongoing Kashmiri conflict is a microcosm for the recent past and current situation of India, Pakistan, and their relations with the countries of the greater region. Describe the major conflicts that have occurred in Kashmir since 1947 and discuss how its current status is a result of these past events.**

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# The PERFECT ESSAY

- Sample Answer Guides
- [Rubric](#)
- Consensus vs. Average (both if done correctly)
- Not an English essay... seriously though

**Rubric**  
for the Social Studies Essay

*Judges may award all or no points. This is a working document for as many as three judges. Final points are a compromise among judges, NOT A RUNNING POINT TOTAL or pure point averaging. Return this form to the student with the objective portion of the contest.*

■ Points AWARDED:	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Consensus
<b>A 16-20 ESSAY</b> opens with a declarative statement that extends the prompt without re-stating it. The thesis is supported by substantial, relevant information that analyzes the prompt from a range of perspectives—for example, political, social, cultural and economic. It does not provide a mere shopping list of facts. It interprets the facts without editorializing. The essay is well written and organized with few spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. The essay is clear, precise and succinct.	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>An 11-15 ESSAY</b> offers a clear thesis with limited development. It either deals with one aspect in depth or with all aspects more superficially while providing limited analysis. Generally good writing and organization skills displayed. May contain errors of fact that do not seriously detract from the quality of the essay.				
<b>A 6-10 ESSAY</b> lacks a thesis or presents a confused or undeveloped thesis. It deals with the prompt in a superficial way and offers no analysis. Instead, it tends to editorialize. May contain major fact errors, display poor writing skills and rely on bloated, pretentious language.				
<b>A 0-5 ESSAY</b> displays little or no understanding of the prompt. The response is poorly written and organized and may contain significant fact, grammar, punctuation and/or spelling errors that detract from the clarity of the response.				
<b>OVERALL ESSAY SCORE</b> (maximum of 20 points)				_____
<b>OBJECTIVE SCORE</b> (score from the objective portion of the test)				_____
<b>OVERALL SCORE</b> (add essay score to objective score)				_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_



# ESSAY Continued

- ❖ Open with a clear, precise statement that assimilates all the information you've gathered regarding the question.
- ❖ Important: Do not repeat the essay prompt in your opening paragraph.
- ❖ Take it to a new level of understanding.

# DEFEND YOUR STATEMENT

- You have 90 minutes for the objective portion of the test and the essay.
- That's more time than you'll probably need, so think first before writing.
- Outline your essay.
- Prioritize your points. Then, be specific.
- Use specific examples.

# The BUTLER DID IT!!!

(skip to the end)

- Let it percolate
- Test questions might spark something
- Dulls the impact

# Possible Essay Question Topics!

## People (From Section I & II- Generally)

- Leaders: Jefferson, Madison, Clay, Hamilton, Jackson, Adams & Adams
- But also: Van Buren, Webster, Calhoun
- groupings/interactions: Parties and their factions, Movements (Abolition, Suffrage/Representation) (overlap with III)

## Major Events or Processes or Beliefs

- Terms w/ overlap in II & III (Elections(issues,developments), Vetoes)
- Issues (Bank War, Nullification, American System)
- Foreign Policy/Factions (Battles in Congress, Compromises, British v. France)

# Possible Essay Question Topics!

**TRENDS THAT COVER THE ENTIRE ERA AND  
SPECIFIC KEY MOMENTS WITHIN THEM**

- **Cause and effect**
- **Compare and contrast**
- **Could be stand alone if significant enough**

# General Guidelines for Essay Questions

- Objective is to encourage thinking and analysis
- Specific focus in most questions
- Abundant information available for response

# Details Review

## Understand the Math?

- 80 is Perfect Objective
- 20 on Essay (same as Current Events)

## Top 8 Objective (or more if ties on eighth)

### *Both are important*

- Perfect score and not place (b/c bad essay)
- Amazing Essay that no one ever reads (b/c not top 8 objective)

