

**PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon
REGISTRATION FORMS AND FEES**

There is an annual fee of \$200 per school district to register for the current decathlon season (waived for the 2020-21 school year to assist teams in paying for the \$50 virtual testing fee). The district registration fee covers awards, test preparation, some competition costs, communications, mailings, etc. Upon receipt of the registration, test dates notification form and fee, a confirmation will be sent to participating schools.

The completed current registration form, test dates notification form (links found on the “Forms” section of the website at www.pageinc.org/gad) and the \$200 registration fee, per school district, should be sent no later than OCTOBER 15 to:

**Michelle Crawford, State Director
PAGE GAD
PO Box 937, Young Harris GA 30582
gad@pageinc.org**

If your school advances to state competition there is an additional State Competition Registration fee of \$75 per school (to assist Georgia’s National competition representatives). State Competition schools are expected to pay their travel and lodging expenses. Most meals are provided during the state competition.

Academic Decathlon curriculum materials are not covered by the \$200 season registration fee and are available for purchase directly from USAD for approximately \$700. (*You can find the applicable information on the USAD website: www.usad.org.*) If your school has never participated or has not participated during the past ten years, you may be eligible for a USAD curriculum grant. Please contact the state director for more information.

TEAM SELECTION

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Each high school needs to devise its own strategies for team selection and study format. Various schools participating in the Academic Decathlon in prior years have utilized the following procedures. (*In addition, refer to the BACKGROUND Section, To the Academic Decathlon Coach, "Publicity and Recruitment."*)

Sample High Schools

High School "A"

The academic coaches reviewed teacher recommendations, SAT scores and grade-point averages. After narrowing the field of potential participants, informal discussions and interviews with students were held.

A night orientation meeting for parents and students was held. All students and parents were in attendance. The agenda included showing of the video, an overview of the national and state Academic Decathlon program, and discussion of commitment necessary for participation.

During the following week, three of the students decided they would not be able to devote the appropriate amount of time to preparing for the Decathlon. (*Reasons given: employment and soccer*) Students identified earlier as potential participants replaced these students.

High School "B"

Public address system announcement was made regarding the Academic Decathlon. Two orientation meetings were held with interested students. Each student was requested to complete a self-report sheet that required such information as:

- 1) estimated grade-point average;
- 2) strengths and weaknesses in subject areas;
- 3) task commitment; and
- 4) teachers' names for reference purposes

The academic coaches and the principal utilized the student self-report information, SAT scores, grade-point averages, types of courses taken, and teacher/counselor recommendations to make the team selection.

High School "C"

Public address system announcements were made regarding the Academic Decathlon. Orientation meetings were held. There was substantial self-elimination due to students' commitments in other areas. Grade-point averages were reviewed. Student interest was the major criterion. Twenty-one students began the study process.

TEAM SELECTION *(continued)*

High School “D”

Coaches sent notices to all high school teachers and counselors requesting names of students they would recommend suitable to meet the criteria of commitment. A list was compiled; and if several teachers recommended a student’s name, he/she was considered a good candidate.

Notices were sent to the students indicating they had been recommended for the Academic Decathlon. One hundred students met during lunch and were asked the major question, “Are you interested?” Interviews were set up and a core of dedicated, interested and capable students drilled for the event.

High School “E”

- When? Springtime, after nationals in April/May, and when the new USAD Study Guide is available.
- Have competition for “Honor” and “Scholastic” categories (*and “Varsity” if you have enough students*).
- Solicit recommendations from gifted program teachers for underachievers in the “Varsity” category, followed by a personal invitation
- Emphasize to students that this is not a trivia contest, nor is it a contest of general knowledge (*like Hi Q or Academic Bowl*). This is a contest of hard work and diligence. High grades and high SAT scores are useful, but not necessary.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY

The Team

A team consists of nine full-time students from the ninth through twelfth grades of the same high school; or, if there is no ninth grade, a team consists of nine full-time students from the tenth through twelfth grades of the same high school. A full-time student is defined as a student who is enrolled in four or more class periods per day. Each team is made up of three Honor students, three Scholastic students, and three Varsity students in accordance with the following grade point average definitions:

Honor:	3.80 – 4.00 GPA
Scholastic:	3.20 – 3.799 GPA
Varsity:	0.00 – 3.199 GPA

Contestants may compete in a higher division than their own grade point average category but not in a lower division.

