



GATA COACHES MANUAL



**Created by Members of the Georgia Academic
Team Association as a Resource for New (and
Experienced) Quiz Bowl Coaches**

2009

Edited by Jeff Burns

So you've volunteered (or been volunteered) to be your school's quiz bowl coach, but you don't have a clue where to begin. The membership of GATA has created this manual as a how-to resource. We hope it answers your questions, and puts you and your team on a path to fun and success.

What is Quiz Bowl?

Quiz bowl is a game in which two teams compete head-to-head to answer [questions](#) from all areas of knowledge including history, literature, science, fine arts, current events, sports, and popular culture.

The defining feature of quiz bowl is the use of a "buzzer system" (or, more formally, a "lockout device") that lets players interrupt the reading of a question when they know the answer. That element adds a dimension of confidence, anticipation, and rapid recall to what is primarily a game about knowing facts. Those "tossup" questions are answered individually, but doing so earns one's team a chance at a multipart "bonus" question. Bonus questions are worth more points and allow collaboration, but are generally more difficult.

Organized quiz bowl competitions are available in most states and at most grade levels; it is particularly popular at the high school and college level, though middle school, elementary school, and community college events exist as well.

Quiz bowl tournaments can be [intramural events](#) designed for students at a single school, or [interscholastic meets](#). There exist tournaments based on athletic conferences, states, counties, cities, and most other conceivable groupings of teams. From www.naqt.com

Also known as Quiz Bowl, Scholastic Bowl, Brain Bowl, Academic Team, Academic Varsity Bowl, Academic Challenge, Academic Challenge Bowl, Scholars Bowl and a variety of other names.

RULES

Toss-Up Questions

1. Any player from either team may answer a toss-up question.
2. After a non-computational toss-up has been read, players have five (5) seconds to buzz in. The first player to buzz in must begin his/her answer within three (3) seconds **after being recognized**.
3. Questions that require mathematical computation have a fifteen (15) second buzz-in time limit; however, the player still must begin his answer within three (3) seconds **after being recognized**.
4. A toss-up question will be read in its entirety only once. If a completed question is answered incorrectly by the first team to buzz in, it will be offered to the opposing team without re-reading. The opposing team has 5/15 seconds to buzz in after the question is offered to them.
5. Any player may buzz in to interrupt the reading of a toss-up question but can give an answer only **after being officially recognized**.
6. If the interrupted toss-up is answered incorrectly or if no answer is given, the opposing team will have the opportunity to hear the remainder of the toss-up question read and to buzz in to answer; the reader will resume reading the question at the point of interruption or at some other logical point before the point of interruption, not necessarily at the beginning of the question.
7. No point penalty will be assessed for an interrupted toss-up question answered incorrectly.
8. No pauses or thinking breaks may be taken while answering a toss-up.
9. No conversation or consultation will be allowed on toss-up questions. If, in the judgment of the reader, such occurs, the opposing team and only the opposing team may answer that specific question.
10. If a reader inadvertently provides the correct answer to a toss-up question following an incorrect answer, that toss-up will be eliminated and the team which did not have an opportunity to answer will receive a replacement toss-up.
11. The player will give only one answer. Giving multiple pieces of information relative to the question, hoping to get the correct answer somewhere in the string, is considered an incorrect response.

Example: *A Tale of Two Cities* is one answer; *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens is two answers and is incorrect according to this rule. (This rule also applies to bonus question answers.)

12. Each toss-up question has a value of ten (10) points.

Bonus Questions RULES, continued

1. By answering a toss-up question correctly, a player earns his/her team the first opportunity to answer a two-part bonus question.
2. Simultaneous consultation among members of *both teams* is permitted on bonus questions.
3. Teams have a ten (10) -second discussion/consultation time limit except for computational questions, for which they have a fifteen (15) -second time limit. The reader will ask for the answer after “time” is called by the timekeeper.
4. Each bonus part will be read only once; each bonus part will be read separately and answered before continuing to the next bonus part.
5. In a varsity or junior varsity match, the **team captain must deliver all answers** for a bonus question. He/she must begin his/her answer immediately after it is called for by the reader, with no pauses or thinking breaks.
6. Each bonus part answered incorrectly or not answered by the team earning the bonus will be offered (bounced back) immediately to the opposing team; *with no further prompting*, the opposing team captain must begin answering within three seconds after the reader offers the bonus to him/her.
7. If neither team answers part one of the bonus correctly, the reader will not give the correct answer until both teams, if necessary, have had the opportunity to answer part two of the bonus.
8. Number 11 under “Toss-Up Questions,” above, also applies to bonus question answers.
9. Each bonus question has a combined twenty (20) -point potential (ten points for each part).

Ties

1. In the event of a tied round, one or more of the tie-breaker toss-up questions printed at the end of each round will be read to break the tie.
2. The first team to answer a tiebreaker question correctly will be declared the winner of the round.

Protests

1. Protests must be lodged verbally by the coach or the team captain. Any protest must be lodged to the reader and settled before the round progresses to the next toss-up question.

2. Protests will be decided by the following tournament officials in the order given: the room reader, the tournament coordinator/director, the quizmaster or the designee of the latter two.

Miscellaneous

1. During a match, players may not have reference books or other aids, including calculators and student-made charts or lists made prior to the match.

2. If teams wish to use pens or pencils and paper during rounds, they must provide their own pens or pencils and clean paper for each match.

3. Cell phones, beepers, electronic alarms, etc., must be turned off during matches.

RANKING

Team ranking will be decided according to playing format and consideration of the factors designated (a), (b), (c), etc., in the order they are given under each format heading below:

1. Round Robin...

(a) win-loss record.

(b) head-to-head competition between tied teams.

(c) total points scored.

(d) coin toss.

2. Preliminary Plus Playoff Rounds with an *even* number of teams...

(a) win-loss record.

(b) total points scored.

(c) coin toss.

3. Preliminary Plus Playoff Rounds with an *odd* number of teams...

(a) fewest losses (because all teams do not play the same number of matches,

do not consider wins; *i.e.*, a 4-1 record will be considered the same as a 3-1 record,

and a 3-0 record will be considered better than a 4-1 record.

(b) average points per match played.

(c) coin toss.

Georgia Academic Team Association
CODE OF ETHICS
for Coaches and Students

Coaches will...

1. Play honestly, taking particular care to avoid communication with players during matches and to report promptly to tournament officials if the questions have been heard previously.
2. Treat readers and other tournament workers with respect, making and discussing protests in an appropriate manner and accepting decisions graciously.
3. Treat all teams, especially their own, with respect.
4. Inform tournament officials of their withdrawing from a tournament in a timely manner.
5. Know and follow tournament rules and requirements, bringing the designated number of accompanying adult supervisors, tournament workers and working buzzer systems, etc., to the tournament.
6. Give complete information regarding the tournament rules, requirements and procedures to their teams and to all those accompanying their teams,* prior to the tournament.
7. Be responsible for the behavior of their teams and of those accompanying their teams.*
8. Be responsible for the respectful care and treatment of the host school's equipment and facilities by their teams and by all those who accompany their teams.
9. Refrain from making disparaging remarks about the host school's facilities.
10. Allow tournament officials to do their jobs without interference.

Coaches should encourage the growth of new academic team programs.

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- Includes adult supervisors, parents, other family members, student spectators, etc.

Students will...

1. Play honestly.
2. Treat readers and other tournament workers with respect.
3. Refer questions and concerns to their coaches for appropriate handling.
4. Display good sportsmanship at all times, especially by winning or losing graciously, communicating positively with the opposing team and expressing appreciation to readers and other tournament workers.
5. Display appropriate behavior both during and between rounds, especially by being in designated areas only, avoiding profanity, refraining from intentional distractions during their matches and from creating disturbances that may distract from ongoing play in other rooms.
6. Take respectful care in using equipment (particularly buzzer systems) and facilities throughout the host school.
7. Refrain from disturbing anything in the playing rooms that is unrelated to the tournament.
8. Be positive representatives of their schools.
9. Follow their school's dress code.

GEORGIA ACADEMIC TEAM ASSOCIATION

DIRECTIONS FOR TOURNAMENT READERS, TIMERS and SCOREKEEPERS

READERS

1. You, the **READER**, are officially in charge of all matters having to do with matches played in the room to which you are assigned.
 - a. You may have one or two other tournament officials, a timer and/or a scorekeeper, also assigned to the room; if these officials are experienced in quiz bowl, you may wish to call on them to assist you in decision-making such as word pronunciation, recalling the sequence of events in a protest, etc.
 - b. You and the other official(s) should determine the division of duties before beginning the match. (Timer and scorekeeper duties are given below, but you may want to reassign them. Some readers prefer to perform most of the duties themselves; do as much as you feel comfortable doing.)
 - c. Before you begin reading each match, you or the other official(s) should...
 - (1) Run a buzzer check; if any part of the system is out of order or is in questionable working order, send to Tournament Central for a replacement.
 - (2) Identify the name of each team and its captain. If teams have identifying placards, having the captains place the placards in front of them will assist you in remembering the captains.
 - (3) Be sure each player knows his position number; positions may have ID numbers 1-4 displayed.
 - (4) Tell the players exactly how you or the other official will recognize them. A player may not begin his/her answer until he/she is recognized by the designated official.
2. You, the **READER**, should always return to Tournament Central with the official score sheet and the questions packet after each match; you will turn in the score sheet and the questions packet, pick up a new score sheet and question packet for the next match and wait for instructions from the Quiz Master.
3. **TOURNAMENT FORMAT** may vary in each level and/or segment of the GATA tournament series.

Generally the following compositions will apply:

- a. Varsity State matches consist of 20 toss-ups and 20 paired bonuses.

- b. Varsity Regional matches consist of 15-20 toss-ups and 15-20 paired bonuses.
- c. JV State and Middle School State matches consist of 15 toss-ups and 15 paired bonuses.
4. **TOSS-UP QUESTIONS** are worth 10 points each and are open to both teams.
- a. Read the toss-up until you hear the sound of a buzzer (bell, etc.), at which time you stop reading, even if you are in the middle of a syllable. It is very important not to keep reading after a player has buzzed in. The player buzzing in has 3 seconds **after being recognized** by the designated official to begin his/her answer.
- b. A player may interrupt the reading of a toss-up question at any time, but if his/her answer is incorrect, rule the answer “incorrect” and immediately resume reading the question for the other team exactly where you were interrupted; if you don’t remember the exact point of interruption, begin from some logical point that you do know you have already read. (Try to avoid a long pause between ruling an interrupted question incorrect and resuming reading to the other team.)
- c. If you read the toss-up completely without either team’s interrupting, the teams have 5 seconds after you stop reading to buzz in (or 15 seconds if the question involves computation). The first player to buzz in has 3 seconds **after being recognized** by the designated official to begin his/her answer.
- d. Should you read a toss-up completely and one team buzzes in and gives an incorrect answer, **do not re-read the question for the other team**; just rule the answer incorrect and offer the question to the opposing team. The opposing team then has 5 /15 seconds to buzz in after you offer them the question. **REMEMBER NOT TO GIVE THE CORRECT ANSWER UNTIL BOTH TEAMS (if needed) HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO ANSWER THE TOSS-UP!**
- e. If the second team also fails to buzz in and/or give a correct answer, the first team does not have *another* opportunity to answer that toss-up. Announce “no points,” skip the bonus question and begin reading the next toss-up.
- f. *If you goof* (it happens to the best of us) and need a replacement tossup question, use the tie breaker at the end of the question set. If you run out of tie breakers, send to Tournament Central for extras.
5. **BONUS QUESTIONS** are rewards for answering toss-ups correctly. All bonuses are in two parts; each part is worth 10 points.
- a. Only the captain of the team may deliver the answer for a bonus question. The team that answers the toss-up correctly has the first opportunity to answer each part of the bonus question.
- b. Read each part of the bonus separately. Should the team that earns first opportunity to answer each part of the bonus miss the first part, you should immediately offer (bounce) that part of the bonus to the other team. The captain of the other team must begin his/her answer within 3 seconds of your offering the question, with no further consultation or prompting. If the second team *also* answers part one of the bonus incorrectly, immediately begin reading part two of the bonus for the team that answered the toss-up correctly and proceed in the same manner as for part one.

REMEMBER! DO NOT give the correct answer to **any part** of the bonus until both teams have had a chance to answer both parts, if needed.

c. If you goof on a part of a bonus and must throw out that part, you have two options: (1) You can use part of a bonus that you skipped earlier in the round because no team answered that toss-up, or (2) you can use one of that round's tiebreaker question to fill in as part of the bonus. If you run out of these options, send to Tournament Central for added questions.

d. **See also #8, b., below.**

6. **PROTESTS** may be lodged only by the team captain or coach. Protests must be lodged verbally with the reader and settled before the round progresses to the next toss-up question.

a. You have 3 ways to resolve a protest within the playing room:

(1) You may decide on the given answer/behavior/etc., without conferring with anyone.

(2) You may decide on the answer/behavior/etc., after conferring with your timer/scorekeeper and/or the team coaches.

(3) You may replace the question in protest with a tiebreaker from the end of the round.

b. At a State Tournament, if coaches disagree with the reader's decision, they may request that a protest be taken out of the room to the Quizmaster or the Tournament Director.

7. **PLAYERS MAY NOT...**

a. Begin a **toss-up** answer before being fully recognized by the designated official; such an answer is considered non-responsive and cannot be accepted whether it is correct or incorrect. Do not rule the answer correct or incorrect, simply "non-responsive;" immediately continue reading for the other team or bounce the question to the other team.

b. Do anything (use gestures or body language, make noises, etc.) that could be interpreted as communication during a toss-up. Any such action is consultation and is not allowed.

d. Have access during the match to texts, reference books, calculators, handwritten lists or other aids prepared prior to the match.

e. Have operative cell phones, pagers, etc., during matches; remind them and others in the room to disarm these devices before each match begins.

f. Leave the room *en masse* or become noisy enough to disturb other rooms before all rooms in their area have finished the round.

8. **MISCELLANEOUS** suggestions and a reminder to help keep matches moving smoothly and rapidly:

a. Be animated! Avoid long explanations, side comments about the questions, "teaching opportunities," making jokes, especially those aimed at the players and their knowledge or lack thereof, etc.

b. If you have difficulty pronouncing a word, go ahead and pronounce in any way you think

that it should/could be pronounced. If you cannot find any way to pronounce the word, as a last resort, spell it. CAUTION: Do not spell THE word in a spelling question!

c. Announce how many points are awarded after each toss-up and after each part of the bonus so the scorekeeper can record accurately.

d. You may mark on the question sets in pencil only. Please try to keep marks to a minimum.

e. THE TIMER, SCOREKEEPER AND READER SHOULD NEVER ALL BE OUT OF THE PLAYING ROOM AT THE SAME TIME! Please make an effort to keep an eye on school and teacher property during the day.

g. Remember that after EACH MATCH, YOU take the official score sheet and questions packet back to Tournament Central

TIMERS

(NOTE: The reader may wish to reassign some of these duties and may do so in whatever way he/she feels most comfortable.)

