MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT
ACADEMIC COMPETITION GUIDELINES

These general guidelines apply to the Montgomery County Academic Competition

A. General Information

1. Team matches will be randomly determined 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.
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.

B. Tournament Officials

1. The academic competition coordinator is responsible for the required registration materials and the logistics of the competition.
2. The academic competition judge is 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 has 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 has a scorekeeper and timekeeper (may be combined when necessary).
6. Matches will 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.

7. Teams may agree to use a partially working buzzer system. If any team objects, the game will be played or resumed without a buzzer.

8. 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.

9. 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.

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. Adults may attend as spectators, but may not participate in game play. Adult spectators should arrive no earlier than 8:30 AM. Lunch will be provided for students and volunteers only between Round 6 and the Championship Round which typically occurs between noon and 1:00 PM.

3. Substitutions may only be made between rounds.

4. No player may play for two different teams.

5. A coach is a person who acts in a recognized advisory role to a particular team. A coach may not be a player for any team in the competition. A team can have an unlimited number of coaches or no coach, but only one may be designated the official coach 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.

6. It is the responsibility of the designated coach to ensure that all members of his/her school's team fully understand the competition's rules and code of conduct.

7. 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 sequence of questions in the toss-ups will be:

   World History - Literature - American History - Science - Potpourri -
   World History - Literature - American History - Science - Potpourri

   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 two toss-up sections and two fanfare sections.

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 fifteen (15) 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 one team in rapid succession within sixty (60) seconds.

2. The time clock does not start counting down from sixty seconds until the first question is completely read or the team captain has begun answering. If the timer sounds during the reading of a question, the question will be completed and the team must answer immediately. The designated team captain will be required to give the answers. If another team member responds, the response will not be accepted until the captain has given the answer.

3. Teams may “pass” on any question; however, they will not be given an opportunity to answer “passed” questions even if time remains on the clock after all questions have been answered.

I. Correct Answers

1. The quizmaster will accept only the first answer given by a player.

2. Excluding the instances listed below, a person's last name will be accepted unless the question specifically asks for a full name. If a full name is given voluntarily, it must be completely correct. Universally known nicknames may or may not be accepted. (For example, “Babe” Ruth may be accepted while the “Home Run King” might not).

3. 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.

4. United States president’s last names will be accepted unless the last name is not sufficient to distinguish the president. In that case, a 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. 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.

5. First names of kings and queens will be accepted without their corresponding number; however, if a number is given, it must be correct.
6. 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.

7. Dates must be exact (e.g. the year 71 will not be accepted if the answer is 1971).

8. 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.

9. 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 an no points will be rewarded for the replaced question.

11. 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. 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 will be accepted. All decisions by the academic competition judge 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.
K. Championship Match

The top three winners will compete in the championship match.

L. 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 final match.
   b. At the end of the Championship match.

2. In the event of a tied score at the end of the final match and 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.
   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. The team sitting at the lowest numbered table will be asked a question and they will have 15 seconds to provide an answer. The next tied team will then be asked a new question from the same category. They will have 15 seconds to provide an answer. This process will repeat for each tied team. After each tie-breaker “round” we will pause for a moment and the quizmaster will say “This concludes round # of the tie breakers. We will resume in just a moment.”
      i. If all teams answer correctly, they will move into a new sudden death round and each team will be given new questions.
      ii. If all teams answer incorrectly, they will move into a new sudden death round and each team will be given new questions.
      iii. If there are more than two teams in the tie-breaker and one team answers incorrectly while the other teams answer correctly, that incorrect team will be eliminated from the round and the remaining teams will enter a new round.
      iv. If there are more than two teams in the tie-breaker and one team answers correctly while the other teams answer incorrectly, the team that answered correctly will enter a new round alone where they will be given a new question. If they answer correctly, they will be declared winner. If they answer incorrectly, a new round will begin and all teams from the previous round will be back in play.
      v. When there are only two teams remaining, if one team answers correctly and the other team answers incorrectly, the team that answered correctly will enter a new round alone where they will be given a new question. If they answer correctly, they will be declared winner. If they answer incorrectly, a new round will begin and both teams will be back in play.
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, 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 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.

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