

A Contest of Academic Strength

Providing academic competition to encourage, acknowledge and reward academic excellence through teamwork among decathletes of all achievement levels.



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ACADEMIC DECATHLON

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

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Since 1968, the Academic Decathlon has grown into the premier scholastic competition in America. The Academic Decathlon was created to provide opportunities for high school students to experience the challenges of rigorous team and individual competition. Designed to provide a forum for celebrating and acknowledging scholastic achievement and academic excellence in the context of a team environment, the Academic Decathlon provides high school students the opportunity to participate in an educational forum that fosters a deep respect for knowledge, cooperation, and self-esteem.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEW JUDGES

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEWS

1. INSPECT YOUR STATION

- A. Make sure the station and chairs match the diagram on Page 4.
- B. Please be sure to return the room to its original set-up before you leave for the day.

2. REVIEW PROCEDURES

Before the first decathlete enters the room, you should review the following procedures as well as the attached time schedule with the other judges in your team:

- A. Be sure that each judge asks the decathletes questions and takes part in scoring.
- B. **STAY ON SCHEDULE.** If you get behind you may make up time during breaks, but it is essential that each decathlete feels at ease and respected.
- C. Select questions from the list of questions approved by Academic Decathlon. Try to refrain from repeating a question after a decathlete has responded unless you require clarification to his/her response. Do not argue with a decathlete's ideas or get into a discussion with the decathlete by stating your ideas. Failure in any of the above may prompt a coach to lodge a protest, which would greatly upset the time schedule. Also, please do not talk about yourself.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS BEFORE EACH INTERVIEW & JUDGING PROCESS

- 1. Decide which judge will be responsible for distributing the pre-slugged Scantron to the rest of the judges. The pre-slugged Scantron already has the decathlete's ID number and the judge's ID number (1, 2, or 3).

Judges must select an ID number and that will be the number he/she will use for the rest of the day. Number 3 cannot be used if there are only two judges.

- 2. Judges need to verify that the decathlete's ID and judge's ID numbers are correct.
- 3. Decide who will hold up the Station Number Card for the decathlete to look for when entering the arena room. Invite the decathlete to be seated.
- 4. Cordially greet the decathlete and introduce her/him to the rest of the judging panel (see "Judge's Script" on Page 8). The judges will individually introduce themselves to the decathlete.

Note: There is no penalty if the decathlete reveals his/her city, county, or school name.

JUDGES SHOULD NOT ASK A DECATHLETE WHAT SCHOOL THEY ATTEND OR THE AREA THEY REPRESENT. JUDGES MUST ALSO AVOID ANY QUESTIONS THAT PROBE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, DATING HABITS, PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS, ETC.

5. Select who will be responsible for completing the student roster for each interview session. The student roster is where you report any issues or concerns during an interview such as a decathlete arriving late, leaving early, absent or any other concerns.
6. The room manager will notify the judges to begin the interview. Interviews will last 7 minutes. When 6 minutes have passed, the room manager will announce that one minute remains and ask for final comments.
7. Permit the decathlete to leave immediately after the interview.
8. Allow time for judges to enter their scores. Before bringing in the next decathlete, if necessary, judges should address any concerns regarding question content and provide an alternate appropriate question(s) from the list of questions provided by the Academic Decathlon for consideration to ask a decathlete.
9. Return to the beginning of "Distribution of Materials & Judging Process."

AFTER EACH ONE HOUR SESSION

1. Assign a judge to collect Scantron sheets from the rest of the judges at the station and verify the return of all Scantron sheets for each judge and each decathlete before placing the sheets in the correct envelope.
2. Include the decathlete roster with the completed Scantrons in the correct envelope for collection. The room manager will pick up your envelopes.

AFTER ALL INTERVIEW SESSIONS HAVE CONCLUDED

1. Judges please clean your area and be sure to return all materials back into your Interview Kit.
2. Judges return the final set of completed Scantrons, roster and Interview Kit to the room manager.
3. Please take a moment to fill out the volunteer evaluation form. Your information is very valuable and appreciated in developing the finest competition for our decathletes.