1. As a **Timer**, you will perform **four main functions**, the latter three as illustrated in items 2-4, below:

- a. You will control the buzzer system console. (See NOTE above.)
- b. You will recognize the player that buzzes-in prior to his/her giving a response to a toss-up (see #2, below).
- c. You will time response-time for each toss-up and bonus (see #3 & #4, below).
- d. You will say "TIME" decisively whenever appropriate (see #3 & #4, below).

2. Recognition of Players

- a. When a player buzzes in on a toss-up, recognize the player in the following manner:
"Central, player 2." or "Central, 2."
- b. If the recognized player gives an incorrect answer, clear the buzzer console, and after the reader turns the question to the other team, repeat the process for the other team.

3. Timing Procedures on Toss-Ups (see Readers Instructions re. Toss-ups for complete info)

- a. When a player buzzes in on a toss-up before it is read completely and is recognized, allow 3 seconds for the player to begin his/her answer before calling "TIME." At that point, reading is continued for the other team, and the timing procedure begins again.

- b. Once a toss-up has been read completely, wait 5 seconds (15 for computation); if no one buzzes in within 5/15 seconds, declare 'TIME.' At that point the question is dead and no one else may buzz in.
- c. If a toss-up has been read completely and the first team to buzz in answers incorrectly, the reader will offer the toss-up to the opposing team which will have an additional 5/15 seconds to buzz in.
- d. Note that players must begin their answers *before* or *as* you are calling "TIME" or lose the opportunity to answer.

4. Timing procedures on Bonus Questions

- a. The team earning the bonus is allowed **10 seconds consultation time** for each part of the question, except for **computational questions, for which they are allowed 15 seconds**.
- b. After 10 (or 15) seconds, declare "TIME," and the reader will immediately ask the captain for the team's answer. If the captain of the team that earned the bonus does not give the correct answer, the reader will offer (bounce) the question to the other team.
- c. After the question is offered to the second team, give the second team captain only 3 seconds to begin his/her answer before calling "TIME." The second team captain does NOT get a reader prompt for his/her answer!
- d. The second team's captain must begin his/her answer *before* or *as* "TIME" is called .

5. As a Tournament Official, remain in the playing room with the teams to insure that no one tampers with materials, equipment, etc., and that everyone behaves in an orderly and sportsmanlike manner.

SCOREKEEPERS

(NOTE: The reader may reassign some of these duties and may do so in whatever way he/she feels most comfortable.)

1. As a **Scorekeeper**, you will perform **five main functions**:
 - a. In the blanks at the top of each score sheet, complete **all information** required for the particular tournament you are scoring. The quizmaster will tell you what is required during training.
 - b. Keep an accurate, cumulative (running) score for each team in the spaces indicated.
 - c. Check the scores with the coaches at the times indicated on the score sheet or whenever asked to do so by the reader or a coach.
 - d. Have each coach sign on the appropriate line at the bottom of the score sheet to verify agreement with the final scores given for both teams.
 - e. Give the verified score sheet to the reader to take back to Tournament Central.

2. As a Tournament Official, remain in the playing room with the teams to insure that no one tampers with materials, equipment, etc., and that everyone behaves in an orderly and sportsmanlike manner. Report any infraction to the reader when he/she returns to the room.

Revised 5/19/06

Why Quiz Bowl?

For the School?

- One of the few activities that showcase what a school is supposed to be about: learning.
- Enjoyable and challenging academic activity (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)
- Student interaction with students from other schools is always good. A good team makes the school look like they are doing their job. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)

For the Coach?

- Same as coaching or teaching - satisfaction in seeing the kids we work with learning and applying. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)

For the Players?

- Fun, self-confidence, even some knowledge - collaborative working and shared responsibility. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)
- Builds sense of confidence and teamwork (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)

Everything I Know in Life I learned in Quizbowl

By Sherri Sheu

Parkview, class of 2004

1. It doesn't matter if you hate your team as long as you can win together.
2. Most teams are made up entirely of idiots who play one tournament a year. Don't judge the quality of your team by these teams.
3. Bringing a laptop leads to you never getting to see it.
4. Foot pedals suck.
5. It's okay to hate everyone around you, as long as there's no violence involved.
6. At the end of the day, it's still a game.
7. Listen to the coaches; they're smarter than we give them credit for most of the time.
8. Freshmen. Die.
9. Cramming rarely works.
10. It is possible take fourth place with a losing record.
11. Any team can beat you at any time.
12. Cracker Barrel is everywhere.
13. Know the name of the school you're playing in.
14. When all else fails, BS the answer, because sometimes it's right.
15. Know a name from every subject. Better yet, know a noun and the name of a male and a female in every subject.
16. Buzz hard. Be right. Don't screw up.
17. Eventually, Dickens will be the answer.
18. If clueless on an art questions, guess a Ninja Turtle.
19. There aren't enough hours in a day to learn everything you need to know.
20. Learn from more experienced players. Their nuggets of wisdom may come in handy.
21. Tournaments are cures for the common cold.
22. Always shake hands with the opposing team.
23. Be the well mannered, dominating team, not the assholes.
24. Trust your gut.
25. Leeches suck, but sometimes it will be necessary to be the leech.
26. Sir Walter Scott, not Ivan Scott.
27. Tom Ridge is from Pennsylvania.
28. Tommy Thompson is from Wisconsin.
29. Learn from past mistakes.
30. Science Bowl, Academic Decathlon, Beta Club, and Science Olympiad will inevitably schedule their competitions on the same day. They may even decide to use the same day as a PUBLISHED SAT test date. Go figure.
31. Adapt or die.
32. Overnight trips are supposed to be alcohol free.
33. Science Bowl, Scholar's Bowl, and Science Olympiad have the same core nucleus of players.
34. Nephrons are not in the liver.
35. America has no emperor.
36. Uhh and Ummm are considered to be words in some places.
37. Quiz-A-Matics will survive WWII. We won't.

38. Scholar's Bowl is as close to religion as some people have.
39. Winning is a lot better than losing.
40. ACE is sleep deprivation survival camp.
41. Do not eat hot breakfast at Furman. The eggs sweat.
42. Nobody really cares about this game except the people in it.
43. Play for the love of the game, not for recognition or college applications or all that other crap. If you want to put something on college applications, join band or play a sport or get a job.
44. Respect the game. It was here before you, and will last long after you.
45. Everything has a double meaning.
46. Don't screw up the buzzers.
47. Cartoon worksheets, Walton's Simpsons worksheet, and Chip Beal were all created by Satan to torment the world.
48. Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, the Beatles, and the Simpsons are neither pop culture nor trash.
49. Life is good when you win. It's not so good when you lose.
50. One day when all this is over, we'll probably look back on it as the best time in our lives. Unless of course, you win the Nobel or some crap like that, in which case you more than likely will never do anything important for the rest of your life. Or if you become an artist or writer. In that case, get tested for STDs every month.

Stereotypes

Written by Andrew Moore, Brookwood Class of 2003

After three and a half years of quiz bowl, I have finally come to the conclusion that most players can fit into one or more of several stereotypes. I see myself in several of these. There will be several people that jump immediately to mind as you read each of these. You will even see yourself in some.

1. Mr. clueless about everything that can't be phrased as an answer

You've seen him before, probably looking lost or confused. In a match setting, he seems at ease, but once you remove him from that environment, all bets are off. He becomes nervous and shift, and seems to not be aware of proper behavior for certain situations. Social graces are far from his strong suit. Most attempts at conversation are rebuffed or completely ignored. You wonder about what he will be able to make of his life.

2. The sci-fi fantasy guy

This one is easiest to spot – long hair, unkempt appearances and general disorder accompany him. He will wear shirts depicting characters from movies, comics, Pokemon, or the occasional Pink Floyd design. This one is best observed before tournaments and during lunch breaks, when he engages in marathon games of Magic or argues the merit of his latest online gaming conquests. Other popular topics include Star Wars, Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings. He has never talked to a female and might not even be aware that they exist.

3. The math-loving prototypical nerd

There is normally one of these per team, in at least some capacity. As soon as the words "fifteen seconds" come out of the reader's mouth, you see his eyes light up and his hand tense; a math problem is on the way. He is also involved with the math team, sometimes at the expense of the quiz bowl team. Between matches he can be seen programming his Ti-89 or brushing up on his trig identities. These players normally end up attending Georgia Tech.

4. The most annoying kid in the world

You cringe when you see him, because it is inevitable that he will come talk to you. And when that happens, it is better to have died a young child than to be you at that moment. If he happens to be on your team, the situation is even worse, and you often consider suicide during tournament trips. Even outside of quiz bowl, this guy doesn't have much in the way of friends, and those he does have aren't too fond of being around him.

5. Guy who would be almost normal except for quiz bowl.

This one is despised by all of the rest of stereotypes, except for the next one, with whom he has the most success. He may even play a sport or be an SGA member, he is able to carry on a normal conversation, and he is aware of most normal social conventions. He looks down on the other stereotypes as below him, and often finds himself wondering what he is doing on the quiz bowl team. These tend to stick together, because to associate with other, lower players would be socially unacceptable.

6. The girl

She is perhaps the greatest enigma in all of quiz bowl. Every team has one, but they still form the vast minority. Most are for some reason literature experts. At tournaments, they are generally left alone, because most players are unsure how to approach them, yet they are far from unnoticed. They are generally friendly though, and they receive much attention from the previous stereotype. They do truly love the game, because otherwise they would not subject themselves to weekends full of socially inept weirdoes.

7. The team cheerleader (a.k.a Mr. Why am I here?)

This is the quiz bowl equivalent of the bench warmer. He is always at every tournament, and yet you have never actually seen him play a match. Most of the time he is sitting in the back of the room, either keeping score or taking notes. He is the first to congratulate his teammates on a victory, and he lives vicariously through their accomplishments. On certain teams, the cheerleader plays but does not ring in. One notable and well-documented case of this phenomenon involved a large amount of back patting (If you know, you know).

8. The jerk

The jerk is God's gift to quiz bowl – or so he would have you believe. The jerk is another one who makes you cringe when he walks into the room, but this time because of the effort you must exert to keep from punching him. Jerks are disproportionately located on winning teams, for obvious reasons. However, winning does not mean that one is a jerk, and vice versa. Jerks never miss an opportunity to build themselves up and knock other teams down, and they appear not to realize when opposing teams snicker behind their backs. Most jerks grow up to be anal-retentive adults.

9. The socially inept creep

These are not only the most rare but also most disturbing of the stereotypes. Because of their extreme level of social ineptitude, they relate to others in ways that normal people consider strange and sometimes terrifying. They also seem to always use their most bizarre tactics on females, leading to ostracism and further withdrawal from society. Rumor has it that the Unabomber was once a quiz bowl player.

The Ten Commandments of Quiz Bowl



1. **THOU SHALT NOT USE AN ANSWER'S FIRST NAME UNLESS PROMPTED BY THE READER, AND THOU SHALT KNOW NUMBERS OF MONARCHS.**
2. **THOU SHALT NOT INTERRUPT A TOSSUP QUESTION THAT IS BEING READ SOLELY FOR YOUR TEAM.**
3. **CAPTAINS SHALT NOT ANSWER A BONUS QUESTION WITHOUT CONFERRING WITH TEAMMATES.**
4. **THOU SHALT NEVER ANSWER "I DON'T KNOW" OR "NO ANSWER" OR LEAVE A QUESTION UNANSWERED. MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS.**
5. **THOU SHALT LISTEN TO THE QUESTION!!!**
6. **THOU SHALT FOLLOW THE FIRST PRONOUN RULE.**
7. **THOU SHALT WAIT TO BE RECOGNIZED.**
8. **THOU SHALT NOT SAY ANYTHING AFTER YOU BUZZ IN UNLESS IT'S PART OF YOUR ANSWER.**
9. **THOU SHALT SHAKE HANDS AFTER A MATCH. DO NOT SPIT IN YOUR HANDS BEFORE SHAKING HANDS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU JUST LOST, EVEN MORE ESPECIALLY IF YOU JUST WON.*****

10. **THOU SHALT DO YOUR BEST, HAVE FUN, AND WORK AT GETTING BETTER.**

***from Jaron Hendrix, Henry County High School Class of 2002

How Do I Start a Team and Recruit Members?

Once you have your principal behind you, you have to assemble a team. When you're ready to recruit, put up posters, make announcements. Use teachers in your building. If possible arrange to go into classrooms and answer questions and maybe do a demonstration. Ask teachers to recommend students.

Make sure to have a presence on your school's website and every time parents and students are in the building (open house, honors night, ninth grade orientation, etc.). Sometimes you get interest from parents before you do from students.

If you are in a high school, make connections with your feeder middle school. Each spring, I get recommendations from middle school coaches and teachers and send personalized information and invitation packs to those rising 9th graders that were recommended. I've even arranged to the middle school for after school meetings to make a pitch and have high school players play a demo round.

- I fumbled my way around and did what I would have liked when I was in school. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)
- Word of mouth. Invite a friend. (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)

Where do I find Team Resources?

For links and lists of resources for study and for buzzer systems, go to GATA's website www.gataquizbowl.org or search on the internet for what you're looking for. There are lots of questions and study guides available online. Also, create a library of resource books for your team to study. Two great sources are Barnes and Noble's Clearance Books section and the test prep section of any bookstore. There you will find Sparknotes, Kaplan, and Facts on File Encyclopedias to numerous subjects. Also, pick up trivia games and books at yard sales and flea markets and by donation. There are commercially produced study cards and flash cards in every subject as well.

Encourage students to watch Jeopardy, PBS and the History Channel. Read and maybe subscribe to magazines like Smithsonian and National Geographic and other history and science magazines.

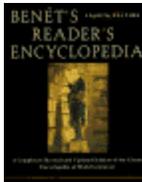
Where do you get practice questions? There are numerous samples online. You can purchase practice questions from GATA. Many tournament directors will provide sample rounds if contacted. Make connections with other coaches. Many GATA coaches trade and share questions.

Recommended Resources

www.naqt.com

Success in quiz bowl requires a team to be familiar with noted events, discoveries, and people from all fields of human endeavor; this is a difficult task and one that may require additional resources than the textbooks of a standard curriculum. NAQT recommends the following books and periodicals for players who want to take their knowledge base--and playing ability--to the next level since they contain facts, theories, and anecdotes that are likely to appear in questions. These would also serve as valuable reference material for question-writing for teams that write practice questions for themselves.

Keep in mind that NAQT questions are drawn from a wide variety of sources that may or may not include the works listed here. These works are recommended by NAQT's members (all past players), but there is no guarantee that even a single question will be written out of them in the future; memorizing these works (even if that were possible) will not guarantee a national championship!



