

General Overview of the Written Tests

Six written exams are taken at the Local, Regional, and State Competitions:

Art	Mathematics
Economics	Music
Language & Literature	Science or Social Science

Scoring

Each test is worth 1000 points. Each test is made up of 50 questions, worth 20 points each, except for Mathematics, which is made up of 35 questions, with a total value of 1000 points. Students are given 20 minutes to complete each test, except for the Math test which is scheduled for 30 minutes.

USAD Study Guides

Study guides are available from the USAD for each subject area. *Basic Guides* are a general reference resource for fundamental concepts within each subject area. *Resource Guides* are tailored to the specific topics that change from year to year, within each curriculum area.

USAD Practice Tests

The USAD Practice Test Booklet contains practice exams on each of the six subjects. The USAD CD-ROM Practice Tests disc contains many practice test items, divided into subcategories within each subject.

Test Taking Strategies

Do NOT assume that your students have good test taking skills. Review basics of multiple-choice test taking, such as leaving no questions unanswered (students are not penalized for guessing), answering in the correct area of the scantron sheets, using all the time allotted, using process of elimination, etc.

Make sure your students have approved calculators, and that they know how to use them. (Math only)

Formulate your own answer before reading the options.

Underline or circle key words in the question and the answer choices. Cross off answer choices that are clearly incorrect.

Always read each answer choice: some questions are looking for the "best" answer.

Flag questions that you are unsure of. Check them again if you have time at the end.

Think of multiple choice questions as a series of True/False statements.

Be careful when questions contain a negative. (i.e., except, not, etc.) It is easy to make mistakes on these.

If two choices overlap or mean essentially the same thing, they probably cancel each other out. (Unless "all of the above" or "both B and C" are choices.)

If there are "partner choices," one of them is often the correct answer. (Partner choices are opposites or have a difference of one or two words.)

Art

The test is based on the USAD Resource Guide.

Tips:

The "Artchive" is an outstanding internet resource with biographies of artists, images of artworks, information on Art History, and links to museums and other Art resources.

http://www.artchive.com/ftp_site.htm

Check the websites of the museums that house the selected works.

Get the Guidebooks from the museums that house the selected artworks.

Visit the Art Institute of Chicago – it makes a great field trip for your team.

Barnes & Noble or Borders bookstores often have excellent art books available at very reasonable prices.

"Sister Wendy" has a video series on PBS that is well worth watching.

Economics

The test is based on the USAD Resource Guides.

Tips:

There are hundreds of websites that offer instruction, tutorials, and practice tests on various Economics subjects. Some of the most helpful:

Many Economics textbooks have companion websites that include short review quizzes on specific topics.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis: click on "Education Resources."

<http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/>

The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco: especially good on the Federal Reserve System and Monetary Policy.

<http://www.frbsf.org/education/index.html>

The National Council on Economic Education has a website with lots of online lessons.

<http://www.econedlink.org/>

The University of Nebraska-Omaha has an excellent site with economics resources.

<http://ecedweb.unomaha.edu/>

Economic News & Data

The Dismal Scientist **<http://www.economy.com/dismal/>**

Bureau of Economic Analysis **<http://www.bea.doc.gov/>**

Language & Literature

This test is comprised of three main parts:

- 1) Critical Analysis of an excerpt from a speech, letter, document, or other work of literature. (10 questions)
- 2) Poetry or other short selections. (15 questions)
- 3) The Novel. (25 questions)

The Language & Literature test is a key to your team's success.

It is very difficult to get all 9 team members to score well on this test.

Tips:

Practice the Critical Analysis portion frequently. Use old USAD practice tests. This is an area where students can make substantial improvement with a little work.

Reading the novel is imperative. One-half of the test and the Essay test at the Regional competition are based on it. Have students read it over the summer and again before the Regional competition.

If there is a film version of the novel available, watch it if it is true to the book — but only after students have read the novel.

Cliffnotes and **Sparknotes** have good character profiles, plot summaries, and sample essay questions.

Mathematics

Tips:

Have students with stronger Math skills tutor the ones who are weaker in this subject.

Get a Math teacher from your school to work with the kids. Reviewing a practice test from the booklet can be helpful.

Music

The Music test is based on the Resource Guide. The test includes an aural section (12 questions) that requires students to answer questions based on excerpts from the selected compositions.

Tips:

Give your students the CD over the summer and ask them to familiarize themselves with each selected work.

Drill students frequently on music terms.

If you have students who have a strong musical background, let them instruct the rest of the group.

Science/Social Science

This test will be based on Resource Guide material.

The Super Quiz topic at the State Competition will be either a Science or Social Science subject. There will be a general written test in the other area.

The Super Quiz written exam consists of 40 questions, worth 15 points each. The Super Quiz Relay consists of 5 questions worth 80 points each.

Tips:

These tests are heavily weighted towards the material from the Resource Guides.

Get help from other teachers.

Obtain examination copies of textbooks on the various disciplines from the publishers. (Who says there's no free lunch?)

Really work on the vocabulary. The Study Guides often contain glossaries.

Give quizzes on short sections of the Study Guides.

Practice for the Super Quiz Relay by simulating the format as realistically as possible.