

Section 940: LITERARY CRITICISM

(a) REPRESENTATION.

(1) *Individual Competition.* Each participant high school may enter as many as four individuals in the district meet, all of whom may place. In districts with more than eight schools, district executive committees may elect to limit entries to three. First, second and third place finishers advance to the next higher level of competition.

(2) *Team Competition.* The individuals entered at district constitute the team. A team must have a minimum of three contestants compete in order to participate in the team competition. All four members of the winning team will advance to the next higher level of competition.

(b) ELIGIBILITY. Each student entered in this contest must be eligible under Subchapter M.

(c) QUALIFICATION; SUBSTITUTES; ALTERNATES. The three individual winners and the winning team from each district shall qualify for the regional meet and the three individual winners and the winning team from each region shall qualify for the State Meet, as described in Section 903. Team members also qualify to compete for individual awards. If an individual qualifier cannot compete at the next higher meet, the alternate shall be notified and allowed to compete. If a member of a school's team is unable to compete at the next higher level of competition, only one substitution may be made. The substitute must give the contest director a letter certifying eligibility signed by a school administrator. (See Section 903 [b] [4].)

(d) WILD CARD. Each region's highest-scoring second place team may advance to the regional academic meet. In case two or more teams tie for the wild card berth, the highest overall net score of the fourth place member of the team will be used to break the tie. Should two or more contestants who are the fourth place member of the team have the same overall net score, then a tie will be declared, and all involved in the tie shall advance. A team that does not contain a fourth member forfeits the right to participate in the tie breaker. If neither team has a fourth member, neither shall advance. In order to be eligible as a wild card representative, district results must be certified online no later than 5 p.m. on the Monday following the final district academic week. Failure to meet the deadline disqualifies the district from advancing teams as wild card representatives. The highest-scoring second place team from the regional meets may advance to the Academic State Meet.

(e) NATURE OF THE CONTEST. The 90-minute contest requires knowledge of literary history and of critical terms, and ability in literary criticism. Students are tested over material on the reading list and required to select the best answers involving judgment in literary criticism. Students must also analyze literary passages not on the reading list. A tie breaker is required in which the student must write a short essay dealing with a

specified topic about a short literary passage.

- (f) **SOURCES USED FOR COMPOSING TESTS.** *A Handbook to Literature* by William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman, eighth, ninth or tenth edition, state adopted texts, and the announced reading list for the current year will be used as sources for the tests.
- (g) **CONTEST ADMINISTRATION.**
 - (1) *Personnel.* The director may be a contestant's coach. Assistants are optional. Coaches may serve as graders. The contest director should select by lot an odd number of coaches from a list of volunteers.
 - (2) *Time Allotted for Contest.* Ninety minutes should be allowed to complete all parts of the test.
 - (3) *Materials.* Contestants must furnish their own pens or number two pencils and erasers for this event. Contest directors will furnish blank sheets of paper for each contestant. The League will furnish the tests, answer keys, and answer sheets.
- (h) **CONDUCTING THE CONTEST.**
 - (1) *Distribute Answer Sheets.* The contest director will distribute answer sheets and three blank sheets of paper to each contestant.
 - (2) *Number Contestants.* As roll is called, instruct contestants to place their contestant numbers in the upper right-hand corner of the answer sheet and place the number in brackets.
 - (3) *Clear Room.* Contestants and coaches should be informed of the time and place of the verification period. Remind coaches that they may be asked to judge tie breaking essays. Spectators and coaches not assigned a specific duty in administering the contest should be dismissed from the contest room before the contest begins.
 - (4) *Distribute Tests.* Distribute the tests, face down, to each contestant. Instruct contestants to wait until the signal is given to turn the test copy face up and begin.
 - (5) *Fifteen-Minute Warning.* Warn contestants when 15 minutes remain in the contest period. However, responsibility for keeping up with time rests with contestants. Remind contestants to write contestant numbers at the top of each page of the essay.
- (i) **GRADING.**
 - (1) *Briefing Graders.* Prior to grading, the director should discuss thoroughly with graders the criteria for evaluating tests.
 - (2) *Grading Criteria.* In the section covered in *A Handbook for Literature*, one point will be given for each question answered correctly. In the sections covering specific application to literature and questions about literature on the current reading list, two points will be given for each question answered correctly. Although the essay section is required of all contestants, no points will be awarded.
 - (3) *Answer Key Errors.* In the case of an error on the answer key of an objectively-scored contest, graders should notify the UIL State Office of the nature of the error and/or contact the respective state contest director to seek clarification. Mistakes in

the answer key should be corrected, and papers should be judged on correctness rather than on an incorrect answer given in the key.

(4) *Places.*

(A) *Individual Competition.* Places through sixth are determined by the highest scores.

(B) *Team Competition.* The combined scores of the top three team members constitute the team score. All four members of the first place team will advance to the next higher level of competition. Team members also qualify to compete for individual awards.

(5) *Ties.*

(A) *Individual Competition.* All ties shall be broken through sixth place. The essay sections shall be ranked by consensus of three judges who are not coaches of the tied contestants. If two contestants are tied for first place, judges will rank the two contestants' essays and give first place to the contestant with the better essay. The other contestant will be awarded second place. The same procedure is used for ties which include three or more contestants. The following are judging criteria for the essays:

- (i) how well the contestant followed the instructions accompanying the questions;
- (ii) the excellence of the literary insights expressed;
- (iii) the effectiveness of the written expression; and
- (iv) the grammatical correctness of the writing.

(B) *Team Competition.* In case two or more teams tie for first or second place, the highest objective score of the fourth place member of the team will be used to break the tie. Should two or more contestants who are the fourth place member of their team have the same objective score, then a tie will be declared and all involved in the tie shall advance. In the event of a team tie, the team score to be reported is the sum of the top three scores from each school. A team that does not contain a fourth member forfeits the right to participate in the tiebreaker. At the state meet, a tie or ties for first place team shall not be broken.

(6) *Points.* Points are awarded through sixth place for individual competition, and to first and second place teams. See Section 902.

(7) *Verification Period.* Unofficial individual and team scores and places should be posted and verified. Contestants and coaches shall be given a period not to exceed 15 minutes to examine all test papers with official keys. Questions should be directed to the contest director, whose decision will be final.

(8) *Official Results.* After the verification period has ended and all test papers have been collected, the contest director shall announce the official results. Official results, once announced, are final.

(9) *Returning Materials.* If results are final and all test questions resolved, entries may be returned no sooner than the end of the contest on the Saturday of the respective district week. If the regional meet is held on Saturday, tests, keys and essays should be returned to contestants following the announcement of official results.

(j) READING LIST

- (1) *Fiction.* *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.
- (2) *Poetry.* All 20 selections by W. H. Auden in *The Mentor Book of Major American Poets*, edited by Oscar Williams and Edwin Honig. Any unabridged edition of these selections will be appropriate for the competition.
- (3) *Drama.* *The Little Foxes* by Lillian Hellman. Any unabridged version of the play will be appropriate for the competition.
- (4) *Handbook.* The authority for Part I of the contest, Literary History and Literary Terms: *A Handbook to Literature*, 9th, 10th, or 11th edition.