



# Ready Writing

These directions expand upon but do not replace the information in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules. The contest director should read Section 948 of the Constitution, then read these guidelines for additional details.

## Before the contest

### ROOM

Secure a room of adequate size for the number of contestants expected. The room should have chairs and desks or tables of proper height. Sufficient electrical outlets should be available.

### MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

The contest director will provide the following.

- A copy of the rules from the *Constitution and Contest Rules*
- Accurate clock for timing and clock which contestants can see during the contest
- Paper clips, stapler, scissors, extra ink pens
- (DISTRICT) One 8 1/2 x 11 envelope per school (8-12)

The League office will provide the following.

- Instructions
- Copies of the writing prompts in a sealed envelope (Do not open the sealed district test packet until just prior to the beginning of the contest. The district director may schedule a specific time and place for contest directors to pick up these packets on the day of the event.)
- Judging materials: judging instructions and ready writing judging rubrics
- Workable grading procedures
- Contest Evaluation Form
- (REGION) Regional awards order form (green)
- (REGION) State Meet information cards for state meet qualifiers and alternates (5)

### COMPUTER USE

For guidelines on use of laptop computers in the Ready Writing Contest, turn to page 60 of this manual.

### PERSONNEL

- Contest director. A coach of a contestant may serve as contest director.
- Assistant to the contest director. (REGION) The UIL staff may appoint an assistant to the contest director from one of the high school campuses in the region, if requested. This individual will serve as a support person for the contest director and may be on hand before, during and after the meet to answer questions which may arise concerning the contest. Coaches of competitors may serve as assistants to the director.

**INVENTORY ALL materials except the sealed test packet well in advance to make sure nothing is missing. If necessary, photocopy any needed UIL forms.**

**FOR MORE information on substitutions, see C&CR, Section 902 (g) (B).**

- Judges. Select properly qualified and impartial judges exclusive of the coaches whose contestants are represented in the contest in the conference to be judged. A minimum of three judges is recommended.

**TIME**

- Allot 2 1/2 hours for the contest: up to 20 minutes for roll call and opening remarks, and exactly two hours for the test. It is critical to stay on schedule as some contestants may need to go to other events.
- Allow four hours for grading the essays.
- Arrange for and announce, during the opening remarks and in the meet program, the time and place for viewing judges' comments and announcing official results.

**CONTEST ROSTER & RESULTS SHEET**

(DISTRICT & REGION) Your meet district director will provide to you a contest roster, generated from the UIL Spring Meet Online Entry System. It will list the contestants and alternates from each school. You will need to assign contestant numbers, and should use the numbers printed on the roster beside each contestant's name. You will also record results on the contest roster to give to the contest director, who will then enter the results into the online system.

**SUBSTITUTIONS**

(DISTRICT) Schools may replace contestants on the official district meet roster with substitutes so long as the substitutes present the contest directors with the appropriate documentation.

- *Students whose names were never entered into the online entry system* may substitute so long as they provide the contest director before the contest begins with a substitute eligibility form (found in the appendix and on the UIL web site) or a letter signed by a designated school official certifying the student's eligibility.
- *Students whose names were entered into the online entry system and hence certified as eligible* are eligible to substitute for a contestant so long as they provide the contest director with written notification (either the substitute form or a letter) signed by the event coach or representative from the contestant's school. Eligibility is already certified. Therefore, written notification is for the convenience of the contest director who may not have a copy of the other contest rosters.

At the conclusion of the meet, submit the substitution forms/letters to the spring meet district director to be filed with the school's original entry (see C&CR, Section 902 (g) (B)).

**ALTERNATES (REGION)**

Alternates may compete only in the absence of an individual who won first, second or third place in the same district competition. Contest directors should delay calling for alternates until immediately prior to the beginning of the contest.

**SORTING ENVELOPES (DISTRICT)**

Provide and label a large (8 1/2 x 11) envelope for each school entered in the district meet. Write the name of the school and contest on the top of the envelopes. Save the sorting envelopes to use after the announcement of awards. Place contestants' essays and prompts in the appropriate envelope for return to the ready writing coach at each school on the Monday following the respective district week, or after the contest if the meet is held on Saturday.

**During the contest**

1. Seat contestants sparsely around the room, separating contestants from the same school.
2. Read aloud the following statement: "Coaches, contest directors and contestants are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of contest material. Transfer of information relative to the test shall be considered a violation of the academic spring meet code and subject to penalties as outlined in Section 700 of the C&CR."
3. During the contest, exclude all persons from the room except contestants and the director.
4. Contestants may use either ruled or plain white paper, notebook paper (regular or college ruled) or typing paper. Oversized or legal sized paper should not be used.
5. Call roll from the roster.
6. (DISTRICT) Replace absent individuals with certified alternates who are present and furnish required certification: named as alternate on district roster; furnished a signed substitute form; or furnished a letter from school administrator. Please check and correct name spellings at this time.

