

2025 USAD Nationals Explanation of Scoring

The United States Academic Decathlon® has 10 events. Each event is evenly weighted at 1,000 points per competitor for a possible 10,000-point total per student. However, only six scores per team are counted for the team ranking (top two honor, scholastic and varsity) making the highest possible team score 60,000.

The social science, music, and literature tests have 50 questions each. The raw score for these tests is converted to 1,000 points with each question worth 20 points. The art, science, and economics tests have 55 questions with each question worth 18.18 points. The math test has 45 questions with each question being worth 22.2 points.

The essay is scored based on a rubric. Each essay is independently read twice. If there is a divergence of 200 or more points in the two scores, the essay is read and scored by a third judge. The third score replaces the divergent score. The two scores are averaged for the final score.

The speech and interview are performed before a panel of judges (usually three). The judges complete the appropriate scoring forms online. The scoring program computes an average score based on a maximum of 1,000 points.

The Super Quiz™ will include questions from the subjects of art, economics, literature, mathematics, music, science and social science. In the Super Quiz three students from each GPA category will be asked to come to the stage. Varsity students will be tested with the first 18 questions, followed by the scholastic students answering the next 18 questions, and then the final 18 questions of the competition for the honor students. Questions are worth one point each for a total of 54 points per team. The Super Quiz is a standalone event, and scores will NOT be added to individual or team scores.

Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded in each division, event and category (honor, scholastic and varsity). All ties are awarded.

Team overall ranking is determined by the six team members that make up the top two scores in each category (honor, scholastic and varsity).

There will be five divisions of schools - Division I, II, III, IV, & V - at USAD Nationals. All five divisions at Nationals will be score-based divisions and will be determined using each team's total 10-event state score. The teams will be distributed across divisions as evenly as possible. Each Division will have first (gold), second (silver), and third (bronze) place winners as their division champions. The Dr. Robert D. Peterson National Championship Award will be awarded to the team with the highest number of points.

An award list will be sent to State Directors following the awards ceremony that indicates the medalists in each event; special awards; top team in each division in the Super Quiz; and top 10 teams in the overall standings.

Special awards are common in Academic Decathlon such as the Highest Scoring Student Award (one per team); and the Most Valuable Team Member Award (one per team). Some other special awards at Nationals will be communicated after the event and include: the Asa Edwin Reaves, Esq. Social Science Prize; B. Franklin Reinauer II Economics Prize; the Frank Wurtzel Prize; the Roberts/Caperton Inspiration Award for overcoming challenges; the State Directors' Communication Award; the Rookie of the Year Award; and the Founder's Scholarship: Most Improved Varsity Student.