

Hi! My name is Kirby Rankin. I taught Technology Applications at Wall High School for 18 years and retired in 2015. I coached Computer Applications at Wall all 18 years and had the privilege of coaching the 2004 and 2013 2A state champions. Now I serve as an assistant for the Computer Applications contest. I proof read all of the tests and solutions and help out with a few contests and conferences. I can be reached at [kirby.rankin@gmail.com](mailto:kirby.rankin@gmail.com) or 325-656-0739.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a network of white lines and circles on a blue gradient background, resembling a circuit board or a neural network.

# COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

GETTING STARTED AND DOING WELL....

# WHAT IS IT?

- 5 minute tie breaker.
  - Simple typing test
- 3 minute preview time
  - You may mark up the test document all that you want.
  - You may not begin the test during this time.
- 30 minute test
  - Test will consist of a series of step by step instructions.
  - Usually produce 2 documents using Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access.



# TYPICAL TEST

- Excel printout, Word document with Excel chart or formulas
- Access report, Word document with Access data or formulas
- Excel or Access printout, Word document with merged data
- Access printout, Excel chart creation, Word document with embedded chart
- Excel data entry, import to Access for report, Word document with chart or formulas
- Just Excel and Access in either order for two printouts



# REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- Computer
  - Use laptops only, no desktop PCs.
  - If possible, use laptop dedicated only to UIL Computer Applications.
  - Computers may not be networked to one another or connected to the Internet.
- Portable printer
- Flash drive
- Paper
- Microsoft Office 2010, 2013, 2016, or Office 365

# OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

- Mouse
- External keyboard
- External keypad
- Copy stand
- Power strip (highly recommended)
- Pencils, highlighters and labels

# WHEN TO PRACTICE

- Practice Often
  - At least once a week
  - Start in the fall
- Practice Outside of School Time
  - One night a week for an hour
  - At home whenever you can
- Practice as a team



# HOW TO PRACTICE

- Don't just work tests.
  - Choose a topic from the Typical Topic List and learn it.
  - Practice a skill that you did poorly on in the last contest.
- Don't always time your practice tests.
  - Work through them slowly to learn the skills tested.
  - Stop and ask for help from your teammates.
- Work the 5 downloadable Lesson Plans from the UIL website: IF/IF Function, Date & Time, Update Queries/Expression Builder, Field Codes for date/time and numbers.
- Read the FAQs on the UIL website.

# HOW TO PRACTICE

- Repetition
  - Work the same test multiple times.
    - First, work test without a time limit to learn how to do everything.
    - Next, time the test, but don't stop when the timer goes off. Go ahead and finish.
    - After that, time the test and stop when the timer sounds. Score your work.
  - Work each test until it can be completed within the expected timeframe.

# HOW TO PRACTICE

- Know your stuff!
  - *Use the Typical Topic List as a check list of what you need to learn.*
  - Practice each topic until you are comfortable doing that skill.
  - Go online, use Office Help or look in books (OMG!) to find how to use each skill.
  - EXPLORE the alternatives to each topic.
  - Get the ULL's practice packets and work on them until you can do ALL of them.
- Learn the Computer Application Handbook information!
  - Know all the rules as this is an extension of the Constitution.
  - Have templates for all document types



# BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- Make a check list of all the equipment that you will need.
- Set up and test each computer and printer.
- Be sure that you can log into the computer when it is away from your school's network.
- Take the printer driver software with you to the contest.
- Purchase extra printer cartridges to have at contests.

# AT THE CONTEST

- Arrive early enough to get a good seat.
- Set up and test your equipment.
- If you can, bring a backup for everything.
- If there is an equipment problem, and you don't have a backup, see if you can borrow from a fellow competitor.
- Test print from each application and leave them all open.
- Don't practice just before the contest.
- Leave the contest room and go relax.