Thank you very much for volunteering for this event, we appreciate your time!

TIME FORMAT AND ROOM SETUP

TIME FORMAT
Time allotted each decathlete.

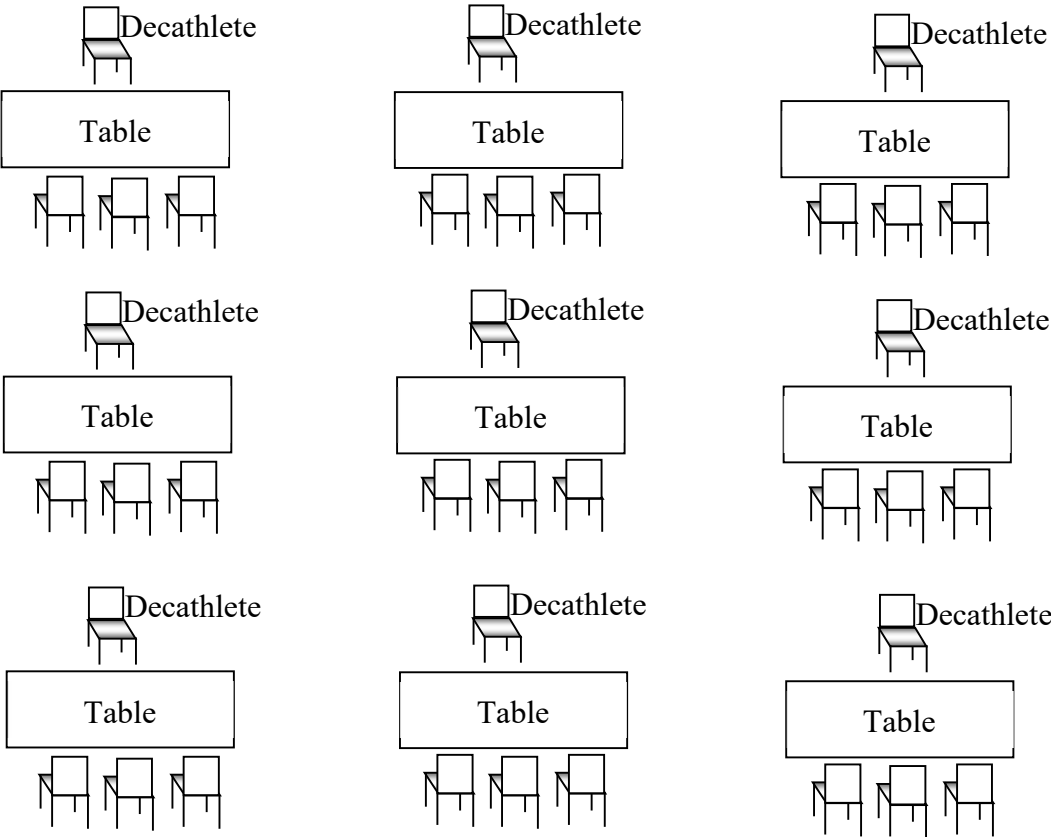
Time for introductions and review
of procedures (script) 1 minutes

Interview 7 minutes

Adjudication..... 2 minutes

Total Time..... 10 minutes

SAMPLE ARENA ROOM SETUP



ROOM MANAGER / JUDGE'S SCRIPT

SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR INTERVIEW ROOM MANAGER/JUDGES

- [Room Manager] "Decathletes, welcome to your interview, please find your station and have a seat."
- [Judge] "Welcome to the interview. My name is _____,
and I will be participating as a judge."
- [Judge] "I would like you to meet your other judges."

(Judges Self Introductions) 1. _____
 2. _____
- [Judge] "Before we begin, please tell us your first name and your ID."

