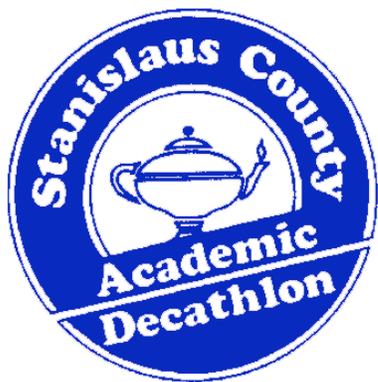


A Contest of Academic Strength

*Providing academic competition to
encourage, acknowledge and reward
academic excellence through teamwork
among decathletes of all achievement levels.*



Stanislaus County ACADEMIC DECATHLON

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

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Since 1968, the Academic Decathlon has grown into the premier scholastic competition in America. The Academic Decathlon was created to provide opportunities for high school students to experience the challenges of rigorous team and individual competition. Designed to provide a forum for celebrating and acknowledging scholastic achievement and academic excellence in the context of a team environment, the Academic Decathlon provides high school students the opportunity to participate in an educational forum that fosters a deep respect for knowledge, cooperation, and self-esteem.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEW JUDGES

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEWS

Welcome to Academic Decathlon, and thank you for serving as an Interview Judge in this year's competition. Please read the following carefully and adhere to all procedural and timing guidelines. Enjoy the event!

- You will be assigned to an interview arena room with other judges and will be evaluating one decathlete at a time using an online Evaluation Form (link to be emailed).
- Each judge will evaluate the decathlete individually.

1. REVIEW PROCEDURES

Before the first decathlete enters the room, review the following procedures:

- A. From the list of Open Ended Interview Competition Questions (see page 3-4), decide as a group which questions will be asked by which judge.
- B. **STAY ON SCHEDULE.** The group of decathletes will automatically be entering the arena every 10 minutes. It is essential to stay on schedule. Try to refrain from repeating a question after a decathlete has responded unless you require clarification to his/her response. Do not debate or dispute with a decathlete's ideas, or get into a discussion with the decathlete by stating your ideas.

INTERVIEW & JUDGING PROCESS

1. Judges will be responsible to use the online Interview Evaluation Form.
2. Enter your email and name on form where indicated (Judges Name).
3. Judges cordially greets the decathlete and will then individually introduce themselves to the decathlete. If a judge knows a student, he/she has the option to be excused from scoring that speaker if they feel they cannot impartially judge the student.
4. Enter the decathlete ID into the Evaluation Form once confirmed with decathlete. Decathlete ID number will be located on the students name badge.
5. Begin the interview process. Allow seven minutes per decathlete. When six minutes have passed, the room monitor keeping track of the time will announce that one minute remains and ask for final comments. **Note: There is no penalty if the decathlete reveals his/her city or school name.**
6. Time will be allowed for judges (two minutes) to enter their scores on the online form (independently). Before interviewing the next decathlete, if necessary, judges should address any concerns regarding question content and provide an alternate appropriate question(s) for consideration to ask a decathlete.
7. All judges to submit Evaluation Form and start a new Evaluation Form for next decathlete.
8. Reserve the higher scores (9 or 10) for exceptional speakers.

CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

General Recommendations: The success of the interview depends on how well and how quickly you can create a pleasant understanding with the decathlete, treating them at all times with respect.

1. **Determining Environment.** Manner, attitude, and tone of voice are important in creating the proper interviewing climate. In the short time available, establish a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in which the Decathlete is assured of your sincere interest and attention. Encourage the Decathlete to talk about himself/herself.
 - Ensure privacy without interruptions.
 - Maintain an attitude of pleasant receptiveness, quiet confidence, and intelligent objectivity.
 - Establish rapport and put candidate at ease.
2. **Managing Interview.** The judges are in charge of the interview process. Control, direct, and guide the interview. Set a steady pace and ask the questions according to the structured interview format.
 - Keep initiative but be responsive.
 - Cover all of the topics and devote enough time to each part.
 - Conduct the interview so the Decathlete plays the dominant role and the interviewer is the stage manager.
 - Steer the conversation without intruding on it. Refrain from expressing your personal opinion or values. Be objective.
 - Encourage Decathlete to talk openly and freely.
 - Pace questions so that Decathlete can give adequate replies without dwelling on irrelevant information.
 - Indicate when the interview is coming to a conclusion.
3. **Listening Intelligently.**
 - Concentrate on what the Decathlete is saying.
 - Allow Decathlete to complete remarks without interruption or second-guessing.
 - Listen attentively.
 - Show interest.
 - Give Decathletes the time they need to think of examples and answer the questions.
4. **Coming to the Conclusion.**
 - Empathy, fairness, and good judgment are working tools for a good interview.
 - Bring interview to an end gracefully and naturally without rushing to a close.
5. **Silent Gaps.**
 - Summarize points made by the Decathlete and lead into the next question.
 - Keep asking for specific examples.
 - Give encouragement by rephrasing question.

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW COMPETITION QUESTIONS

Objective: Conduct an objective interview by creating the same situation for each Decathlete, (i.e., same judge asking the same set of questions of every Decathlete).

