

PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon

HOW THE DECATHLON WORKS

Academic Decathlon is unique because it is not limited to high-achieving students. Preparation and competition include high school students from ninth through twelfth (9-12) grades. The purposes of the Academic Decathlon are to: 1) develop a greater respect for knowledge; 2) promote wholesome competition in academic areas of study and interest; 3) stimulate intellectual growth and achievement; and 4) encourage public interest and awareness of outstanding programs in our schools.

A unique aspect of Academic Decathlon is the design to include students from all academic backgrounds. Each 9-member team consists of 3 “A” students, 3 “B” students and 3 “C” students. The “C” students – perhaps never academically motivated before – perform very well. Some students who once performed average work excel in the competition and experience continued academic success after the event.

Students must be academically well rounded to earn good scores in the Decathlon. Lives are changed and enthused students take new directions. It’s exciting, it’s rewarding, it works!

Competition events include 6 tests of academic strength, 3 demonstrations of communication ability and the Super Quiz – a written test and an oral relay team event before an audience. Six (6) comprehensive tests are given in the areas of: economics, social science, mathematics, language and literature, science and fine arts. The 3 communication events include: speech (*prepared and impromptu*), interview and a written essay.

The competition concludes with the Super Quiz-Oral Relay. All decathletes gather in an arena setting where one student from each competing team participates in a relay round. Five (5) questions are asked of this group of students. Then a second group of students representing each team participates, a third group and so on, until all 9 students from each team have participated in the Super Quiz-Oral Relay. The order of participation in the Super Quiz-Oral Relay is 3 rounds with the “C” students, followed by 3 rounds with the “B” students, and concludes with 3 rounds with the “A” students. As each relay round is completed and the team scores are flashed on a screen, students get excited and cheer for an all out academic effort.

Teams may choose to wear similar T-shirts, or blazers or uniforms during competition; however, team apparel should not be distracting to other decathletes. A team coach or co-coaches lead each team. Coaches often depend on experts in fields outside their area of expertise to work with the team. So the concept of team and coach broadens to include all who work to support the team to their goal.

What is the goal of Georgia Academic Decathlon? It is for all participants, decathletes and coaches to be active learners and do so in an enjoyable setting. Academic Decathlon provides just the right format.