

## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF UIL HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC CONTESTS

The University Interscholastic League offers a wide variety of academic contests for high school students, encompassing many elements of required high school coursework. These contests build upon the academic skills developed in the classroom and offer students an opportunity to stretch their talents above and beyond those requirements.

The UIL publishes manuals and handbooks to provide guidelines for each UIL academic contest. Handbooks are intended for contestants, coaches and contest directors. All participants should be familiar with the contents. Most are updated every year or substantially revised every few years as needed. Coordinators can download handbooks and manuals on the UIL website.

### **Accounting**

*Maybe you're on your way to becoming a CPA or you just really know how to take care of money. Make a stop at this contest and pick up a few skills in bookkeeping, balancing and banking before you take one of the Big Four accounting firms by storm.*

The contest focuses on the elementary principles and practices of accounting for sole proprietorship, partnerships and corporations, and includes bookkeeping terminology, the work sheet with adjustments, income statement, balance sheet, trial balance, account classification, journalizing, posting, bank reconciliation, payroll and other items related to the basic accounting cycle.

### **Barbara Jordan Historical Essay Competition**

*Ever wish the road to become a UIL state finalist was shorter? Your wish is our command! Research and write about an extraordinary, influential person, become a state finalist, AND become eligible for TILF scholarships through this remarkable essay opportunity submitted online. One essay, no travel, hone your writing skills and learn about an amazing person at the same time!*

Provides students an opportunity to explore the contributions of African Americans to Texas history, as well as honoring the legacy of its namesake, Barbara Jordan. The theme of the competition is "African Americans in Texas: Past and Present."

### **Calculator Applications**

*Calculate this: Add your math skills to a college application, standardized test or resume, and success might just be the result. Math is power in today's job market, so multiply your potential by trying out this problem solving contest.*

The contest includes calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, roots, powers, exponentiation, logarithms, trigonometric functions and inverse trigonometric functions. In addition to straightforward calculation problems, the contest includes geometric and stated problems similar to those found in algebra, geometry and trigonometry textbooks, previous contests and League materials related to the contest.

### **Congress**

*Want to debate legislation from inside the state capitol? This contest gives you the opportunity to see what it's like to be a member of Congress by learning to effectively create and debate legislation with your fellow student representatives.*

Models the legislative process of democracy, the United States Congress. Within this mock legislative assembly, the students draft legislation, research bills and resolutions dealing with real-world social and

political policies, deliver speeches and vote to pass or defeat the measures they have examined. Parliamentary Procedure forms structure for the discourse.

### **Computer Applications**

*For the 'tech' generation: Become technologically savvy while testing your word processing, database and spreadsheet skills. You'll become familiar with the finer points of computer skills such as formatting copy, editing, creating charts and integrating applications.*

Computer Applications focuses on word processing speed and accuracy, computer skills in database and spreadsheet, and integration of applications. Skills tested include formatting copy, mail merge, headers/footers, editing, proofreading, spreadsheet, graphs/charts, and integration of all applications.

### **Computer Science**

*Bill Gates used to program computers in his spare time, and apparently, he did something right. Get your start in computer science by learning the details of Java programming and try your hand at writing some programs of your own.*

The Computer Science Contest challenges high school students to gain an understanding of the significance of computation as well as the details of Java programming, to be alert to new technology and information, to gain an understanding of the basic principles of computer science and to get a start in one of the most important fields of the Information Age.

### **Copy Editing**

*Edit or regret it! This contest is a three-part opportunity to showcase your ability to correct material for accuracy and readability.*

Copy Editing teaches students the vital skills of proofreading and editing to create accurate, clear and succinct writing. Emphasis is placed on the ability to find and correct grammatical, spelling, punctuation, AP style and factual errors.

### **Cross-Examination Debate**

*If you've never shied away from an argument and you have a zest for winning, give Cross-Examination Debate a try. As part of a two-person team, you will prepare your stance on a particular policy in advance and then face an opposing team in competition. You'll have to think on your feet to defend your ideas.*

Cross-Examination Debate trains students to analyze a problem, conduct thorough and relevant research, and utilize principles of argumentation and advocacy in presenting the most effective case for or against a given proposition. Debate provides invaluable training in critical thinking, quick responses, defending worthy ideas and attacking invalid ideas. It teaches students to tolerate other points of view. Debate exists only in democratic societies, and no democratic society can exist without debate.

### **Current Issues & Events**

*You'll go around the world in 40 multiple-choice questions as you test your knowledge on current state, national and global events. Watching news shows will pay off when you answer the essay question at the end and take a closer look at one current event.*

The contest focuses on a basic knowledge of current state, national and world events and issues. The contest consists of 40 multiple-choice questions and an essay that challenges students to understand not just what is happening in the world today, but why and how it's happening and what it means to us as citizens of the United States.

