

PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon

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 schools
- 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 “C” 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 to 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), 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 student 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 Box 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. These are announced in early March of each year. This announcement will be on the USAD web page. Other items you may want to purchase include: copies of the novel (or play), and the USAD On-Target materials.

The costs of the study items vary, but plan on spending around \$500 for the items listed above. Other companies offer additional study materials that run from \$200 - \$2000. Most are repetitive and most are worthless. Let the buyer beware. Entrepreneurs from these companies may even visit the state competition and approach you about buying their materials. Be cautious!
- § **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. 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.

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.