Perhaps the most commonly used quiz bowl reference is [Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia](#). This work has mostly short articles and is intended to be a general source for understanding allusions and a work's historical and intellectual context. The contents go well beyond literature "proper," to include artists, movements, mythology, historical events, and philosophy. Benét's frequent use as a source for questions has led to many of its anecdotes becoming overused and significantly less difficult than one might expect. While a superb source to prepare from, inexperienced writers should exercise caution in incorporating its interesting facts into their questions.



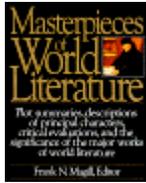
Whether or not [The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy](#) does in fact contain "What Every American Needs to Know," this book is an excellent source for information that is considered "basic" knowledge for quiz bowl teams competing at the varsity level. The book's articles cover the spectrum of quiz bowl: history, technology, mythology, geography, language, etc.



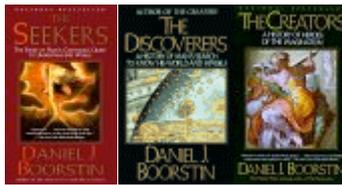
Michael Hart's book [The 100](#) purports to be "A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History." While every team will enjoy arguing about the choices (and the "near-misses" listed at the end), the biographies and historical contexts will make it useful to nearly every player. The top three? Muhammad, Isaac Newton, and Jesus Christ.

Frank N. Magill's [Masterplots](#) is a one-volume condensation of his original twelve-volume collection of summaries of and critical essays on classic novels and short stories. Since NAQT questions usually emphasize

narrative or thematic elements (rather than just asking for the author of a work), in-depth summaries make for profitable preparatory material. Of course, one should also aim to read the works themselves--there's a reason that they are still considered important!



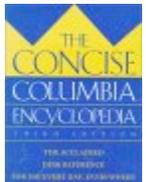
Another work of Frank N. Magill, [Masterpieces of World Literature](#), contains summaries and critical essays on 270 great works, but differs from *Masterplots* by including notable poems, essays, and works of philosophy.



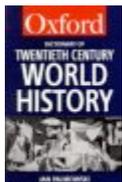
These three books by former Librarian of Congress Daniel Boorstin, [The Discoverers](#), [The Creators](#), and [The Seekers](#), are, respectively, a history of Western civilization with a focus on the ideas and movements that shaped it; a study of the painters, sculptors, and architects who created the Western artistic tradition from their own imagination; and a look at the philosophers, prophets, theologians, and scientists who have sought to understand human existence. These are unified works, not references, and are packed with exactly the sort of facts and stories about exactly the sort of important figures that come up in quiz bowl.



Judy Jones' and William Wilson's [An Incomplete Education](#) is similar to *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* but is written somewhat more irreverently. It also covers most of the topics dealt with in quiz bowl and nearly all of the people, books, and events mentioned would be considered fair game for matches at the high school level and up.



[The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia](#) is a frequently-used reference for writing (and fact-checking) questions. The depth and breadth of its articles make it very useful, particularly for science and geography. It is also a handy book to have on hand when running a tournament to assist in the resolution of protests.



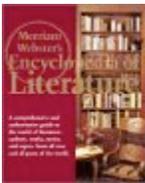
The articles in [A Dictionary of Twentieth-Century World History](#) are actually closer to those expected in an encyclopedia; most have more than enough information to construct a question and nearly all of its subjects have come up in quiz bowl at one time or another (some only at higher levels). Also, as its name suggests, it is an excellent resource on non-Western countries, an important component of quiz bowl.



No single author comes up more often in quiz bowl than William Shakespeare and no author's works are asked about in greater detail. Teams will definitely want to have players familiar with the major comedies, tragedies, and histories, and national championship-caliber teams would want to know the characters, settings, and plots of [The Complete Works of William Shakespeare](#).



In spite of their unsophisticated name, the three volumes of [The Great American Bathroom Books](#), which consist of two-page summaries and analyses of great works of literature and philosophy, are very useful for players who aspire to improve their play either through writing questions or studying material that is unfamiliar to them. These books often have an idiosyncratic take on the works they cover.



[Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature](#) is another work similar in tone to *Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia*, but has longer articles and is somewhat more tightly focused on literature proper. Personal preferences will vary between the two. A caveat: Much of the content of this work is licensed from Encyclopedia Britannica, so if you have a copy of that work (or an [online subscription](#)), you will see some

duplication.

Marina Vaizey's [100 Famous Paintings](#) delivers exactly what is promised: half-page descriptions of 100 notable paintings and half- or full-page reproductions of them. There is a significant overlap between the paintings selected for this book and the ones that, historically, [have come up most frequently in quiz bowl](#). Relatively few questions will simply ask for the painter of a work, so it is important for players to be familiar with works' visual details, their symbolism, and the circumstances under which they were painted.



Cecil Adams' [The Straight Dope: A Compendium of Human Knowledge](#) is the first of four books that collect the newspaper columns of the same name in which readers' questions on all walks of life are answered. While some of the pieces are unlikely ever to be made the subject of questions, more of them than one might expect deal with important historical events or scientific issues and are thus worth learning in the context of the game.

Almost all are worth learning about for more general reasons.



The full title of [What Are the Seven Wonders of the World?](#) indicates that it is a collection of 101 "cultural lists" that are "fully explicated." Examples include the three musketeers, the five pillars of Islam, the seven virtues, the nine Greek muses, and so forth. The lists are interesting to read and do a commendable job of connecting their subject matter with a greater cultural context.

Players and coaches should also become familiar with the [You Gotta](#)

[Know](#) articles written by NAQT members and former players and may consider purchasing [frequency list](#) study guides from NAQT.

How Do We Practice?

Practices can be managed in a number of ways. Scheduling is up to you. Maybe you need to meet before school, after school, during an activity period or study hall period. Some schools do 1 practice a week; others 2-3. Some schools run simultaneous practices for JV and V in different rooms.

What does practice look like? Some practices may be devoted to actually teaching, reading, writing questions, making notecards, watching videos. Have students teach. The coach can teach. Bring in other faculty members with expertise in particular areas. Some coaches give regular subject-area quizzes to track their players' development. Most teams, however, probably spend the majority of the time answering questions. Before a tournament, it's always helpful to run questions that are from the tournament you're preparing for. This will get players accustomed to cadence and format..

I've attached a practice scoresheet that I use. I keep points and post them weekly. Players keep track of their improvement over the year. I use these points to help me determine competition teams and awards at the end of the year. A croak is when a player buzzes in and says nothing or says something stupid. I rarely take negative points unless they are varsity players or when buzzing too early becomes a problem. With JV or other new players, "negs" might have an inhibiting factor, so I don't count negs on them till later in the year.

- Very informal every day over lunch - various different kinds of quizzing- all voluntary. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)

How Do Players Study/Practice for Quiz Bowl?

A good player cannot rely solely on practice alone. A good player reads and studies on his own as well. Many coaches assign students to be specialists in a given area, based on the student's interests and strengths. The typical major assignments are literature, social studies, and science; minors may be art, music, mythology and religion, and math. Players may be given and should be encouraged to find on their own study materials in those areas and create their own study notebook or card file. They should also do outside reading and pay close attention to those classes in their areas.

Some players will find that they have a facility for memorization and can spit out information like authors and capitals and such. Some outsiders might think that is good quiz bowl. That's not really true. The best quiz bowl players have deeper knowledge than rote memorization, from actually reading the novels or reading biographies and histories. A player with deeper knowledge will always beat a memorizer to the buzzer.

PERSONALITY CARDS

Make 100 notecards on important people and works in each of your MAJOR and MINOR areas. Find names in your study notebooks or from the *shoulda knowed* lists. Look them up. The purpose is to make a file of items that are likely to show up in quiz bowl. You'll learn as you do cards, and the cards will be a resource for future study and question-writing.

The cards should be as legible as you can make them.

Make them complete and useful.

ON Blank SIDE:

The Artist or Composer or Mythical/Religious Figure

Or the Major Work of Art or Music

(Example: Leonardo Da Vinci or The Last Supper)

Lined Side:

Life: Years, birthplace, other important places he's associated with

(example: 1452-1519, born in Tuscany near Florence, worked in Milan, died in France at Chateau Amboise) --- **(for a work: when and where created)**

Works: what they're famous for --- books, works, acts, prizes, awards, accomplishments **(why it's significant, facts about work)**

(example: Mona Lisa, Last Supper, Madonna of the Rocks, Adoration of the Magi, St. Jerome, Vitruvian Man, inventions like tank, parachute, etc.)

Facts: Pick three to five facts or more which are unique to the person or work and which might be a clue to an early answer or might be used to write a pyramidal question.

(example: model for Verrochio's David, wrote backwards in notebooks, many designs but not built, frescoes)

Study Card Info

Here's what you need, at minimum, for each type of study card. Always look for things that could be used early in a question.

Work of Literature: author, characters, plot summary, other facts

Literary Character: Work, author, what character does, symbolism, influence, allusion, etc

Author: time, place, pen name if any, style associated with if any, works (notable and obscure), other facts

President: number, years, party, key events and term, nickname, first lady's name, other facts

General person: time. Place, what they did, nicknames, facts, creations

Thing: time and place, what it is, causes, effects, other facts

Artist: Time, place, style/school, works, facts

Amendment, law, treaty: when and where, what it did, causes and effects, any people associated

Movement (art, lit, music): time, place, description, where name came from, people associated with it

Scientist: time, place, discovery/invention, facts

Element: number, symbol, properties, facts, where name came from

Science laws: what it says, who said it, formulas, what good is it

Art or music creation: creator, style, description, critical remarks about it, symbolism, other facts

How Do I Select Teams?

In most Georgia tournaments, a team consists of 4 or 5 players, with one designated as captain. Most tournaments allow substitutions to be made at certain points in a match, and most tournaments allow schools to enter multiple teams in a tournament. However, once a player begins the day on one team, he/she may not play on another team at that tournament.

I try to make as balanced a team as possible, choosing the best literature, the best social studies and the best science as a core for example. Sometimes you hit on something and it gels and grows from there. Sometimes it's like reaching into a box blindfolded and just being stuck with what you have that day. Of course the ideal thing is to have a core team as you're a team so that they can grow together. However, teams should never be permanently written in stone. Players have got to know that they can land a spot on the A team if they work hard enough to knock somebody off.

- Almost always on who is able to show up the day of an event. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)
- All who show up. (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)

How Do I Select a Captain?

The captain does more than just answer bonuses, and it's not always true that a captain is the best player on the team. They are often leaders in practice as well. There are certain qualities that make a good captain, and a great captain comes along occasionally. A coach has to be able to recognize and groom captains.

- So far the captain has been the one who seems most into the team and is decided on by the team. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)
- Oldest, best speaker, most knowledgeable (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)

What are the Characteristics of a Good Captain?

The captain is not necessarily the best player. He or she needs specific leadership skills at practice and in tournament play.

- The Captain needs to know the strengths of the team - who to listen to when the bonus questions come up and there are 2 conflicting answers. The Captain needs to not be panicky and to be a listener and a quick decision maker. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)
- Articulate, strong voice (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)

Where Do We Compete?

Tournaments are held by schools and colleges around the state and beyond. GATA maintains an updated tournament list on its website www.gataquizbowl.org , complete with registration forms. GATA itself only sponsors three tournaments a year, the official state championship varsity, junior varsity, and middle school tournaments. GATA has no authority beyond those three tournaments, and other tournament directors are free to conduct their tournament any way they wish. However, most tournaments in Georgia use GATA rules and formats to a degree.

There are other competition venues as well. PAGE, Professional Association of Georgia Educators, sponsors a statewide middle school competition. RESAs also sometimes sponsor quiz bowl leagues in some form or another. WSB-2 in Atlanta and other television stations host programs like High Q. There are also online competitions like Knowledgemaster Open. www.greatauk.com

What Do I Need To Know About Traveling With and Transporting Students?

Every system and school has its own rules and requirements about travel with students. Please refer to those policies. Use whatever forms you need to use. It's important that you keep an updated health form and contact form on file and with you when you travel. You need to know about conditions, medicines, and allergies, and you need contact info just in case. Your school's athletic director might be a great resource to help you determine what you need.

General Tips:

- ❖ Create a tournament calendar as early as possible so parents and students can plan.
 - ❖ Secure a credit card for yourself that accumulates air miles or some other perk. Use that for hotels and other quiz bowl expenses and then get reimbursed by your boosters or team.
 - ❖ Use a particular hotel brand loyalty card and earn free nights for yourself.
 - ❖ Whenever we do an overnight trip, we take Friday as a field trip day and spend it in museums and historic sites along the way or at the tournament locale.
 - ❖ Make it clear that misbehavior on trips will be dealt with both as a team issue and a school discipline matter if necessary.
- School rules and common parenting sense. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)

What Can Assistant Coaches Do?

What Can Parents Do to Help?

It is impossible for a coach to operate without parental support. Parents recognize and appreciate a coach who is committed to working with their students.

- Organize and shepherd kids at a meet - important in Middle School -encouragement especially about learning and memorizing. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)
- Provide transportation (if allowed) and support (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)

How Do I Enlist Community Support?

General Tips for Tournament Day

- ❖ Bring snacks for between rounds.
- ❖ Bring playing cards.

- ❖ Read all the pre-tournament information carefully before arriving at the tournament and make sure you read everything you receive when you arrive.
- Get up early and be prepared to stay very late.(Wayne Parker, Lovett)

How Do I Raise Money?

Modest dues defray some costs, but of course you have to be conscious of those who cannot pay.

How Do I Use a Booster Club?

Many teams have taken a page from athletic playbooks and created academic team booster clubs. The booster club can help the coach tremendously in several areas: publicity, community relations, and fundraising. (The example I included below was based on the basketball booster club constitution.)

Ola Academic Team Booster Club By-laws

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization is the Ola Academic Team Booster Club.

ARTICLE II- PURPOSE, PRINCIPLES, AND OBJECTIVES

Section I: The purpose of this organization is to focus community and individual efforts in support of the academic team at Ola High School (OHS).

Section II: The members of this organization commit to portraying the best possible model for the students by working together in concert with the community, administration faculty, staff; and other school support organizations to enhance OHS. In keeping with this philosophy, the following principles will serve as the foundation for our efforts.

A. We shall abide by the spirit of OHS Booster Club directives as published.

B. All activities shall be in compliance with the spirit of the Georgia High School Association, Georgia Academic Team Association, Ola Board of Education, and Ola High School.

C. Fund raising activities shall be oriented at providing service and a specific return for the funds being raised to the extent practical. Solicitation of individuals or businesses for open donations shall be kept to an absolute minimum.

Section III: Our objectives are to:

A. Work as a team in support of OHS to provide moral and financial support for the academic team members and coaches.

B. Provide a vehicle for businesses and individuals to channel their funds, time, and energy in a meaningful and responsible manner in support of the academic team.