## Team Score is Top 3

- Tiebreak is 4th place score (if there is a 4th)
- All the way to state

## Individual Tie-Break = Essay

- 2nd tiebreak = compare side by side (cannot be an individual tie)

# Section One Questions

Term related questions ~200-300

- Lots of People and Groups
- Events
- Less terms than in some years

Explore List (will be notably altered from initial draft)



# Section Two Questions

## A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign

by Edward Larson

- Generally a spotlight/magnification of a specific key area.
- Chronological overall, but jumps back and forth to incorporate context and quotes. Repeats key items.
- Extremely readable and a great author
- Gives context and covers roots of the situation

# Section Three Questions

## Questions related to documents:

### Standard for Domestic topic

- Court Cases
- Legislation
- Speeches
- Other Documents
- Documentary & Topics

### Standard for Foreign topic

- Country Profiles
  - BBC
  - World Factbook
- Infoplease Encyclopedia

**... about the questions**

# Sample Question

1. The demise of “King Caucus” is associated with the election of \_\_\_\_\_.

A. 1844

B. 1828

C. 1800

D. 1824

*(other forms)*

# ... and another

2. On the first seven ballots at the 1844 Democratic Convention in Baltimore, numerous candidates received multiple votes for presidential nominee, but \_\_\_\_\_ received zero.

