STANISLAUS COUNTY ACADEMIC DECATHLON

ESSAY TEST - GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Expository Essay does the following:

- primarily explains a process or idea by presenting and interpreting evidence, or offering and explaining reasons
- presents the thesis clearly 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

Information:

- You will write your essay online on the computer using an assigned login. There is no spell check, and you will not be able to cut and paste. You will be able to scroll through your essay and add or delete text.

- You have **50** minutes to write your essay on the official testing date (10 minutes during the practice period). The system tracks and displays the testing time and will log you out when 50 minutes has passed (after 10 minutes during the practice session). When 5 minutes are remaining the bar at the top of your browser will turn yellow. When you have 1 minute left the bar will turn red.

- Raise your hand if you experience any technical problems and the Test Proctor will offer assistance.

- The system automatically saves what has been written every minute. You are encouraged to hit the save button on occasion as a precautionary. You should see the bar turn green when it saves. If it stays busy for more than one minute, close the browser and log in again.

- There is always a green bar displayed if the system is running properly. If there is a red bar or no bar, you should log off and log back in or try a different computer.

- While taking the test, a white bar at the top of your browser will display the number of characters typed in the top center and your time remaining in the top right-hand corner.

- USAD runs a report at the end of the day. Any odd activity (e.g., the number of times a decathlete logs off, the number of attempts to cut and paste) is flagged and will be investigated.

- Store your belongings (jackets, backpacks) in a designated area. Make sure your cell phones are turned OFF.

- You will receive your username and password from your test proctor.

- The Essay Test has three essay prompts. You will select one to write your essay.

- Write a well-organized essay in which you clearly respond to the question or direction that is presented in the prompt. Be sure to follow the accepted rules of Standard English sentence structure, usage, spelling, and punctuation, and use appropriate diction and style.

- Allow yourself time to proofread your essay. For the essay topic you choose, state your individual thesis or position clearly. Use specific information and examples from your studies to support your position. Provide a final paragraph to conclude or close your essay.

- You can use scratch paper provided at your computer station to make notes, plan your essay, or prepare a draft of your essay. Scratch paper is not to leave testing room. Be aware that your time is running when you are writing on the paper. Be sure to touch a key on the keyboard every 5–10 minutes, so you will not be logged off. The system will log you out after 15 minutes of no activity.

- This is a closed book test. Notes, books, and other reference materials are NOT ALLOWED.