

This is the rules and format document for the 2025 Minnesota Student Quiz League, a Venetian-style quiz league developed by the UQC.

General Outline

- 4 players are in a game room
- 24 cycles of three questions each are in a packet, and all 24 of those are played in regulation (six cycles per player, or eighteen questions each)
- Each cycle has easy, medium, and hard parts, like a standard quizbowl bonus
- Each question is worth 10 points

MSQL Category Distribution (per-packet)

4 History

- 1 American History
- 1 European History
- 1 World History
- 0.5 Ancient History
- 0.5 Any/Other History

4 Literature and Mythology

- 1 American Literature
- 1 British/Irish Literature
- 0.5 European Literature
- 0.5 World/Other Literature
- 1 Mythology

4 Science

- 1 Biology
- 1 Math (non-computational only)
- 1 Other Science (including astronomy, geoscience, mixed science, computer science, etc.)
- 0.5 Chemistry
- 0.5 Physics

4 Thought and Art

- 1 Visual Fine Arts* (including painting & sculpture, architecture, film, etc.)
- 1 Auditory Fine Arts* (including classical music, jazz, opera, world music, etc.)
- 1 Religion
- 1 Philosophy/Social Science

4 Entertainment

- 1 TV/Movies
- 1 Music/Video Games
- 1 Other Pop Culture
- 1 Sports

4 Modern World

- 1 Geography
- 1 Current Events
- 1 Food
- 1 Grab Bag**

* In quizbowl terms, “auditory fine arts” also includes what would be considered “other auditory fine arts,” and “visual fine arts” also includes what would be considered “other visual fine arts” in a quizbowl distribution.

** “Grab Bag” could be anything, particularly a topic that does not neatly fit into any other existing subcategory.

Game Format

- Players select the general category of their cycle—“history” or “thought and culture” and so forth. Players may not select a specific subcategory like “American history.”
- Once all of the cycles in a category have been played, the category may no longer be selected.
- Once a topic is selected, the “lead-in” (the first line of the cycle) will be read, followed by asking the player if they would like to “double.” “Double” refers to the “double or nothing” mechanic, the rules for which are below.
- The lead-in is judged to have ended after a player answers “yes” or “no” (in regards to whether or not to double).
- The *active player* may use a mulligan at any point before the leadin ends.

The four players in the room will take turns answering questions in the following order through the first five rounds (or 20 questions).

Player 1: 1, 5, 11, 14, 20 (1, 1, 3, 2, 4)

Player 2: 2, 6, 12, 15, 17 (2, 2, 4, 3, 1)

Player 3: 3, 7, 9, 16, 18 (3, 3, 1, 4, 2)

Player 4: 4, 8, 10, 13, 19 (4, 4, 2, 1, 3)

After the fifth round (or cycle 20), players are ranked from 1-4. Ties are broken by awarding the higher placement to the player in the higher seat. The player in first selects which position in the sixth round they wish to select and answer in (first, second, third, or fourth). The player in second then repeats the process, though they can’t pick what the player in first has already picked. And so on.

After the sixth round, if any players are tied on points, sudden-death tiebreakers will be read to those players in overtime.

Timing

- To select a category: 15 seconds (prompted after 10 seconds)
- To decide whether to use a mechanic (double-or-nothing or a mulligan): 15 seconds (prompted after 10 seconds)
- To answer a question: 15 seconds (prompted after 10 seconds)

Timing Penalties

- If a category is not selected in time, the moderator will read the next available cycle in packet order. Typically this is history, followed by literature, et al as written in the distribution above.
- If the player does not indicate “yes” or “no” to using a mechanic within 15 seconds, the moderator will proceed as if the player indicated “no.”

- If a player does not begin giving an answer before the 15 second time limit, the moderator will consider the player incorrect.

Mechanics: “double or nothing.”

- After the lead-in is read to a player, the player will be asked if they wish to select “double or nothing,” referred to in shorthand by the question “would you like to double?”
- When a player doubles, if they get all three questions correct for the cycle, they receive 60 points for that cycle (a “double”).
- When a player doubles, if they do not get all three questions correct for the cycle, they get no points for that cycle (thus why the mechanic is named “double or nothing”).
- While the moderator is reading the lead-in, a player may interrupt to indicate whether they wish to double or not by saying “yes” or “no.”
- If a player indicates whether they wish to double prior to the end of the lead-in, the moderator will read the rest of the lead-in, and mulligans may no longer be used on that cycle. In this situation, the moderator will skip the “would you like to double?” prompt and proceed directly to reading the questions.

