

## EDITORIAL WRITING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONTEST DIRECTOR

The following guidelines are to be used to expand upon, but not replace, the information in the *Constitution and Contest Rules*, Section 1424. The rules may be found in the *A+ Handbook* and on the UIL web site.

### **BEFORE THE MEET**

**Open and check your contest packet...**you should receive:

1. Writing prompts
2. Contest roster
3. Instructions to the Judges and a Sample Editorial
4. Evaluation sheets

### **Room.**

Secure a room of adequate size with desks or tables and chairs of the proper height for the number of contestants.

### **Materials and Equipment.**

1. The contest packet, which contains the prompts and other materials.
2. The contest roster should be filled out with contestants' names from entry forms prior to the contest.
3. Carefully review the rules for this contest, found in the *A+ Handbook*, on the UIL web site or in the current *Constitution and Contest Rules*.
4. An accurate clock or stopwatch.
5. Blank sheets of paper for each contestant and extra pens or pencils.
6. Contestants provide their own pens or pencils, and may use a thesaurus or dictionary.
7. Contestants may use computers if they wish. They must provide their own printers and paper. Students who elect to use computers accept the risk of computer malfunction. In the case of computer malfunction, the contestant may use the remaining allotted time to complete the composition in handwriting.

### **Personnel.**

1. *Contest Director.* A contest director is needed and may be a coach.
2. *Assistant.* A person, who may be a coach, should be appointed to assist the contest director during the contest.
3. *Judges.* The contest director shall select an odd-numbered panel of properly trained and impartial judges or a single judge (exclusive of coaches whose students are represented in the contest to be judged). Judges should be provided with instructions and judging criteria prior to the contest.

### **DURING THE CONTEST**

1. *Contest Room and Seating.* The contest director should arrange for a suitable contest room that provides enough space for comfortable writing. Contestants should be seated randomly throughout the testing area.
2. *Numbering Contestants.* The contest director should call roll using the contest roster and assign a number to each contestant, instructing the contestants to write their assigned number in the top right-hand corner of their blank paper. Contestants should not put their name or school on their contest paper.
3. *Clearing the Room.* Contestants and coaches should be informed of the time and place of the optional viewing period. Spectators and coaches not assigned a specific duty in administering the contest should be dismissed from the contest room before the contest begins.

4. *Starting the Contest.* The contest director shall place the writing prompts face down on the desk in front of each contestant. Contestants may use the instruction and prompt page for notes or ideas, but should be instructed to write their editorial on the page(s) they have numbered.
5. *Time.* A start signal shall be given, and contestants will have 45 minutes to create and write their editorials.
6. *Test Collection.* When the testing time has elapsed and the stop signal has been given, the contest director shall ask all contestants to place their pencils on the desks and then collect all editorials and prompts. If students use computers, they should enter the print function when the stop sign is given.

### **GRADING THE CONTEST PAPERS**

1. *Briefing the Judges.* At some convenient time before the contest begins, the director shall discuss thoroughly with the judges the criteria for evaluating the editorials, making sure that they all understand those criteria and the relative importance to be accorded each.
2. *Judging Instructions.* Each judge shall be given the sample editorial, a copy of the standards for evaluation and evaluation sheets.
3. *Rating the Compositions.* Judges shall read all of the editorials submitted and, without marking on the manuscripts, rank them in order of their excellence: 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Comments should be made on the evaluations sheets provided. Comments should be specific enough to provide a clear sense of the positive elements of the editorial and where improvement is needed. Judges should discuss the compositions contending for rank, and reach a consensus on the rankings.

### **ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS**

1. *Verification Period.* An optional period not to exceed 15 minutes may be arranged for coaches and contestants to review their own evaluations and editorials before the official results are announced.
2. *Official Results.* Once the viewing period has elapsed and the contest director has collected all contest papers, official results shall be announced. Official results, once announced, are final.
3. *Places and Points.* Places shall be determined and recognized and points awarded through sixth place. See the *A+ Handbook* or the *Constitution and Contest Rules* (Section 1408(i)) for points to be awarded.

### **AFTER THE CONEST**

1. Provide the district director with the Contest Roster, a list of the winners and their schools, and the number of contestants participating.
2. Make recommendations or suggestions for the following year.
3. The district director or district meet host must return contestants' tests, evaluations, answer sheets, papers, etc. to participating schools. This material CANNOT be returned until the release date established in the current *Constitution and Contest Rules*. The meet director may need your assistance in putting the names of contestants and their schools on the papers to be returned, or in separating the contest materials to be returned to each school.