Directions:

1. From the list of **general questions** below, decide as a group which questions will be asked by which judge (2-4 per judge, depending on the length of the decathlete's response).
 2. Follow-up questions are not required, but a judge may ask the Decathlete to elaborate on a comment they made in their introduction or response to a question if a judge finds a point interesting or requires clarity.
 3. Do not ask questions that stray away from the list of question that are included on this list.
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GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. What career path do you plan to take at this time in your life? Why?
2. What daily activity requires the most energy? How do you maintain your effectiveness while working on this activity?
3. Describe a time when you served as a project manager.
4. Describe a time when you had to use your judgment to make a tough decision.
5. Discuss where you get your inspiration when you are creative.
6. Give one example of something that you have done in school that demonstrates your willingness to work hard.
7. Some people consider themselves to be "big picture people" and others are "detail-oriented." Which are you? Give an example of a time when you displayed this characteristic.
8. Describe what you do to control mistakes in the work you do.
9. Describe the work environment that makes you thrive.
10. Tell me about a time when you have had to rely on someone else in order to get something done.
11. What has being a member of a team (such as the Academic Decathlon) taught you?
12. Describe a time that you were not satisfied with your performance in school. What did you do about it?

13. Describe a situation when you managed your time, allocating correctly to each task and getting the work done successfully.
14. Tell me about a time you had to quickly adjust your priorities to meet changing demands.
15. Describe a time when you acted as a role model during a difficult time, conducting yourself with integrity and enthusiasm.
16. Tell about a time when you had to face one of your greatest fears.
17. What is the most important thing you have learned about yourself in the past year?
18. Have you ever been put in a position of leadership? Describe your experience.
19. What is the hardest thing you have ever had to learn?
20. Describe a time you made a change that improved your life or the lives of others.
21. Have you ever done something that you thought would be too hard to do, or that someone thought you could not do? If so, what motivated you to overcome your fears or challenge the other person's expectation of you?
22. What is the greatest responsibility your parents have given you?
23. Tell about a time when friendship proved to be of great value to you.
24. Discuss a new concept you have learned recently and how it has affected you.
25. What is the most valuable use of your time in your life right now?
26. What gives you your greatest sense of joy and happiness in life?
27. Describe a situation when you developed resilience and bounced back from a setback.
28. What is one thing that you hope to continue throughout your life?
29. What is a personal motto that you try to live by?
30. Complete the statement: I taught someone how to...

DO NOT ASK A DECATHLETE WHAT SCHOOL THEY ATTEND OR AREA THEY REPRESENT. ALSO, AVOID ANY QUESTIONS THAT PROBE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, DATING HABITS, PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS, ETC.

DESCRIPTORS for INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM - RATING SCALE

Voice is the way a speaker controls volume, clarity, and distinctness of voice to gain greater audibility. Voice should have a variety in the rate, volume, and pitch to engage interest, hold attention, and convey self-assurance.

Language Usage refers to the appropriate choice of words, proper use of grammar and correct enunciation. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and be appropriate for the occasion.

Interpersonal Skills are measured by the candidate's ability to establish rapport with interviewers. The candidate's response should correspond to and interact with the interviewers' questions, and he/she should stimulate an involvement with the interviewers.

Non-Verbal Language refers to the manner in which the candidate uses gestures, facial expressions, and physical involvement for effective communication. It is the indirect revelation of the candidate's real self while speaking. The candidate should speak with enthusiasm and assurance, showing interest in the interviewers and confidence in his/her responses.

Through the interview process, the individual reveals:

Problem Solving Skills	Creating/Developing Skills	Organizational Skills
Analytical Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Promotional Skills

When asking questions of the candidate, keep these skills in mind. Help the candidate to develop experience in answering questions that reveal these skills.

Manner is measured through the candidate's ability to speak with enthusiasm and assurance while showing interest in the interviewers and confidence in their reactions. The candidate should be direct in his/her response.

Listening Skills refers to the ability to analyze and interpret "what is being asked." In order to answer skillfully and address the issue being considered, the candidate must listen carefully and attentively. The candidate's responses to the questions will give an indication of his/her level of attention and ability to identify, sort, and process the information being requested.

Answering Skills refers to the ability to 1) address the issues being considered; 2) present information in a clear and concise manner; 3) organize information in a logical and sequential order; 4) adjust responses appropriately to a variety of audiences; and 5) pace conversation to convey necessary information and achieve purpose. Order, logic, imagination, intelligence, and other personal qualities are reflected in the way answers are given. A well thought-out answer engages the interviewers' attention and gives insight into the candidate's personal qualities, skills, goals and experiences. Relevant examples and illustrations support the answers. All information presented should be relevant to the question being asked.

Responses refer to the quality of the answers given. The candidate should reflect on the questions to provide thoughtful and insightful responses. A well thought-out answer engages the interviewers' attention and gives insight into the candidate's personal qualities, skills, goals, and experiences. The answers are supported by relevant examples and illustrations. All information presented should be relevant to the question being asked. The candidate should speak with certainty and conviction.

Overall Effectiveness measures the 1) nature of information provided; 2) manner in which it was communicated; 3) overall impression it created, and 4) rapport established between the interviewer and candidate. Some of the questions to consider are: Did the candidate provide the information requested in a skillful manner? Was the information relevant and meaningful? Was the candidate able to achieve a positive impression of his/her skill, experiences, and personal qualities?

Appearance refers to the appropriate attire of the candidate. It is recommended that participants dress in business professional or business casual attire.