



Introducing New Mexico Academic Decathlon 2009-2010

USAD Mission Statement

The purpose of the United States Academic Decathlon is to develop and provide academic competitions, curriculum, and assessment to promote learning and academic excellence through teamwork among students of all achievement levels.

The History of Academic Decathlon

USAD was created in 1981 by Dr. Robert Peterson, who believed that student learning was accelerated and more information was retained if a team environment was provided for learners in conjunction with a competition to test their knowledge. His goal was to encourage large numbers of students, schools, and states to participate in this rigorous educational experience.

What is Academic Decathlon?

- The premier scholastic competition in America – building “life skills” in students:
 - Teamwork
 - Competitiveness
 - Communication – written and oral
 - Research and life-long learning

Program Overview

Academic Decathlon is a team competition wherein students match their intellects with students from other schools. Students are tested in ten categories:

- *Art
- *Economics
- *Essay
- *Music
- *Language & Literature
- *Mathematics
- *Science
- *Interview
- *Social Science
- *Speech *(both prepared and impromptu)*

Educational Experience

Based on the model of the athletic decathlon, AD requires participants to prepare for ten academic events. AD does not permit students to “specialize” but rather encourages academic versatility by requiring students to prepare for all ten events. AD stresses educational opportunity and academic excellence.

Competition Events

- Seven multiple choice exams – one in each of the following: Art, Economics, Language & Literature, Math, Music, Social Science, and Super Quiz
- Three judged communication events: Speech, Interview and Essay

Multiple Choice Exams

- Art, Economics, Language and Literature, Music, and Social Science each have 50 questions.
- Math exam has 25 questions.
- Written Super Quiz exam has 40 questions.

Students are given 30 minutes to complete each of the multiple choice exams.

Communication Events

- Students are given 50 minutes to complete the Essay exam.
- Speech – students present one 3 ½ to 4-minute prepared speech and an impromptu speech lasting between 1 ½ and 2 minutes.
- Interview with a panel of 2 to 3 judges – the interview process usually last between 4 and 7 minutes.

Super Quiz

- Comprised of two parts –
 - Written (accounts for 60% of overall SQ score)
 - Oral relay (accounts for 40% of overall SQ score)
- Test items are derived from the Super Quiz Resource Guide.
- 2009-2010 Super Quiz topic – *The French Revolution*

2009-2010 Super Quiz Topic

The Super Quiz topic will focus on *The French Revolution*. The *Super Quiz Resource Guide* will include readings on such topics as the Ancien Regime, the Coming of the French Revolution, French Revolutionary Developments, and the Aftermath of the Revolution.

Language & Literature

The language and literature curriculum will include critical reading, one novel, and several shorter works. The featured novel will be *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens.

Art

The art curriculum topic will be *18th and Early 19th Century French Art.*

Music

The music curriculum will focus on the music of the French Revolution. The curriculum will include a companion CD, featuring a number of listening selections.

Science

The science curriculum will focus on an Introduction to Chemistry.

Economics

The economics curriculum will cover fundamentals of economics, including general topics in macro- and microeconomics and international trade and global economic development. The economics curriculum will also include a thematic section focused on the economy of the French Revolution.

Math

The math curriculum will cover topics in the fields of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry and differential calculus.

Levels of Competition

- Local Scrimmages
- Regional
- State
- Nationals
 - 2005 Chicago, Illinois
 - 2006 San Antonio, Texas
 - 2007 Honolulu, Hawaii
 - 2008 Garden Grove, California (25th Anniv.)
 - 2009 Memphis, Tennessee
 - 2010 Omaha, Nebraska

National Competition – April

- Students compete in all ten events
- One team per state advances to Nationals
- Teams compete with 40+ other states (three divisions – schools are placed in a division according to their school population...small, medium, large)
- There are also Small, Medium, & Large School Online National Competitions held in conjunction with the USAD Nationals in April.

2009 National Champions



Awards

- Certificate of Participation
 - Medals
 - Plaques
 - Trophies
- Scholarships

State & National Competitions

Each team member competes in all ten events. Only six scores count towards the final team standing

- The top two Honor scores
- The top two Scholastic scores
- The top two Varsity scores

State & National Awards

Gold, Silver and Bronze medals are awarded for individual event winners in each division (honors, scholastic, and varsity) and overall total high scorers.

The NM State Academic Decathlon also awards UNM and NM Tech scholarships to some of the top scoring individuals in the State competition.

The Team

A team consists of nine full-time students from 9th – 12th grades of the same high school. Each team is made up of three Honor students, three Scholastic students, and three Varsity students:

- Honor 3.750 – 4.000 GPA
- Scholastic 3.000 – 3.749 GPA
- Varsity 0.000 – 2.999 GPA

How to Form A Team

- Identify a Coach (need good motivator)
- Discuss with students the idea of forming a team
- Recruit additional teachers to help with other subjects
- Recruit your 3 "A", 3 "B" & 3 "C" students (can start w/ 2 of each)
- Prepare - Let teachers in the classes that cover Decathlon topics know what you are working on

Team Selection

- Open up to all students - give tests (USAD scrimmage or other) to determine qualified students
- Get recommendations from teachers or other students
 - ◆ Talk to Counselors
 - ◆ Get leads from other students
 - ◆ Survey teachers for names of students
 - ◆ Check test scores, IQ, standardized tests, etc.
 - ◆ Talk to Gifted & Talented Coordinators
 - ◆ Hold general meeting - discuss advantages/disadvantages of AD; determine student's availability; review course work as it relates to current Study Guide topics.
 - ◆ Student Characteristics - intelligence, brain power, motivation (desire), coachability, peer acceptance, team player.

Team Recruitment

- Year round effort
- Coach is salesperson
- Talk it up in your schools and classrooms
- Active recruitment may be necessary to secure "varsity" level students
- Be honest with amount of time required
- Be alert to extra-curricular activities (especially jobs)
- Balance the team (freshman through seniors) if possible
- Test students with last year's Practice Test or this year's scrimmage tests from USAD; have students write an essay test for writing ability

Coaches Responsibilities

- Team Recruitment
- Team Selection
- Secure Resource Materials
- Staff Involvement
- Coaching
- Team Preparation
- Register Team
- Verify GPA's
- Make Travel Arrangements for Competition(s)
- Communicate with State Director
- Chaperone Team

Why Academic Decathlon?

- Creates a climate on high school campuses, supporting and cheering a program devoted to the achievement of intellectual strength.
- Teachers from various disciplines and experts from public and private sectors work together in preparing the team.
- The “C” student – becomes empowered.
- The “A” and “B” student are given the chance to research and enrich learning.
- Music and Art appreciation study come alive.
- Encourages public interest and awareness of outstanding programs in American schools.

How to get started!

- Contact Karen Kinsman – call 505-277-4916 or email at: kkinsman@unm.edu, or
- Contact USAD at: mylene@usad.org
- Select a coach
- Use the *official Study Guide* and visit the **USAD** website @ www.usad.org for additional study materials that can be ordered
- Meet with interested students
- Begin research according to the **Study Guide** outlines
- Recruit faculty and community co-coaches
- Select nine students for the team
- Prepare and practice
- **Compete!**

NEW TEAM INCENTIVE!

New teams that commit to doing Academic Decathlon for a minimum of 2 years will receive USAD's Basic Curriculum package of study materials (\$440 value) **FREE OF CHARGE** for the first year! The NMAD team registration fee will also be **WAIVED** for the first year (\$400 value)!



Thank You for taking the time
to learn about this incredible
academic program!