# ACCESS SKILLS – FROM BASIC TO ADVANCED

- Build tables
- Create labels
- Simple report, minor changes
- Select & update queries
- Functions & formulas
- Report wizard
- Merge to Word
- Use format switches
- Export to Excel
- Advanced queries
- Complicated formulas/functions
- Modify created reports
- Build relationships
- Import files from Excel



# EXCEL SKILLS – FROM BASIC TO ADVANCED

- Basic calculations
- Functions
- Headers and footers
- Formatting fields
- Create charts
- Export to Word
- Merge to Word
- Sorting
- Text to columns
- Filter data
- Multiple worksheets
- Consolidate from multiple sheets
- Advanced chart features
- Goal seek
- Subtotals
- Pivot tables
- Data validation

# WORD SKILLS – FROM BASIC TO ADVANCED

- Create document
- Templates for document formats
- Formatting fields
- Headers and footers
- Special characters
- Merge
- Columns
- Tables
- Text boxes
- Borders
- Drawing tools
- Outlines
- Calculations in tables
- Use section breaks

# JUST BEFORE THE CONTEST STARTS

- Roll is called.
- Coaches leave with tests to take in groups.
- You're on your own, so be sure you know ALL the rules.



# CONTEST STRATEGY

- Use the 3 minute preview time wisely and mark difficult areas.
- Use templates.
- If there is one, do the Word document first.
- If you don't have time to embed a chart, print it from Excel.
- Don't try to figure out how to do something, just skip it or FAKE it!
- Be sure you print everything you do.
- **Fast, almost correct and finished is better than slow, perfect and not finished.**
- Go to LOTS of contests.

# COMPUTER PROBLEM DURING CONTEST

- ***Raise your hand to get help from an official assistant.***
- If the problem cannot be solved, unfortunately, there is no recourse.
- If it is a printer problem, save often to your flash drive.
- The assistant will watch you print your printouts on another computer or on your computer with another printer after the contest.

# END OF CONTEST

- Carefully pick your best printouts.
- Be certain each printout has Contestant Number.
- If you have a chart or graph that didn't get into a document, submit it.
- Turn in your flash drive with tape over any ID and Contestant Number visible.
- Go have fun while your coach haggles over grading.



# GRADING & VERIFICATION

- ALL coaches are required to grade or student may be disqualified!
- If you can't grade, arrange for a substitute BEFORE the contest.
- Grade all Printout 1 papers together until 3 different people have graded each test.
- Grade all Printout 2 papers together until 3 different people have graded each test.
- Show up for verification to review your test with your coach.
- Don't review test with others.
- Show up at the Awards Ceremony.

# STRATEGY FOR COACHES

- Find capable participants.
  - Keep your students from prior years.
  - Look for students in Computer Science Classes.
  - Learn which students are possibilities from Middle School/Junior High tech teacher.
  - Ask your existing participants for suggestions.
- Motivate your students.
  - UIL looks great on college applications.
  - Computer skills are necessary for the workplace.
  - State is a really fun trip.
  - Bribe them with candy or pizza, if nothing else works.
  - Prepare students BEFORE sending them to District or you're setting them up to fail.

# MORE STRATEGIES FOR COACHES

- Rearrange the curriculum.
  - Teach your students enough about Access in early fall to be viable contestants.
  - Put off Outlook and PowerPoint in your curriculum until late spring.
- Encourage extracurricular work.
  - Make old tests available.
  - Use self-paced study materials and videos from third party vendors.
  - Use the 5 Lesson Plans on UIL website.
  - Read FAQs on UIL website.



# PROBLEMS WHEN PRACTICING

- For any UIL test, Hexco test or Downloadable Lesson Plan from the UIL website that you're stuck on, send it to Linda Tarrant at [hexco@hexco.com](mailto:hexco@hexco.com) .
  - YOUR ACTUAL ATTEMPT (Excel, Access and/or Word files)
  - AN EMAIL WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS that are stumping you or your student
  - Correction will be sent to you with explanation of any problems found
- DO NOT scan the whole test and reference a line of instruction by its outline position...write it out!
- Email or call Linda Tarrant, Contest Director, with any questions that arise.
  - [hexco@hexco.com](mailto:hexco@hexco.com)
  - 830.367.3825

The background is a blue gradient. In the corners, there are white line-art illustrations of circuit boards or neural networks, with lines and small circles representing nodes.

GOOD LUCK!

SEE YOU AT STATE!