

The Ohio Academic Competition O.A.C.

2025-2026 Ohio Academic Competition Rules

Advisors and team members are responsible for understanding the format and having full knowledge of all rules of the Ohio Academic Competition. Any questions or concerns should be directed to an O.A.C. Committee member.

A. Tournament Format

A1. Two teams will participate in each match with a maximum of four (4) members of each team participating at a time.

A2. Two team questions and one toss-up question will be asked in ten (10) categories. During a match, the categories will be presented in the order listed below:

American Literature

Mathematics

World History

Fine Arts

Life Science

English/World Literature

U.S. Government/Economics

Physical Science

Geography

U.S. History

A3. The Alphabet Round will follow the category round. In the Alphabet Round, each team receives at least two written copies of the same twenty questions, and each team receives one official answer sheet.

A4. The match will conclude with 20 questions in a Final Round. The questions will

be from the previous categories as well as mythology, world religion, philosophy, earth and space science, social science, computer science, and current events.

B. Competition Terms

B1. Match – competition between two teams

B2. Round – all matches held at the same time

B3. Moderator – the match judge and question reader

B4. Judgment Decision – a decision of the moderator concerning the operation of a match. *Judgment decisions are not subject to protest.*

B5. Recognized Team – the team that has been recognized by the moderator to provide an answer

B6. Team Question – a question directed to one team

B7. Steal – an opportunity to answer a missed Team question

B8. Toss-up Questions – questions asked of both teams simultaneously during the category round

B9. Final Round Questions – questions asked of both teams simultaneously during the final round

B10. Alphabet Round Questions – written questions asked of both teams simultaneously and requiring answers written on an official answer sheet

B11. Protest committee – the group that is appointed by the tournament director to resolve any protests of question content

C. Team Rules

C1. Substitutions are permitted during a match after life science in the category round, immediately before the alphabet round, immediately before the final round, at a timeout during the final round (by either team) and immediately following regulation if overtime is needed (students may not be subbed at any time during the overtime period though). Students that haven been subbed out during one substitution period are eligible to return during the next substitution period. In the event a player becomes ill or is unable to participate, the match will be stopped and a new player may be permitted to participate.

C2. Any student in ninth through twelfth grade may participate on a school team at regionals and state (players in K-12 may play at other tournaments). The student must be currently enrolled in that school.

C3. A participant's eligibility at regionals and state shall not exceed eight high school

semesters (or equivalents).

C4. During a match, questions may be answered by the captain or any team member.

* See C1 for emergency situations.

C5. Teams that fail to report to a match in a timely manner may be made to forfeit the match at the discretion of the tournament director.

C6. The team that wins the coin toss prior to the start of a match will have the choice of receiving the first or second question in the first category. Teams will then alternate in receiving the first question in each succeeding category.

C7. All food, drinks, cell phones etc., must be removed from the contestant tables prior to the introduction of the teams. However, players may have notebooks on their desk as long as they are turned to a fresh page. These notebooks should be removed from

the contestant tables while in possession of the alphabet round answer sheet (as soon as the answer sheet has been submitted, notebooks may return to the table) and/or at any other time if the reader feels they are a problem. Students should have scratch paper and pencils before the reading of the first question.

C8. Disruptive behavior by team member(s), advisor(s) or audience member(s) will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior could result in removal of team member(s), advisor(s) or audience member(s) from the match site.

D. Question Rules

D1. The time given for students to answer/buzz in after a question has been read is the following:

- Team Questions (no buzz required) – 10 seconds (unless otherwise stated) •
- Tossup Questions in the Category Round (buzz required) – 10 seconds (unless otherwise stated)
- Final Round Questions (buzz required) – 5 seconds

On any question that requires a buzzer, the recognized team must give its answer within 5 seconds after recognition. The team will lose the chance to answer the question if the moderator indicates that the team has not answered quickly enough. Consultation among players is allowed at all times.

If the first team to buzz answers incorrectly, the other team will be given the greater amount of time between the balance of the remaining time or 3 seconds to buzz in.

D2. Teams MUST press their buzzers to answer Toss-Up and Final Round questions. This must be done even if the other team has already buzzed in and been ruled incorrect.

D3. If a buzzer fails to work properly, a player may yell “buzz” and be recognized as having buzzed in. After the conclusion of that question, the reader should conduct a buzzer check. If the buzzer is malfunctioning, the system and/or buzzer

must be replaced immediately. If a verbal “buzz” occurs simultaneously with or before a buzzer, the reader shall rule on who buzzed first or have the option of seeking a replacement question.

D4. A team must be recognized by the moderator before giving its answer to a Bonus, Toss-Up, or Final Round question. If a team answers a question before it has been recognized in some manner by the moderator (manner of recognition will be indicated at the beginning of each match) that team forfeits its opportunity to answer. If a team answers a question after the other team has been recognized, the unrecognized team forfeits its opportunity to answer.

D5. A question will ask for specific information.

If any additional incorrect information is provided in the answer, the entire answer will be ruled incorrect. Example: Give the last name of the first President of the United States.

Correct Answer – *Washington* or *George Washington*

Incorrect Answer – *Fred Washington*

Titles of literary, artistic, or musical works must be exact and give in full (will not be prompted) but can be given without a leading article. However, if the wrong leading article is given, the answer will be ruled incorrect.

Correct Answer – *The Red and the Black*

Correct Answer – *Red and the Black*

Incorrect Answer – *A Red and the Black*

Incorrect Answer – *The Red and Black*

If a question is asking for a specific year (four digits), and a player gives a two digit answer, the player will be prompted for a complete answer so long as the two digits they gave match the last two digits of the correct answer.