Mechanics: the “mulligan.”

- A “mulligan” is a do-over, and is used by saying the word “mulligan.”
- The *active player* is defined as the player who is currently being read a cycle. All other players are defined as *inactive players*.
- In MSQ game play, only the active player may call for a mulligan.
- Each player has one mulligan at their disposal per game. This can be used during any cycle’s lead-in by saying “mulligan.”
- The lead-in ends when a player indicates whether or not they wish to double. Players may only call for a mulligan before they answer “yes” or “no” to the double prompt.
- Players may interrupt the moderator to use a mulligan prior to the end of the lead-in. If this occurs, the moderator will immediately stop reading and resolve the mulligan. The rest of the lead-in is not read until the topic is selected again.
- Using a mulligan puts the initially-selected cycle back in the pool and allows the active player to select another cycle, either from the same category or a different one.
- If a player mulligans, the mulliganed topic is out of play for the *current cycle/turn*. As such, if the player picks the same category after mulliganing, they will be read the next topic in the category (not the one they just mulliganed).
- After the cycle/turn when a topic was mulliganed, that topic is back in play, and is therefore the first in the queue within its category for all future cycles. The next player to pick that category will receive the previously-mulliganed topic.

Scoring for Rankings

Points are allocated in the following manner

First-place in a game room: 3 points

Second-place: 2 points

Third-place: 1 point

In prelims, players are ranked first by their game points (what is listed above), then by their total score in all games combined, then by tiebreakers as outlined on the “progressions” tab of a site’s schedule spreadsheet. Typically the third tiebreaker will be “unadjusted PPB,” which is a measure of how many questions a player answered correctly, disregarding their doubling decisions.

Anti-Cheating Policy (For Online Gameplay)

- In online gameplay, players are required to have both of their hands within view of a camera at all times.
- Moderators may (or may not) allow players to not have their hands in camera during other players’ questions *before* a player has used a mulligan.

Protests

- A player may protest the acceptance (or lack thereof) of a given answer by saying “protest.”
- Protests must be lodged within the game when the question was heard.
- Protests are considered with the *entire* question (or “bonus part”) in mind. Answers must be correct for *all* parts of a single question to be acceptable.
- Moderator decisions are final, and may only be overruled by the Tournament Director.
- *Procedural* matters (such as timing decisions) are not protestable.
- If the acceptance of a protest would necessitate overtime, “hypothetical gameplay” will be played. The protest will be resolved after the game.
- “Hypothetical gameplay” is the gameplay that would have happened with the acceptance of a protest.
- All protests which affect a game’s outcome will be resolved. Protests which do not affect a game’s outcome may or may not be resolved if a clear and obvious resolution can be reached.
- A resolution that the player “should have been prompted” will result in the player being given the points for the protested question. As such, in order for this resolution to be achieved, the Tournament Director (or equivalent protest committee) must rule that sufficient knowledge was demonstrated to earn points for the question. Protests for overly-vague answers (for example, an answer of “South America” for a question which asks for “Patagonia” as “this region”) will not be entertained.
- If a protested question is ruled to be sufficiently ambiguous or erroneous, the protested player will be read a new *single question* in the same category of the same difficulty as the protested question. For example, if the player initially answered the medium part incorrectly, and successfully protested, they will be read only the medium part from a replacement cycle.

Repeats

- The active player may ask the moderator to repeat any portion of a question that has been read.
- Irrespective of this, the player has 15 seconds from when the moderator *first* completes the question to begin giving their answer. Players may not gain more time by asking for repeats.
- Players *may* ask the moderator to repeat a previously-mulliganed lead-in while deliberating on category selection, or between rounds of play (including at halftime).
- *Online gameplay is auditory. If the moderator feels that their audio or pronunciation was sufficiently problematic, the moderator may (at their discretion) paste a question’s text into Zoom chat or equivalent. This is an exception, not something that should be expected to happen*

regularly. Players may not request for question text to be pasted unless they are having significant Internet-related issues.

