

STANISLAUS COUNTY ACADEMIC DECATHLON

ESSAY TEST: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Once your coach and all students are ready to begin timing the essay test portion of the Academic Decathlon, you will receive an *Essay Test Prompts* sheet.

Your coach has been instructed to not answer ANY questions or offer ANY information about the prompts. Do not discuss the prompts with anyone. This is a closed book test. Notes, books, and other reference materials are NOT ALLOWED.

The three (3) essay prompts are based on the literature, science, and art materials you read and studied for this year's Academic Decathlon event.

Carefully read each essay prompt, and then do the following:

- select **only one (1)** prompt on which to write your essay
- write the number of the essay prompt you select in the "Essay Prompt Number" section and your 4-digit **Aca-Dec** student ID number in the "Enter Your Aca-Dec ID Number" section on the essay cover sheet. **Do not separate the cover sheet from the lined paper.**
- put your ID number and prompt number at the top right corner of **EVERY page** of your essay on the lined paper attached to the essay test cover sheet.
- **skip lines** when writing your essay (this makes it easier on the readers!)
- write on front side of paper only
- avoid messy cross-outs by using correction fluid or an erasable ink pen (pencils ok)
- **write or print LEGIBLY!** Illegible and **"off prompt"** essays will be given a score of zero (0).
- when your coach indicates that your time is up, return your essay packet to your coach

You have **fifty (50) minutes** to pre-write, write and proofread your essay, so plan your time! Be sure to state your position clearly when writing your essay and support your position with examples. Provide a conclusion to close your essay.

Expository Essay does the following:

- primarily explains a process or idea by presenting and interpreting evidence or facts, or offering and explaining reasons
- presents the thesis clearly and often creatively and provides background information that focuses and unifies the essay
- supports the thesis with strong, convincing, and often original arguments
- develops the essay with clear and relevant information and evidence
- offers specific, concrete, detailed discussion throughout the essay
- has organization which is focused, logical, and coherent; ends in a satisfying way, bringing closure
- has an appropriate voice: authoritative, lively, reasonable, and convincing
- engages and maintains the reader's interest throughout the essay

In citing material from the literature or science material, do not merely summarize or list facts, ideas, or evidence. Select, analyze, and discuss the material in a purposeful manner to support your assertions. **IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU RESPOND TO THE ENTIRE PROMPT.**

Be sure to follow accepted rules of Standard English sentence structure, usage, spelling, grammar, and mechanics. Remember; choose **only one (1)** essay prompt.