

PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon

Essay

PREPARATION FOR COMPETITION:

The Essay event in the Georgia Academic Decathlon is conducted online before state competition. Prior to competition, GAD will arrange for an online practice session. It is *imperative* that all students use their usernames and passwords at that time. This is also an opportunity to allow students to familiarize themselves with the program. It is advisable to have the team use the practice prompts to practice typing an essay in the time given, even though the prompts may have nothing to do with the competition. Any essay practice is useful.

The essay competition must be held on one of two times set for the competition. Students should arrive at least 25 minutes prior to the testing time. The entire team must write at the same time, including three alternates. Decathletes will type an essay in response to a prompt chosen from a set given to them. Students will be given 50 minutes for writing the essay that will be scored in accordance with the published essay rubric.

Students will be given two documents as they enter: 1) the student instructions, and 2) planning paper.

Place a copy of the student instructions at each computer. You might want to spend a few minutes prior to competition reviewing these rules. Copies of these rules were sent to coaches so this should not be new to decathletes. **Please collect these instructions and the planning paper at the end of testing.** They may be trashed but should not be left for the students.

The proctor **must** be someone other than the coach. There will need to be enough computers for the entire team plus additional computers in case of any problems. There will be a 60-minute window for each competition time. The student screen counts down the time remaining.

In order to use the software you must have a broadband Internet connection and be using a reasonably current Internet browser. The software supports Internet Explorer ONLY. The software **does not** allow students to spell check or cut and paste. The run instructions are located at <https://usad.enlyght.com/help>

INSTRUCTIONS:

You have been given **3 prompts** from which you will **select 1 as the topic** for your essay. Do **not** write your name or prompt on your essay. It is **not** necessary to include the quotation or language from the prompt in the body of your essay.

Explain the meaning of the prompt and support your position in several well-developed paragraphs with specific examples from your experiences and/or your reading. Provide a final paragraph that offers a logical conclusion to your essay. Be sure to include adequate transitions between your ideas; and follow the accepted rules of standard English sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation. Allow yourself time for proofreading and correcting your essay.

You will be graded on your ability to:

1. Organize ideas in logical patterns appropriate to the purpose of the assignment.
2. Present these ideas using effective vocabulary and written structures appropriate to formal standards of written communication in English.
3. Use mechanical skills of standard American English (*punctuation, grammar and spelling*) that facilitate communication and are acceptable in formal writing.

You have 50 minutes for the Essay competition. Your screen will give you a 5-minute warning after 45 minutes have elapsed. Allow yourself time for proofreading and correcting your essay.

WEBSITE: <http://www.usadtest.com> Click on **State Competition**

OR go directly to <http://usad.enlyght.com/USADComp/start.asp>

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS:

- Make sure your number is correct.
- Do **not** put your name, school, GAD number or prompt number on your essay.
- Select one of the prompts carefully. You may not change prompts once you begin.
- Write a well-organized essay in which you clearly respond to the question or direction that is presented in the prompt. Use specific information and examples from your studies to support your position.
- Be sure to include adequate transitions between your ideas and to follow the accepted rules of standard English sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation.
- Provide a final paragraph to conclude or close your essay.
- Maintain legible handwriting. Avoid messy cross-outs when writing your essay.
- Allow time for proofreading and editing your essay.
- You may use the prompt sheet for planning, but it **must** be turned in the proctor before you leave.

REMINDERS:

- / No hats.
- / No drinks or food.
- / Do not write on these instructions.
- / No student is to leave the room during the testing period.
- / Students arriving late do **not** receive additional time for the essay.
- / No talking during the testing time. The room **must be silent** until the time is called.
- / You **must** use a computer for the essay. If there is a problem, raise your hand immediately so the proctor can make the necessary changes.
- / No study materials in the essay room (cell phones, Palm Pilots, study cards, etc.). They will be taken and returned when you leave.