Sponsor Competition Quick Guide

Festival Date: April 2, 2027
Registration & Submission Deadline: March 19, 2027 by 11:59 p.m. EST

Use this guide to help students find Academic Festival competitions that match their interests and skills. The descriptions below provide a quick overview of each event.

Sponsors should review the **complete event directions** before registering students. Full directions include eligibility requirements, participation limits, required materials, submission formats, judging information, AI guidelines, and other event-specific rules.

Art

ART01 – Photography

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original photographs such as portraits, landscapes, still life, nature photography, documentary-style images, or experimental work. Judges will consider composition, lighting, focus, creativity, technical quality, and overall communication.

ART02 – Painting: Oil, Acrylic, or Watercolor

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original painting created with oil, acrylic, or watercolor. Judges will consider color, brushwork, composition, creativity, technical skill, and how effectively the piece communicates its idea or meaning.

ART03 – Sculpture & Ceramics

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original three-dimensional artwork such as pottery, ceramics, carved work, wire sculpture, wood sculpture, paper sculpture, or other 3D forms. Judges will consider craftsmanship, form, balance, texture, and creativity.

ART04 – Drawing

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original drawing created with pencil, charcoal, ink, colored pencil, marker, or similar materials. Judges will consider line quality, shading, proportion, composition, technical skill, and originality.

ART05 – Printmaking

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original work created through a printmaking process such as linocut, woodcut, screen printing, etching, monoprinting, or block printing. Judges will consider design, craftsmanship, contrast, texture, and creativity.

ART06 – Two-Dimensional Mixed Media

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original two-dimensional artwork combining multiple materials or techniques. Judges will consider composition, craftsmanship, creativity, use of materials, and how effectively the elements work together.

ART07 – Graphic Design

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original graphic-design project such as a poster, logo, cover, advertisement, infographic, or branding design. Judges will consider layout, typography, color, creativity, originality, and overall visual communication.

ART08 – Digital Art: Still Image

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original still artwork created or substantially developed with digital tools, including digital painting, illustration, collage, concept art, character design, or artistic photo manipulation.

ART09 – Digital Art: Animation and Motion Graphics

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original digital artwork that includes movement, such as animation, motion graphics, animated illustrations, title sequences, or character animation. Judges will consider creativity, movement, pacing, technical skill, and visual communication.

Business Skills

BUS01 – Job Interview

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Students will prepare a one-page résumé and participate in a realistic job interview with a panel of judges. Competitors will be evaluated on preparation, communication, confidence, professionalism, and overall interview performance.

Creative Writing

CW01 – Poetry: Traditional

Pre-Submission, Individual

Traditional Poetry invites students to submit original poems using structured poetic elements such as rhyme, meter, rhythm, or narrative form. Entries should show attention to language, form, imagery, and meaning.

CW02 – Poetry: Free Verse

Pre-Submission, Individual

Free Verse Poetry invites students to submit original poems that do not follow a required rhyme scheme or regular meter. Entries should show thoughtful use of language, imagery, line breaks, voice, and meaning.

CW03 – Fiction: Science Fiction/Fantasy

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original short fiction using speculative, futuristic, scientific, magical, or fantastical elements. Judges will consider plot, character, setting, creativity, and effective storytelling.

CW04 – Fiction: Realistic

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original realistic fiction featuring believable characters, settings, conflicts, and events. Judges will consider plot, character development, dialogue, theme, and overall storytelling.

CW05 – Nonfiction: Personal Narrative

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original nonfiction essay based on a real personal experience. Entries should use reflection, description, organization, and detail to explain why the experience was meaningful.

CW06 – Nonfiction: Literary Analysis

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original literary analysis examining a theme, character, symbol, conflict, or other literary element. Essays should present a clear argument supported with evidence from the text.

Cyber

CYBER01 – Cyber Security

Day-of-Festival, Individual or Group

Students may compete individually or in teams in a hands-on cybersecurity challenge involving scanning, reconnaissance, and problem solving. Participants should be familiar with common cybersecurity tools and techniques.