(Judges wait to ask the first question until the room manager notifies you to begin.)
- [Room Manager] "Decathletes, the interview will last 7 minutes. When 6 minutes
have passed, I will notify the judges that a minute remains and will ask for
conclusion."
- [Room Manager] "At the end of 7 minutes, I will notify the judges that time has
expired and no more questions can be asked."
- [Room Manager] "You may begin." (*Time begins now.*)

*[Judges] (Judges will begin the interview by asking the Decathlete to introduce
themselves and share a little bit about themselves.)*
- [Room Manager] "That is time."
- [Judges] "Thank you for your participation, you may be excused. We wish you the
best of luck in the competition." (*Judges don't dismiss until after Room Manager
says, "time."*)

*(If you are on schedule, judges should have time to complete their scoring
independently of each other Please follow the Room Manager's instruction who
will adhere to the time schedule.)*

CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

General Recommendations: The success of the interview depends on how well and how quickly you can create a pleasant understanding with the decathlete, treating them always with respect.

1. **Determining Environment.** Manner, attitude, and tone of voice are important in creating the proper interviewing climate. In the short time available, establish a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in which the contestant is assured of your sincere interest and attention. Encourage the contestant to talk about himself/herself.
 - Ensure privacy without interruptions - closed door, etc.
 - Maintain an attitude of pleasant receptiveness, quiet confidence, and intelligent objectivity.
 - Establish rapport and put candidate at ease.
2. **Managing Interview.** The judges oversee the interview process. Control, direct, and guide the interview. Set a steady pace and ask the questions according to the structured interview format.
 - Keep initiative but be responsive.
 - Cover all the topics and devote enough time to each part.
 - Conduct the interview so the contestant plays the dominant role and the interviewer is the stage manager.
 - Steer the conversation without intruding on it--refrain from expressing your opinion or values--be objective.
 - Encourage contestant to talk openly and freely.
 - Pace questions so that contestant can give adequate replies without dwelling on irrelevant information.
 - Indicate when the interview is concluding.
3. **Listening Intelligently.**
 - Concentrate on what the contestant is saying.
 - Allow contestant to complete remarks without interruption or second-guessing.
 - Listen attentively.
 - Show interest.
 - Give contestants the time they need to think of examples and answer the questions.
4. **Coming To The Conclusion.**
 - Empathy, fairness, and good judgment are working tools for a good interview.
 - Bring interview to an end gracefully and naturally without rushing to a close.
5. **Silent Gaps.**
 - Allow for silent gaps.
 - Give encouragement by rephrasing question if necessary.

SAMPLE TOPICS FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Note: The questions below are just SAMPLE QUESTIONS.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF THE DECATHLETES CAN BE BASED ON THE STUDENTS' SELF-INTRODUCTION OR A SELECTION OF QUESTIONS PROVIDED DURING ORIENTATION.

THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW ARE ONLY EXAMPLES AND SHOULD NOT BE USED DURING THE OFFICIAL INTERVIEW:

1. **PERSONAL OBJECTIVES & ACADEMICS**
 - a. "What do you enjoy most about school?"
 - b. "How do you like to spend your time after school?"
 - c. "Describe your biggest challenge at school?"
 - d. "Do you feel it's important to be involved in extra-curricular activities? Please explain."
 - e. "What did you do as a member of _____?"
 - f. "How has participation in _____ affected you personally?"
2. **ACTIVITIES (During and After School)**
 - a. "Describe the type of community service activities that you are involved in or would like to be involved in?"
 - b. "What meaningful experiences did you have as a _____?"
 - c. "What kinds of skills have you acquired as a _____ that will help you in a future job?"
 - d. "In what other activities would you like to have participated: how would they help you in the future?"
3. **COMMUNITY INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES**
 - a. "How do you feel your current activities (school and/or out-of-school activities) will benefit you in the future?"
 - b. "What would you like to accomplish in the next five years?"
 - c. "Perhaps you would share with us some of your dreams for the future."
 - d. "What are some of the things you would like to do upon graduation?"
4. **ACHIEVEMENTS**
 - a. "How did you become interested and/or involved in the Academic Decathlon?"
 - b. "What is the most difficult event in the Academic Decathlon?"
 - c. "What have been the benefits of being a Decathlon team member?"
5. **INFLUENCES & VALUES**
 - a. "Who do you consider to be the most influential person in your life?"
 - b. "How has this person influenced your personal growth?"
 - c. "What values do you consider having most strongly influenced your life?"
6. **MISCELLANEOUS IDEAS**
 - a. "What personal quality do you possess that will benefit society or your community and why?"
 - b. "If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?"
 - c. "If you could solve a social problem, what would it be, and how do you think you would solve it?"

