

Academic Decathlon Course Description

The Academic Decathlon is an academic competition in which students match wits with students with the same achievement level from other schools in ten subject areas. Medals are awarded for the top scores in each individual event as well as total combined scores. Students are tested in the following categories:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| (1) Art | (6) Mathematics |
| (2) Economics | (7) Music |
| (3) Essay | (8) Social Science |
| (4) Interview | (9) Speech |
| (5) Language & Literature | (10) Super Quiz – (Science - Evolutionary Biology) |

Every year United States Academic Decathlon (USAD) selects the curricular theme which provides the framework for each of the subject areas. This year's curricular theme is *Latin America*. Students begin their study of these subject areas by studying the Basic Guides in subject areas. Additionally, students will read a novel based on the curricular theme and the Resource Guides which are designed to provide participants with a comprehensive treatment of the subject areas. This year's selected novel is *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya.

Academic Decathlon is a team competition consisting of three Honors, or "A" students (3.75-4.00 GPA); three Scholastic, or "B" students (3.00-3.74 GPA); and three Varsity, or "C" students (0.00-2.99 GPA). For the team total score, the top two composite scores in each category are used. The Academic Decathlon provides a unique opportunity for students with a wide range of GPA's to compete together. Everyone takes the same tests, but the results are not always predictable where "C" students often do as well as or better than the "A" or "B" students. Student success in Academic Decathlon is largely based on dedication and commitment to the subject matter.

Academic Decathlon is the most prestigious of academic competitions in the United States and is recognized by colleges and universities – top scorers not only receive scholarship money, but are given serious consideration on their college application. The Academic Decathlon prepares students to be better equipped in a world that is both competitive and cooperative. Students often comment on how it was one of the most challenging experiences of their high school years while it prepared them well for meeting the demands of college and life.

The elective course for Academic Decathlon will be an in-depth study of the subject areas for the curricular theme *Latin America* and the super quiz subject (science) involving evolutionary biology. Students will prepare for ten academic events learning about *Latin American Art, Music, Literature, Science, Social Science, and Economics*. Students will learn about specific artworks, memorize excerpts from a musical CD, and read a selected novel. Students will learn the fundamentals of essay writing, speech composition, and interview techniques. This course is designed for students to come away with a deeper level of understanding of interdisciplinary connections, parallels, and differing perspectives on *Latin America*. Students in the Academic Decathlon course develop research skills and acquire college-level study skills. Students must undertake much of the research and compilation of study outlines and aides, and they must master selected portions of the material, so they can serve as project leaders for a particular subject area.

The Academic Decathlon class will follow the preparation for the Orange County competition held at the end of January. Students in the class are eligible to compete at this annual regional competition. However, not every student enrolled in the class will be selected for the team competition; only the top students from each GPA category are invited. Every student must participate in the Orange County Scrimmage held on Saturday, November 22, 2008. Scrimmage results as well as overall class scores will help to determine the students that will be selected for the regional competition. The Academic Decathlon coaches will make the final determination for team selections.

Students are responsible for completing the reading of all resource guides that discuss the thematic unit selected by USAD. In addition, students are required to read the selected novel, read the basic guides in art, economics,

music, and language and literature, write and prepare a four-minute speech, and memorize musical excerpts and selected artworks. Students will be asked to present material in the form of a power-point discussion and/or demonstration.

Students who are selected to participate at the regional competition from the class must commit to three events after the Orange County Scrimmage. These events include the speech, interview, and essay competition (scheduled for Saturday, January 31, 2009); the written tests as well as the super quiz competition (scheduled for Saturday, February 7, 2009); and the awards ceremony (mid February, 2009). Students selected to represent Cypress High School at these events are expected to demonstrate appropriate and positive behavior. Any student that accepts a team position for the regional competition that does not follow through with attending the competition may have their academic grade lowered by one letter grade.

Grades

Students must decide before the third week if they will take the course for a letter grade, or for credit only. To receive credit for the AD class, students must earn the grade equivalent of a "C" or better according to the letter grade point totals. Once students select the letter grade option or the credit option, students will not be permitted to change their status in the class during the semester.

