

Section 1424: EDITORIAL WRITING CONTEST

(a) REPRESENTATION.

- (1) *Contestants.* Students in the seventh and eighth grade who are eligible under Section 1400 may enter this contest.
- (2) *Divisions.* This contest will consist of one division unless the district executive committee approves separate divisions for each grade.
- (3) *Individual Competition.* Each participant school may enter as many as three contestants per division in the district meet.
- (4) *Team Competition.* There is no team competition in this contest.

(b) NATURE OF THE CONTEST.

- (1) *Summary.* The purpose of the contest is to stress writing and higher order thinking skills and to teach students the basics of communication necessary in life.
- (2) *Contest Format.* This is a 45-minute contest. Contest materials shall consist of a fact sheet from which participants will develop an editorial.
- (3) *Contest Material.* One prompt will be provided for grades seven and eight. The League will make available one contest prompt for invitational meets, one for fall/winter district meets and one for spring district meets.

(c) CONTEST ADMINISTRATION.

(1) *Personnel.*

- (A) *Contest Director.* The contest director shall be responsible for preventing any communication between contestants or any reference on the part of contestants to notes, books or printed material other than a standard bound or electronic thesaurus and/or dictionary. The contest director shall be timekeeper of the contest and give warnings of the time remaining at 15 and 5 minutes, even if the contest is held in a room where a clock is clearly visible to the contestants. When 45 minutes have elapsed from the time the contestants have been instructed to begin the contest, the contest director shall collect all entries.
- (B) *Judges.* The contest director shall select a properly qualified and impartial single judge or an odd number panel of judges. The papers shall be graded in accordance with the list of journalism contest judging criteria.

(2) *Materials*

- (A) *Provided by UIL.* The following materials will be provided to schools submitting the appropriate requisitions. See Section 1408 (c) for the dates when invitational materials will be available. See Section 1408 (e) for the dates when district materials will be available.
 - (i) Prompts for 30 contestants in each packet.
 - (ii) A list of editorial judging criteria. The contest director shall make available copies of the list for review by judges prior to the contest.
 - (iii) Two contest rosters.
- (B) *Provided by the Student or School.*
 - (i) Blank paper (ruled or plain white.)
 - (ii) Pens, pencils and/or erasers.
- (C) *Other.* Students may use a standard bound or electronic thesaurus and/or dictionary during the contest.

(d) CONDUCTING THE CONTEST.

- (1) *Number Contestants.* Contestants shall be assembled and seated throughout the room(s). A roll is called. Students should be instructed to write their assigned contestant number in the upper right hand corner of each page and to circle the number. Coaches may assist in this process prior to the contest.

- (2) *Clear Room.* Contestants and coaches should be informed of the time and place of an optional viewing period, if one is scheduled. Spectators and coaches not assigned specific duties in administering the contest should be dismissed from the contest room before the contest begins.
 - (3) *Distribute Prompts.* Place a copy of the prompt in front of each contestant and instruct them not to open the contest material until the start signal is given.
 - (4) *Signal to Stop.* When 45 minutes have elapsed, tell the students to stop writing. Collect all prompts, notes and contestant papers.
- (e) **OPTIONS FOR WRITING.** Contestants may use ruled or plain white paper, standard notebook or typing paper to hand-write their editorials. Students may bring and use their own computers. If contestants choose to use their own computers, they must bring their own printers, associated hardware, software and paper. Laptop computers are permitted and recommended. Spell check and thesaurus functions may be used if available on computers. 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. Contestants may use electronic or printed dictionaries and thesauruses. The entry should be written on one side in pencil or ink, or typed on a word processing computer using any standard 12-point font and one-inch margins on regular sized computer paper. Contestants shall not include their names or the names of their schools on the contest entry. Papers will be identified by numbers assigned by the contest director.
- (f) **JUDGING CRITERIA.** Judging criteria shall be enclosed in the contest material requisitioned from the League office. The contest director shall make these criteria available to judges prior to the contest. The following is a general outline of an editorial for judges and contestants:
- (1) Introduction - presents problem and establishes staff stance.
 - (2) Body supports stance taken.
 - (3) Conclusion.
 - (A) The contestant offers original solutions or suggestions, if warranted.
 - (B) Conclusion restates staff stance.
 - (4) Considerations for Judging.
 - (A) Writing is exact, active and precise.
 - (B) Alternative viewpoints are presented and rebutted when appropriate.
 - (C) Editorial is written in third person, although first person plural may be used when appropriate.
 - (D) Secondary consideration is given to grammar, spelling and neatness.
- (g) **POINTS.** Individual points shall be awarded through sixth place. See Section 1408 (i).
- (h) **RETURNING MATERIALS.** No materials from the fall/winter district contest may be returned to contestants before January 31. No materials from the spring district contest may be returned to contestants before May 15.