C. Ensure that the coaches and players have the financial support to focus their time and efforts in preparing for and participation in activities that foster a tradition of excellence.

D. Plan for and meet the long term needs of the OHS academic team.

B. Acknowledge the contributions of the individuals and businesses of the community who make particularly significant contributions to the OHS academic team.

ARTICLE III- MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

A. Membership in the Ola Academic Team Booster Club is open to all individuals who share our philosophy with the following exceptions:

1. Students of OHS shall not be members.
2. Coaches are honorary members and may vote at any meeting.
3. The principal is an honorary member and may vote at any meeting.

B. Dues shall be set by the coach and will be used toward costs of materials for team members. Inability to pay dues will not disqualify a student from membership.

C. A record of the current members shall be maintained by the club secretary.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

A. There shall be at least two meetings, one in September and one in May. Other meetings may be called as needed.

B. An attempt will be made to publicize all special meetings and attempts will be made to reach all members by mail or telephone at least two days prior to such meetings.

C. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with parliamentary procedures as specified in Robert's Rules of Order Revised in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the Bylaws and special rules of the Ola Academic Team Booster Club.

ARTICLE V - ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Section I: Nominations

A. The academic team coach will nominate a slate of officers and will present these nominees for the club's approval.

B. The officers shall consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer.

C. Only those members who have signified their consent to serve

if elected shall be nominated for election to office.

Section II: Officers and their election

A. Officers shall be elected during the school year. Only voting members may be nominated or vote in the election of officers.

B. Officers shall assume their official duties after being elected and shall serve for the rest of that school year.

C. At the termination of office, each officer shall surrender all materials, records, or supplies to his/her successor as soon as possible.

Section III: Office vacancies

A vacancy occurring in any office shall be filled for the unexpired term by a vote of the membership at the next scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE VI - DUTIES OF THE ELECTED OFFICERS

Section I: President

A. The president shall preside at all meetings. He shall exercise general supervision over the interests and affairs of the club, and shall have the duties of promoting the purposes of this organization.

B. The president shall appoint committees as needed to carry on the business of the club.

C. The president shall co-sign with the treasurer all checks, purchase orders, and correspondence on behalf of the club.

D. The president shall represent the interest of the club in discussions with the OHS principal.

E. The president shall ensure that the club remains in accordance with these Bylaws and other directives that pertain to the regulations of this club as communicated by the administration of OHS.

Section II: Vice President

The vice president shall act in the absence of the president to fulfill those duties, with the exception that the vice president may not sign checks or purchase orders without specific written authorization. The vice president

shall oversee fundraising.

Section III: Secretary

- A. The secretary shall record and maintain legible minutes of all club meetings and ensure that a copy can be provided upon request. These minutes must be maintained for the current and two previous years. The president shall be given a copy of the minutes within ten days from the date of the last meeting.
- B. The secretary shall prepare all correspondence on behalf of the club, maintain the membership roster, and the record of approved meeting times, locations, and authorized fundraising events.
- C. The secretary shall maintain the bylaws and provide a copy to all members.

Section IV: Treasurer

- D. The treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the club, which shall be maintained if possible in an interest-bearing checking account. He shall keep an accurate record of all receipts, expenditures, property, and items belonging to or incurred on behalf of the club.
- E. The treasurer shall ensure that all checks and purchase orders are signed by him and the club president, the said checks and purchase orders were voted as approved by the members, and appear in the formal minutes of a club meeting.
- F. The club is prohibited from deficit spending.
- G. The treasurer is to prepare a financial report for each meeting.
- H. The treasurer shall maintain and balance the checking account.
- I. The treasurer shall ensure that a receipt is maintained for all purchases by the club.
- J. The treasurer shall ensure the books are kept current and open for audit or review by membership, independent auditor, or principal. He shall conduct a joint audit off the books with the treasurer-elect at the conclusion of the term of office.

K. The treasurer shall ensure the principal of OHS receive upon request an itemized listing of all items donated to OHS or its students on behalf of the club.

L. The treasurer shall prepare an annual financial report for the period June 1 through May 31 of each year.

ARTICLE VII GENERAL

Section I: Basic policies

A. All members, as a precondition of membership, must abide by these Bylaws and the directives of OHS as they apply to booster organizations.

B. No member, to include officers, may make commitments, take positions, or obligate funds on behalf of the club without the approval of the membership as voted in formal meetings and written in minutes.

C. The requests of OHS and the academic team for club support are to be communicated to the club in writing. Members are not to solicit or accept requests that are not in accordance with this policy as established.

Violations of the intent and spirit of this policy are prejudicial to both the club and the staff of OHS.

Section II: Purchases

A. Purchases of \$300 or more will use a modified bid system.

B. Requests for bids must have a required delivery date. Should a vendor not provide the items by the required delivery date, the club may deny receipt for the items and payment provision for this refusal must be on all purchase orders. Vendors who attempt to violate the intent of this bid system, or who fail to perform in accordance with the bid they communicate may be removed from the list of authorized vendors.

C. The club is not held to the lowest bid. In the event a bid other than the lowest is accepted, a written explanation will be recorded and maintained with the purchase order.

D. As a general rule, the club will try to make purchases from those businesses that support OHS and its various support organizations before going to other vendors.

E. Where quantity purchases affect significant savings, the club may act in concert with other booster organizations, or may affect a multi-year

commitment, as in the case of letter jackets or other low volume, high cost items.

F. The Booster Club may authorize the academic team coach to expend a specified amount of \$300 on an emergency basis for unanticipated expenses. These expenses shall only be allowed if the funds are available, and detailed receipts will be required for any purchase.

Section III: Accountability

A. All items purchased by the club shall be donated to the school. Once donated, these items become the property of OHS to be used exclusively as predetermined by the written agreement, at the discretion of OHS.

B. Those items purchased by the club for resale shall be accounted for in sufficient detail to preclude losing control or placing anyone in a situation where there could be the appearance of wrongdoing or lost accountability.

ARTICLE VIII- AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended by two-thirds majority vote of all members in good standing at any regular meeting provided the amendments were submitted in writing to the secretary and read by the secretary at the previous regular meeting. The amended bylaws must be submitted to the principal for approval before being adopted in accordance with the booster club directive.

Revised August 28, 2006

How Do I Host a Tournament?

Hosting a tournament is a great way to raise money for your team in the form of registration fees, question sales, and concessions. It requires a lot of work and cooperation from administrators, coaches, players, and parents/boosters. Planning for hosting should begin at least 6 months before the event.

What Potential Problems Might Coaches Face?

Miscellaneous Thoughts and Advice from Coaches *TO* Coaches

- Snacks (Ginny Davidson, Henderson Middle)

How to Write Questions

Experienced coaches and players agree that the single best thing a player can do to improve may be to actually write questions. Not only does the player learn in the process, but the team develops a source of practice questions, and some teams even make money by selling questions to other teams and tournaments. What follows here is a sampling of primers on how to write good questions, in no particular order.

[How to Write Questions](#) (link)

by [grapesmoker](#) » from World of Quiz Bowl Website www.hsquizbowl.org

Now that the discussion of the various tournaments has finally petered out, I thought I'd promulgate some dogma on question writing, seeing as how I'm always yelling really loudly about question quality and such. I encourage other players to contribute, and I'll incorporate good suggestions into the original post. Before I get going, I'd like to point out that many of the things I'll be writing about are settled issues with respect to question writing, but many others reflect my own stylistic preferences, and I'll be sure to try and point out which are my own biases. To begin:

1. Before Writing Questions

Look *around* you. *Look* around you. Just look around you. Do you see what we're looking for yet? That's right, the subject of today's lesson is **sources**.

I'd like to start this guide with a general discussion of what makes a good question-writing source. There are many things that one can use, but obviously not all sources are equally reliable. Notably unreliable sources include Wikipedia and random geocities web pages. Reliable sources include scholarly journals, textbooks, published books, and encyclopaedias of various sorts. If you can get your hands on it, the electronic version of the Encyclopaedia Britannica is superb for many topics, particularly history. Masterplots are a good resource for literature plot summaries, and there are many topic-specific encyclopaedias that are surely available at your local university (or public) library (I'm assuming that virtually all of you have some sort of university affiliation).

Wikipedia may be worthy of a special topic of its own; I mention it here to point out that while it may be a nice source for brainstorming before you actually start writing, you should be thrice-wary of anything you read on Wikipedia. I don't want to get into a discussion of the problems that inhere in the Wikipedia model. Suffice to say that it is not a trustworthy source, though it does in fact contain much that is true. Anything read on Wikipedia should be cross-checked with a more reliable scholarly source. For that matter, pretty much anything you read on the internet that doesn't come from a journal should be double-checked. There are some sites which are pretty reliable and contain some useful information; those are usually associated with universities in some way. The worst part of using Wikipedia as a source is the noted problem of Wikiplagiarism, which is what occurs when people just copy sentences out of Wikipedia. Wikiplagiarism can be easily spotted by competent editors because it contains weird phrasings that usually shouldn't appear in questions, as well as editorializing. I'll have more on style topics below.

Another useful source is online lecture notes (thanks Dwight), whether they come from a class you're taking or just from some stuff professors at other institutions put up. These are generally reliable (they have been in my experience) and ordinarily are pretty easy to get, since many professors just make their notes available to whoever. A notably good source for such notes is MIT's Open CourseWare site, which contains a lot of excellent information on various scientific topics (and some others too).

All this makes it sound like sources are hard to get to and require a lot of work. For the most part, you should be able to get a lot of mileage out of a few books available from whatever library is easiest for you to get to.

2. Deciding What to Write About

This is arguably the hardest phase of the whole process; I know for me it's usually the stumbling block, whereas once I have my topics picked out things generally go pretty smoothly. How can you make a good decision regarding what to write? Read below to find out!

First, you have to know your audience. Are you writing for a novice tournament, a standard invitational, or ACF Nationals? This will determine, to some degree, what answer selections are appropriate in your packet, and later on, what clues you use to construct this question. Second, you should ask yourself whether the answer you are thinking about will make for a good question; although most answers are fine, all other things being equal, some answers don't lend themselves well to good questions and should be avoided if possible. I'll try to outline some of that below. Finally, you should ask yourself whether writing on this particular answer choice is going to require a lot of research. This has less to do with writing a good question and more with budgeting time for doing so. If you find yourself spending an hour per tossup, you're either doing something wrong or picking topics that take far more time to research than they should.

Mostly, I've been writing about tossups. As far as bonuses are concerned, a good way of constructing a bonus is the "easy-middle-hard" model which is now pretty much predominant in quality tournaments. The easy part of the bonus should be answerable by pretty much any team at the tournament. The middle part might be answerable by about half the teams, whereas one might need to have really good knowledge to get the third part; probably no more than 20% of teams should reasonably be able to 30 a bonus. Of course, bonuses vary in difficulty for different teams, but in general, a tournament with well-distributed bonus difficulty will have bottom teams converting not much less than (preferably around) 10 PPB, whereas the best teams could conceivably top 20 PPB, and bonus conversion should be well-correlated with overall place in the tournament.

This brings me to the somewhat peripheral but still important issue of consistency. This is less important for tossups, which contain internal difficulty gradations, than it is for bonuses. If all the science bonuses at a tournament are super hard, you're going to screw some teams really badly. For this reason, following the above bonus writing model is a good way to ensure that you aren't making any one category too hard. Some teams are going to just not know some areas, and that's fine, but if some bonuses are consistently harder than others, that has the potential to really damage teams. In accordance with this principle, the practice of the impossible third bonus part should also be avoided. The possibility of getting 30 points on a bonus should always be there for the talented team; overly difficult bonus parts effectively turn 30 potential points into only 20, which tends to really narrow the gap between teams.

3. Actually Writing the Questions

Ok, with that long preamble out of the way, we can get down to the business of actually writing some questions. I'll try to provide some guidelines for general question writing and also dissect some questions to demonstrate what makes for good and bad tossups and bonuses. Here we go!

3.1. Tossups

The first principle of good tossup writing is pyramidality. What is pyramidality, you ask? Pyramidality is simply the principle of putting harder clues earlier in the questions, with the idea

being that the more knowledgeable team will answer the tossup first because they know more about the subject. I like to think of the pyramid as representing the proportion of teams that would know the answer to the tossup at some particular spot in the question. So the apex of the pyramid represents a specialist in the subject, and the base represents most people who play quizbowl and have heard of the answer. Ideally, there should be a relatively smooth gradation between the apex and the base, although of course real tossups resemble ziggurats (or perhaps mastabas) more than actual pyramids. Nevertheless, the idea is clear: there are gradations of clue difficulty in tossups which is intended to distinguish between more knowledgeable and less knowledgeable players.

There's no magic formula for writing tossups, unfortunately. If there were, we could have computer write tossups for us and the problem of generating questions would be solved once and for all. While Ray Luo labors to come up with such a machine, I'll just go ahead and describe, in general terms, what the various levels of the tossup pyramid might look like and what kind of clues they might contain. Keep in mind that this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but I hope it will prove instructive.

The first clue of a question should contain information that is unlikely to be known by anyone who has not spent at least some time studying whatever the answer might be. When I say "studying" I don't necessarily mean studying in school, but rather this word should be read as meaning "absorbing information about," and I write "studying" for short. So, reading a book by or about, say, Herman Melville, qualifies as studying in this sense. If I were determined to learn a lot about *Moby Dick* I would certainly read the work itself, but I might also read various critical interpretations of it. That kind of clue would be pretty useful to me then; it would give me an advantage over someone who has just read the book but not the criticism. In science, such a clue might reference a little-known application of some effect, for instance. In history, it could be a clue about an academic historian's interpretation of some event. And so on.

I think this is a good point to insert a brief caveat about such first clues. It can be hard sometimes, especially when employing clues of the type "Joe Blow said this-and-that about this work," to decide if a clue will actually be useful to anyone. I address this below in the section entitled "The Usefulness of Clues." Moving on:

The next couple of clues (what I'm going to refer to as "the middle") should successively narrow the answer space down to the actual correct answer of the tossup. This is the part that is usually the hardest to execute, since clues that are really easy or really hard might be obviously so, but the arrangement of middle clues is tough because you're trying to create a relatively fine gradation from the start to the end of the tossup. It's hard to say exactly what those clues should be, but maybe some examples would be instructive. If the question is on a work of literature, (say, the very same *Moby Dick*), you might describe a somewhat-little-known episode in the book, followed by the actions of some better-known characters, followed by some even better-known names or events. In a science tossup, you might talk about a lesser-known consequence of some effect, then maybe the equation that describes this effect, followed by a better-known consequence. Or something like that.

