

### MAPS, GRAPHS & CHARTS (grades 5-8)

The maps, graphs & charts contest is designed to help students learn to get information from world maps, pie charts, bar charts and local area maps.

The 75-question objective test that students must complete in 45 minutes measures skills such as using a reference book to locate information, making comparisons, estimating and approximating, using scale and interpreting legends and keys.

### MATHEMATICS (grades 6-8)

Learning to quickly complete math problems is a valuable skill in all facets of life including engineering, accounting, completing a tax return and even grocery shopping. Students have 30 minutes to answer 50 multiple-choice questions that cover everything from algebra to geometry, as appropriate for the grade level.

### MODERN ORATORY (grades 6-8)

In modern oratory, the contestant will select one of five topics, determine the critical issues in the topic, and determine and acknowledge both pro and con points citing support discovered in their research. Students will decide which side they will defend and support that side in a three- to six-minute speech with additional evidence.

### MUSIC MEMORY (grades 2-8)

The focus of the music memory contest is an in-depth study of fine pieces of music literature taken from a wide spectrum of music genres. Students listen to a portion of each selection on the music list and must list or recognize the composer, the name of the major work and the name of the selection.

### NUMBER SENSE (grades 4-8)

Being able to perform quick mathematical calculations is the premise behind this contest. The test covers functions appropriate for the grade level, including algebra and geometry. Students are given 10 minutes to complete the fill-in-the-blank test.

### ONE-ACT PLAY (grades 6-8)

Students in one-act play will have the opportunity to work in all aspects of the production of a 40-minute play including the opportunity to satisfy the competitive, artistic spirit with friendly rivalry among schools, emphasizing high quality performance. The contest promotes interest in an art form most readily usable in leisure time during adult life.

### ORAL READING (grades 4-9)

As students prepare a piece of prose or poetry to read out loud, they learn to analyze the text as a literary critic, to grow and to develop as a performer, to communicate a message to an audience and to perform an artistic creation. All of these apply to the oral reading competition, which should be an extension of the classroom literary and language arts activities in poetry, short stories and childrens' fiction.

### READY WRITING (grades 3-8)

Given up to two hours to write an essay on one of two topics, ready writing helps students refine their writing abilities. This contest helps them to learn to write clearly and correctly a paper that is interesting and original, regardless of the topic area. Participation in Ready Writing provides excellent preparation for the writing components of state-mandated testing.

### SCIENCE (grades 7-8)

Emphasis for the science contest is placed on knowledge of scientific fact, understanding of scientific principles and the ability to think through scientific problems. The 45-minute, 35-question contest is designed to test knowledge and the ability to critically think about science and scientific concepts. Test content is specifically correlated to the TEKS curriculum.

### SOCIAL STUDIES (grades 5-8)

This contest is designed to encourage students to expand their knowledge of social studies, particularly in the areas of history, geography, government systems, economics and citizenship. Students will be given an objective test containing approximately 40 questions which must be answered in 30 minutes. Test content is specifically correlated to the TEKS curriculum.

### SPELLING (grades 3-8)

The spelling contest is designed to give students exposure to a wide variety of vocabulary words. It is not a contest of memorization. For the most educational value, preparation for this contest should include instruction in the rules of the English language, meanings and definitions, and root words. Depending on their grade level, students must spell between 65 and 140 words in 30-60 minutes.

### STORYTELLING (grades 2-3)

To tell a story, the participant must develop skills in listening, interpretative thinking and speaking. Students are read a story, which they must then tell back to the judges. Preparing for this contest also allows for the development of creative expression and self-confidence.

#### STATE OFFICE SUPPORT

UIL offers assistance to administrators and teachers.

Contact

Lisa Parker

A+ Academics, Assistant Director

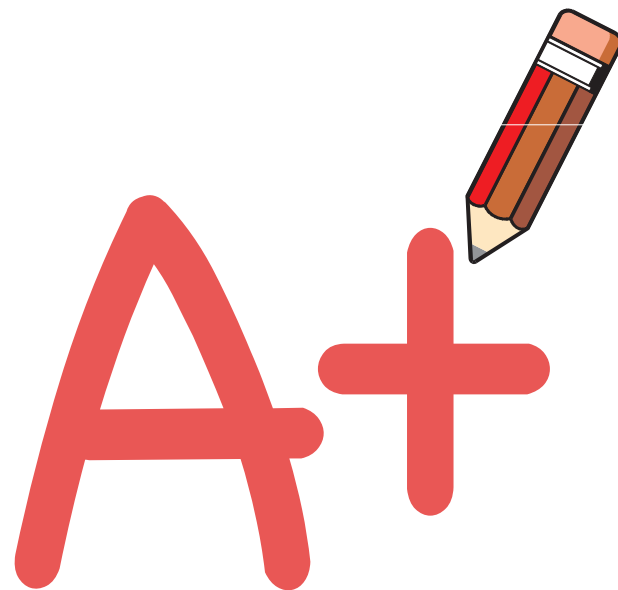
University Interscholastic League

Box 8028, Austin, TX 78713

512-471-5883 • fax: 512-232-1499

[aplus@uiltexas.org](mailto:aplus@uiltexas.org)

[www.uiltexas.org/aplus](http://www.uiltexas.org/aplus)



## Academics

# Academic Competition for Elementary, Middle School and Junior High



University Interscholastic League

## MISSION

The academic programs of the University Interscholastic League motivate students

- to find new excitement in learning;
- to work with others in a competitive atmosphere;
- to achieve mastery of essential knowledge and skills;
- to test their skills and knowledge;
- to know the satisfaction of a successful performance; and
- to achieve recognition for academic excellence.