7. Instruct the contestants to enter their assigned numbers in the upper right-hand corners of all pages of the manuscript and enclose them in parentheses. Read aloud the following instructions.
  - a) Contestants must write or print the composition in ink, not pencil.
  - b) Write on only one side of the paper.
  - c) Contestants composing by hand may use a printed or electronic thesaurus and dictionary during the contest. Contestants composing on computers may use spell check, dictionary, and thesaurus functions of the computer during the contest. No other resource materials may be used during the contest.
  - d) Center your title at the top of the first page of writing.
  - e) Consistent left margins of approximately one inch should be used.
  - f) Pages should be numbered on the upper left-hand corners, without parentheses.
  - g) Your contestant number should be placed in the top right-hand corner of each page, and placed in parentheses.
8. Check to ensure that all pages are printed clearly and completely. Distribute the topics face down to the contestants and explain that they should choose one of the statements and write an essay on a clearly related topic.
9. Prevent any communication between contestants, or any reference on the part of contestants to notes, books or any printed matter other than a thesaurus or dictionary. Do not allow a student to leave the room prior to turning in his paper except in an emergency situation. Keep time for the contest. Give a fifteen minute warning of the time limit, even if the contest is held in a room where contestants may clearly see a clock. When two hours have elapsed from the time the contestants have received the topic, collect all manuscripts.
10. Gather all essays and the topic sheets for the contest so that none are retained by the contestants, coaches or other interested parties.

## Judging the papers

- Exclude contestants and coaches from room when judging. Allow sufficient time for careful judging.
- Provide each judge with an adequate number of rubric sheets and a set of judging instructions.
- Contest director decides whether each essay shall receive one or three judging rubrics. See “tips for judging essays,” below. Attach the rubric(s) to the back of the essay. Please do not write on the contestants’ papers. Make comments only on the rubrics.
- Rank only the top six essays; however, all essays must receive at least one rubric assessment.
- Check the wording in the rules (contest directors may read portions of this information aloud to contestants):
  - Nature. The composition is to be expository in nature. Descriptive or narrative passages may be used to illustrate or reinforce an idea or point that is being explained, but they must be clearly subservient or incidental to the purpose of exposition.
  - Length. Avoid wordiness and sparseness indicative of lack of development. There is no minimum or maximum length requirement, but judges recognize well-developed ideas and the use of evidence to bolster main point(s).
- Requirements for writing the essay. Contestants must write essays in ink and on only one side of ruled, or plain white, regular sized paper or type the essay using any standard 12 point font and one inch margins, on a word processing computer. Print computer-generated compositions on unlined paper.
- Recommendations for writing the essay.
  - Title. Center the title at the top of the first page of writing.
  - Margins. Follow consistent left margins of approximately one inch.
  - Page numbers. Number pages on the upper left-hand corners, without parentheses, to distinguish the page number from the assigned contestant number.

## Tips for judging the essays

- Instruct judges to scan the papers first and award a plus (+) or minus (-) at the bottom of the last attached UIL judging rubric. Either one or three rubrics will be attached to the back of each essay, depending on the contest director’s choice of judging procedures. (See note \* below.)
- Gather the essays and separate papers into (+) and (-) stacks.

**COMPUTER USE**  
**For guidelines on use of laptop computers in the Ready Writing Contest at the district and region level, turn to page 62 of this manual.**

- Redistribute the (+) papers to judges.
  - Judges read and give preliminary ranking to the (+) essays.
  - Judges then determine the final ranking of the top 6 essays. Judges may award a total of 30 points by circling the appropriate numbers in each of the three major areas of consideration: interest, organization and correctness of style. Judges must discuss papers and concur on rankings.
  - In accordance to rankings, give at least one rubric assessment for each essay (both the + and - papers) entered in the contest. Judges write directly on the judging rubric, remembering to offer constructive criticism aimed at helping students overcome areas of weakness or error. The comments need not be long, but should be specific rather than general because specific references are more beneficial.
- \* There are three possible methods for providing responses: one judge may give written response in the space provided on a rubric; all three judges may collaboratively provide responses on one rubric; or all three judges may write separate responses on separate rubrics.

Checked portions of at least one rubric should be completed for each contestant. Attach judging rubrics to the contestant's essay and return essay (with rubric) to the student at the designated time following the contest.

**TIES**

There are no ties in the ready writing contest. Judges must reach a consensus on the rankings of essays and rank the top papers first through sixth place, with no ties.

## After the contest

**OFFICIAL RESULTS**

When all papers are in the hands of the contest director, the director should announce the results beginning with the sixth place winner. Once the awarding of places has been announced as official, changes are not to be made.

**CRITIQUES AND WRITTEN CRITICISM**

The UIL does not require but certainly allows oral critiques. Attach written rubric criticism to each essay.

**POSTING RESULTS**

Announce or post the names, schools and ranks of only the persons placing first through sixth.

**REPORT TO DIRECTOR**

(DISTRICT) Individual contest directors shall give the contest roster/results form and sorting envelopes to the district director immediately after the contest. The district meet director is responsible for entering results into the UIL Spring Online Meet Entry System. District results must be submitted into the UIL online system and made available for public review by 5 p.m. on the Monday following the second district meet. (REGION) Individual contest directors shall give the contest roster/results form and sorting envelopes to the regional director immediately after the contest. The regional meet director is responsible for entering results into the UIL Spring Meet Online Entry system and making them available for public review by 5 p.m. of the Monday following the regional meet. Regional directors shall also provide a list of contestant absentees if alternates were not present to take these individuals' places.

**RETURNING PAPERS**

(DISTRICT) If results are final and all questions resolved, entries may be returned no sooner than the end of the contest on the Saturday of the respective district week. (REGION) If all questions are resolved and if the meet is held on Saturday, the essays and comments should be returned to the contestants the day of the meet.

**MAILING RESULTS**

Mailing a copy of the district or regional meet results to each participating school is optional since results will be posted online.

**EXTRA CONTEST MATERIALS**

(DISTRICT) Destroy all extra materials on the Monday following the second district week. (REGION) Destroy all extra materials on the Monday following the regional meet.

**INDIVIDUAL POINTS**

1st place.....	15
2nd place.....	12
3rd place.....	10
4th place.....	8
5th place.....	6
6th place.....	4