The key component of clue ordering is to ask yourself, what would a person who knows a lot/a decent amount/not so much/very little (pick one) be likely to know about whatever it is that you're writing about. This requires some intuition in some cases, because unless you've been around the circuit for a while, you probably don't know that certain clues for certain things are considered "stock" and thus shouldn't be anywhere but in the end of a tossup. However, for many situations, you can figure this out; in literature, for example, it should be straightforward to see which characters are minor and which are major, which events are central to the work and which are just vignettes. If you're writing on some idea or theory, the name of its formulator probably belongs in the end, unless it's obscure. Likewise for common definitions (like in a math question), or major scenes in novels, or most famous lines of poetry, or whatever. You should quickly get some sense for what the clue ordering might be like by reading a bunch of tossups; that's not to

say that you have to slavishly emulate what came before you (maybe you found a neat new clue or something) but it does mean that if you follow the conventional clue order you will probably write a decent tossup.

The giveaway is self-explanatory. It should contain the most famous bit of information about whatever the answer is. It should *usually* not, in my opinion, contain tangential clues (the James Webb telescope comes to mind) about what the answer sounds like or anything that requires lateral thinking. Note the emphasis on "usually." Sometimes an oblique reference to another thing that may help someone get the question is fine (mostly I'm thinking of common-link tossups), but most of the time it's not.

3.2. Bonuses

There is a lot less to say about writing bonuses than about writing tossups, mostly because the confusion associated with pyramidity is to some extent absent in bonuses. Bonuses should generally follow the "easy-medium-hard" model of bonus parts and the majority of the bonuses you write should be of the 10-10-10 variety. We can loosely define "easy" to mean that we would like 90% of the field to convert this part, "medium" to mean that maybe 40-50% of the field will convert it, and "hard" to mean that perhaps 10-20% of the field should convert it. These are not hard-and-fast numbers; they are just vague signposts to explain what is meant by the difficulty levels. Obviously, these may be adjusted downward or upward for various tournaments, but I think they are generally a good indication of how to break down bonus parts by difficulty.

In writing bonuses, avoid the "impossible third part." A sufficiently competent team may not get 30 points on each bonus, but the potential for 30 points should be there. A bonus part on something that no one who is not an expert on some particular subcategory wouldn't even have heard of is a bad idea. It is also bad to have the bonus difficulty differ substantially across categories within a tournament (and especially within a single packet). Such bonuses tend to screw an unfortunate team and can make the difference in close games. Of course, there will be variability between teams, and some categories will be known better than others, but the potential for the structure of the packet (rather than the clue content) to influence the outcome of the game should be minimized.

3.3. Style

This may be the most subjective section of all, but I think it's necessary to say something about the stylistic issues inherent in question writing. It should go without saying that packets should be grammatically correct, but they're often not, so please read your questions out loud to yourself to make sure the sentence structure makes sense. We all make mistakes of course, but some tournaments I've been to have featured missing words or spelling errors or grammatical mistakes in almost every question. This is the minimum that can be expected of any writer. I'll say it again: PROOFREAD!

The first clue of a tossup should always be uniquely identifying (to the best of the writer's abilities; sometimes information may match two answers despite the writer's best attempts). Also, the first pronoun should refer unambiguously to the answer and should appear IN THE FIRST SENTENCE. I can't stress this enough! If the first sentence of a tossup finishes and I don't know what category the answer goes in (person, place, or thing) then this question is bad because it doesn't make clear what it's looking for.

More generally, there are different ways to word questions, and different approaches to writing. On one level, you may choose between simple, declaratory sentences (e.g. "This guy wrote about Joe Blow in Work X. Then he wrote about Jane Doe in Work Y.") or compound sentences with clauses and subclauses (e.g. "This guy wrote about Joe Blow in Work X, after which he used his experience in the Pastry War to write about Jane Doe in Work Y."). You get the idea, I'm sure.

I personally like the latter style, but some people like the former. I don't think there's anything wrong with either one, provided you are economical about your word choice. Since questions are typically limited in length by editors, you should make sure that all the words you use are meaningful. If a clue can be rewritten with shorter words in place of longer ones, you should probably do that. This saves space and helps you pack more information into a tossup.

Within clues, there are different ways of ordering information. For example, notice how above I used the form "wrote about Joe Blow in Work X," rather than, "His Work X concerns the adventures of Joe Blow." This is deliberate; any random quizbowl player is less likely to know the main character of any given novel than the name of the novel itself. And so on. I recommend using this construction to create pyramidal within clues themselves.

Finally, a word on gender. For a long time, there has been what I think is a nasty trope in quizbowl, which involves writing things like "this writer," or "this scientist," or whatever in an attempt to disguise the fact that the person in question is female. This is annoying, because instead of saying "she," which is shorter, you're now using up more space and you're not even hiding the fact that it's a woman, because everyone now knows to watch for this. So my suggestion is that people use "this [blank]" in the first couple of clues, but then just transition to the male or female pronouns. In most cases, the field of women whatevers is not nearly so narrow as to shrink the potential answer space down to something obvious.

3.4. The Usefulness of Clues

This is another problem that I see come up over and over again. Clues get used in tossups that are just not useful to anyone. Egregious examples of these kinds of clues are "Joe Blow notably studied this thing." These clues are unhelpful because unless you know exactly who Joe Blow is (and even then, he might have notably studied several things), you can't possibly get anything out of this. Such a clue could be converted into a useful one by writing, "Joe Blow notably addressed this issue in his tract 'On Stuff,'" provided that "On Stuff" is actually about only that one thing. Clues containing numbers in science questions (e.g. "Its albedo is a million," "This quantity is 234.9 for water," etc.) are also useless, because no one memorizes these numbers. Vague clues like "In this novel one character goes to the store for some lettuce," are also not useful since they are probably not uniquely identifying. Clues like "This river is 543 miles long" are also dumb because no one, not even geography wizard Jeff Hoppes, knows these things. In short, if you are tempted to pad a question with the kind of information found in an almanac, don't. Make sure that all your clues convey useful information that someone could actually get the question from.

All this leads me to the culmination of this lengthy opus, which is perhaps the most important part.

3.5 What to Avoid, and Why

I've done my best to cover how questions ought to be written; now I'll point to some mistakes people make in writing questions and explain why you shouldn't do these things.

Tossups

- Giveaways in the first line are bad. Since pyramidal is good and this makes the question not pyramidal, it is bad. Ok, that was the obvious one
- Stock clues. These are clues that were abundant in old, pre-2002 or so quizbowl, like Michael Faraday being apprenticed to a bookbinder or Saussure writing about Indo-European languages (must be the most reused lead-in ever). These clues are bad because instead of learning anything about the subject at hand, people just memorize clues which end up being recycled by lazy writers. Sometimes, the recycling of these clues by beginning writers is inevitable, but editors should know better. Keep in mind that not ever lead-in is a "stock" clue, since there are plenty of different ways to write a tossup

- on, say, Herman Melville, and some of them may recycle clues about his lesser-known works. However, clues that come up again and again (the Saussure clue is bad because it's his only other published work, so it gets referenced all the time, becoming "stock"). My suggestion for avoiding this is to search the Stanford Archive for the topic and then see if the lead-in you want to use appears many times in older packets. If it does, don't use it.
- Question Transparency. This is a huge one, and I didn't really address it above. I'll do so now. The idea of question transparency is that if you write the question poorly (or if you choose your answer poorly), it will become very obvious what the answer is without the player actually having to know anything. Case in point, picked at random from whatever Moon Pie packet I happened to be looking at: a tossup on Grimm's Law, which mentions something about exceptions to it being described by the spirant law and later in the first sentence mentions voiceless dentals. Now, I know nothing, but nothing about voiceless dentals. All I have is a little radar that beeps "linguistics" when I hear that line. Also, I speak English well so I know that laws have exceptions. What is a law of linguistics? Why, Grimm's law is! This is the classic example of a question that rewards lateral thinking and knowing that an answer vaguely matching the characteristics being described exists. Basically, if someone can "figure out" the answer based on the fact that it becomes obvious (for reasons having to do with poorly placed clues, linguistic hints, whatever) within the first two clues or so (as opposed to because they actually know it from information provided), then the question is bad.
 - Editorializing and needless verbiage. Everything you write in a tossup should contain information that helps players answer the question. I've seen at least one packet from Moon Pie that contains all sorts of needless editorial content and mountains of words that don't help at all when playing. Any words that don't contain useful clues are just hindrances for the players; moreover, since space is limited, these questions tend to suffer from sharp difficulty drops and create buzzer races. Speaking of which...
 - Buzzer races. If you write a question that contains clues on nothing but Melville's poetry and then a giveaway on *Moby Dick* you have engineered a stupid and pointless buzzer race, because one either has to be a Melville expert to get this question or wait until the end and hope one is fast enough to beat everyone else who will buzz at the same time. This goes contrary to the idea of pyramidality and having clues which get progressively easier. It also fails to discriminate between two teams with potentially different Melville knowledge, neither of which contains Melville experts.
 - List tossups. These kinds of questions violate several rules of good question writing, including the one that mandates that the subject of the answer be revealed in the first sentence. This has the added effect that potentially *any* commonality between the listed things should logically be an acceptable answer. For example, a question that begins "Julius Caesar, John F. Kennedy, William McKinley," with the intended answer being "they were all assassinated" would be terrible anyway, but logically would have the answer "they were all men" be acceptable. This is stupid and wrong, so don't write these questions, as nothing good can come of it. There does not exist a list tossup that cannot be remade into a better question with the same answer just by changing the wording of the question.

Bonuses

- List bonuses. These are dumb and uninteresting. These bonuses amount to almanac memorization and tell you nothing interesting about the subject at hand. Authors from works, VSEPR shapes, rulers from dates of rule, whatever. All these are equally dull and should be avoided. The presence of such questions is one of the best indicators of lazy question writing.
- Almanac bonuses. These include memorizing Nobel Prize lists, physical constants, and so on. A relative of the list bonus, and bad for all the same reasons.

- Wacky bonus forms. The 5-10-15 is deprecated; so is the 30-20-10, which is better as a tossup anyway. The 5-10-15 is bad because it penalizes the team twice: once for not knowing the hard part, and once again for making the hard part worth more. The 10-10-10 is king; you should follow this bonus convention unless you have a good reason to change the value of some of the parts (such as if you have two answers required for one part and you'd like to make them 5 each).
- Varying bonus difficulty. Already discussed above, but all your bonuses should aim to be roughly the same in difficulty. They won't be of course; some teams will know some categories and not others, and that's ok. But if all teams are doing poorly on a certain category, then your bonus difficulty is unbalanced. Also, randomly difficult bonus parts in supposedly easy tournaments are also bad.

Writing Good Academic Quiz Bowl Questions

(Taken from Carleton's question-writing guide, written by Eric Hillemann)

GENERAL

In writing full packets, make sure the questions are balanced, both across broad subject categories (literature, history, science, etc.) and also within categories (e.g., history questions should be a mix of American and world history, and not concentrated too much on any particular time period; science questions should be scattered among the various subdivisions, physics, biology, chemistry, etc.)

All information should be correct--an obvious consideration, but faulty factoids do creep into packets on occasion. Use reputable reference works as a check on your personal knowledge. Answers should be precisely targeted, not calling for much interpretation on the part of the moderator as to what is a correct response. Alternative correct answers should be anticipated and provided for the moderator.

Answers should be clearly visible and separated from the question to be read. Underline the part of an answer that is the minimum needed for a correct response. First names of persons should be required only when there is a possibility of confusion. The initial articles "A," "An," or "The" may be dropped from titles when answering, and should not be underlined as necessary to a correct answer.

Questions should be challenging but not impossible. (See below for more on the relative difficulty between most tossups and bonuses.) Questions which merely stump both teams due to obscurity are boring for everybody. Questions which are markedly too easy are also annoying, but less frustrating than ones that are far too esoteric.

Be nice to the moderator: put pronunciation guides into questions where needed, typically for foreign, scientific, or other difficult-to-pronounce terms.

TOSSUPS

85-90% or more of tossups should be answerable by most teams at the event for which the questions are written, if read to completion. Tossups are there to be answered, to get to the bonuses--but should reward the team which can answer them *first*, either by anticipating the direction the question is headed, or by having deeper knowledge of the subject.

Good tossups are generally produced by presenting interesting clues, to something answerable by most teams, arranged in so-called "pyramidal" style: clues generally moving from relatively obscure to increasingly familiar. Typically, the easiest clue should appear as the very last word or last several words of the tossup. The question should use the phrase "for 10 points" somewhere near the end, usually just before the final clue. See the sample questions provided for examples.

Misleading introductions or false lead-ins which invite minus fives are supremely evil--never write a tossup which will predictably penalize knowledge and speed. A made up example:

1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 are the first few terms of the Fibonacci series. For 10 points--the mathematician

Fibonnaci was a native of what Italian city?

answer: *Pisa*

This is a lousy question on several counts, including that it has only one clue to its answer. (Good tossups tend to have multiple clues to the eventual answer, presented at multiple "trigger points.") But what makes it absolutely unacceptable is that it misleads a knowledgeable player into buzzing in early to say "Fibonacci" or "Fibonacci series." Questions should never penalize knowledge by tricking a knowledgeable player to buzz in early before an unpredictable change of direction.

Never, ever, mislead with words like "he", "her", "it", "this" and so forth. The first pronoun without an antecedent must always refer to the answer! Example:

Vowing that he would never go to Canossa, the Chancellor of Germany announced a cultural struggle against Roman Catholicism in the 1870s. For 10 points--what three-syllable German noun named this anti-Catholic campaign?

answer: *Kulturkampf*

This question tricks a player into answering "Bismarck" early. It could be rewritten as: German Chancellor Bismarck, vowing never to go to Canossa, announced a cultural struggle against Roman Catholicism in the 1870s known--for 10 points--by what three-syllable German noun?

answer: *Kulturkampf*

Avoid writing overlong tossups. NAQT, which writes for timed-play tournaments, does not allow any tossup to exceed 425 characters, excluding the answer line. For untimed tournaments, such concision is less crucial, but still desirable. One sentence tossups, signalled by beginning the question with a warning such as "For a quick 10 points--", were long in use, but were widely unpopular and have now become quite rare. Most tossups are 2-4 sentences--but the main consideration is overall length, rather than number of sentences.

Michigan Memorandum 2002

I. CARDINAL RULES

These four cardinal principles underlie this Memorandum. Should question writers follow them, as well as the spirit of fairness they embody, no further instructions would be necessary.

1. All questions must contain many pieces (ideally 4+) of substantial information, with clues ordered from most obscure to least obscure. The challenge is to compact as much information as possible into 3 or fewer sentences. A well-written question will often contain 3-4 pieces of information per sentence.

2. All questions must clearly and succinctly move unidirectionally toward one unambiguous answer from the first word to the last. What that means is this: writers should read questions one word at a time, thinking of all possible answers at every point in the question. If the question at any point is narrow enough to draw a reasonable answer that is wrong, the question **must be rewritten**. Questions can be a little bit sneaky in terms of where they're going, so long as they don't invite someone to leap to a wrong answer.

