

A In a Few Words

Objectives and Synopsis of each UIL Academic Contest

Accounting

The contest focuses on the elementary principles and practices of accounting for sole proprietorship, partnerships and corporations, and includes bookkeeping terminology, the work sheet with adjustments, income statement, balance sheet, trial balance, account classification, journalizing, posting, bank reconciliation, payroll and other items related to the basic accounting cycle.

Calculator Applications

The 30-minute contest includes calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, roots, powers, exponentiation, logarithms, trigonometric functions, inverse trigonometric functions, iterative solutions for transcendental equations, differential and integral calculus, elementary statistics and matrix algebra. In addition to straightforward calculation problems, the contest includes geometric and stated problems similar to those found in recently adopted high school algebra, geometry, trigonometry, pre-calculus and calculus textbooks, previous contests, and UIL materials related to the contest.

Computer Science

The Computer Science contest challenges high school students to gain an understanding of the significance of computation as well as the details of Java programming, to be alert to new technology and information, to gain an understanding of the basic principles of computer science, and to give students a start in one of the most important fields of the Information Age.

Current Issues & Events

The contest focuses on a basic knowledge of current state, national and world events and issues. The content consists of 40 multiple-choice questions and an essay question that challenges all participants to understand not just what is happening in the world today, but why and how it's happening and what it means to us as citizens of the US.

Literary Criticism

The contest requires knowledge of literary history and of critical terms, and ability in literary criticism. Students are tested over material on the reading list, required to select the best answers involving judgment in literary criticism, and to analyze literary passages not on the reading list. A tie-breaker is required in which the student must write a short essay dealing with a specified topic about a short literary passage.

Mathematics

The 40-minute test consists of 60 questions designed to test knowledge and understanding in the areas of algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, math analysis, analytic geometry, pre-calculus and elementary calculus. Questions will be multiple choice in style.

Number Sense

Number Sense involves a 10-minute, 80 question mental math test covering all high school mathematics courses. Short cuts need to be developed and practiced in order to compete and finish the test.

Ready Writing

In this contest, students write expository compositions. They are given a choice between two prompts, each an excerpt from literature, publications (past and present) or speeches. Expository writing explains, proves, or explores a topic in a balanced way, allowing the argument and the evidence given to be the deciding factor in the paper. The composition is judged on interest, organization and correctness of style.

Science

The purpose of the Science contest is to challenge high school students to do a wide range of reading in biology, chemistry and physics, to gain an understanding of the significance of experiments rather than to recall obscure details, to be alert to new discoveries and information in the areas of science, to gain an understanding of the basic principles as well as knowledge of the history and philosophy of science, and to foster a sense of enthusiasm about science and how it affects our daily lives.

Social Studies

The Social Studies contest consists of 45 objective questions and an essay. Students are expected to master a primary reading selection as well as specific documents. Students will also need to be familiar with general knowledge social studies concepts and terms. Each year the contest focuses on a selected topic area, and a reading list is provided online.

Spelling & Vocabulary

The UIL Spelling and Vocabulary contest promotes precise and effective use of words. The three-part contest consists of multiple choice questions of proofreading and vocabulary and words that are written from dictation. Eighty percent of the words on the test are listed in the UIL publication WordPower, which is based on the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, third edition. The vocabulary-building and spelling components of the contest are important complements of the high school academic curriculum and are indicative of vocabulary words contained on standardized tests such as SAT, PSAT and ACT.

Journalism

The journalism program consists of four contests: News Writing, Feature Writing, Editorial Writing and headline writing. The purpose of the League's journalism program is not so much to train students to become professional journalists but rather to stress critical reading, writing and thinking skills that will be useful in college and beyond. It also teaches the basics of communications necessary later in life to intelligently consume information provided by the media.

News Writing

The news writing contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on mechanical and stylistic precision, lead writing, use of direct and indirect quotes and news judgment.

Feature Writing

The feature writing contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly, and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on the same writing skills as other UIL journalism contests, as well as the ability to write descriptively.

Editorial Writing

The editorial writing contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly, and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on mechanical and stylistic precision, news judgment, and the ability to think deeply, to compare and contrast and to argue or defend a point of view persuasively.

Headline Writing

The headline writing contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly, and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on the ability to discern key facts and to write with flair and style in order to tell and sell a story.

One-Act Play

The aims of the One-Act Play Contest are

- to satisfy the competitive, artistic spirit with friendly rivalry among schools, emphasizing high quality performance in this creative art;
- to foster appreciation of good acting, good directing and good drama;
- to promote interest in that art form most readily usable in leisure time during adult life;
- to learn to lose or win graciously, accepting in good sportsmanship the judge's decision and criticism with a view to improving future productions; and
- to increase the number of schools which have adopted theatre arts as an academic subject in school curricula.

CX Debate

Cross-examination debate trains students to analyze a problem, conduct thorough and relevant research, and utilize principles of argumentation and advocacy in orally presenting the most effective case for or against a given proposition. Debate provides invaluable training in critical thinking, quick responses, defending worthy ideas and attacking invalid ideas. It teaches students to tolerate other points of view. Debate exists only in democratic societies, and no democratic society can exist without debate. The CX resolution is posted online.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Lincoln-Douglas debate provides excellent training for development of skills in argumentation, persuasion, research and audience analysis. Through this contest, students are encouraged to develop a direct and communicative style of oral delivery. Lincoln-Douglas debate is a one-on-one argumentation in which debaters attempt to convince the judge of the acceptability of their side of a value proposition. One debater shall argue the affirmative side of the resolution, and one debater shall argue the negative side of the resolution in a given round. Fall and spring resolutions are posted online.

Informative Speaking

The purpose of this contest is to stimulate an active interest in current affairs at the state, national and international levels, and to teach the student to present extemporaneously in a clear and impartial manner the facts about a subject as they appear in the best available sources of information. This speaking contest is an exercise in clear thinking and informing the public on the issues and concerns of the American people. The objective is to present information in an interesting way, and an attempt should not be made to change the listener's mind beyond presenting the information.

Persuasive Speaking

This contest trains students to analyze a current issue, determine a point of view, and organize and deliver extemporaneously a speech that seeks to persuade listeners. The objective is to reinforce the views of listeners who already believe as the speaker does, but even more so, to bring those of neutral or opposing views around to the speaker's beliefs or proposed course of action. This contest should especially appeal to those who have a strong argumentative urge and who wish to advocate reforms or outline solutions for current problems.

Poetry Interpretation

The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to understand, experience and share poetry through the art of oral interpretation. The goals of this contest are to encourage the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections, and to enhance the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's oral interpretation of the work.

Prose Interpretation

This contest encourages the student to understand, experience and share prose works through the art of oral interpretation. It encourages the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections and to enhance the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's oral interpretation of the work.