Correctness Guidelines

- Answers will be judged according to NAQT's (detailed) [correctness guidelines](#).
- "Vowel Rule:" consonants must be said in the correct order. Vowels may be in an incorrect order so long as clear and obvious knowledge of the answer has been demonstrated. Moderator decisions on correctness *are* protestable.

Forfeit Policy

- Moderators will wait for a missing player for 10 minutes past the scheduled start time. If a player is still missing after 10 minutes, that player forfeits.
- If one player forfeits, the three remaining players will play all 24 cycles over eight rounds. Final scores will be multiplied by a factor of 0.75 for standings purposes.
- If two players forfeit, the two remaining players will play all 24 cycles over twelve rounds. Final scores will be multiplied by a factor of 0.5 for standings purposes.

Overtime / Tiebreakers

- Overtime is sudden-death.
- The double-or-nothing mechanic is not available for use in overtime, and neither are mulligans.
- Three additional cycles (not in the packet) from any category will be made "in play" / available for selection.
- If players are still tied after overtime, the game progresses to Armageddon.
- *In ties involving two players:* the player in the higher seat will pick a category first, and the player in the lower seat will pick second from the categories remaining. The player who scores higher wins. If scores are still tied, the unplayed cycle is used for Armageddon.
- *In ties involving three players:* players pick in seat order. Any player who scores higher than another finishes above the latter. Any tie that still remains is broken by Armageddon.
- Should the result of a two-way tie become mathematically decided prior to the end of a cycle, the moderator may choose to immediately stop reading. For example, in a two-way tie, if the first player scores 10 points, and the second player answers their first two questions correctly, the moderator does not need to read the second player their third question.

Armageddon

- If players remain tied after overtime, the third additional cycle (not in the packet) will be read.
- The lead-in will be read to both players.
- The player in the *higher** seat will determine the target score (10, 20, or 30).
- Then, the player in the *lower* seat will determine which of the two players must achieve the target score by answering the questions in the cycle.
- If the player who answers the cycle reaches the target score, that player wins. If they do not, that player loses.
- Should the active player reach the target score prior to the end of the cycle, the moderator may choose to immediately stop reading.

- *Note for previous Venetian format players: this rule was reversed in Venetian IV. From a gameplay perspective, the player in the lower seat, having survived a strategic disadvantage in overtime, earns the advantage in Armageddon.*

Overtime Addenda

- The possibility of a particular player ever encountering the following scenarios is very small.
- Should there be separate ties for first-place and third-place in a room (for example, two players each score 90 points and two players each score 70 points in regulation), each tie will be broken separately, according to the procedures outlined previously. Players involved in one tie will leave the room while the other tie is being resolved, to allow the same tiebreaker questions to be used.
- *In ties involving four players (which has happened twice ever on the Venetian format):* “sudden-death semifinals” are played. Player 1 and Player 4 in seat order will play against each other in the procedures conducted for two-player ties, as will Player 2 and Player 3 in seat order. The winners of each half will play an Armageddon cycle against each other for first-place. The losers of each half will play an Armageddon cycle against each other for third-place.
- *Three-player Armageddon:* should three players remain tied after overtime, two Armageddon cycles are played. The first is played by the second and third player in seat order, and the loser finishes third in the tie. The winner plays an additional Armageddon cycle against the first player in seat order to break the remaining tie.

Additional Rules and Addenda

- In online gameplay, mid-game, moderators will wait up to one (1) minute for a player experiencing technical difficulties. If this player is *in the room* and does not select their category once the 15-second timer ends, they are treated as any other player who has likewise not selected their category, and the next cycle in packet order is read by rule. If this player is *not* in the room once the 15-second timer ends, that cycle is removed from the packet and the player is given a 0 for all parts of that cycle.
- In between cycles of a game, a player may request what subcategory a previous cycle belonged to (“mythology,” “American history,” and so on). The moderator may reveal this, but must also reveal this to all other (non-forfeiting) players in the room.
- The moderator may not reveal which subcategories are remaining if more than one subcategory remains in a category. If exactly one subcategory remains in a category, the moderator may reveal it.