### **Editorial Writing**

*This contest gives you a chance to win a medal just for sharing your opinion. In editorial writing, you'll take a stand on a controversial school issue and back up your stance with facts and examples.*

This contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on mechanical and stylistic precision, lead writing, use of direct and indirect quotes, news judgment, and the ability to think deeply, to compare and contrast and to argue or defend a point of view persuasively.

### **Feature Writing**

*If you've got a knack for developing a story, this contest is for you. You'll be provided with the facts and quotes you need, and then it's up to you to piece together a journalistic feature story your readers will remember.*

The Feature Writing Contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on the same writing skills as in other UIL journalism contests, as well as the ability to write descriptively.

### **Headline Writing**

*Put the finishing touches on the news as you decide what's most important about six news stories and top them off with headlines. The challenge is to be creative in your word choice and adhere to the word and line counts as you write tomorrow's headlines.*

The contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on the ability to discern key facts and to write with flair and style in order to tell and sell a story.

### **Informative Speaking**

*This contest is all about watching the clock and knowing your material. You'll draw a current event and have 30 minutes to comb through files you've collected throughout the year. Then you'll present a speech that informs your audience on all aspects of the current event you've researched.*

The purpose of informative speaking is to stimulate an active interest in current affairs at the state, national and international levels and to teach the student to present extemporaneously in a clear and impartial manner the facts about a subject as they appear in the best available sources of information. This contest is an exercise in clear thinking and informing the public on the issues and concerns of the American people. The objective is to present information in an interesting way and an attempt should not be made to change the listener's mind beyond presenting the information.

### **Latino History Essay Competition**

*Ever wish the road to become a UIL state finalist was shorter? Your wish is our command! Research and write about an extraordinary, influential person, become a state finalist, AND become eligible for TILF scholarships through this remarkable essay opportunity submitted online. One essay, no travel, hone your writing skills and learn about an amazing person at the same time!*

The Latino History Essay Competition provides students an opportunity to explore the contributions of Latinos to Texas history. The theme of the competition is "Historical and Cultural Legacies of Latinos in Texas History."

## **Lincoln-Douglas Debate**

*In this one-on-one values debate, you'll prepare to argue for or against a given resolution. After researching the topic in advance, it will be up to you to make arguments that defend your point of view and debunk invalid claims from your opponent.*

Lincoln-Douglas debate provides excellent training for development of skills in argumentation, persuasion, research and audience analysis. Students are encouraged to develop a direct and communicative style of delivery. It is a one-on-one argumentation in which debaters attempt to convince the judge of the acceptability of their side of a proposition. In a given round, one debater will argue the affirmative side of the resolution and the other will argue the negative.

## **Literary Criticism**

*You'll need a critical eye as you scan through literary history. You'll analyze literature from a provided reading list as well as literary passages not on the list. A short essay serves as the tiebreaker that could put you over the top.*

The contest requires knowledge of literary history and of critical terms, and ability in literary criticism. Students are required to select the best answers involving judgment in literary criticism and to analyze literary passages from both the reading list and other sources. A tiebreaker is required in which the student must write a short essay dealing with a specified topic about a selected literary passage.

## **Mathematics**

*Algebra, geometry, pre-calculus, oh my! Come armed for this test with your knowledge and understanding of a variety of mathematical subjects such as geometry and trigonometry as you compete against your peers.*

This 40-minute, 60-question contest is designed to test knowledge and understanding in the areas of Algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, math analysis, analytic geometry, pre-calculus and elementary calculus.

## **News Writing**

*In this contest, you decide what's fit to print as you make your way through a set of facts and quotes and pick out what's important. You'll work on deadline for the newspaper as you create a cohesive story that inquiring minds have a right to know.*

The News Writing Contest teaches students to read critically, to digest and prioritize information quickly, and to write clearly, accurately and succinctly. Emphasis is placed on mechanical and stylistic precision, lead writing, use of direct and indirect quotes, and news judgment.

## **Number Sense**

*Ten minutes is all it takes to find out if you have good number sense. You'll work with your coach and team to develop and practice shortcuts to solve the mental math test and still beat the clock. Make sense?*

This 80-question mental math contest covers all high school mathematics curricula. All answers must be derived without using scratch paper or a calculator.

## **One-Act Play**

*Before you pack up your bags and shuffle off to Broadway, try out the League's One-Act Play contest. You'll have the chance to work with other actors and people interested in technical theatre at your school to produce a theatrical production. You'll get a chance to take your show on the road and compete against other schools*

*and you might just make it to the state competition. Many of Texas' best theatre and film professionals participated in this contest while in high school.*

The aims of the One-Act Play Contest are to satisfy the competitive, artistic spirit with friendly rivalry among schools, emphasizing high quality performance in this creative art; to foster appreciation of good acting, good directing and good theatre, to promote interest in that art form most readily usable in leisure time during adult life, to learn to lose or win graciously and to increase the number of schools which have adopted theatre arts as an academic subject in school curricula.