Each team member competes in all ten events of the Decathlon and is eligible for individual medals in all ten events. Only six scores count for the final team standing in the competition—the top two Honor scores, the top two Scholastic scores, and the top two Varsity scores. Therefore, schools may enter with fewer than nine members and still be eligible for team awards as long as there are at least two Honor, two Scholastic, and two Varsity members.

Home-schooled students can participate in the United States Academic Decathlon if their school district allows home-schooled students to participate in other extracurricular activities. Home-schooled students can only participate in the United States Academic Decathlon program at the high school they would attend if they were not home-schooled. The GPA classification of home-schooled students will be made in accordance with state law pertaining to home-schooled students. The State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the State Director have final authority regarding the participation and classification of home-schooled students, and the decision of the State Academic Decathlon association and/or the State Director will be final.

REPLACEMENT OF A TEAM MEMBER OR TEAM for STATE COMPETITION **The nine students who participate in the state competition must be the same 9 students who participated in and won the local/district competition.**

The state director will only approve substitution of a team member on a team that has qualified for the state competition in extreme emergency situations such as death of an immediate family member, accident that incapacitates a team member, personal illness, etc. Each substitution must be submitted to and approved individually by the state director prior to the competition. These requests must be submitted to the state director at least 24 hours prior to competition date, and the substitute may not compete without written approval of the State Director. The Substitution Request Form for the replacement decathlete must be brought to the state competition registration desk with all of the required signatures along with an official transcript (or emailed in advance).

Within each state, the determination of the composition of each team is made by the State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the State Director, and the decision of the State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the State Director is final. The state championship team that attends the National Finals, however, must be comprised according to the guidelines stated previously. The nine

Team Eligibility *cont.*

students who attend the National Finals must be the same nine students who participated in and won the state competition. In the case of an “extreme medical emergency” occurring after the state competition, the State Director may allow another student to replace an absent team member.

The State Academic Decathlon organization has the full authority to declare the first-place team ineligible to attend the National Finals in accordance with the rules and practices of its state organization and may send the second-place team to represent its state. In such cases, the decision of the State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the State Director is final. However, the United States Academic Decathlon should be notified promptly of such an occurrence.

Official Coaches

A team may have only two official coaches. These coaches are considered members of each school’s official delegation with all of the rights and privileges thereof. Should any team elect to have more than two coaches, the two official coaches should be designated. All other coaches may not be listed in programs or receive complimentary tickets for events. Their attendance at the PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon events is at the expense of the individual school or district.

Computation of Grade Point Averages

** Special instructions regarding the pandemic:* Beginning in March 2020, many schools closed due to the coronavirus pandemic and shifted to some form of remote or online instruction. Accordingly, they adapted their grading procedures to measure student progress during the closures. Grades received for coursework undertaken during school closures must be omitted from a student’s GPA calculation.

GPA calculations for ninth-grade students include only their grades earned while in the eighth grade and in the summer session between eighth and ninth grade. *If the ninth-grade student’s final eighth-grade semester was impacted by a school closure, then the GPA calculation for that student must include only the semester grade not impacted by a closure as well as any summer coursework completed after schools physically reopened prior to ninth grade. If a ninth-grade student attended a school that only awarded end-of-year grades and therefore had all of their grades impacted by a school closure, that student’s GPA must be based on their grades earned while in seventh grade, in the summer session between seventh and eighth grade, as well as any summer coursework completed after schools physically reopened.*

The “focus semesters” for GPA computation for tenth, eleventh-, and twelfth-grade students go back two years prior to the present grade level of the contestant. **However, grades received for coursework undertaken during school closures resulting from the coronavirus pandemic must be omitted from a student’s GPA calculation.* If the contestant is a twelfth grader in September of the competition year, then the semesters that are used for GPA computation are all of the tenth grade, all of the eleventh grade, and the summer sessions between tenth and eleventh grades and between eleventh and twelfth grades with the exception of any grades impacted by a school closure. Likewise, if the contestant is in eleventh grade in the fall, the focus period for GPA computations includes the entire ninth grade, the entire tenth grade, and the summer sessions between ninth and tenth grades and between tenth and eleventh grades with the exception of any grades impacted by a school closure. If the contestant is in tenth grade in the fall, the focus period for GPA computations includes the entire eighth grade, all of the ninth grade, and the summer sessions between eighth and ninth grades and between ninth and tenth grades with the exception of any grades impacted by a school closure. Regardless of the system used to determine a GPA locally, these criteria must be followed to ensure uniformity and equity among all participants in the United States Academic Decathlon.