3. Someone with perfect knowledge of the subject should usually know the correct answer first. Of course, that player may not always buzz-in first but questions should create conditions in which the most knowledgeable player is the one likely to answer the question first. In no event should knowledge be punished, though many of the best questions are puzzles that reward more than just "pure" knowledge.

4. When the above three rules are not violated, questions should also entertain as well as educate, as boring questions destroy the joy of the game.

An important, but unnumbered, rule is that the above rules can be violated. There are always some cases in which exceptions are perfectly OK. As you gain more expertise, you will learn these exceptions. However, know what you are doing first, as even experienced question writers should approach exceptions with caution.

This is a wickedly fast game played by many truly gifted players. Should one of your questions violate one of these rules and draw an unjust penalty from a good player, you justifiably deserve their wrath.

Anatomy of a Good Tossup

Consider these examples:

Example 1:

He is beaten by Maurice after he refuses to pay an extra five dollars for the prostitute he hired, but didn't sleep with, at the Edmont Hotel. He then makes a date with Sally Hayes, which falls apart after he asks her to run away to Vermont with him. He then tries to buzz Jane Gallagher, who he hasn't heard about since he left Pencey Prep. For 10 points – identify this sixteen year-old who spends three days in New York in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Answer: Holden **Caulfield**

This question is a straight-forward factually-dense question. It has many substantial clues: (1) the story about the prostitute, (2) the name of the hotel, (3) the name of the girl he tries to run away with, (4) the name of another girl, (5) the school he attended, (6) his age, (7) the city the novel is set in, and (8) the name of the novel.

Example 2:

This band was named partly in parody and partly in tribute of the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. Their first "full length" album, *Take a Look Inside*, has 14 songs but clocks in at less than 22 minutes. Their other full releases, *Dare to Be Surprised* and *One Part Lullaby*, have not matched the popularity of their soundtrack work. For 10 points – identify this band best known for its work on the 1994 soundtrack to *Kids* and the single *Natural One*.

Answer: The **Folk Implosion**

This question's lead-in has a twist, where the correct answer can be deduced from an obscure fact. It still has many substantial clues: (1) the origin of the band's name, (2) the names of three albums, (3) the length of the first album, (4) the band's involvement with the *Kids* soundtrack, (5) the time setting of the soundtrack, and (6) the band's best known single.

Someone who knows a lot about the band may be beaten on this question by someone who is able to figure out the answer based on the parody of "Blues Explosion." In the beginning, this

question is more like a puzzle, rewarding deduction more than "pure" factual recall (but not punishing it). Many very good questions have this quality.

II. ANSWERS

The fundamental precept regarding whether or not an answer should be acceptable is simple: if a player buzzes in and gives an answer that shows precise, accurate knowledge based on the information provided by that point in the question, that answer is correct.

Players should not be penalized for failing to clairvoyantly predict the twists of a question or for not providing the exact answer listed on the packet. Therefore it is the question writer's responsibility to ensure that questions refer to one specific answer from the beginning of the question, and to ensure that all reasonable correct answers *at all points in the question* are listed on the packet.

1. When more than one answer is required for a tossup, that must be stated at the outset in some form. "These two U.S. presidents..." or "Two answers required."

2. When a lead-in could lead to multiple possible answers - and this cannot be corrected by rewriting the question - a prompt must be placed to either accept the other answer(s) as correct or to prompt for the listed answer. In a creator-creation situation, this caveat need not apply, as players may already give both pieces of information, but it is recommended.

Consider the question which begins: "F. Sherwood Rowland of the University of California-Irvine..." At this point there are at least two reasonable answers: "1995 Nobel Prize in Chemistry" or "ozone layer," the subject of his research. A better lead-in is "It was the subject of research by F. Sherwood Rowland..." In no event is the original lead-in acceptable unless there is a note to accept both answers or to prompt on one of them.

In general, host notes are suboptimal solutions since moderators can easily miss them during a match. They also allow a question writer to write weaker questions; it is always better to have a question that leads unambiguously to one answer from the beginning.

3. All potential acceptable alternative answers should be listed. When these are insufficient to receive credit, a prompt must be included.

Whenever the answer given is substantially equivalent to the listed answer, but the given answer is later used as a clue in the question, the given answer must be accepted or a prompt must be given. For example, if an abbreviation for a group is given as a giveaway clue, but the player buzzes in early and gives the abbreviation, that should be taken as correct, or the player should be prompted for the group's full name.

a. Married and unmarried names for persons, especially women, must be supplied whenever appropriate. Birth names, as well as professional names and pen names must always be listed, along with common nicknames.

b. Royal titles must be listed whenever appropriate.

c. Scientific names must be listed as alternate answers whenever appropriate, especially for animals and plants.

d. Answers must also list commonly used symbols and letters that represent the same answer, such as the letter "c" for the speed of light. However, questions that ask what certain letters stand for in science are almost always awful, as the hundreds of major scientific fields all have their own abbreviations and symbols.

e. Official postal abbreviations should be accepted for states, or should be listed as answers that require prompts for more information.

f. Chemical symbols as well as element numbers should be accepted, or should be listed as answers that require prompts for more information. Also, many chemicals have several names and all names must be listed. (e.g. muratic acid = hydrochloric acid = HCl)

If the question is going to be reasonably gettable by most players who have been through introductory chemistry, the formula should not be too hard in the first place.

However, a possible problem with formulae arises when the same empirical formula applies to different chemicals. For example, a question leading the answer "fructose" should prompt on $C_6H_{12}O_6$, but not accept it as the correct response since that formula also applies to a host of 6-carbon sugars, such as glucose.

If there is a question about whether a moderator can interpret the formula, spell it out (e.g., C-6-H-12-O-6 or equivalent rearrangements, although for this example, a chemist who states it as "O-6-C-6-H-12" is a sick puppy).

4. Only the minimum information necessary to distinguish should be underlined. "Eleanor Roosevelt" or "Food and Drug Aministation" is sufficient.

a. The family name must be the one underlined; for languages other than English, this is not necessarily the last name listed. When in doubt, check a biographical dictionary. (Teams should always fact check all names of persons in a biographical dictionary before submitting a packet.)

b. Court case names usually require only the first party listed, though sometimes the second party alone is sufficient, especially if the first party listed is common. (e.g., Marbury v. Madison, Gitlow v. New York, United States v. Nixon.)

Sometimes, legal scholars choose to refer to cases based on the latter party's name for other reasons (such as the first party having a long name or being a scumbag, e.g., Bowers v. Hardwick or Bowers), in which case either party's name should be acceptable, or may shorten the party's name. (Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson or Vinson) Sometimes, especially with older cases, the parties may have a different order at the trial, appellate, and Supreme Court levels. Players should be prompted for a full case name only if the answer is ambiguous.

5. Answers must be listed in both English and the original language of the answer.

Ethnocentric English-only rules are never acceptable. The world is a diverse place, and this game is played by persons from all different parts of the world, as well as by persons from English-speaking nations who have an expert knowledge of other cultures. Someone with a native or expert knowledge of a foreign language and culture should be rewarded for this knowledge, not actively punished. More importantly, the question is about something that was originally written in another language. Indeed, if only one answer must be preferred, the foreign language title is the only correct answer. The English translation of that work is only a derivative of the work, but one that we choose to accept for ease of administering the game.

a. Country names must also be listed in the country's own language. "Kingdom of Bhutan or Druk Yul". The names of countries in their own languages are listed in almost all almanacs and geographical dictionaries.

b. Works written in a language other than English must have all original language titles listed, as well as all English translations, e.g. *L'E*tranger or *The O*utsider or *The S*tranger. Original titles are always listed in the various Benét's Reader's Encyclopedias, and most other reputable reference source.

c. Transliterated answers must be treated carefully, as they often generate a number of correct possible English translations. This is especially true of titles, such as "Night on the Bare Mountain," "Night on Bare Mountain," "Night on the Bald Mountain," and "Night on Bald Mountain," all of which are common English translations for the same Mussorgsky work.

6. When an exact answer is given that identifies the information in the question, that answer must be accepted, even if the listed answer is only an approximation of the given answer. Never should an exact answer to a question be counted as incorrect.

For example, if a question begins, "You want to find the area of a regular hexagon with sides 6..." and a player answers "24 radical 3," that answer should be taken as correct, even if the question finishes with "is the area closest to 31.4, 41.4, or 51.4?" (although this a terrible question...see the section on multiple choice answers below)

a. In a calculation question, the units of the final answer should be specified in the beginning, or equivalent answers must be listed to handle otherwise correct, but early answers.

7. When the information in the question is actually performed by a closely related group, or a subgroup of the listed answer, that other answer must also be listed, or ruled out.

For example, it is easy to confuse the precise roles or relationships between of the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee or the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

8. Words with the same root that show knowledge of the correct answer should usually be listed also. For example, a question that begins "this word is derived from..." which asks for something like "jingoism" should also accept "jingoistic." This would normally be an example of exact and unambiguous knowledge, except that many writers at the end of the question include something like "...name this 8-letter word."

9. Questions that do not indicate a level of geographic specificity early must accept other answers that show exact and unambiguous knowledge, or must prompt for more information. For example, "The Headquarters of the International Labor Organization, GATT, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, WHO,..." should ideally be answered "Geneva." However, if the question finishes "...are all located in what country," then the question is misleading.

10. Rules that allow blitzing (giving many correct facts hoping that one is the correct answer) are only necessary if questions are not written correctly, as correctly written questions lead to one unambiguous answer. Regardless of whether or not a specific tournament allows blitzing, it should be discouraged by question writers producing tightly worded questions that lead to only one answer from the first word to the last.

III. LEAD-INS

The purpose of a lead-in is to reduce the number of possible answers from the billions possible before the first word is spoken down to one specific, unambiguous answer. If at any point, the question is narrow enough to draw a reasonable answer that is wrong, the question **must be rewritten**.

1. Non-unique lead-ins that narrow the field of possible answers to just a few are not acceptable. Lead-ins must uniquely pinpoint one possible answer as soon as possible, or must be general enough not to draw an incorrect early answer.

"Maya Angelou wrote a poem for this event..." is not acceptable, as she wrote poems for (among other events) both Clinton's inauguration and the Million Man March. Instead, the question lead-in

must limit the range of answers to one (e.g., "In October 1995, Maya Angelou...)

However, lead-ins may take a few words to eliminate all answers but one; a player cannot buzz in after "This woman..." say "Susan B. Anthony" and argue that he or she is correct on the grounds that Susan B. Anthony, being a woman, satisfies all the information given up to that point in the question. It is obvious to everyone that there are billions of possible answers after those two words.

A good rule of thumb is that if there are less than ten possible correct answers at any point in your lead-in (and more than one) the question must be rewritten.

2. Question writers often use pronouns poorly. "It was inspired by Sauk Center, Minnesota..." is not acceptable, as it could draw an answer of both "*Main Street*" as well as "Gopher Prairie." A better lead-in is "This city was inspired by Sauk Center..." Another example is "President McKinley was assassinated here....," to which the answer could be "Buffalo" or "Pan American Exposition."

a. Improper use of the passive voice may lead to multiple correct possibilities. "A new color was added in 1995..." could lead to either "blue," "M&Ms," et cetera.

b. Too often, pronouns are used correctly, but do not distinguish between characters and actors. For example, "He uttered the famous line, 'Frankly my dear...'" does not distinguish between Clark Gable or Rhett Butler.

c. A related problem is recitation of quotations without specifying whether the speaker of the quote or the subject of the quote is wanted. For example, "Tell me what brand of whiskey he drinks. I would like to send a barrel of it to my other generals" could lead to either Grant or Lincoln.

3. Introductory phrases that modify a noun are not acceptable. For example, consider the lead-in "The author of the 1914 collection of short stories *Dubliners*, James Joyce was also famous for..." When someone hears "The author of the 1914 collection of short stories *Dubliners*," they will justifiably buzz in with "Joyce" and draw a penalty.

4. Introductions that do not have anything to do with the final answer are never acceptable.

a. Anything in the form "X is Y, but for 10 points, what is Z" must be rewritten (e.g., "*A Tale of Two Cities* was written by Charles Dickens, but who wrote 'Moby Dick.'")

Similarly, the question "Adelbert Ames served as governor of Mississippi from 1874....For 10 points - name the current governor" is unacceptable. Someone hearing "Adelbert Ames served as governor..." will justifiably buzz in with Mississippi.

b. Many lead-ins are good, but do not lead to the desired answer. If a question begins, "Manzanar in Lone Pine, California..." and a player answers "Japanese Internment Camps," that answer should be accepted as it *exactly* identifies what was asked, even if the question (stupidly) goes on to ask "what group of Americans were interned there during WWII," and the listed answer is "Japanese Americans." This is a case in which the question is acceptable, but the answer listed is the wrong one.

5. Lead-ins should contain facts that are substantially related to the correct answer.

a. Lead-ins should remain in the same general category as the desired answer. A question on an academic subject should not begin with a pop culture lead-in, nor should a science question describe a scientist's appearance in a work of fiction. Interdisciplinary questions are always encouraged, but should not be written as to unfairly penalize specialists in specific subject areas.

b. “Son-of-a-blank” lead-ins should only be used when there is a useful reason to know the profession of a person's parents. For example, “Daughter of an entomologist...” is an acceptable lead-in for Margaret Atwood, as her relationship with her father is an important element of some of her works (e.g. *Cat's Eye*) However, “Son of a tallow chandler...” as a lead-in for Daniel Defoe is inane.

c. Madlib lead-ins (Born in {YEAR}, he went to school at {SCHOOL} and studied under {PERSON}) should be used sparingly. A lead-in mentioning the year of birth should only be used when it is important to specify the proper time period early in the question.

6. Questions should be written in parallel structure when possible.

For example, a question that begins, "Until 1997, the tallest building in the world was located in Chicago..." could draw an answer of "Kuala Lumpur", the city in which the Petronas Towers were built. It is just misleading if the question goes on to ask "... in what country...", wanting Malaysia. If the question wanted the country, it should not have dangled Chicago in the lead-in.

The lead-in above, while it illustrates this point, is misleading for other reasons, as players could buzz in after "Until 1997, the tallest building in the world..." with either "Sears Tower" or "Petronas Towers," depending on where they think the question is going - the player should never be required to guess in this fashion.

a. Giving one half of a well-known pair in a lead-in, when not asking for the other half as the answer, is often misleading. For example, "One type of cholesterol is LDL..." would lead to an answer of "HDL." If the question goes on to ask "what does LDL stand for" or any other information, it is misleading. Similarly, if the question begins "Leander swam the Hellespont nightly to be with his love...", a player would buzz in with "Hero." If the question then goes on, however, to ask about Lord Byron swimming the Hellespont to re-enact this scene, the lead-in is misleading and must be rewritten.

7. The lead-in "for a quick 10 points" is not acceptable, nor are the questions that usually follow it. Questions that are only valuable to differentiate the split-second reactions of 8 simultaneous buzzes have no place in competition. Questions can be of varying length, but the absolute minimum question length should be two sentences.

