

UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON

Essay Rubric

Explanation of the USAD Rubric Domains

Following are brief explanations of each of the domains of the USAD rubric

FOCUS/SCOPE: This domain assesses how thoroughly the student addresses the given prompt and how successful he/she is in establishing a clear thesis or purpose. The student should make a specific point about a specific topic and should maintain this focus throughout his/her essay. This domain also calls for judgment on the student's range of understanding of the given topic. In this domain the student demonstrates an awareness of task and audience; establishes and maintains a clear purpose; makes a point about a specific topic.

ORGANIZATION: This domain assesses the manner in which the student presents his/her ideas to the reader. This domain calls for judgment on the clarity, logic, and sequence of the ideas presented and the degree to which these ideas are developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices. This domain also assesses the quality of the student's introduction and conclusion and the effectiveness of these paragraphs in presenting and reinforcing the student's main point(s). This domain shows a presence of ideas developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices and including the introduction and conclusion.

CONTENT/DEVELOPMENT: This domain assesses the quality of the student's ideas and the degree to which they are fully developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons, and/or explanations. The reader will also assess the relevancy of the information presented to the overall focus of the essay.

LANGUAGE/STYLE: This domain assesses the effectiveness and appropriateness of the student's choice, use, and arrangement of words and sentence structures. The student's use of language should serve to create an effective and appropriate tone and a consistent and powerful voice. The student should use language to communicate his/her ideas clearly and effectively. The reader will need to consider the student's choice of words, range and specificity of vocabulary, as well as sentence variety.

CONVENTIONS: This domain assesses the correctness of the student's grammar, mechanics (spelling, capitalization, punctuation), usage, and sentence formations.