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THE INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

Refer to the USAD Academic Decathlon Interview Evaluation Form on page 10.

When completing the evaluation form.

1. Use a pencil that will be provided during your orientation. Don't use ink pens to complete the form.
2. Make dark marks.
3. Erase completely to change your response.
4. Make sure the bubble is filled in completely.
5. Print clearly so that others can review the form as needed.
6. Mark one (1) student per form.

Section A.

Student's Name. If the student's name is not already entered, you will need to print the first name of the student in this section.

Judge's Name. If the judge's name is not already entered, you will need to print your first name in this section.

Room Number. Make sure the room number (and time) is entered in this section.

Section B.

Student ID Number. This section must have the student's four (4) digit ID entered into the boxes and also bubbled in below the boxed numbers. **IMPORTANT** – make sure the bubble that is filled in matches the number above it.

If this section is not already entered, you will be given the ID from the student when they enter the room. It may also be on a roster provided you during your orientation.

Volunteer Number. Disregard. It will not be used for this event.

Section C.

Judge Number. Unless it is already marked, you will need to select a Judge number and keep that number for that room for the entire day. Each judge must be assigned a number and it can't be the same as another judge in the room.

Do not select a number higher than the number of judges you have in your room.

Section D.

Interview Descriptors and Rating Scale. The following page provides information on the descriptors.

IMPORTANT – For each row, there must be only one (1) bubble filled in (0 – 10). Do not leave a row empty.

DESCRIPTORS for INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

Rating Scale

Voice is the way a speaker controls volume, clarity, and distinctness of voice to gain greater audibility. Voice should have a variety in the rate, volume, and pitch to engage interest, hold attention, and convey self-assurance.

Language Usage refers to the appropriate choice of words, proper use of grammar and correct enunciation. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and be appropriate for the occasion.

Interpersonal Skills are measured by the student's ability to establish rapport with interviewers. The student's response should correspond to and interact with the interviewers' questions, and he/she should stimulate an involvement with the interviewers.

Non-Verbal Language refers to the way the student uses gestures, facial expressions, and physical involvement for effective communication. It is the indirect revelation of the student's real self while speaking. The student should speak with enthusiasm and assurance, showing interest in the interviewers and confidence in his/her responses.

Through the interview process, the individual reveals:

Problem Solving Skills
Analytical Skills

Creating/Developing Skills
Interpersonal Skills

Organizational Skills
Promotional Skills

When asking questions of the student, keep these skills in mind. Help the student to develop experience in answering questions that reveal these skills.

Manner is measured through the student's ability to speak with enthusiasm and assurance while showing interest in the interviewers and confidence in their reactions. The student should be direct in his/her response.

Listening Skills refers to the ability to analyze and interpret "what is being asked." To answer skillfully and address the issue being considered, the student must listen carefully and attentively. The student's responses to the questions will give an indication of his/her level of attention and ability to identify, sort, and process the information being requested.