All UIL programs are designed to support the basic academic curriculum. The contests are easy to implement and serve as academic laboratories where students can apply what they learn in the classroom.

## GETTING STARTED

Every public elementary, middle and junior high school may register to participate. There is no fee for A+ program membership for a school whose parent high school is a member of the UIL. Schools that register will receive

- the *A+ Handbook*, a comprehensive guide to participating in A+ competitions, hosting the district meet, acquiring study materials, and FAQs.

You may register your campus online at

[www.uil texas.org/aplus](http://www.uil texas.org/aplus)

## THE HANDBOOK

The *A+ Handbook* contains

- instructions on forming a district;
- all necessary forms for district competition;
- instructions on hosting an invitational meet;
- the rules for all of the contests;
- sample questions and prompts for contests; and
- information about where to get UIL materials.

## COMPETITION

Schools may attend an unlimited number of invitational meets. However, the UIL creates only one set of invitational materials and urges sponsors to limit student participation to one competition that uses

Contest	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Team?
Art			A	A	A	B	B	Both
Calculator Applications					A	A	A	Both
Chess Puzzle Solving	A	A	B	B	C	C	C	Both
Creative Writing	A							Ind.
Dictionary Skills				A	A	B	B	Both
Editorial Writing					A	A	A	Ind.
Impromptu Speaking					A	A	A	Ind.
Listening				A	A	B	B	Both
Maps, Graphs & Charts				A	A	B	B	Both
Mathematics					A	A	A	Both
Modern Oratory					A	A	A	Ind.
Music Memory		A	A	B	B			Both
Number Sense			A	A	A	B	B	Both
One-Act Play					A	A	A	Both*
Oral Reading			A	A	A	B	B	Ind.
Ready Writing		A	A	B	B	C	C	Ind.
Science						A	B	Both
Social Studies				A	A	B	B	Both
Spelling		A	A	B	B	C	C	Both
Storytelling	A	A						Ind.

## CONTESTS OFFERED BY GRADE LEVEL

**The UIL offers academic contests beginning in the second grade and continuing through high school. This chart shows the academic contests offered to students in elementary and junior high school. The district executive committee may choose to offer all or just some of these contests and may develop supplemental events. Letters in the chart indicate different versions of the tests or prompts offered. For example, there is one prompt for students in grades 3-4 in ready writing and another for grades 5-6. The A+ Handbook and the UIL web site contain instructions on administering each contest. Note: Ind.=Individual competition; Both =Individual and Team competition.**

the same set of UIL invitational materials. UIL invitational materials may be used Nov. 1 through April 1. Invitational meet materials are available only to those schools hosting invitational meets and are not available as study materials.

Schools may attend only one district meet, and there is no advancement beyond district in A+ competition. Fall/Winter district meets may be held Dec. 1 through Jan. 31. Spring district meets may be held Feb. 1 and later. Test materials are available to the academic meet director only and are not available as study materials.

## THE CONTESTS

### ART (grades 4-8)

The art contest involves the study of paintings from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and paintings from Texas art galleries and museums. Students will demonstrate an understanding of art history, interpret ideas and moods in original artworks and make informed judgments about the artwork. The contest consists of multiple choice and true/false questions and an identification section.

### CALCULATOR APPLICATIONS (grades 6-8)

The calculator applications contest is designed to stimulate the development of mathematical and calculator skills. Goals are both intellectual and practical: developing mathematical reasoning and knowledge and requiring the application of problem-solving skills toward realistic problems. The contest is a 30-minute, 80-problem, fill-in-the blank test.

### CHESS PUZZLE (grades 2-8)

Chess teaches problem solving, hones concentration and encourages analytical and strategic thinking. Chess can be a lifelong pursuit. Contestants in chess puzzle receive a paper-and-pencil test that includes a series of chess boards with pieces in particular positions; questions are based on analysis of material or possible moves in each given diagram. The contest is a 30-minute, 20-problem, multiple choice test, plus a tiebreaker.

### CREATIVE WRITING (grade 2)

Creative writing is designed to promote creativity in an academic format and to encourage writing skills at an early grade level. Through preparation for the contest, students will be able to evaluate their own writing and the writing of others. Students are given five captioned pictures and 30 minutes to write their story about one or more of those pictures.

### DICTIONARY SKILLS (grades 5-8)

Thorough knowledge of the dictionary is a way to increase a student's ability to find the information that is needed for classwork as well as everyday living. The subject matter of all tests is taken from Merriam Webster's Intermediate Dictionary. Students are given 20 minutes to answer 40 objective and short-answer questions.

### EDITORIAL WRITING (grades 6-8)

Texas teachers have always looked for ways to improve their students' writing skills. The Editorial Writing contest will build those skills as well as refine the students' ability to prepare a well-balanced persuasive paper.

### IMPROMPTU SPEAKING (grades 6-8)

Impromptu speaking provides opportunities for students to organize ideas; to prepare and deliver speeches on different types of topics; to evaluate speeches given by others; and to develop self-confidence. From a set of topics, students are given three minutes to prepare one speech no longer than five minutes.

### LISTENING (grades 5-8)

The listening contest helps students recognize the importance of effective listening skills and to identify problems they may have in listening effectively, a skill they will need throughout their lives. Students are read a script 7-10 minutes long and then must answer 25 objective questions.