

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 (3.75 – 4.00 GPA), Scholastic (3.00 – 3.74 GPA), and Varsity (below 2.99 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, Music, and Social 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 1960s: A Transformational Decade*. The language and literature for the event is *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard and several shorter selections. The music topic will be an introduction to the music of the 1960s. The social science curriculum will cover U.S. history of in the 1960s.

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.

Please be sure that the ID number on the pre-slugged scantron form matches the one on the essay. After scoring please separate the scantron forms from the essays. Additional blank scantron forms are included in your packet should you need to make a change. Be sure to include the decathlete's ID number.

If you feel an essay is "off prompt" or is offensive, please make a note on the essay (not the scantron form) and separate the essay and scantron from the other essays when they are returned. If the student has made an attempt to respond to a prompt, even if it is just a few sentences, please give the essay a score. Occasionally, a student will indicate an essay prompt number and change their mind without changing the prompt number. If you come across such an essay please change the prompt number to reflect the change.

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.