Team Eligibility *cont.*

Grades for courses shall be used in GPA computations for United States Academic Decathlon competition purposes if the courses focus more than 50% of the time on understanding ideas, concepts, and theories of a specific discipline and the assessments are objective in nature. Grades for courses that directly deal with the theoretical content covered in the United States Academic Decathlon curriculum and competitive events should be included in GPA computations. However, a grade for a course focused specifically on the United States Academic Decathlon should NOT be included in GPA computations.

Grades for courses shall NOT be used in GPA computations for United States Academic Decathlon competition purposes if they are hands-on, performance-based, skills type, lab-based, or more than 50% of course time is spent in service learning or internship. The skills that are developed in these courses tend to be more technical/vocational, and the majority of a student's grade in these courses is subjective in nature. Please refer to the United States Academic Decathlon's current **Acceptable/Unacceptable document**. (Found on page 18 or on the usad.org website.)

Inquiries regarding borderline courses should be referred to the State Director, who will make the determination based on the academic nature of the course, and who will then implement the decision uniformly throughout the state. The decision of the State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the State Director with regard to which course grades are applied to the United States Academic Decathlon GPA tabulation is final.

For all alpha grades, all A's will count as 4.0, all B's will count as 3.0, all C's will count as 2.0, and all D's will count as 1.0. Anything below D will count as 0 points. When numerical grades appear on the transcript in place of alpha grades, they shall be converted to alpha grades according to the official conversion scale that appears on the school's official transcript or in the school's official profile.

The GPA for each student shall be calculated by dividing total points by total credits hours for the focus semesters. The total points shall include the alpha grade points multiplied by the credit hours. Unless a school's curriculum defines the specific credit hours earned by a course, credit hours should be determined as 1.00 credit hours for a full-year grade, 0.50 credit hours for a half-year grade, 1/3 credit hours for a trimester grade, and 0.25 credit hours for a quarter-year grade.

If a student receives a Fail in any academic course, the F is counted in averaging the student's grades even though no credit is given. When a course has been failed prior to the focus period for which the GPA is being computed but repeated during that period, only the repeat grade is counted. When a course is failed and repeated during the focus semesters, both grades will be counted in the GPA.

Incomplete or pass/fail grades are not included in computing the GPA unless the student received an F that appears on the transcript. Once a grade is given to remove an incomplete, that grade must be used to determine the Decathlon GPA. If only pass/fail grades are assigned, the State Director will determine an evaluation scale in concert with the United States Academic Decathlon Testing Director.

Community college or other college courses are included in the GPA only if high school credit is given and the course is listed on the official school transcript.

Team Eligibility *cont.*

A grade, regardless of whether it is advanced placement, honors, regular, or remedial classification, will count the face value of the final grade as reflected on the official transcript. No weighting of grades for honors classes will be included, even if this is the local district policy. An “A” grade, therefore, will count 4 points for Decathlon computation even if it counts 5 points within the local system. Under no circumstances may an “A” grade count three points. The letter grade shown on the transcript will be used in computing GPA regardless of any plus or minus. State Directors may determine standards for eligibility for students from schools with non-traditional grading systems. Such standards should be communicated to the United States Academic Decathlon for approval prior to the state competition.

If a school or a teacher has a policy of changing grades subsequent to receipt of advanced placement test scores, the new grade must be used for the computation of the Decathlon GPA. The deadline for the adjustment of AP grades is established by the State Academic Decathlon organization and/or State Director, and the decision of the State Academic Decathlon organization and/or State Director will be final.

Verification of Eligibility

Each high school will submit official transcripts to verify eligibility of team members to the manager of the competition the team is entering. The school certification of transcripts will be the final indication of a student’s eligibility and GPA category. The competition manager shall check the GPA computation in accordance with the above guidelines and verify eligibility of each team member. It is recommended that GPAs are calculated using the United States Academic Decathlon’s **GPA Calculation Excel Worksheet**, which can automatically calculate a student’s GPA and identify the lowest division in which a student may compete. The team coach shall be notified of any discrepancies.

