

DESCRIPTION OF UIL ACADEMIC CONTESTS

The University Interscholastic League offers a wide variety of academic contests for high school students, encompassing many elements of required high school coursework. These contests build upon the academic skills developed in the classroom and offer students an opportunity to stretch their talents above and beyond those requirements. The complete rules for each contest are contained in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules, which is updated every year and posted on the UIL website.

Accounting

The contest focuses on the elementary principles and practices of accounting for sole proprietorship, partnerships and corporations, and includes bookkeeping terminology, the work sheet with adjustments, income statement, balance sheet, trial balance, account classification, journalizing, posting, bank reconciliation, payroll and other items, related to the basic accounting cycle.

Calculator Applications

The contest includes calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, roots, powers, exponentiation, logarithms, trigonometric functions and inverse trigonometric functions. In addition to straightforward calculation problems, the contest includes geometric and stated problems similar to those found in algebra, geometry and trigonometry textbooks, previous contests and League materials related to the contest.

Computer Applications

Computer Applications focuses on word processing speed and accuracy, computer skills in database and spreadsheet, and integration of applications. Skills tested include formatting copy, mail merge, headers/footers, editing, proofreading, spreadsheet, graphs/charts, and integration of all applications.

Computer Science

The Computer Science Contest challenges high school students to gain an understanding of the significance of computation as well as the details of Java programming, to be alert to new technology and information, to gain an understanding of the basic principles of computer science and to get a start in one of the most important fields of the Information Age.

Current Issues & Events

The contest focuses on a basic knowledge of current state, national and world events and issues. The contest consists of 40 multiple-choice questions and an essay that challenges students to understand not just what is happening in the world today, but why and how it's happening and what it means to us as citizens of the United States.

Editorial Writing

This contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on mechanical and stylistic precision, lead writing, use of direct and indirect quotes, news judgment, and the ability to think deeply, to compare and contrast and to argue or defend a point of view persuasively.

Feature Writing

The Feature Writing Contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on the same writing skills as in other UIL journalism contests, as well as the ability to write descriptively.

Headline Writing

The contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on the ability to discern key facts and to write with flair and style in order to tell and sell a story.

Literary Criticism

The contest requires knowledge of literary history and of critical terms, and ability in literary criticism. Students are required to select the best answers involving judgment in literary criticism and to analyze literary passages from both the reading list and other sources. A tiebreaker is required in which the student must write a short essay dealing with a specified topic about a selected literary passage.

Mathematics

This 40-minute, 60-question contest is designed to test knowledge and understanding in the areas of Algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, math analysis, analytic geometry, pre-calculus and elementary calculus.

News Writing

The News Writing Contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly, and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on mechanical and stylistic precision, lead writing, use of direct and indirect quotes, and news judgment.

Number Sense

This ten minute, 80-question mental math contest covers all high school mathematics curricula. All answers must be derived without using scratch paper or a calculator.

Ready Writing

Students write expository compositions that attempt to explain, prove or explore a topic in a balanced way, allowing the argument and the evidence given to be the deciding factor in the paper. Students are given a choice between two prompts, each an excerpt from literature, publications or speeches. The essay is judged on interest, organization and style.

Science

Individual awards are given in each subject area, so even students who have not yet taken all the science courses can excel! The Science Contest challenges students to read widely in biology, chemistry and physics, to understand the significance of experiments rather than to recall obscure details, and to be alert to new discoveries and information in the areas of science. It is designed to help students gain an understanding of the basic principles as well as knowledge of the history and philosophy of science, and to foster a sense of enthusiasm about science and how it affects our daily lives.

Social Studies

The Social Studies Contest requires students to expand and apply their knowledge of governmental systems, historical trends, movements and eras and the physical setting of the earth, particularly as it applies to cultural environments. Each year the contest focuses on a selected topic area, and a reading list is provided.

Spelling & Vocabulary

The Spelling & Vocabulary Contest promotes precise and effective use of words. The three-part contest consists of multiple-choice questions covering proofreading and vocabulary, and words that are written from dictation. The vocabulary-building and spelling components of the contest are important complements to the high school academic curriculum and are indicative of vocabulary words contained on standardized tests such as SAT, PSAT and ACT.

CX Debate

Cross-Examination Debate trains students to analyze a problem, conduct thorough and relevant research, and utilize principles of argumentation and advocacy in presenting the most effective case for or against a given proposition. Debate provides invaluable training in critical thinking, quick responses, defending worthy ideas and attacking invalid ideas. It teaches students to tolerate other points of view. Debate exists only in democratic societies, and no democratic society can exist without debate.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Lincoln-Douglas debate provides excellent training for development of skills in argumentation, persuasion, research and audience analysis. Through this contest, students are encouraged to develop a direct and communicative style of delivery. Lincoln-Douglas debate is a one-on-one argumentation in which debaters attempt to convince the judge of the acceptability of their side of a proposition. One debater will argue the affirmative side of the resolution and the other will argue the negative side of the resolution in a given round.

Informative Speaking

The purpose of informative speaking is to stimulate an active interest in current affairs at the state, national and international levels, and to teach the student to present extemporaneously in a clear and impartial manner the facts about a subject as they appear in the best available sources of information. This contest is an exercise in clear thinking and informing the public on the issues and concerns of the American people. The objective is to present information in an interesting way, and an attempt should not be made to change the listener's mind beyond presenting the information.

Persuasive Speaking

This contest trains students to analyze a current issue, determine a point of view, and organize and deliver a speech that seeks to persuade listeners. The objective is to reinforce the views of listeners who already believe as the speaker does, but even more so, to bring those of neutral or opposing views around to the speaker's beliefs or proposed course of action. This contest should especially appeal to those who have a strong argumentative urge and who wish to advocate reforms or outline solutions to current problems.

Poetry Interpretation

The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to understand, experience and share poetry through the art of oral interpretation. The goals of this contest are to encourage the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections, and to enhance the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's interpretation of the work.

Prose Interpretation

This contest encourages the student to understand, experience and share prose works through the art of oral interpretation. It encourages the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections and enhances the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's interpretation of the work.

One-Act Play

The aims of the One-Act Play Contest are to satisfy the competitive, artistic spirit with friendly rivalry among schools, emphasizing high quality performance in this creative art; to foster appreciation of good acting, good directing and good theatre, to promote interest in that art form most readily usable in leisure time during adult life, to learn to lose or win graciously and to increase the number of schools which have adopted theatre arts as an academic subject in school curricula.