CYBER02 – AI Prompt Injection Challenge

Day-of-Festival, Group

Teams of up to four students will compete in a hands-on AI challenge testing prompt writing, creativity, teamwork, and problem solving. Students will attempt to persuade specially designed competition AIs to reveal hidden information or overcome fictional restrictions using techniques such as roleplay, strategic questioning, disguised prompts, and creative wording. No coding experience is required.

Dance

DAN01 – Ballet: Solo, Duo, or Trio

Day-of-Festival, Individual or Group

Students will present a live Ballet performance as an individual, duo, or trio. Performances will be evaluated on technical merit, interpretation, originality, performance quality, and overall effectiveness.

DAN02 – Ballet: Group 4+

Day-of-Festival, Group

Groups of four or more students will present a live Ballet performance evaluated on technical merit, interpretation, originality, performance quality, and overall effectiveness.

DAN03 – Modern: Solo, Duo, or Trio

Day-of-Festival, Individual or Group

Students will present a live Modern Dance performance as an individual, duo, or trio.

DAN04 – Modern: Group 4+

Day-of-Festival, Group

Groups of four or more students will present a live Modern Dance performance.

DAN05 – Hip Hop: Solo, Duo, or Trio

Day-of-Festival, Individual or Group

Students will present a live Hip Hop performance as an individual, duo, or trio.

DAN06 – Hip Hop: Group 4+

Day-of-Festival, Group

Groups of four or more students will present a live Hip Hop performance.

Film

FILM01 – Short Film

Pre-Submission, Individual or Group

Students may work individually or in teams of up to four to create a 1–5 minute film in almost any genre or creative style. Judges will consider storytelling, technical quality, visual composition, performance, impact, and overall cohesion.

French

FR01 – French Translation Level A

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Students in their first French course will complete individual written translation and verb-conjugation exercises designed for their level of study.

FR02 – French Translation Level B

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Students in their second French course will complete written translation and verb-conjugation exercises designed for their level.

FR03 – French Translation Level C

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Advanced French students will complete written translation and verb-conjugation exercises designed for their level.

FR04 – French Food Video

Pre-Submission, Individual or Group

Students may compete individually or in teams of up to four by preparing a dish from a French-speaking culture and documenting the experience on video.

FR05 – Francophone Travel Brochures

Pre-Submission, Individual or Group

Students may compete individually or in teams of up to four by creating two travel brochures featuring Francophone destinations.

Health Science

HS01 – Medical Terminology Spelling Bee

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Each school may enter up to two students in a competition that begins with a written medical terminology test and advances the highest-scoring students to an oral spelling bee.

History

HIST01 – History & Geography Jeopardy

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Each school may enter up to three students in a competition that begins with a written qualifying test covering World History, American History, Tennessee and local history, and Geography. Ten questions on the qualifying test will focus specifically on maps and geography. The top 18 students will advance to live History & Geography Jeopardy rounds.

Journalism

JOUR01 – Yearbook

Pre-Submission, Individual or Group

Students may submit individual or group yearbook work demonstrating strong writing, photography, design, organization, and visual storytelling.

JOUR02 – Written Journalism

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original piece of written journalism, including news, investigations, features, editorials, opinion pieces, profiles, reviews, or other non-sports journalistic writing.

JOUR03 – Sports Journalism

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit original sports journalism ranging from game coverage and analysis to athlete profiles, team features, commentary, or investigative stories.

JOUR04 – Digital Still Image Journalism

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students may submit an original still image used to document, promote, inform, or tell a story about their school or school community.

JOUR05 – Digital Media Journalism

Pre-Submission, Individual or Group

Students may create a digital media project such as a podcast, social media video, interview, mini-documentary, news package, or multimedia explainer.

Math/Physics

MATH01 – Calculator Olympics

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Calculator Olympics is an individual 30-minute competition challenging students to solve a variety of calculator-based math problems.