Promptable Answer – 68 for 1968

D6. If a team’s pronunciation of the answer is very close, but not phonetically correct, the moderator may ask for the spelling.

D7. If the moderator inadvertently makes an error in the reading of a question or an answer, or reads the answer to a question before the appropriate team has the chance to respond, a replacement question will be asked. When the replacement question is read, the balance of answers already given will carry over. For instance, if a tossup question was already incorrectly answered by one team, the replacement will be read to the other team only. Also, if a team has already given one answer on a team question and a replacement question is needed, the original team will still get their second answer on the replacement question.

D8. If the accuracy of a question or an answer is questioned, the moderator will appeal to the Protest Committee, which will then be the final authority on points earned.

D9. Any protested answer must be presented to the moderator immediately following the match (preferably noted during the match). The faculty advisor or team captain must submit this protest to the moderator; a response to the protest will be given after the Protest Committee has studied the protest. If the protest does not affect which team won the match, the protest will not be entertained.

D10. Any judgment decision on the part of the moderator during the match is final. For all practicality, judgment decisions cannot be protested.

D11. During the category rounds, if the buzzer system has a functional timer, the moderator MUST use the timer for team questions. If the moderator does not do so, this is grounds for replacement of the moderator from his/her duties.

E. Round Rules

E1. Matches will be conducted in closed sessions. Audience entry or exit will not be permitted after a match begins.

E2. Audio and videotaping of matches is prohibited. All electronic devices must be turned off by players and audience members before the match begins.

E3. The score of each match will be announced after Life Science, U.S. History, Alphabet Round, ten questions through the Final Round, fifteen questions through the Final Round (if the score is within two) and at the end of the match.

E4. During a round, each team has one, one-minute timeout that they may call after any toss-up question (after a toss-up question in the category round or after any question in the final round). During this timeout, both coaches may talk to their teams but no substitutions may be made unless it occurs during the final round. Teams must also stay in the competition room during the timeout.

F. Tie-Breaker Rules

F1. In an event of a tie, the tied teams will immediately participate in a tiebreaker.

F2. Five additional final questions will be asked to break the tie. If after those five tiebreaker questions, the game is still tied, the tie will be broken by reading one final round question at a time in a sudden death fashion.

G. Scoring Team Questions

G1. A team does not need to press its buzzer to answer a Team Question.

G2. Within the designated answer period, a team may give up to two answers to a Team Question. Two points are awarded if the team's first answer is correct; one point is awarded if the team's second answer is correct. If a team fails to answer correctly in two tries, the clock will continue to run for the remainder of the designated answer period. The question becomes a steal opportunity for the other team for the remainder of the designated answer period.

H. Scoring Steals

H1. The buzz of the clock at the end of the designated answer period for a team question will be the signal for the other team to have the opportunity to answer. The team does not need to press its buzzer to answer but must be recognized by the moderator and then answer immediately.

H2. Only one answer will be allowed for the steal try. One point will be awarded if the steal try is correct.

I. Scoring Toss-Up Questions

I1. A team must press its buzzer and be recognized by the moderator to have an opportunity to answer a Toss-Up question.

I2. A team may not buzz in for a Toss-Up question until the first syllable of the first word in the question is said. Buzzing in early will warrant one warning. Buzzing in early in a match more than once will cause a forfeit of that question. Directions by the moderator/reader are not considered a part of the question.

The two teams will receive the same question. The team that presses its buzzer first will have the first opportunity to answer after it has been recognized by the moderator. If the answer is incorrect, the reader will continue the question, and the other team will have an opportunity to answer by being recognized by the moderator before the allotted time expires. The question will be worth two points. Only one answer per team will be accepted.

I4. If a team buzzes prior to the end of the reading of the question and gives an incorrect answer, the remainder of the question will be read for the remaining team. The team must buzz and be recognized before the allotted time expires.

I5. If the allotted time expires during the answering of a Toss-Up question by the first team to buzz in or during a ruling on the correctness of the first team's response, the other team will be given an additional three seconds to buzz in on the Toss-Up question.

J. Scoring Alphabet Round Questions

J1. The Alphabet Round will consist of twenty two-point questions, all of which require answers that begin with the letter of the alphabet designated for that round's questions.

J2. Each team will be given at least two copies of the questions for this round. Each team will be given one official answer sheet.

J3. Teams will have four minutes to consult and write their answers. Both teams will work at the same time. The moderator will give warnings when two minutes are left and one minute is left. Students MUST stop writing when TIME is called at the end of the four minutes. Spelling does not count unless correct spelling of the answer is

specified in the question. Answers must be legible and phonetically correct.

J4. The reader and/or official scorer will check the answers, read the answers aloud, and announce point totals before the Final Round.

J5. Each correct answer shall be worth two points.

K. Scoring Final Round Questions

K1. The Final Round will consist of twenty two-point questions.

K2. A team must press its buzzer and be recognized by the moderator to have an opportunity to answer a Final Round question.

K3. If a team buzzes prior to the end of the reading of the question and gives an incorrect answer, the remainder of the question will be read for the remaining team. However, this team must press its buzzer and be recognized by the moderator before answering the question.

K4. Only one response will be accepted per team.

K5. If the allotted time expires during the answering of a Final Round question by the first team to buzz in or during a ruling on the correctness of the first team's response, the other team will be given an additional three seconds to buzz in on the Final Round question.