Foreign students are eligible to participate in the United States Academic Decathlon. A foreign student who does not possess a valid transcript may participate in the Honor category. If a coach wishes to qualify a foreign student for the Scholastic or Varsity categories, the coach must provide adequate evidence that the student performed at a relative B or C status within the foreign system during the two years prior to participation in the Decathlon. The State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the State Director have final authority regarding the participation and classification of foreign students, and the decision of the State Academic Decathlon association and/or the State Director will be final.

For the National Finals, each State Director must file a team certification guaranteeing that this is the same team that won the State Championship and that all team members are eligible for the categories as indicated. Official transcripts must accompany this form. In addition, the United States Academic Decathlon may request transcripts directly from the high school in order to verify eligibility. The decision of the State Academic Decathlon organization and/or the State Director regarding the certification of the State Championship Team will be final.

Participation in the United States Academic Decathlon is voluntary and is open to all students regardless of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability or handicap. Questions regarding computing the Decathlon GPA or eligibility of students should be addressed to the State Director.

Team Eligibility *cont.*

Teams and Conditions

- Each high school will submit official transcripts to verify eligibility of team members. All transcripts will be verified and schools notified of any discrepancies.
- The members of the team participating in state competition must be the same individuals who participated at the local competition. If for any reason a member is unable to participate, the state director should be contacted for a ruling. (*See "Request for Student Replacement" form in this tabbed section.*)
- The state director and competition coordinator will determine the deadline for transmittal of the documents.
- Only students whose transcripts have been received by the deadline will be eligible for participating in the competition.
- Any exceptions to these eligibility requirements must be approved in writing by the state director in advance of the submission date for entries.
- Registration for participation in the PAGE GAD season is \$200.00 per school district. This fee may be refunded if notified in writing by October 30th of the competition year. This fee covers expenses for medals, trophies, test duplication, mailings, physical facilities, and tickets for up to nine official team members and coaches for the awards banquet.

TEAMS and COACHES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Expenses for USAD curriculum materials and related study materials
- Expenses for transportation to and from district and/or state competition, lodging and meals for teams and coaches
- If your team wins the state championship, expenses related to representing the State of Georgia at the USAD national competition.

Participation in the United States Academic Decathlon is open to all students regardless of race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability or handicap.

Questions regarding computing the Academic Decathlon GPA or eligibility of students should be addressed to: Michelle Crawford, State Director, gad@pageinc.org, Direct/Cell 404.414.3041, PAGE GAD, P.O. Box 937, Young Harris, GA 30582.



2020-2021 ACCEPTED/UNACCEPTED COURSES for GPA CALCULATION

Grade Conversions

Honor	3.80-4.00	A =	4	90-100 =	4
Scholastic	3.20-3.799	B =	3	80-89 =	3
Varsity	0.000-3.199	C =	2	70-79 =	2
		D =	1	60-69 =	1
		F =	0	≤ 59 =	0

Acceptable Courses	Unacceptable Courses
<i>Courses are considered acceptable if they focus more than 50% of the time on understanding ideas, concepts, and theories of a specific discipline.</i>	<i>Courses are considered unacceptable if they are hands-on, performance-based, skills-type, non-book, lab-based, or more than 50% of course time is spent in service learning or internship.</i>
Academic Business Courses	Academic Decathlon Classes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting 	Agriculture (applied courses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agri-Business 	Architectural Drawing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micro/Macro Economics 	Art
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business/Organizational Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphic Design, Ceramics, Drawing, Multi-Cultural, Painting, Jewelry, Printmaking, Sculpture, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer Economics/Marketing Theory 	Astronomy (unless a Science credit is given)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Business/Principles of Business 	Automotive Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Law 	Bookkeeping
Art	Child Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art History 	Computer Courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art Appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data/Information Processing
Bio-ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keyboarding/Word Processing
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Lab
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications/Software Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software Courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web Design Programs
Computer Courses	Consumer & Family Science
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming Languages (HTML, ASP, JAVA, Visual Basic, C++, etc...) 	Current Events (unless Social Studies credit given)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer Literacy 	Drafting

