

**National Tournament of Academic Excellence
2009 Rules**

1. One team per state/territory may participate in the national tournament. A team consists of six team members and a coach. Students enrolled in the district in grades 9-12 during the current academic year are eligible. Teams may compete with fewer than four members, but not more than six.
2. A tournament competition consists of three rounds and a tie-breaker round when needed. Team scores at the end of the competition determine final team placement. A tournament competition is complete once final scores are announced, and results are not subject to dispute or to change.

Five-point round:

- twenty competitive-response questions
- team question valued at a maximum of 10 points
- two-minute break (coaches consult teams and substitutions allowed)

Ten-point round:

- cumulative scores announced
- twenty competitive-response questions
- team question valued at a maximum of 20 points
- two-minute break (coaches consult teams and substitutions allowed)

Fifteen-point round:

- cumulative scores announced
- twenty-five competitive-response questions
- team question valued at a maximum of 30 points
- scores announced

Tie-breaker round:

- two-minute break (coaches consult teams and substitutions allowed)
- if two or more qualifying teams have scores that are tied at the end of the fifteen-point round, only those teams will be asked competitive-response question(s) until all ties for final placement are broken. If a team gives the correct answer, one point is added to its score. If the given answer is incorrect, one point is subtracted from the score.

3. A competition opens with four playing students, and substitutions may take place only during authorized breaks. It is the responsibility of each team coach to report during the authorized breaks to the scorekeepers with the names of the team members who will be playing in the next round. All team members must remain seated except during the authorized breaks. Team members may not converse outside their table during challenges or unscheduled breaks during a competition.
4. Random selection is used to place teams into elimination competitions. Teams are assigned team numbers for each competition. A maximum of six teams competes in each competition.
5. Each team has one button that activates a first-response lockout system. For competitive-response questions only the team recognized as having pushed its button first has the opportunity to answer the question. If the question is answered incorrectly, the question is not given to another team. The correct answer is given, and the reader proceeds to the next question.

6. Any playing member may push the button, and any playing team member may answer. If two or more team members respond and one is correct and the others are incorrect, the response will be considered incorrect. Once a team gives a response, the response cannot be changed.
7. Team members may confer before and/or after the button is pushed; however, stalling is not permitted.
 - (a) Three-second rule: The team response must begin within three seconds of verbal recognition. This three-second interval is controlled through the use of a timer built into the game system.
 - (b) Once begun, the response must proceed without prolonged hesitation. The interpretation of this rule lies with the reader.

Violation of either of these rules is considered an incorrect response.

8. A team may request that a question be repeated only if a team button has not been pushed or if the one-minute timer has not sounded.
9. If a team pushes its button before the question is completely read, the question reader will not finish reading the question and will expect the team to begin responding within three seconds.
10. Pass option: This option is implemented when, in the judgment of the question reader, a particular question will go unanswered. At the discretion of the question reader, the teams may be asked for that particular question, "Does any team wish to pass?" If all teams elect to pass, the reader will disengage the timer, give the correct answer, and continue to the next question.
11. Each team begins a competition with 100 points. A team is eliminated from the current competition when its score reaches zero, but must remain seated quietly until the end of the current point round.
12. The tournament uses two types of questions: competitive-response and team questions.
 - (a) Competitive-response questions are answered by competing teams using the button. When a team answers a competitive-response question correctly, it receives the number of points the question is worth. If the answer is incorrect, the points are subtracted from the score, and the round continues to the next question. If a competitive-response question is not answered within sixty seconds, the answer is given and the round continues.
 - (1) On a **free-response question** the reader may ask for clarification of the answer or for additional information. Generally in questions requiring computation, the unit is specified and is, therefore, not required as part of the answer. If the unit is not specified in the question, it must be given as part of the response. If the unit is omitted from the response, the reader will ask the respondent for additional information.

