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WEST VIRGINIA  
**ACADEMIC  
SHOWDOWN**

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**A COMPETITION MATCHING TOP STUDENTS FROM AROUND THE STATE**



# GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The West Virginia Academic Showdown is an academic head-to-head competition between West Virginia high schools for grades 9-12. The competition is a partnership between West Virginia Department of Education, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, West Virginia Public Broadcasting, and West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture, and History.
2. The academic showdown is a double elimination competition. Schools are allowed up to two teams per school.
3. Regional tournaments will take place in five regions at local universities around West Virginia. The top two teams will move on to the final showdown in Charleston, WV.
4. Each team must have a coach or sponsor who is a school employee or school-approved individual from a full-time academic institution which includes public schools, non-public schools, and home school education associations.
5. Each team must meet registration deadline requirements.
6. High schools may create teams of 4 students from grades 9-12. There may be a fifth team member who acts as an alternate.
7. Schools may send up to two teams to the regional competitions.
8. Team attire will be determined by the individual team. Team shirts or other matching attire is encouraged.
9. Each team member must:
  - a. be enrolled as a full-time high school student at a participating school
  - b. have an acceptable attendance and discipline record
  - c. have approval from a participating school official
10. The participating school will be responsible for all travel and expenses related to participation in the regional and final competition.
11. Questions will come from the following subject areas:
  - a. literature
  - b. math
  - c. history
  - d. science
  - e. geography
  - f. fine arts
  - g. religion/mythology
  - h. social science
  - i. philosophy
  - j. current events
  - k. pop culture
  - l. sports
  - m. general knowledge

# WEST VIRGINIA ACADEMIC SHOWDOWN OFFICIALS

1. All decisions of the designated showdown officials are final.
2. A moderator will facilitate each game. The moderator will read the official questions, enforce time limits, supervise the clock, determine if question answers are correct, award points, deduct points, and enforce the rules of the showdown.

3. Other officials may be designated to assist the moderator. Assistance may be provided through keeping score, supervising the clock, and deciding the correctness of answers given in all portions of the games.

## EQUIPMENT

1. Each team will play with a buzzer system that is provided to them during the tournaments. The electronic buzzer system will determine who will answer each question first. Should the buzzer system not function for some reason, the players will use a signaling system agreed upon by officials.
2. If it is necessary to utilize a signaling system, a designated official will act as the final judge that designates which team signals first. The designated official will have the final say and determinations may not be protested.
3. Each player is responsible for monitoring whether the buzzer system is properly working throughout the match. If a buzzer malfunctions, only the current tossup or the just completed tossup question may be repeated. Only a designated official may rule whether a question may be repeated.
4. If a player is physically unable to utilize the buzzer system, accommodations will be made to assist the student.

## PARTICIPANTS

1. All individuals participating in the showdown will be considered responsible for their actions. Players, coaches, sponsors, and schools are responsible for any liability arising from their conduct while at the regional and final competitions. This is valid for travel to and from regional and final competitions as well.
2. A team consists of four players. An alternate may be designated and accompany the team to the regional and final competitions.
3. No player may play for two different teams.
4. A coach or sponsor is a person who acts in a recognized advisory role to a team. A coach may not be a player for any team. A team may have multiple coaches, but only one person may be designated as the official coach prior to each match. A team may change its official coach prior to each match. A person may coach multiple teams. If a team has only a single coach, that person will be assumed to be the official coach.

## MATCHES

1. Each game consists of two halves:
  - a. The first half of each match will last approximately 15 minutes and will consist of a maximum of 20 questions that will alternate between teams with correct answers being worth 1 point. A captain will be identified for this half and will answer for the team or identify a team member to provide their answer. A coin toss prior to the start of the match will determine which team answers first.
  - b. The second half will last approximately 15 minutes and will consist of a maximum of 20 questions. Teams will receive 1 point for each correct answer.
2. In the case of a tie between two teams, a tie breaker of three 1-point tossup questions will be given to determine the winner.
3. There are no penalties for incorrect answers.