Acceptable Courses	Unacceptable Courses
Creative Writing	Drama/Theater/Stagecraft
Criminal Law/Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting/Performance
Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagecraft/Technical Theater
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering Design/Problem Solving 	Electronics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering Theory 	Engineering Graphics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robotics 	English/Language Arts
English/Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Journalism (yearbook, school newspaper)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition/Writing 	Ethics Law (Theology)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Writing 	Health Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalism (NOT yearbook, school newspaper) 	Horticulture
Foreign Language	Independent Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Language Arts 	Mechanical Drawing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French, Spanish, German, Russian, Chinese, Sign Language, Navajo, etc... 	Media Studies
Humanities	Morality & Issues
Mathematics	Multi-Media Communications
Music	Music Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Appreciation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Band
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chorus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchestra
Psychology/Sociology	Photography
Science	Physical Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL basic sciences 	Religion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forensic Sciences 	Service Learning/Internships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-Science (theory) 	Student Government/Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science, Technology, & Society 	Study Skills/Prep Classes
Social Studies/Social Science/History	Technical/Vocational Courses

Please check your course catalog/descriptions to determine applicability of specific classes. If you are still unclear, please contact your AD State Director for clarification.

**PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon
REQUEST FOR STUDENT REPLACEMENT – State Competition**

TO: Georgia Academic Decathlon State Director

FROM: _____
Name of Coaches and School District

DATE: _____

_____, from _____
Student Name High School

registered in the _____ category, cannot participate in the

State competition for the following reason:

_____ will substitute in the _____
Student Name Honor/Scholastic/Varsity

category for the State competition on _____.
Date of Competition

All transcripts, permissions and related information have previously been sent or are enclosed with this request. I request this student be permitted to participate in the state competition.

I understand this request must be in the hands of the State Director twenty-four hours prior to the start of the state competition.

Signature of Principal

Date/Time

Academic Elective Course – Academic Decathlon Curriculum

Many, many schools across the United States that participate in Academic Decathlon also participate in a Decathlon course. Efforts to offer an academic elective course in Georgia that uses the USAD curriculum has been on a voluntary basis for many years. Through consultation with the Curriculum Director at the Georgia Department of Education in the Winter of 2002, we learned of the potential of offering the USAD curriculum through an academic elective course in Georgia high schools. The potential courses that frequently match the content of the USAD curriculum are listed on the following page. The course selected should change from year to year to be most compatible with the USAD curriculum of that year. Districts/schools should attempt to match the AD curriculum with potential courses annually to achieve the best correlation of standards for the selected content for that year. However, courses should not be randomly selected. Each year when the curriculum topics are published by USAD, the course title and number of the most appropriate course should be researched and determined by the coach and district. Matching the AD curriculum to a different course each year will enable interested students to receive elective credit in four different elective courses should a student choose to be a part of this curriculum each of his/her four years in high school.

The **rationale** for offering the decathlon curriculum through an academic elective course is to provide opportunity for a whole class (20+) of students to engage in this rich and rigorous curriculum. The nine students that may make up the Academic Decathlon team may come from this course, but there may also be other students who would like to be a part of the team but are not able to work the elective course into their schedule. Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.03 prohibits for funding the use of “any course that requires participation in an extracurricular activity and for which enrollment is on a competitive basis.” To meet the requirements of this rule, students who are members of the Academic Decathlon team should **not** be required to take this course. Neither should students in the course be required to be on the Decathlon team.

Students who participate in such a course that offers a rich, rigorous, and challenging curriculum and the extended opportunities for research should produce positive results in achievement. Such an opportunity promises to go a long way toward closing the achievement gap for those underachieving and unmotivated high school students. It’s worth a try!

Potential Courses

Following is a listing of academic elective courses from which schools and school districts may choose to offer the AD curriculum that may parallel the topics for any given year. It is suggested that districts planning to offer the course should do so in the first semester. The teacher of the course, who may also be the team coach, will need assistance from experts in other disciplines. Strategies for using the expertise of others are provided in the “Study Strategies” section of the *PAGE GAD Coaches’ Manual*.