The letter grade points are categorized into participation, tests, quizzes, projects, essays, speeches, midterms, and finals. Student midterms are required and all students enrolled in the class are expected to attend the Saturday, November 22th Orange County Scrimmage. Students need to be at CHS before 7:00 AM to ride the bus to the Scrimmage location (TBA). The Orange County Scrimmage is a vital part of the class grade.

Point Breakdown

900 Points Participation (10 points per day)
1700 Points Subject Tests (250 points per test)
200 Point Project (Power Point Presentations)
1000 Points Essay Compositions (200 points per essay)
1000 Points Speech (100 Draft, 300 Impromptu, 300 per Speech)
700 Points Practice Tests (100 per test)
1000 Points Final (500 points per test)
3500 Points Midterm (500 points per test)

Letter Grade Equivalencies

A = 7500 – 10000 points
B = 6250 – 7499 points
C = 5000 – 6249 points
D = 3750 – 4999 points
F = 0 – 3749 points

Credit = 5000 – 10000 points
No Credit = 0 – 4999 points

Extra Credit opportunities will be provided for students who are interested in raising their grade in the class. Students who attend after school meetings will be eligible for extra credit participation points. Participation in Inner-Squad meets and extra quizzes outside of class time will also give students extra credit.

Student Name: _____

We understand the course outline for the Academic Decathlon class and the related competition rules. We also understand the difference between the letter grade option versus the credit and no credit option.

INITIALS _____ (Parent) _____ (Student)

Please select the grade option that will be used to evaluate you son/daughter in the Academic Decathlon class for Fall Semester 2008. Once selected, students may not change their grading status during the semester.

_____ My son/daughter will use the Letter Grade Option

_____ My son/daughter will use the Credit/No Credit Option

Parent Signature: _____

Academic Decathlon 2008-2009 Application

Co-Coaches: Mr. Delgado & Mr. Montrella

Academic Decathlon team members are required to attend all after school meetings Mondays and Thursdays. Not all students enrolled in the Academic Decathlon class are necessarily selected for the team. Coaches will determine team members based on the scrimmage performance and other participation factors. If a team member cannot be present, Mr. Delgado or Mr. Montrella needs to be notified in advance. Non-participation during team meetings without notification may render a decathlete ineligible for the regional competition. Decathletes will be required to attend 3 Saturday competitions [11/22/08, 1/31/09, 2/07/09] and awards ceremony [mid February 2009]. All decathletes need to read all resource materials and prepare a 4-minute speech.

Students enrolled in the Academic Decathlon course are automatically in the Academic Decathlon Club. The AD Club offers leadership positions as well as opportunities for field trips, social gatherings, and student recognition/awards. The AD Club fund raises every year to earn enough money to support extra-curricular activities and study materials for the Academic Decathlon team. Club dues are collected each year to help with the upkeep of the club's finances. We ask that students give \$30 or more (checks made payable to Cypress High School [Memo: Academic Decathlon]) to help enrich the Academic Decathlon experience for the students.

Student/Parent Signature:

I understand that I represent Cypress High School by being on the Academic Decathlon team and will display appropriate and positive behavior. I understand that making the Academic Decathlon team and/or winning decathlon medals enhances my college application and potential acceptance into a 4-year university. I understand the minimum expectations as a decathlete and accept the commitment.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student's Name _____ Grade Level (2008-09 School Year) _____

Phone (Home) _____ Phone (Cell) _____

Address _____

Email Address (Parent) _____ Email Address (Student) _____

Student School I.D. # _____ Approximated Academic GPA _____

Previous Decathlon Experience _____

Academic Areas of Strength _____

Areas Needing Assistance _____

Other Time Commitments _____

Academic Decathlon Club Officers

Mission Statement: The Academic Decathlon Club supports the attainment of further education and academia beyond the normal high school curriculum to better prepare oneself for college and life-long learning.

Selection for Officers for Academic Decathlon Club: Students interested in obtaining a position as an officer in the Academic Decathlon Club will be subjected to a screening process through written application and oral interview at which time the best candidate will be selected for the appropriate position.

Club Officer Positions:

President - Senior, Leader and representative of the ADC. Duties include overseeing all other positions, delegating tasks, communication with guest lecturers and administration.