# TIME

1. Tardiness of more than 5 minutes will result in a forfeit, unless the delay is the fault of the tournament or the tournament director is satisfied with another good cause.
2. A game consists of two halves, each approximately 15 minutes long or until all of the questions provided for the game have been read, whichever comes first. If the score is tied at the end of the game, an overtime period will be played.
3. The clock starts when the moderator begins reading the first question of each half.
4. When the clock sounds the end of time, the half or full game shall end with the conclusion of the current question cycle. In particular:
  - a. If the moderator has just finished a question or an unanswered tossup question and has not yet begun the next question, then the half is over. A question is considered to begin when the first syllable of the first word has been read. Preliminary statements will not count. ("Here is the next question" or "Tossup number 18" does not count as reading the actual question.)
  - b. If the moderator is reading a question, then he or she shall continue reading it, giving both teams a chance to answer, and their full allotment to signal. If the question goes unanswered, then the half is over.
  - c. If the moderator is reading a first-half question that alternates between teams, the half shall end when the question is completely over. This includes allowing the team to answer and the other team to answer if the first team misses the question.
5. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins. If the score is tied, an untimed overtime period consisting of three tossup questions will follow. These tossups will be read from the original set (if unread questions remain) or may be obtained from the tournament director.
6. If the game is tied after the first overtime, a second overtime will take place. If additional overtime games are needed, the moderator will provide three tossup questions per round until a winner is determined. These tossups will be read from the original set (if unread questions remain) or may be obtained from the tournament director.
7. The clock shall not stop except for the following reasons:
  - a. when a timeout is called (only between questions)
  - b. when stopped by a game official to resolve a serious issue
  - c. to discipline, warn, or eject players or a team
  - d. to replace a question
  - e. to acquire replacement questions when necessary
8. Each team has one 30 second timeout per game. Timeouts do not carry over from game to game. Teams are not given additional timeouts in overtime periods.
  - a. Only an active player or official can call a timeout. A timeout is called by saying "timeout" or "time."
  - b. A timeout may be called only before the beginning of a tossup question or alternating question cycle. Once the tossup question or alternating question has begun, a team cannot call a timeout for the duration of that cycle.
  - c. Game officials will ignore any attempt to call a timeout at any other time, unless they consider such an attempt unsportsmanlike behavior.

- d. Game officials will ignore any attempt to call a timeout by a team that has already called one. Repeated attempts to call additional timeouts shall be considered game-delaying tactics and may result in a player's warning or ejection.
9. The timepiece used by the game officials is the official time and may not be protested.

## ALTERNATING QUESTIONS

1. Alternating questions begin in the first half of each match. The moderator will flip a coin provided by the tournament director. Each team will be identified by a side of the coin. The team whose side faces up after the flip will go first in the alternating round.
2. The moderator will read each alternating question one time during a question cycle. The moderator has an option to reread the question if needed. If a team answers a question incorrectly, the other team may ask to have the question repeated. The moderator may decline to repeat the question if it is believed the team is asking to stall answering the question.
3. Teams may confer on alternating questions. One team member (the captain) will give the answer for the team. If conflicting answers are directed at the moderator, the captain will be asked to choose the team's answer.
4. A team has 10 seconds to answer an alternating question. After reading each alternating question, the moderator will prompt the team for an answer after 5 seconds.
5. A team may begin its answer before the end of an alternating question. In this case, the moderator will stop reading the question when the team begins to answer.
6. If the moderator inadvertently reveals the answer to the question, he/she will go to the next alternating question.
7. If the moderator inadvertently reveals the answer following an incorrect answer without the second team having a chance to answer, the next alternating question will be posed to the second team only. The next question will then return to the alternating cycle.

## TOSSUP QUESTIONS

1. Players may not communicate with anyone other than tournament officials during the tossup round unless a timeout has been given.
2. A player may signal to answer a question at any point after the moderator has begun reading the question. If the player answers the question incorrectly, no member from that team may try to answer again.
3. When a player has signaled, a game official will acknowledge or recognize the player by name, number, pointing at the player, or looking at the player. There is no penalty if a player who has signaled answers before being acknowledged.
4. If a player signals before the moderator has finished reading the question, the moderator will stop at that point. If the response given is incorrect, the moderator will finish the question for the other team only, if it is eligible to answer the question. The moderator is not required to reread the entire question, but should resume at a natural point in the question.
5. An answer to a tossup question must be given within 5 seconds after the player has been recognized. Answers will not be accepted after the moderator has said "time."