If more information is given in the answer than is needed, that information must be correct. However, "shotgunning" is not permitted and will be considered stalling.
 - (2) On a **matching question**, an acceptable response is any correct combination of letter/ number matching column to column. For example: A-4, B-1, C-2, D-3. If a team chooses to respond before the question has been completely read, then the answer must be given exactly as printed. Otherwise, the answer will be judged incorrect. It will not be referred to the subject area judge(s) for decision. In some questions one numbered choice will not be used. This will be stipulated in the question stem.

- (3) On a **multiple-choice question**, the best response is the correct number or the exact answer. Answers that are not exactly as printed are referred to the subject area judge for decision. No clarification from the respondent will be requested or permitted.

"Which one or ones..." is a common introduction for multiple-choice questions which may have more than one correct response. For this type of question all correct answers must be given or the response is incorrect.

By not waiting for the choices to be read, the player takes a chance that the judges will not accept his answer.

For multiple choice and matching questions, the recommended answer is the number or numbers of the correct response(s). By giving the number for the answer, there is no indecision as to the correctness of the given response(s).

- (b) Team questions are answered by teams within a specific time limit without the use of the button. Time limits are determined by the complexity of the question. Team questions are responded to on paper. When time runs out, the team's designated answer sheet is collected and graded by the subject area judges. Teams must stop writing when time is called. Points are not subtracted for incorrect responses.
- (c) For those competitive-response or team questions requiring written answers in a foreign language, spelling and accents must be correct only if indicated in the question instructions.

13. Coaches and alternates are seated in an assigned area. Coaches may consult their teams only during the authorized two-minute breaks. Coaching during actual competition is not permitted.

14. A team may challenge the ruling of the correctness of its response or the ruling of the correctness of another team's response. Only the team that answered the question can gain or lose points.

(a) Any challenge must be made by any of the four playing team members before the first word of the next question is read. Neither coaches nor alternates nor observers may challenge. If the last competitive-response question in a round is challenged, the challenge must be made before the title of the team question is announced. The team member challenging a question or a response should announce "challenge." Once recognized, only that team may give input in the challenge.

(b) Any challenge of a team question must be made before the announcement of the two-minute break.

(c) The challenge process concludes at the discretion of the reader, coordinating judge, and/or the tournament director.

15. The tournament director and judges have final authority during competition play. They make decisions when:

(a) a challenge is made

(b) a team gives questionable response

(c) the wrong team responds

The team that has hit its button first is recognized by its team number and name. Teams are cautioned not to respond unless their team number and name have been called. In the event a team who has not been recognized gives a response, the reader asks for a response from the recognized team.

(d) the wrong team is recognized

If a team is recognized incorrectly, and the correctness of the response is ruled on, then the question is discarded and is replaced. The replacement question may not be from the same subject area.

(e) **the question is read incorrectly**

If the question reader makes an error that causes a team to lose points, the question is discarded and no loss of points will be recorded. The question is replaced. The replacement question may not be from the same subject area.

(f) **coaches, alternates, or observers give signals**

(g) **the audience interferes**

(h) **poor sportsmanship is shown**

16. Possible penalties include the loss of points, disqualification and/or removal of player, coach, alternate, observer and/or team.
17. If a team button malfunctions, the question reader must be notified immediately.
18. Pencils, paper, at least one scientific calculator (TI-34) and one graphing calculator (TI-83) per team are provided. No other materials are permitted at the team tables during tournament play.
19. Team members or coaches not present at the beginning of the five-point round will be disqualified from all rounds of that competition. A team may compete with fewer than four members.
20. Only the designated coach from each team may come to the judges' table. Those coaches must stay in front of the judges' table or tables and may not go behind the table(s). No team member, alternate or observer may come to the judges' table(s) before, during or after the competition. Team members and coaches in ongoing competitions must have an escort to leave the room. The designated coach from each team should ask the coordinating judge for that escort. **Team members, coaches, and/or accompanying team observers may not enter or reenter a room with on-going competition if not accompanied by an NTAE staff member.** Teams who have completed their competitions are excluded from entering rooms with ongoing competition.
21. Electronic devices are to be in the off position during a tournament competition. All forms of recording and messaging, as well as all other forms of electronic communication are prohibited during a tournament competition without the express permission of the tournament director.