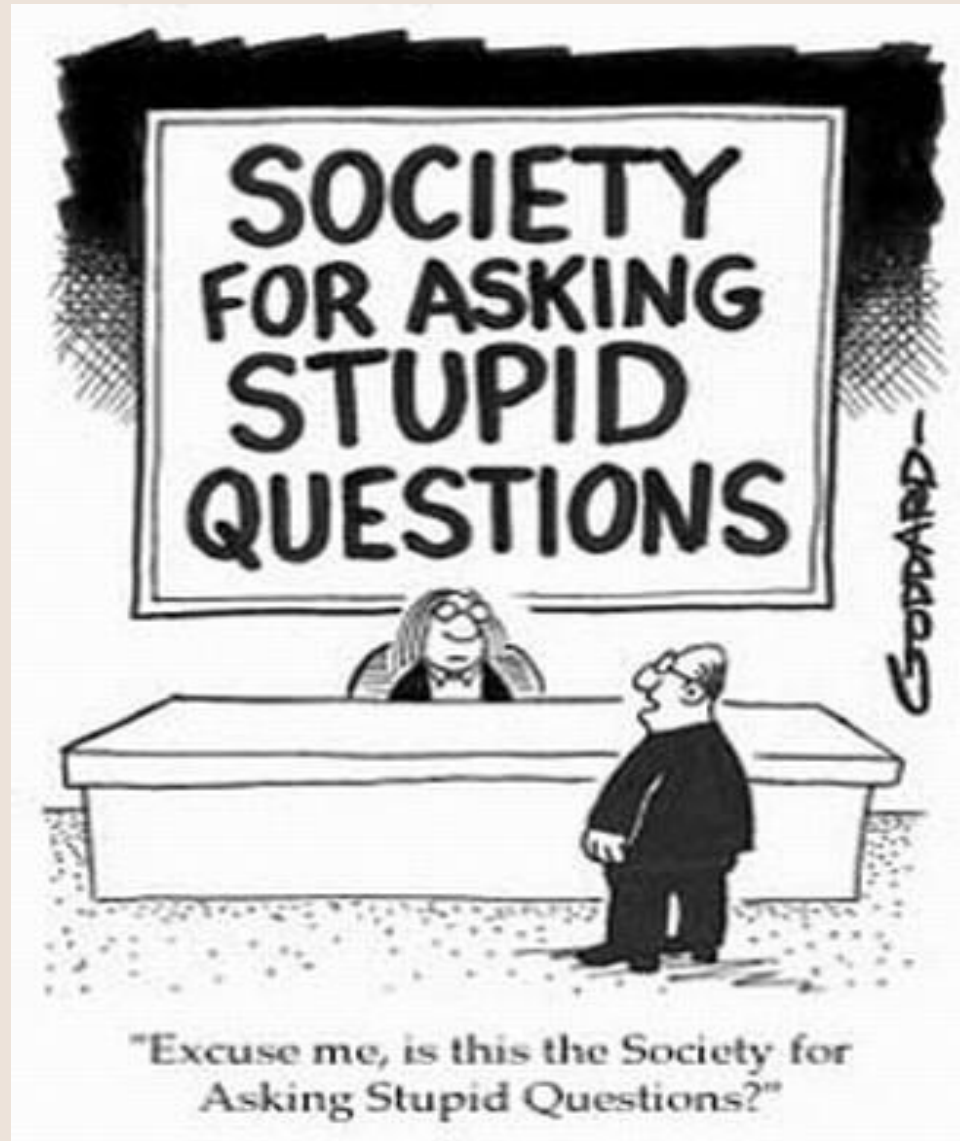
A. James Buchanan

C. John C. Calhoun

B. James K. Polk

D. Martin Van Buren

# No really easy questions



# Do NOT Expect This One

- 1. The delegates of the Hartford Convention proposed \_\_\_\_\_ amendments to the Constitution.**
  - A. too many...**

**... nor ones like this**

**2. Between 1798 and 1801, \_\_\_\_\_ people were prosecuted under the Sedition Act. These prosecutions, of mainly pro-Jefferson editors, led to 10 convictions.**

**A. 52**

**C. 31**

**B. 12**

**D. 26**

**(will not be questions based on specific numbers / statistics)**



**... nor ones like this**

***3. After the French victory over Prussia at Valmy in 1792, \_\_\_\_\_ wrote, “on this day began a new era in the history of the world.”***

***A. really significant, just not right now (however...)***

**TERMS - 100**

**BOOK - 75**

**DOCS - 50**

**225 TOTAL**

	<b>Section I</b>	<b>Section II</b>	<b>Section III</b>
<b>Set A</b>	20	15	10
<b>Set B</b>	20	15	10
<b>District</b>	20	15	10
<b>Region</b>	20	15	10
<b>State</b>	20	15	10

# Question Areas

- Matching individuals and position, philosophy, accomplishments
- Issues related to specific events
- Specific accomplishments (firsts)

# Question Areas

- Timeline kinds of questions
- The order in which major events transpire
- Emergence of political principles

# Question Areas

- Cause/Effects
- Evolution of involvement—key political events
- Exceptional situations

# Competition

- Official UIL – District, Region and State
- UIL – Invitational tournaments
- Informal competition
- Internet competition
  - <http://virtualchallengemeets.com/>
  - <http://bestoftexascontest.net/>

# Additional Helpful Material

# Recruiting Students

- Previous competitors
- Classes
- G/T Program
- Recommendation
- Personal Observation



# Preparation

- Select a team – yes, there is individual competition but teamwork is helpful
- Begin as soon as possible – teams that compete in May begin work in AUGUST (or earlier - BOOT CAMP)
- Establish reading deadlines – do not try to read the whole book in a week, especially the week before your first contest. Subscribe to a provider of practice material.
- Subscribe to a provider of practice material – multiple companies listed on the UIL website offer great material

# Preparation

- Practice regularly – the football team does it; so why not the Social Studies team
- Prepare team questions – a great way to gain new insight
- Question writing assignments – see above and add some focus
- Flashcards – one of the best ways to prepare
- Practice test-taking skills – regardless of the test, skills remain the same

# General Suggestions

- Regular practice sessions
- Develop flashcards and study materials
- Practice tournaments
- Stress team aspect of the contest
- Student activity conferences

# More Suggestions

- Review tests from previous competition
- Network with other coaches/students
- Ask questions @mracademics



# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING



HOUSTON EVAL

We value your  
feedback.  
Please complete  
conference  
evaluation after  
your last session.



LONE STAR COLLEGE- NORTH HARRIS, HOUSTON