Answering Skills refers to the ability to 1) address the issue being considered; 2) present information in a clear and concise manner; 3) organize information in a logical and sequential order; 4) adjust responses appropriately to a variety of audiences; and 5) pace conversation to convey necessary information and achieve purpose. Order, logic, imagination, intelligence, and other personal qualities are reflected in the way answers are given. A well thought out answer engages the interviewers' attention and gives insight into the student's personal qualities, skills, goals, and experiences. Relevant examples and illustrations support the answers. All information presented should be relevant to the questions being asked.

Responses refer to the quality of the answers given. The student should reflect on the questions to provide thoughtful and insightful responses. A well thought out answer engages the interviewers' attention and gives insight into the student's personal qualities, skills, goals, and experiences. The answers are supported by relevant examples and illustrations. All information presented should be relevant to the questions being asked. The student should speak with certainty and conviction.

Overall Effectiveness measures the 1) nature of information provided; 2) way it was communicated; 3) overall impression it created, and 4) rapport established between the interviewer and student. Some of the questions to consider are: Did the student provide the information requested in a skillful manner? Was the information relevant and meaningful? Was the student able to achieve a positive impression of his/her skill, experiences, and personal qualities?

Appearance refers to the appropriate attire of the student. Decathletes are required to dress appropriately for a Speech and Interview competition. Coaches are encouraged to ensure that their Decathletes attire is pressed, presentable and appropriately fitted.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

USA U.S. ACADEMIC DECATHLON
INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

DIRECTIONS

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

PLEASE -

1. MAKE DARK MARKS
2. ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHANGE
3. ENTER: STUDENT'S NAME AND NUMBER
YOUR NAME AND NUMBER
ROOM NUMBER
4. MARK 1 STUDENT PER FORM

EXAMPLE:

1	0	2
(0)	(1)	(2)
(3)	(4)	(5)
(6)	(7)	(8)

STUDENT ID NUMBER

1	0	1	3
(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)
(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(8)	(9)	(0)	(1)

VOLUNTEER NUMBER

(0)	(1)	(2)
(3)	(4)	(5)
(6)	(7)	(8)
(9)	(0)	(1)

STUDENT'S NAME
Sarah John

JUDGE'S NAME
I - 07

ROOM NUMBER

JUDGE

(1)	(2)	(3)
(4)	(5)	(6)

INTERVIEW

		EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
VOICE	• VOLUME • FLEXIBILITY • EXPRESSIVENESS	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
LANGUAGE USAGE	• GRAMMAR • ENUNCIATION • APPROPRIATENESS	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	• RAPPORT • INTERACTION • INVOLVEMENT	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE	• MOVEMENT • GESTURE • POSTURE	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
MANNER	• ASSURANCE • ENTHUSIASM • DIRECTNESS	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
LISTENING SKILLS	• APPROPRIATENESS of RESPONSES • ATTENTIVENESS	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
ANSWERING SKILLS	• CLEAR • COMPLETE • APPROPRIATE	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
RESPONSES	• THOUGHTFUL • INSIGHTFUL • WITH CONVICTION	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	• PURPOSE ACHIEVED • INTEREST • RECEPTION	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				
APPEARANCE	• APPROPRIATE FOR AN INTERVIEW	(10) (9) (8) (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) (0)				

INTERVIEW VOLUNTEER EVALUATION FORM

Chart: Y = Yes N = No ⑤ = Excellent ④ = Great ③ = Average ② = Below Average ① = Poor		Yes No	Rating
Questions / Comments			
1. Do you feel you were given adequate training to perform your job? Comments:		<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	⑤ ④ ③ ② ①
2. What was the most critical component of the training that you found valuable?			
3. Was the time allotted sufficient for the training? Comments (suggestions):		<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	⑤ ④ ③ ② ①
4. Was the time allotted enough for each decathlete, judging, etc., in the actual session? Comments (suggestions):		<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	⑤ ④ ③ ② ①
5. Would you be willing to judge again in the future? If yes, print name and phone number at the bottom of this evaluation form. Comments:		<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	

Additional comments can be made on the back of this evaluation form.

Print Name (optional): _____ Phone: _____

Email Address (optional): _____

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