

Section 948: READY WRITING CONTEST

- (a) **REPRESENTATION.** This contest is open to students in grades 9-12. Each school may enter three contestants, who must be eligible under Subchapter M.
- (b) **NATURE OF THE CONTEST.** Contestants write expository compositions. They are given a choice between two prompts, each an excerpt from literature, publications (past and present), or speeches. Expository writing explains, proves, or explores a topic in a balanced way, allowing the argument and the evidence given to be the deciding factor in the paper. Descriptive or narrative passages may be used to illustrate or reinforce an idea or point, but they must be clearly subservient or incidental to the purpose of exposition. The composition is judged on interest (60%), organization (30%), and correctness of style (10%).
- (c) **CONTEST ADMINISTRATION.**
 - (1) *Personnel.* A director, who may be a contestant's coach, should administer the contest. A minimum of three qualified and impartial judges, who may not be contestants' coaches, should be appointed by the contest director or meet director. An assistant director may be appointed but is not required.
 - (2) *Time Allotted for Contest.* Two hours should be allowed for writing the composition.
 - (3) *Computer Use Option.* Contestants may use laptop or notebook computers, which they must bring, as well as portable printers, and associated hardware, software and paper. Districts and regional host sites may provide computers for contestants but are not required to do so. Computers will not be provided at the State Meet. The typed entry must be single-sided and double-spaced, using any standard 12-point font on 8 1/2 x 11-inch white paper. When printing the contest on an electronic printer, the print command must be started by the time contest time expires. Students who opt to compose their entries on computers accept the risk of computer malfunction. In case of computer malfunction, the contestant may use the remaining allotted time to complete the composition in handwriting or compose on another computer (if available).
 - (4) *Writing By Hand.* Contestants who are hand-writing their compositions must use their own standard 8 1/2 x 11-inch ruled white notebook paper or typing paper or the paper provided by the host school. Contestants shall write or print the composition in ink and on only one side of the paper.
 - (5) *Materials.*
 - (A) *Topics.* Topics shall be furnished by the League office.
 - (B) *Thesaurus and Dictionary.* 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.
 - (6) *Manuscript Instructions.*
 - (A) *Title.* Center the title at the top of the first page of writing.
 - (B) *Margins.* Consistent left margins of approximately one inch should be used. However, contestants who compose on computers should not be penalized for variations in margins.
 - (C) *Page Numbers.* Pages should be numbered on the upper left-hand corners, without parentheses, to distinguish the page number from the assigned contestant number.
- (d) **CONDUCTING THE CONTEST.**
 - (1) *Number Contestants.* As roll is called, instruct contestants to place their contestant number in the upper right-hand corner of each page of writing, and place the number in parentheses.
 - (2) *Clear Room.* Contestants and coaches should be informed of the time and place of the optional viewing period, if one is scheduled. Spectators and coaches not assigned a specific duty in administering the contest should be dismissed from the contest room before the contest begins.
 - (3) *Distribute Prompt Sheets.* Distribute the contest prompts, face down. Instruct contestants to turn the prompts over when the signal is given and to select only one prompt.

- (4) *Time Warning.* Warn the contestants when 15 minutes remain in the contest period.
- (e) **JUDGING.**
 - (1) *Briefing Judges.* Prior to the contest, the director should discuss thoroughly with judges the criteria for evaluating the compositions.
 - (2) *Judging Criteria.*
 - (A) Interest depends primarily upon substance, i.e., having something to say that is worth saying because of its acuteness of analysis and its originality of thought. It depends next upon clarity and upon including specific details and examples that individualize the composition as an outgrowth of the writer's character and experience.
 - (B) Organization has clarity as its main goal. The plan of the whole composition should be such that each part contributes to an understanding of the writer's main idea or thesis, no part being misleading or unrelated to that thesis. The organization of each paragraph should be directed to the logical and full development of one idea.
 - (C) Correctness of style includes avoiding errors in sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, word usage, and spelling that hinder clear communication.
 - (3) *Ranking the Compositions.* Judges shall read all of the compositions and without marking on the papers, shall rank them in the order of their excellence: 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. The judges should discuss the papers contending for rank, and may alter decisions as a result of the discussion. Judges are to reach a consensus on the rankings. There can be no ties in this contest.
 - (4) *Preparing Critiques.* Judges should prepare comments on the Ready Writing Judging Rubric for each entry. Comments should reflect the UIL philosophy on judging. First identify and comment on the positive aspects of the essay. Then offer constructive criticism aimed to help students overcome areas of weakness or error. The comments need not be long, but should be specific. Evaluate each composition by checking the areas of content designated on the rubric and tabulate a score for each contestant. Scores should reflect the outcome of the consensus ranking of compositions.
 - (5) *Points.* Points are awarded through sixth place. See Section 902.
- (f) **VIEWING PERIOD.** An optional period of time not to exceed 15 minutes may be arranged for coaches and contestants to review their own evaluations and compositions.
- (g) **OFFICIAL RESULTS.** After the optional viewing period, if held, has ended and all papers have been collected, the contest director shall announce the official winners. Official results, once announced, are final.
- (h) **RETURNING MATERIALS.** 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. If the regional meet is held on Saturday, compositions and prompts should be returned to contestants following the announcement of official regional results.
- (i) **PUBLICATION OF COMPOSITIONS.** Compositions of contestants in the State Meet become the property of the League and may be printed and circulated or otherwise used by the League in promotion of the contest.