6. Players have 5 seconds to signal after the moderator has finished reading the tossup. If the player gives the incorrect answer, the other team (if eligible to answer) will then have 5 additional seconds to signal.
7. Only game officials may signal whether players have exceeded the allotted time to signal or answer. Protests are not accepted for these decisions.
8. If the player to answer is a teammate of the first player to signal, the moderator will treat the response as an incorrect answer and turn the question over to the other team.
9. If a player who answers is not a teammate of the first player to signal, the moderator will ignore the answer (even if correct), and will recognize the player on the other team who had actually signaled. Only that player will have a chance to answer, as the non-signaler has disqualified his/her team on that tossup.
10. If a player answers because an official incorrectly identified who signaled first, the question must be replaced.
11. If the moderator inadvertently reveals the answer to a question after one team has given an incorrect answer, but before the other team has had a chance to answer, the moderator will read a tossup for the second team only, off the clock. If neither team has had a chance to answer, the tossup is thrown out and replaced off the clock.

## **INCORRECT ANSWERS**

1. To receive credit, the response must indicate accurate and precise knowledge of the correct answer that is listed on the question/answer sheet.
2. If a player gives an answer that demonstrates accurate and relevant knowledge, but is ambiguous, the moderator will prompt by saying "more information please." (Example: The player says a last name only, and the answer requires a first and last name.) The moderator will not state which type of additional information is needed.
3. A captain who has been prompted on an alternating question may quickly check with a teammate for further information, or designate that person to give the additional information as long as it is not an attempt to delay the game.
4. The moderator will accept only the first answer given by a player except for the following:
  - a. when the question calls for multiple answers
  - b. when subsequent information given by the player makes the first answer more specific
5. If the first answer is correct, but the player provides subsequent information that is incorrect, then the answer will be ruled incorrect. (Example: The first answer Kennedy and then the subsequent answer is Dwight Kennedy.)
6. The moderator will read the correct answer at the end of each question if neither team answers correctly.
7. If the moderator determines that a response is given in an unsportsmanlike manner, the moderator will issue a warning or ejection to the player and also rule the response as incorrect.

## **PROTESTS**

1. Active players and official coaches may indicate their intention to protest during a match by quickly saying "protest" after an answer or action they deem to be incorrect. The moderator will acknowledge the intent by saying "noted" and continue with the match until half-time or end of the game when protest may be addressed. Proclaiming a protest should not disrupt or delay a game.

2. The person making the protest should briefly explain the nature of the protest to the moderator, game officials, and a representative of the other team. Protests may include the acceptability of an answer, execution of game procedures, scoring errors, insufficient prompting, and similar factors that have an effect on the game.
3. If a question contains a verifiable factual error which misled a player into giving no response, the question will be replaced.
4. Technical protests, such as incorrect scoring, may be handled by the staff in the game. The game must not be delayed because of protests. While protests may be lodged during timeouts, protests will not be adjudicated until the end of the half or if the moderator decides the issue may be quickly corrected within a time-out period.
5. For protests lodged in the first half, game officials should try to quickly resolve the protest to both teams' satisfaction. If this cannot occur, the protest will be deferred to the end of the second half. If the game officials are unable to resolve a protest quickly to both teams' satisfaction, the protest may be appealed to the tournament director.
6. The tournament director may resolve a protest with or without a protest committee, depending on the protest. The decision of the tournament director is final.
7. If a protest is upheld, the remedy is to restore the game to its condition had the error not been made. Thus, all points erroneously awarded or not awarded shall be removed or added. If a team is incorrectly credited with a tossup or an alternating question, the points will be removed. If the other team was not given a chance to answer the tossup or alternating question, it shall hear a replacement question.

## **ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

1. All players, coaches, representatives, and other persons associated with a team are bound by an honor code to behave responsibly and ethically. This includes the following:
  - a. treating all participants and staff with courtesy and respect
  - b. neither giving or receiving impermissible assistance.
  - c. abiding by all decisions of the tournament
  - d. not participating in cheating
  - e. reporting details of any issues to officials
  - f. reporting violations of the rules to officials
2. Any tournament official may find that a player, coach, representative, or other person associated with the team has committed misconduct.
3. All instances of misconduct must be reported to the tournament director.
4. Instances of misconduct may result in sanctions to be determined by the tournament director. These sanctions may include suspension of a team member, suspension of a team, loss of game(s), score clock adjustment, or expulsion from the tournament.
5. Sanctions may not be appealed.

