

READY 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 1088. The rules may be found in the *A+ Handbook* and on the UIL web site.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. The contest includes three divisions: Grades 3/4, grades 5/6 and grades 7/8. Districts may elect to have a separate division for each grade level in grades 3 through 8.
2. The contestants will be given a choice between two prompts. The prompts supplied by UIL will give the purpose of writing, the audience, the format and a brief description of the situation.
3. A total of two hours is allowed for contestants to complete their essays; however, districts may shorten the length of the contest period to conform to the needs of the grade level.

BEFORE THE MEET

Check your contest packet...you should receive:

1. Contest Roster
2. Ballots
3. Writing Prompts
4. Evaluation Sheets

Room

Secure a room of adequate size for the number of contestants expected. The room should have chairs and desks or tables of proper height.

Materials and Equipment

1. The test packet with the writing prompts.
2. The contest roster may be filled out with contestants' names from entry forms prior to the contest.
3. A copy of the current *Constitution and Contest Rules* or a copy of the rules for this contest.
4. A copy of the "Criteria for Evaluation" for each judge.
5. An accurate clock for timing the contest.
6. Extra pencils and a pencil sharpener for use by contestants. Contestants may use pens or pencils.

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*. Coaches of the contestants may NOT be judges of that grade level. Be sure each judge is familiar with the scoring guidelines. Judges should be briefed before they begin judging the essays to ensure that they understand the criteria and the importance of positive and constructive remarks.

DURING THE CONTEST

1. During the contest, exclude all from the room except contestants, the director and one assistant.
2. Contestants shall be assembled and seated sparsely over the room.
3. Check names of contestants against the contest roster and assign each contestant a number.
4. Instruct contestants to enter their assigned number in the upper right-hand corner of the first sheet of their manuscripts and enclose it in parentheses.
5. Distribute the topics to each student and explain that they are to choose one of the topics and statements and write a theme on that topic. READ THE TOPIC AND STATEMENTS ALOUD once. Do not discuss the topics with the contestants.
6. The director is responsible for preventing any communication between contestants, or any reference on the part of the contestants to notes or books or printed matter of any character. The director is the timekeeper for the contest, and when two hours have elapsed (or the modified contest period) from the time the contestants have been given the topic, all manuscripts should be collected. The contest director shall give 15 minutes' warning of the time limit, even if the contest is held in a room where a clock is clearly visible to the contestants.

JUDGING THE PAPERS

1. After the contest, gather all of the essays and the topic sheets.
2. Exclude contestants from the room when grading. Allow sufficient time for careful grading. Judges should read the papers submitted in the division to be judged, and without marking on the manuscripts, rank the essays in order of excellence; 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Comments should be made on the evaluations sheets provided. The judges shall discuss the essays contending for a place, being permitted to alter their rankings as a result of the discussion. Judges are to reach a consensus on the rankings. There can be no ties in this contest.
3. Before the results are announced, the judges shall prepare a written evaluation of each essay stating its good points and areas that could be improved. The comments need not be long, and they should be specific rather than general.

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS

1. *Announcing the winners.* Before the assembled contestants and other interested parties, the director shall announce, at a time and place specified, the names and schools of the winners. With this announcement, the results are final.
2. *Awarding places.* Places should be determined through sixth place and points given according to Section 905 (d).

AFTER THE CONTEST

1. Provide the district director with a list of 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' test, 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.