MATH02 – Math/Physics College Bowl

Day-of-Festival, Group

College Bowl is a team competition in mathematics and physics that begins with a written test and advances the highest-scoring teams to live competition rounds.

Music

MUS01 – Vocal Solo

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students submit a recorded vocal solo for pre-Festival judging. First-, second-, and third-place winners will be announced before the Festival and invited to perform live. If a winner cannot attend, the next highest-scoring performer may be invited to perform in their place.

MUS02 – Instrumental Solo

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students submit a recorded instrumental solo for pre-Festival judging. First-, second-, and third-place winners will be announced before the Festival and invited to perform live. If a winner cannot attend, the next highest-scoring performer may be invited.

MUS03 – Vocal Ensemble

Pre-Submission, Group

Vocal ensembles of two or more singers submit a recorded performance for pre-Festival judging. First-, second-, and third-place ensembles will be announced before the Festival and invited to perform live.

MUS04 – Instrumental Ensemble

Pre-Submission, Group

Instrumental ensembles of two or more players submit a recorded performance for pre-Festival judging. First-, second-, and third-place ensembles will be announced before the Festival and invited to perform live.

Philosophy

PHIL01 – Argumentative Essay

Pre-Submission, Individual

Students will submit an individual argumentative essay of no more than 1,500 words that takes a clear position on a philosophical issue or debate.

Science

SCI01 – Science Trivia Game

Day-of-Festival, Group

Each school may enter one team of up to four students in a live trivia competition covering chemistry, biology, physical sciences, and general science.

Spanish

SPAN01 – Spanish Bowl Level A

Day-of-Festival, Group

Teams of four Spanish I students will compete in a live trivia-style competition covering Spanish grammar, vocabulary, geography, and culture.

SPAN02 – Spanish Bowl Level B

Day-of-Festival, Group

Teams of four Spanish II students will compete in a live trivia-style competition covering language and culture.

SPAN03 – Spanish Bowl Level C

Day-of-Festival, Group

Teams of four advanced Spanish students will compete in a live trivia-style competition covering Spanish language and culture.

SPAN04 – Spanish Creative Video Level A

Pre-Submission, Group

Spanish I students may work in groups of up to four to create an original two-minute video in Spanish based on the annual theme.

SPAN05 – Spanish Creative Video Level B

Pre-Submission, Group

Spanish II students may work in groups of up to four to create an original two-minute video in Spanish based on the annual theme.

SPAN06 – Spanish Creative Video Level C

Pre-Submission, Group

Advanced Spanish students may work in groups of up to four to create an original two-minute video in Spanish based on the annual theme.

Speech

SPCH01 – Persuasive Oratory

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Students will deliver a 5–6 minute persuasive speech supported by at least three credible sources and three visual elements. Judges will consider argument, organization, evidence, delivery, visual communication, and the effectiveness of the call to action.

SPCH02 – Storytelling: Fairy Tales

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Students will retell a traditional fairy tale, folk tale, or similar story in a 3–5 minute presentation without notes or visuals. Stories may come from any cultural tradition. Judges will consider organization, storytelling, descriptive language, vocal delivery, body language, and audience engagement.

Theatre

THEA01 – Solo Acting

Day-of-Festival, Individual

Students will perform a solo selection from a published play in a performance lasting no more than four minutes. Judges will consider character development, interpretation, vocal technique, physical expression, confidence, and overall effectiveness.

THEA02 – Duo Acting

Day-of-Festival, Group

Pairs of students will perform a scene from a published play in four minutes or less. Judges will consider character development, interaction, interpretation, vocal and physical technique, confidence, and overall performance.

Before You Register

These descriptions are intended to help sponsors and students explore the available competitions.

Please review the complete event rules before registering. The full directions include participation limits, eligibility requirements, required materials, submission instructions, AI requirements, judging criteria, and division contact information.

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