### **Persuasive Speaking**

*Similar to informative speaking, in this contest you have 30 minutes to review your research files on a particular current event and conclude to argue about that topic. The goal of your speech is not just to present relevant information, but to convince your audience that your position is solid.*

This contest trains students to analyze a current issue, determine a point of view, and organize and deliver a speech that seeks to persuade listeners. The objective is to reinforce the views of listeners who already believe as the speaker does, but even more so, to bring those of neutral or opposing views around to the speaker's beliefs or proposed course of action. This contest should especially appeal to those who have a strong argumentative urge and who wish to advocate reforms or outline solutions to current problems.

### **Poetry Interpretation**

*In poetry interpretation, you'll choose a selection that fits in the given category to present to an audience. This contest emphasizes literary analysis through expressive oral reading.*

The purpose of this contest is to encourage the student to understand, experience and share poetry through the art of oral interpretation. The goals of this contest are to encourage the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections, and to enhance the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's interpretation of the work.

### **Prose Interpretation**

*Those with a flair for expressive oral reading have a chance to combine their passions in this event. You'll select a piece of prose in a given category, then carefully explore the art of expressing it orally before an audience.*

This contest encourages the student to understand, experience and share prose works through the art of oral interpretation. It encourages the contestant's exploration of a variety of literary selections and enhances the performer's and audience's appreciation of literature through the performer's interpretation of the work.

### **Ready Writing**

*Ready, set, write! If you like to make your own path, this contest is for you. A short prompt will provide the inspiration for your creative ideas as you explore a topic or prove a point.*

Students write expository compositions that attempt to explain, prove or explore a topic in a balanced way, allowing the argument and the evidence given to be the deciding factor in the paper. Students are given a choice between two prompts, each an excerpt from literature, publications or speeches. The essay is judged on interest, organization and style.

## **Robotics**

*Bolt on over to Robotics programming where students are exposed to hands-on learning and apply their knowledge to real-life problem solving in a complete, fun environment.*

Robotics incorporates numerous STEM components that develop beneficial knowledge and skills for students, including mechanical and software engineering, computer programming and mathematics. Participation in robotics fosters creativity and innovation, while teaching students to work collaboratively and to think critically and analytically.

## **Science**

*Forget just memorizing facts, because the science contest is all about the importance of experiments and scientific discoveries. Your knowledge of biology, chemistry and physics will help you select the correct answers on this 60-question multiple-choice test. Individual awards are given in each subject area, so even students who have not yet taken all the science courses can excel!*

The Science Contest challenges students to read widely in biology, chemistry and physics, to understand the significance of experiments rather than to recall obscure details and to be alert to new discoveries and information in the areas of science. It is designed to help students gain an understanding of the basic principles as well as knowledge of the history and philosophy of science, and to foster a sense of enthusiasm about science and how it affects our daily lives.

## **Social Studies**

*If your interest lies in movements, wars, history and politics, this contest will give you more than enough material to explore. The contest requires you to apply your understanding of history and culture through multiple-choice questions and an essay.*

The Social Studies Contest requires students to expand and apply their knowledge of governmental systems, historical trends, movements and eras and the physical setting of the earth, particularly as it applies to cultural environments. Each year the contest focuses on a selected topic area, and a reading list is provided.

## **Spelling & Vocabulary**

*Whether you've already aced the SAT verbal section, or you could use some extra practice, this contest keeps you focused on the details. By the end, you may be correcting your teachers' spelling and using words your coach has never heard.*

The Spelling & Vocabulary Contest promotes precise and effective use of words. The three-part contest consists of multiple-choice questions covering proofreading and vocabulary, and words that are written from dictation. The vocabulary-building and spelling components of the contest are important complements to the high school academic curriculum and are indicative of vocabulary words contained on standardized tests such as SAT, PSAT and ACT.

## **Theatrical Design**

*Break out the glue guns, your best art skills and maybe a curling iron or two. From set design to costumes to makeup and advertising materials, this contest allows you to flex your skills in multiple artistic areas.*

Provides an opportunity for students to develop their skills in design and marketing. It teaches students critical thinking and analysis, creative thinking and artistic skills used to communicate an idea or concept. Theatrical Design offers contests in Set Design, Costume Design, Marketing, Makeup and Group Design.

## **Young Filmmakers Festival**

*Lights, camera, action! Express yourself through the art of cinema. Work independently or with a large group—this contest allows the flexibility to combine the skills of visual storytelling, production design, performance and sound design. Auteurs welcome.*

Provides the opportunity for student short film production of original works. Entries in narrative, documentary and animation are evaluated and ranked. Originality, cinematic storytelling and technical execution are the basis of the scoring. The top entries in each category will be screened and ranked first through third at the State Film Festival.