Vice President - Right-hand to the president. Duties include being the main delegate to the president, filling in when the president is unavailable, and introducing guest lecturers.

Treasurer - Maintains financial ledger. Duties include collection of club dues, communication with ASB and Mr. Montrella, and coordinates purchases.

Secretary - Maintains club records. Duties include taking attendance at all meetings, organizing club paperwork and documents, and delegating the writing of thank you notes to guest lecturers and volunteers.

Senior, Junior, and Sophomore Class Delegate - Duties include communication between their specific class members with the other officers of the club, as well as organization of study groups.

Note: ADC Officers will have responsibilities above and beyond the normal decathlete as they are primarily linked to the success and organization of the Academic Decathlon team. Club officers will be expected to meet at all club meetings and on selected days to discuss club status and events.

Written Application

Name (Print): _____ Class (Grade Level): _____

Position(s) Applying For: _____

Write a short paragraph describing why you are qualified for this position. If you are applying for more than one position, please write a separate paragraph for each. (Use the back of this form if you need more room.)

September 4, 2008

Dear Parent,

Your student has the esteemed privilege of trying out for the Academic Decathlon Team for Cypress High School. It is a major responsibility and honor to be a part the Academic Decathlon. Students who participate in the decathlon must take on rigorous study in academic subjects including literature, social science, science, music, art, economics, and mathematics. Students will also be challenged in their writing and communication abilities through speech, interview and essay competitions. Colleges and universities seriously view the Academic Decathlon as a very prestigious event for its academic nature and commitment required. Any awards or honors received in the competition may help in the student's ability to be accepted into a university or college. Any student who participates and completes the competition will have enriched their academic background and develop the hard working ethics necessary for earning a college degree. This is a tremendous opportunity for students to challenge themselves intellectually, socially, and psychologically.

Students involved on the Academic Decathlon team are *required* to participate in meetings outside of class. Decathletes must be dedicated to reading and studying materials in each of the core subjects in a timely manner. Your student will be required to participate in the scheduled competitions, which take place on three Saturdays during the school year (11/22/08, 1/31/09, & 2/07/09). This is a team event, and just like any sports team practice, attendance is necessary.

Our goal this year is to repeat our great success at the county competition. Cypress High School has been recognized as Division 3 Champions (2005), Division 2 Runner-Up Champions (2006), placed 8th in Division 1 (2007), and placed 3rd in Division 1 last year with a new school record of over 40,000 points! We have established our school as a competitive force in the county for Academic Decathlon. Cypress High School officially offered Academic Decathlon as a class last year which contributed to our success. Eleven schools in Orange County already have a course for students in this competition and Cypress can finally compete on an even playing field. Students will be able to enroll in the class during 6th period for both semesters and may take the class for a letter grade or for credit/no credit. To facilitate the academic focus required of the team, students will be meeting twice a week after school on Mondays and Thursdays and will also be encouraged to meet outside of school in study groups.

Financially, we need assistance too. The preparation for the competition requires a large amount of study material; including ten study guide packets, a musical CD, an art reproduction booklet, and the selected literature book. Last year we were able to purchase supplemental test questions and study kits from ACE incorporated, which attributed to our success in Division 1 this year. Finally, we are planning on sending two teams to the competition. This all entails an added financial strain to our budget. For this reason we are requesting that each student donate \$30.00 to the Academic Decathlon Club treasury for their study materials. This money is kept by the Associated Student Body specifically for costs incurred by the AD team. Cash is accepted, and checks are preferred - make checks payable to Cypress High School. Any donation above and beyond the requested amount is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact Mr. Montrella via email or phone to inquire about the decathlon's budget and our financial needs. If you have any questions regarding your student's participation in the Academic Decathlon, please email Mr. Montrella with the header "OCAD" at: montrella_j@auhsd.us.

Sincerely,

Dean Delgado
John Montrella

Important Dates:

11/22/08 – Scrimmage (at Orange County Dept. of Education – Costa Mesa) - Bus leaves CHS @ 7:00 AM
1/31/09 – Speech, Essay, Interview Competition (time and location to be determined)
2/07/09 – Multiple Choice Tests, Super Quiz (time and location to be determined)
mid February '09 – Awards Ceremony