

# Stanislaus County Academic Decathlon

## Essay Reader Instructions

Thank you for volunteering to score the Essay Test portion of the Stanislaus County Academic Decathlon (AcaDec). An AcaDec team consists of nine members in three categories: Honor (3.80 – 4.00 GPA), Scholastic (3.20 – 3.79 GPA), and Varsity (below 3.19 GPA). In addition, a team may enter any number of alternate participants in each category. The top two scores in each category of the nine regular team members are counted for overall team scoring. The team with the most points advances to the California Academic Decathlon State Finals. The top five essays in each division (regular and alternate team members) receive medals.

The essay prompts cover the Literature, Social Science, and Science topics from the California Academic Decathlon study guide made available for participants. Students write their essays during a 50 minute period of time. That will be the first time students have seen the essay prompts and they will have three to choose from. Students are not allowed to have any resources available during the test. Essay prompts are chosen from the current theme for the Academic Decathlon, ***The Cold War***. The language and literature for the event is *Cat's Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. The Social Science curriculum will introduce students to the history of the Cold War. The science topic will be an introduction to astronomy and will include sections on the Space Race between the United States and the Soviet Union.

**Essay readers do not need to be familiar with the essay topics.** Essay readers will receive a summary of the prompts with bullet points to assist with reading and scoring the essays. Each reader will receive approximately 100 essays to read and score. Each essay will be read and scored twice. If there is a significant difference between reader #1 and reader #2 scores, then a third reader will read and score the essay. The two closest scores will be used to determine the final score. All essays will be read and scored online.

**Winning Essay:** Upon completion of essay scoring, the three highest scoring essays will be reviewed and discussed to determine the “winning” essay.

*The event coordinators, coaches, and students thank you for your time and thoughtfulness in scoring the Stanislaus County Academic Decathlon essays.*