8. Describing a work or a scene from a work when not asking for the title or author is misleading. A question beginning "A rat is killed with a frying pan is thrown across the room in a small Chicago apartment..." is acceptable if the answer is "*Native Son*," but not if the answer is "Bigger Thomas."

9. Calculation tossups are acceptable if used *very sparingly*, but they must be carefully written not to mislead players into buzzing before they have all the operations they must perform. In addition, they should never be exercises in brute, mechanical calculation speed.

10. A stylized type of question is a list tossup, where a large number of people or events sharing one common denominator are listed, followed by a giveaway. This type of question should be used sparingly (no more than once a packet) Ideally, the first two items in the list should be sufficient to uniquely identify the answer; if the answer cannot be uniquely identified after four items, the question must be rewritten.

a. Questions which list events and ask for which came first (or last) are unacceptable, as they devolve into buzzer races when the nature of the question is revealed.

b. A question of the form "which does not belong" is always unacceptable. For example, "*Innocents Abroad*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *The Origin of Species* -

which one was not written by Mark Twain" is simply unconscionable.

IV. GIVEAWAYS

The purpose of a giveaway is, obviously, to give the answer away. It should not always contain one of the easiest possible clues about the desired answer (without being insultingly easy) and should never contain a swerve or twist that leads to an answer that's different from the one that the lead-in has directed the player towards.

The giveaway is usually the part of a tossup that gauges to a tossup to a certain difficulty. Please see the note on the distribution of difficulty attached as the appendix.

1. Giveaways should always contain the phrase "For 10 points." This can appear at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence, and it indicates that the reader is in the final sentence of the tossup. There should be no lengthy pauses after the FTP clue, although the sentence that follows FTP can sometimes be rather long.
2. The giveaway should not eliminate any possible answers. If there are still possible answers that need to be eliminated by the giveaway, the rest of the question needs to be rewritten.
 - a. Spelling tossups are inappropriate for competition except in **extremely rare** circumstances in which it is clear to *everyone from the beginning of the question* that the tossup is a spelling question. Giveaways along the lines of "For 10 points - spell this word." are simply evil if there has been no previous hint that the tossup is a spelling question.
 - b. Too often, question writers end questions with "name this 11-letter word," which punishes someone who gives an adjective form instead of a noun form.
3. Bait and switch giveaways should be used sparingly. These occur when giveaways provide information about a more well-known person or event with the same name that is only tenuously related to the subject of the question. (e.g. "For 10 points - identify this German after whom the capital of North Dakota is named.")
 - a. Giveaways that ask for something of the same name that has absolutely no relation to the subject asked about before the giveaway are unacceptable. (e.g. "For 10 points - identify this saint who shares his name with a 10-year-old on *The Simpsons*.)

V. STYLE

Questions should be written to maintain the focus on factual information, not on the writer's personal preferences or beliefs.

1. Discriminatory language is unacceptable.
 - a. Sexist language as well as questions that assume certain social roles for women are unacceptable. Women should be identified primarily by their accomplishments, not their relationships to men. Inappropriate comments and questions about women's weight, bodies, sexual roles, etc. must be removed from the game.
 - b. Racist language or racially insensitive questions must similarly be avoided.
 - c. Inside jokes are almost always inappropriate, as are negative comments about other schools.
 - d. Use of the phrase "politically incorrect" and other meaningless stock-phrases should not be used, especially if they are used derogatorily toward underrepresented players in the activity.

e. Editorial slants in the questions are unacceptable; the object of the game is to reward knowledge of facts, not the question writer's opinions.

2. Questions must be easy to read aloud. We recommend that writers read the entire packet aloud as a final edit.

a. The use of the word "[blank]" in questions is often hokey and confusing, especially in tossups.

b. Writers must use correct grammar. Though many strict grammatical rules interfere with the flow of questions meant to be read aloud, basic grammar rules must be followed whenever possible.

c. Simple past tense should be used when appropriate. Past perfect should be used only to refer to events completed at or before a past time spoken of. Simple past also removes the extra word "had."

3. Questions must be tightly edited to remove all extraneous words and syllables; Correct editing can significantly reduce the length of questions. In a timed game, this means more questions may be asked. In an untimed game, tight editing prevents the game from deteriorating into drudgery and boredom.

4. Information that is time dependent or may become out of date must be date-stamped. Usually, a month and year is sufficient.

VI. SUBSTANTIAL INFORMATION

All information in a question should help players determine the correct answer. Too many questions contain vague, weak, fluffy, or insubstantial information, or meander for 2-3 lines before the meat of the question begins. *Just ask the question.*

1. Clues must be ordered from most to least obscure. Writers still do not apply this basic rule, perhaps because many lack the experience and knowledge to anticipate what other players will and will not know.

a. Too many questions have very difficult clues followed by very easy clues, with no intermediate levels of information. If a question topic lacks intermediate information, the subject may be inappropriate for a tossup. When a potential 80+ point swing hinges on every question, every professional attempt must be made to make the tossups multi-leveled and favorable toward players with more knowledge.

b. Stock clues should usually be avoided, and should never be used as lead-ins.

Question writers should strive to uncover new and interesting information about familiar subjects. Using tired, often-repeated information as clues makes for boring games and provides an unnecessary advantage for warhorse players over novices.

c. Non-clues are a waste of space.

Question writers should avoid using clues like "131 rivers flow into this lake, but only one flows out of it." No one is going to know which lake has 131 rivers flowing into it, and only one river flows out of all sorts of lakes. All information in a question should help someone answer the question. If it doesn't, don't put it in.

2. Inexplicit Criteria must be avoided.

Qualifiers like the costliest, the most expensive, etc. invariably lead to protests. The criteria need

to be explicitly stated.

What is meant by the "largest insurers"? The insurance companies with the most employees, the most office space, the greatest net profits, most insured, greatest gross revenues? What is meant by "the most expensive film ever made"? Adjusted for inflation by the CPI? In unadjusted dollars? Does it include advertising? Depending upon the qualification, this could lead to different answers and could change with time.

- a. When questions refer to events that occurred in geographical entities that no longer exist, the question must carefully pinpoint which answer is desired. A question referring to a 1970 natural disaster in what is now Bangladesh would likely cause a protest if East Pakistan is not an acceptable answer, since that was the entity's name in 1970. The same goes for the USSR, Yugoslavia, etc. If the desired information is not pinpointed very early in the question, a prompt must be placed in the answer should a player give the older (or, as appropriate, newer) name for an entity.
- b. Some information differs because the sources differ. When a conflict among reputable sources differs, the information must be omitted, or the conflict of the sources must be noted.
- c. Word and phrase origins cause persistent protests. Take the example of the notoriously unreliable history of "OK." One reference source lists over a dozen possible derivations. Unless this conflict is the meat of the question, it is inappropriate to write a question about the derivation of "OK" as it will just lead to protests.
- d. Dubious honorifics must be avoided. A question that begins with "He has long been considered the supreme lawgiver of the English language..." is not acceptable (Answer: Samuel Johnson). *Who* has "long considered" him "the supreme lawgiver of the English language"? Though it makes questions slightly longer, if writers want to include such dubious honorifics, they must include who bestowed them for a semblance of credibility.
- e. Subjective judgments asserted as fact must be avoided. Lead-ins like "the most important book of the 19th century..." lead to debates about *The Origin of Species*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and many other works.
- f. Whenever debatable judgments are made, the criteria must be specified. For example, what is meant by "the major persecuted ethnic minority" of a country - the most oppressed? Oppressed by the most people? The biggest group of people who are oppressed? The most noticeably oppressed? The group most in a position to bring its oppression to public debate? This is not the time to generate political, theological, or other endless debates. Use specific, verifiable facts in your questions.
- g. Questions with weak premises should be avoided. A common such premise is "he is the last entry in the biographical dictionary." Depending upon the dictionary, this could be Zwingli, Zworykin, or perhaps others. This is not a constant fact, and the ordering of someone's name in a dictionary is just stupid information compared to their accomplishments.
- h. Questions should not assume that the United States or Europe is the world. Information like "the most influential musician of the 1800s..." begs the question "influential to whom"? It is also important to specify humans when appropriate (e.g., "I will give you the name of an organ, you tell me..."), as many biologists play this game who know information about quite a number of species.

4. Factual errors occur with far too much frequency. Some occur because writers do not consult reference sources carefully when writing their questions; it is **always** inappropriate to write questions from memory. Others occur because some reference sources are not reliable.

- a. More errors occur because misinformation permeates the information/reference source

industry, as writers and publishers attempt to come up with the most outrageous, scintillating "facts" to sell their books. If something seems suspicious, check it with a reliable source. If it cannot be verified, strike the fact from the question. Overly dramatic questions with unverifiable assertions about history must be avoided.

b. In an effort to make questions creative and colorful, writers often speculate about motives, ideas, and thoughts of the question subject, or offer interesting interpretations of limited factual data. Such coloration, however, often makes questions factually inaccurate. Any "creativity" which butchers factual accuracy for cleverness isn't worthy of the label. A creative question will express information in a different, surprising, or thoughtful way, but not in a way that renders the information absurd or wrong. If speculation will make a question more interesting, it must be noted as speculation with qualifiers like "perhaps."

c. Works performed by teams should not be attributed solely to the group's leader, as it is factually inaccurate.

5. Questions with answers that are academic disciplines or broad fields of thought should be avoided. Such questions with answers as existentialism, anthropology, sociology, etc. are invariably inane, limited, and wrong. Modern academic disciplines, with dozens of subfields, do not allow for such questions. Ask something about the *content* of the field instead.

6. Calculation of the number of years that elapse between dates should usually be avoided, especially if rounding could yield conflicting answers (e.g., "If the next landing of humans on the moon occurs in the year 2025, how many years will have elapsed since the first?" as it depends on whether the landing takes place after July 20, 2025.) Asking for the current year in other calendar systems has the same problem. The exact reference points must be specified.

7. Make sure not to confuse similar terms in your questions.

a. Largest does not mean most populous. The largest city in the United States is not New York City, but Anchorage. Questions that ask for population figures must specify the measured entities (cities, SMSAs, etc.) as well as what measurement is being used (e.g., the 1990 Census).

b. Writers must correctly distinguish between percent and percentage. "Percentage" is a mass unit number which carries the unit of the original, while "percent" is a fraction of 100. If 18 of 24 tossups are answered correctly, the "percentage" answered correctly is 18 tossups, or 75 percent.

VII. BONUSES

Unlike tossups, a team receiving a bonus question has the opportunity to hear the entire question before answering; however, many of the same principles still apply. Bonuses should of course contain correct factual information, but they should also be succinct, easy to read, and interesting.

1. All bonuses are worth 30 points, and all possible point values are multiples of five. Bonuses should distinguish between teams with little knowledge of the subject of hand, those with some knowledge, and those with deep knowledge.

a. Commonly used bonus formats includes three questions of 10 points each; three questions, one worth 5 points, one worth 10, and one worth 15; four questions, two worth 5 points and two worth 10; the 30-20-10 progressive bonus; two 15-10 or 15-5 progressive questions; five 5 point question with a bonus five points for answering all correctly; or a one-part question asking a team to identify five or six related items.

b. Questions that stop when the players miss an answer are unacceptable. Players should not be penalized based on an arbitrary ordering of questions.

c. All or nothing single-answer bonuses cannot be used. These bonuses penalize a team with slightly less than perfect knowledge just as much as a team with no knowledge, and are therefore inappropriate.

d. 40-point clues and 1-point clues used in trash competitions are unacceptable for academic events.

2. Bonuses with a single answer per part should have no fewer than 3 parts, and no more than 5. The more bonus parts that are used, the shorter the text of the question has to be; bonuses should take no more than 40 seconds to complete in timed events, and only slightly longer to complete in untimed events.

a. Questions should not repeat the point value in each sub- part when it is the same. Just say "for 10 points each" at the beginning and ask the questions. Repeating the point value wastes time.

b. Questions with less than 3 answers should use progressive clues to have at least three prompts. The 30-20-10 bonus, as well as two 15-5 or 15-10 progressions are accepted formats.

3. Questions that require ordering of a list, with points awarded for placing each item in the proper place, are unacceptable, because they reward luck and guessing and can frequently punish knowledge. A team that places only one item out of order may receive no points. They also permit a team *with no knowledge of the subject whatsoever* to win a tied match by guessing the same answer for each slot. Write instead about something substantial about the subject. Content-based questions requiring exact factual recall are always better.

a. Ordering a short (3-item) list on an all-or-nothing basis is acceptable for a bonus part. (e.g. For 10 points - put the following events in order: Balboa discovers the Pacific, Cortez conquers the Aztecs, De Soto discovers the Mississippi.)

b. In a list like the one above, players should only need to give short bits of information that uniquely identify the items to get points--such as "Balboa," "Mississippi" - although "the first one" and the like are not acceptable.

c. Ordering items correctly can be used as a bonus in a question that asks for them to be named. (e.g. "Identify the five most populous countries in Africa, with a bonus five points for putting them in order from most to least populous.") However, questions that require both the derivation and the correct ordering of a list are punitively difficult and thus unacceptable.

4. Multiple choice questions are never acceptable. If you expect teams to know nothing about the question - so much so that you must give choices - then the question is inappropriate; write a different question. Again, it is never acceptable for teams to get points by guessing when the team has no knowledge of the subject whatsoever. The same applies to true/false and other limited choice questions (even with 4+ choices). A question that does not lend itself to a unique, verifiable answer is inappropriate.

5. Progressive, or 30-20-10 questions are often written poorly.

a. The first clue must always pinpoint one unique gettable answer. For example, "This writer was born in 1907 in New York City" is unacceptable as it could apply to at least dozens of people.

b. The 30-point clue should neither be impossibly difficult or inane; approximately 10-20% of teams should answer the 30-point clue correctly.

c. The 10 point clue is often far too easy. Teams are not entitled to 10 points automatically. Teams should be able to get the question at some point 80-90% of the time, though.

6. Bonus parts with more than one clue should follow a less strict pyramidal style, not to reward the team with more knowledge (as with tossups) but to make the question more interesting.

If a bonus part reads "The capital of Denmark, this city is home to the Little Mermaid statue and Tivoli Gardens," a team will want to answer after "Denmark," and the rest of the question will be ignored. Rephrasing the question as "Home to the Little Mermaid statue and Tivoli Gardens, this city is the capital of Denmark" is better, as teams will be more likely to need to hear the whole question before answering.

Phrasing bonus parts in this modified pyramidal style also makes it more difficult for teams trailing in timed matches to use the "hurry-up offense." In order to both save time and earn points, they will have to have deeper knowledge of the subject.

7. Trite, insipid lead-ins to bonuses should not be used. Anything resembling the following is off limits:

"My roommate Al has a complete Beatles collection..."