Academic Elective Courses Which Have Been Used in Past Years

- 40.07100 Oceanography
- 40.37110 Oceans: Living Space for the Future
- 40.37210 Earth 2525: A Time Traveler's Guide to Planet Earth
- 40.37220 Bioethics Symposium
- 40.37230 From Earth to Mars: A Study in the Humanities of Space Exploration
- 40.37240 The Impact of Science on History (History and Science: There's No Divorce in This Marriage)
- 40.37250 Space Technology On-Line
- 45.01100 Comparative Religions
- 45.01300 Science: Technology & Society
- 45.07200 Asian Studies
- 45.08900 Early Military History

Academic Elective Course Possibilities

- 23.08100 Communication Skills
- 45.01200 Current Issues
- 45.01400 The Humanities/Social Studies
- 70.03100 Directed Study I
- 70.03200 Directed Study II
- 70.03300 Directed Study III
- 70.03400 Directed Study IV
- 35.06100 Study Skills I
- 35.06200 Study Skills II
- 35.06300 Study Skills III
- 35.06400 Study Skills IV

We were able to access information about the above courses by visiting <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/default.aspx> and then clicking on the link "Course Numbers and Descriptions" located toward the bottom of the page under the "Frequently Requested Information" section. Not all of these courses have prescribed standards. In most cases, a course syllabus would need to be developed that would define the parameters of the course and the standards that would be covered in the course.

We request schools offering a course to please share that course information with the PAGE GAD office for our records and to share with other schools.

STUDY STRATEGIES – TEAM PREPARATION

Study strategies will evolve from within the make-up of the students, coaches, resources and facilities available. The following procedures have been utilized by some high schools in recent competitions.

Sample High Schools

High School “A” A study center is set up in the library. Resources are available for independent research. Students and coaches meet four afternoons a week. Each weekend, students do research, devise test questions, and make outlines on assigned topics. Each student, in the afternoon session, presents information to other students. The coaches compile the student-created test items. These practice tests are administered to the students.

High school teachers meet with the students during the afternoon sessions to provide lectures and materials on the specified subject areas.

High School “B” Students have access to a study center in the library. Resources are available for independent research. Students and coaches meet four mornings a week from 7:30 to 8:30 am. There is concentration on one subject area per week. One section of each subject area outline is assigned to each student. The students do independent research, devise 10 test questions, and prepare a lecture on the material. Each student presents the information to the other students. The coaches compile the 90 questions into a test. The test is answered over the weekend and then graded by the coaches. This feedback gives the students information as to additional study needs.

High school teachers of specific subject areas meet with the students during the morning sessions to provide lectures and materials. The students prepare their speeches independently. Speeches are heard and critiqued. Practice interview sessions are held. Study sessions are planned for Saturday mornings and during breaks.

High School “C” The most important ingredient to team preparation is Attitude, Attitude, Attitude. Agree on meeting times and the duration of the meetings. There should be no surprises. You can be a fanatic about this and meet often during the summer, or you can do the worst possible thing by throwing a team together at the last possible minute, or you can find some happy medium between these two extremes. A lot will depend on the students’ individual schedules, the coaches’ schedules and the school’s commitment to the program.

Team members must be committed to Academic Decathlon. This is their primary extracurricular activity. In the summertime, they should read the novel or play identified for study in the Literature discipline for the next year.

STUDY STRATEGIES – TEAM PREPARATION *(continued)*

No coach can be well versed in all the disciplines covered in the USAD curriculum. Include other faculty members in the team's preparation. However, do as much as you can do before asking for assistance.

Math, Science, Social Science, Economics, Fine Arts, Literature: If any of these are not your field of expertise, invite a subject specific teacher/colleague to work with the team.

Interview: Bring in vocational teachers who have experience in interviewing. Counselors often have experience in this domain. A person from your Human Resources department would be a good mentor for developing interview skills. If someone in your school works with Governor's Honors Program candidates on their interview skills, invite them to help your team prepare.

Speech: An English teacher and/or debate coach would be a good support for this dimension. These experts may be helpful in the development of the prepared speech. Once the speech is written, then it's Practice! Practice! Practice! Have team members listen to the speeches of other team members and critique them.

Essay: An English colleague would be a good mentor for ensuring good essay skills. Then it's Practice! Practice! Practice! Have students critique the essays of each other.

STUDY TIPS

There is no substitute for reading the assigned materials. This includes the novel/poetry, the various Resource Guides and Subject Area Guides. How students study and learn depends more on the coach's style of teaching than anything else. Don't fall in love with one method. Be versatile.

Materials

All test questions come from the USAD Curriculum materials that you are required to purchase. Additional materials, initially, are researched and copied by our coaches. After local competition, student research follows up our research. There are also materials produced by outside vendors. Some teams find these additional materials while others have said they're not worth the cost.

Support

You will need financial support and copying privileges from your school's administrator. You will need support from your teacher colleagues in some academic areas (e.g. – art, music, essay writing, interviewing, speech construction and delivery, etc.). You will need lots of understanding from the parents of your decathletes. Finally, you will need financial support from your community. Start early in the year to work on this.

ADDITIONAL PREPARATION STRATEGIES

1. A formal class for school credit that meets daily for a semester or a year.
2. An “extra” class that meets before or after school.
3. Independent study by students combined with regularly scheduled team meetings.
4. Lunchtime meetings daily or weekly.
5. Permit anyone interested to participate.
6. For Varsity students, hunt for those students that are artistic/creative, nontraditional---but have not felt grades were the most important thing.
7. Identify a specific study location – utilize bulletin boards to establish ownership of location and to enhance team preparation.
8. Develop and distribute a calendar of key activity dates (scrimmage date, competition date, awards ceremony date, etc.) and study session dates.
9. Secure commitment from students toward team preparation.
10. Arrange team social activities to assist in building team spirit and camaraderie.
11. Set realistic goals for team (review previous year’s individual school performance report and previous year’s state competition report).
12. Recruit assistance from teachers with specific strengths in the subject areas to be studied.
13. Schedule visits to art museum(s) and attendance at music concerts that highlight areas of study.
14. Establish study notebooks for students to use for notes, handouts, resource material, etc. In addition, study boxes can be valuable for students for storage of ALL study materials in our location.
15. Distribute workload through peer tutoring. Utilize the strengths of team members in the various subject areas. Allow them to teach the subjects.
16. Develop a regular schedule that includes practice testing (tests prepared by the coach, students, or professionals, in addition to USAD practice tests), essay writing, delivering speeches, and participating in mock interviews. Post scores of students (excellent motivational technique).
17. Arrange mock competitions with neighboring schools.
18. Meet with parents to explain the program, to describe the time commitment expected of their children, and to secure their support for the program. Involve them in the preparation process.
19. Encourage the school community to support and recognize the students’ for their participation in this rigorous academic program.
20. Assign each student a particular work of art and musical selection for which they make presentations. Go through the slides; the student in charge of that work explains/tells about the work and the composer. Other students chime in with information they have. All take notes.
21. For music, play it during team meetings as background music. Students make comments regarding the musical pieces, composers, time period, instruments, etc.
22. Take a practice test the week before competition. Discuss the answers.
23. Find a person who does interviewing as a part of his/her job and have them meet with the team to discuss interviewing techniques and do practice interviews.
24. Have students practice their speeches on different people. Ask team members to critique each team member’s speech. Every negative comment must be followed with a solution.
25. Food at team practice session is a must!

Coaches – FYI

ESTIMATED COSTS

\$ **Study Materials** – You will need to buy the Basic Curriculum package from USAD. This is advertised on the USAD web page in early May of each year (www.usad.org). Be on the lookout for the announcement of the curriculum topics in early March of each year on the USAD web page. Other items you may want to purchase include: copies of the novel (or play), and additional USAD materials.

The costs of the study items vary, but plan on spending around \$800 for all of the items listed above. Other companies offer additional study materials that run from \$200 -\$2000.

\$ **Student Supplies** – Students will need notebooks and subject dividers to store information. Check prices locally. USAD has subject dividers with nuggets of information about the subject materials. New dividers are prepared each year to support the new curriculum.

\$ **Food/Meeting Expenses** – Have students bring their own food to the meetings most of the time. This will save you a lot of money. An occasional pizza party should celebrate something special.

\$ **Travel Costs** – Local competition should cost close to nothing. State competition will cost the hotel rate for team rooms for two nights plus the travel costs and banquet tickets for alternates. National competition travel expenses will vary based on the location of the event. Our state competition in late February gives the championship team plenty of time to start making travel plans and raising money for the national competition in late April.

\$ **Team Identification/Mascot** – This is up to you and your team members. Note that Georgia competition has a rule that if a team has a mascot it should be no larger than a 1# loaf of bread.

\$ **Hidden or Miscellaneous Expenses** – Copying. A team can spend up to \$500 on copying costs. Be careful; it mounts up in a hurry. T-shirts or team uniforms.

Something to Consider

Lobby for a coach's supplement. If you want your team to be successful, you'll put in more time than any other coach in the school and that includes football.

These ideas are revisions of tips submitted by former Decathlon coach, Bill Pappas, Clarke County.