"Everyone has heard of..."

"We all know that..."

"Let's play that game: match the artist..."

"It's time again for everyone's favorite African capitals quiz..."

"You might know (or not know) about X, but this question is about Y..."

"For example, if I said X, you'd say Y..." (If the question is that difficult to understand, you might consider not asking it.)

"How well do you know your Athenian history?..."

"The breakup of Yugoslavia has created a bunch of new world capitals for any good academic competitor to memorize. How far along are you."

"We all grew up listening to early 90s rock and roll..."

"Let's hearken back to the not so distant past..."

"It's time for your favorite biology game..."

"It's time again for everyone's favorite question..."

Don't waste time: just ask the question.

How to Get Good at Quiz Bowl

Again, a variety of resources follow.

- Practice more and go to as many meets as possible - the more you attend with a group the more they are likely to respond to training themselves to do better. Start as young as possible and try to keep them together - the longer they stay the better they will get. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)

How to Get Good at This Game

by Roger S. Bhan

Okay, people. Here it is. I've heard the question time and again, so I figured I'd spell it out for everyone's benefit.

A lot of you are probably looking for a simple and fast way to answer more questions. Sorry to disappoint you, but there isn't one. If you find that discouraging, then stop reading. Go jump into a punching bag and let the real players keep beating up on you.

Getting good at this game is a pretty intense process. It involves a good amount of dedication and motivation. However, the process itself is very simple. It's just a matter of sticking to it.

Step 1: Enjoy what you're doing. If you really like sitting at a buzzer and answering (or attempting to answer) questions about stuff other people don't know, then you're already on the right track. This is a game, and games are meant to be fun. If this is frustrating or boring, or too serious for you, stop reading. And stop playing, for that matter. You're ruining it for the rest of us.

Step 2: Figure out what you're good at. This game, regardless of format (ACF, CBI, or NAQT), contains tons of categories and subcategories for everyone. Literature, science, history, philosophy, sports, classical music, etc. all appear in varying degrees. No one person is expected to know all this crap. That's why there are four people on a team instead of one. Socrates' axiom, "Know thyself," works pretty well in this case. There will be some categories you rock, some you're so-so in, and some that just fly right over your head. Determine which ones are the best for you.

Step 3: Here's where the waters get a little murky. This is the crucial step that involves all the work necessary at getting better. There are actually three sub-steps involved. I'll list them for you in no particular order.

- **Step 3 (a): GO TO PRACTICE,** you delinquent! You need to have a buzzer in your hand at least once (if not twice) a week. You need to keep the wheels inside your head turning. If they sit still for too long, rust will develop on them. You should be in a competitive environment as often as possible. And don't just sit there with the buzzer in your hand. Practice actively. When a question goes by that you feel you should've known, write it down so you can remember and learn it for next time (I promise it will come up again). Practicing passively will still help some, but will not help as much. Be active. Take an interest in the questions that you are being asked.
- **Step 3 (b): GO TO TOURNAMENTS!** This is the best way to acquire new information. Tournaments are also where you demonstrate your skills gained from all the practicing you've done. Tournaments are a lot of fun, and the more you attend, the better you'll get. And just like practice, compete actively. Write down stuff you don't know for later assimilation. Tournaments are also great for gauging your skill against other people besides your own WUAT members. Depending on what categories you handle, you can see how you rate against the other lit or science or whatever people around the country.
- **Step 3 (c): WRITE QUESTIONS!** This is probably the most important aspect of getting better at this game, so I'll say it one more time. WRITE QUESTIONS! Okay, one more time. WRITE QUESTIONS! It's a time-consuming process, but the more you write, the better you'll get. What do you write about? Write questions in the categories that you do best. Write questions on stuff you learned in class, or read in a novel. Remember all that stuff you wrote down in practice and at the last tournament? Write questions about that stuff! Writing questions helps in several ways. It etches that bit of knowledge into your brain because you took the time to do a little research about your subject matter. It teaches you about the anatomy of a question, how a question is structured (most difficult to least difficult clues, in case you hadn't figured it out). Write two questions a day. Write a toss-up and a bonus. I guarantee you will notice the difference in your play between tournaments if you maintain writing two questions a day. You have no reason not to do this. It takes 20 minutes a day, it makes you smarter, you'll score more points, and it'll make you look attractive to people (okay, maybe not the last part, but you get the idea). If you're having trouble writing questions, ask someone with experience for help. Any older member of WUAT will be glad to help you (or direct you to someone who can).

Step 4: Get your stuff together. Now that you know the three ways to get better at this game, integrate that stuff. Write some questions. When the stuff you wrote about comes up in practice, impress your friends by nailing the toss-up five words into the question. Take that knowledge to the next tournament and lead your team to sweet victory. It's a process that reinforces itself every time you write a question about something you think you should've known.

Step 5: Get motivated and motivate others! Remember, you're on a team and no one person can win by himself or herself. You're going to notice the difference very soon if you keep writing questions and your teammates don't. And it'll just become more frustrating as you answer more questions and your team still isn't winning. Form some friendly rivalries with your teammates. See who can outscore each other at tournaments, or see who can learn art history best, or something like that. Get motivated to win!

Some people might look at this little regimen as taking the fun out of the game. I have two responses to that. First, this is a learning process, and learning the information described above can be lots of fun. It's tons of fun when you hear a toss-up on a question you wrote the day before and nail it five words into the question. It's a lot of fun when you smash other teams into oblivion because you know ten times more than them. Second, the other teams are going to follow this regimen, whether you do or not. If that's the case, you will lose every time. And I don't care how little self-esteem you have. Losing is never fun.

The bottom line: Put in a little effort, get big results. And that, my friends, is how you get good at this game.

How To Improve as a Player

From NAQT

Like nearly all activities in which score is kept, quiz bowl is fun to play on a casual, social level without investing significant time in improving one's ability. Nonetheless, it is a competitive endeavor, and no national championship has ever been won by a team, however intelligent and educated, that had just sat down to play for the very first time. Winning consistently at the highest level has only been brought about by diligent, directed preparations.

This article describes ten methods that players have successfully used to improve themselves and offers some links to resources that might be useful in pursuing them. These suggestions should be equally applicable to any level of play (middle school, high school, community college, college), though the actual material that one should study will vary.

1. **Competing.** The most obvious (and most enjoyable) route to improvement as a player is actually competing in quiz bowl matches. In addition to simply hearing questions (and their answers!), there is no substitute for real tournaments when it comes to the non-knowledge-related parts of the game: working together on bonuses, developing the intuition to anticipate questions, shaking off the effects of a bad buzz, and simply hearing and processing clues in the rapid-fire way in which they are often delivered.

Teams that are serious about getting better should compete as often as their schedule, chauffeurs, and budget allow; you can find NAQT tournaments on [NAQT's schedule page](#), while others are listed on the [Yahoo! collegiate quizbowl group](#), the [Yahoo! high school quizbowl group](#), and the [World of High School Quiz Bowl](#) site.

As a general rule, tournaments are interested in having everybody attend, particularly new schools. Usually nothing more needs to be done than e-mailing or calling the listed contact to say, "Washington High School wants to attend your tournament on January 28 with two teams; can you send me the necessary information?" Rarely is any sort of league membership or organizational affiliation required, and, if it is, it is usually prominently mentioned in the announcement for the event. Most tournaments are willing to take more than one team from a school and often discount teams beyond the first, so there's no need to artificially limit your institution to one team if you have lots of interested players. Sometimes tournaments will even allow players from different schools to play together (on teams ineligible for the title); if you have an "extra" player or two, ask if this would be allowed so that your own playing time or that of your teammates or students isn't reduced by being forced to alternate.

If tournaments are scarce in your region, you can host your own or start a local league. NAQT can [supply questions for such an event](#) or, if you have a lot of time, you can write your own. NAQT is also more than willing to offer advice on planning your event and can provide contact lists for nearby schools to invite.

In short, play as frequently as you can. This is most important for beginning players who need to develop a sense of "what comes up" and "when should I buzz." As players mature and begin attending harder tournaments, the value of more concentrated, knowledge-based preparation (i.e., "studying") rises, but in the beginning, there is nothing better than actual matches.

2. **Practicing.** Real competition is better, but practice can fulfill some of the same objectives. If you have a choice of practice materials, you'll want to choose those that are similar to those at the competitions you will be entering and that are as hard as possible without being demoralizing; harder questions will expose you to more answers and more clues, which serve players better in the long run than packets in which nine-tenths of the bonus points are converted. For formats, like NAQT's, that feature both tossups and bonuses, it is important to resist the temptation to only play tossups if the true goal is improvement; bonuses contain the harder questions and the harder clues and there is a great deal of value in just knowing that a certain answer exists--oftentimes a difficult tossup can be answered at the end, on the giveaway clue, without knowing anything substantive about the subject. In addition, it is a truism that new topics enter the quiz bowl "canon" as bonus parts and eventually become tossup answers. Practicing on bonuses will introduce you to these topics earlier rather than later.

NAQT does not recommend practicing with one-fact, Trivial-Pursuit-style questions if the goal is team improvement; these questions do not represent quiz bowl as played at the level of national competition and the impressive reaction speed that might be realized is simply not equal to the benefit that could be gained from practicing on pyramidal questions. Please note that NAQT has no opinion whatsoever on the value of things done for fun or in order to attract new players or as fundraisers; if you enjoy playing one-clue tossups or Trivial Pursuit, that's absolutely fine, but it will not serve to raise the level of your quiz bowl play to that required of national championship contenders.

Most teams, however, don't have a real choice as to practice materials--they go so quickly that, quite soon, everything that is available has been played. If you need additional practice materials, here are some choices:

- NAQT has individual [sample packets available for download](#). These will only last you a game, but if you are just starting out, it is better than nothing.
- NAQT also sells tournament sets from previous years as [practice material](#). The invitational series sets will serve as excellent preparation for high school, community college, and young college teams. Experienced college teams will want to practice on the old Intercollegiate Fall Tournament sets or Sectional Championship Sets.
- You will also want to acquire the sets used as tournaments you attend; most hosts will sell them to you afterwards, even if they haven't announced that they were going to do so in advance. You can buy the questions used at NAQT events for \$25 after the tournament, which is cheaper than the \$35 plus shipping that the set would cost if purchased over our website. This practice is also environmentally sound, since it reduces the amount of paper that the host has to throw out.
- There is also the [Stanford Archive](#) of free question sets. These are almost exclusively collegiate sets. As they come from authors and editors all over the country and were written with many styles and distributions in mind, the quality is highly variable. Almost all of these sets are in the ubiquitous tossup-bonus format used at the college level. If you are interested in such things, play the sets in chronological order and watch the game's standards evolve toward those of the present day.
- Finally, it is often possible to purchase question sets that other hosts have written themselves. Prices and quality vary, but it is quite easy to contact the host by e-mail after the event to ask if the packets are for sale and, if so, the cost, number of packets, and questions per packet, involved. No tournament host will be

offended. Note that hosts of NAQT events may not sell, trade, or give the questions to teams that did not attend their tournament.

Most national-caliber teams practice four to six hours per week with new questions whenever they can obtain them. Again, there is no obligation to work this hard to participate in and enjoy quiz bowl, but if you want to win at the national level, it will probably take that much commitment from yourself and your teammates.

- 3. Writing Questions.** Writing questions is a traditional and proven way of improving as a player; few things fix new facts in a way that is as likely to assist their recall during matches as actually framing questions that use them. That said, writing questions is very time-consuming (and writing competition-quality questions even more so); experienced players sometimes question its return per invested-hour when compared with other approaches.

Sometimes question-writing can't be avoided; many invitational tournaments at the collegiate level (and a smaller number at the high school level) require that teams submit a packet, so it helps to have a store of pristine questions for your share of the packet or, at the very least, a developed sense of what resources you'll want to use and what will make for a good question.

Question writing is most useful in your weakest areas as a player; those are the areas in which reading (or at least skimming) reference works, verifying facts, and thinking of ways to connect the subject to what you are already know are most valuable. It's easier to write questions in your fields of expertise, but doesn't produce as much improvement. It never hurts to write two or three questions on the same subject, just to cover the material and phrase the clues in different ways. Take careful note of interesting anecdotes or links to other subjects--these will also appeal to other people and will be chosen as lead-ins to their own questions on the topic. Also note the first things listed in encyclopedia articles; these will often be the facts that end up as giveaways.

This document isn't a primer on question writing, but there are [several such guides available](#) on the Web. Not everything in those documents is accepted by modern players (or was accepted by their contemporaries), but, by and large, they are useful guides to producing questions. If at all possible, you'll want to get experienced players to review your questions, particularly if they are going to be read at a tournament.

If you have trouble motivating yourself to write, you could try writing questions for practice (perhaps competing with teammates such that the writer of the fewest buys age-appropriate drinks for the others). As your writing matures, you could also start writing freelance packets for tournament playoffs (watch the mailing list for advertisements) in exchange for practice questions or money and/or even writing for NAQT itself.

- 4. Studying You Gotta Know Lists.** Each month NAQT publishes a [short article of topics that players "gotta know"](#). For example, "[You Gotta Know These Economists](#)." These contain eight to twelve items that come up over and over again in quiz bowl, either because of their intrinsic importance (mostly) or their idiosyncratic appeal. A Division I collegiate team would be expected to know nearly everything on the lists from their giveaways. A high school team that knew everything on the lists would probably be in a position to do extremely well at nationals. There's obviously a lot more that gets asked

about than what is in the articles, but measured in terms of points-per-fact-learned, these are the subjects to start with.

5. **Reading.** NAQT hopes that quiz bowl will introduce players to new ideas, books, disciplines, and interests, but concedes that that actually reading the novels, dramas, and (to a lesser extent) poems that come up is a very inefficient way to improve as a player (though it is very worthwhile for other reasons). That said, NAQT emphasizes plot-based literature questions (rather than title-author matching) and knowing the entire plot of a novel becomes increasingly important at higher levels of play (the HS NCT, college play in general); for better-known works, it is also true at the level of regular-season high school play. Teams would do well to have players who have collectively read everything on our list of most frequently asked works of literature; questions about these works will not hesitate to ask about characters, settings, plot points, and general themes, with the detail required increasing at each level of play. Conversely, for works that come up less often, knowing the author, the name of the major character, and the single most important plot element, will often garner for the full 30 points on a bonus.

As you can probably guess, reading summaries of works of literature is often rewarded; NAQT [recommends several such collections](#).

6. **Reference Works.** Another good way to prepare is by reading [reference works](#) that go over wide swathes of history or learning; particularly good are those that purport to enumerate what everybody should have learned (or be in the process of learning) in high school. These would include *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* and *An Incomplete Education*. Similarly useful are works that link together developments and ideas from different disciplines (such as *A Short History of Everything*) or which are general histories of one kind of knowledge (like *The Discoverers*). These often derive much of their entertainment value from interesting facts and anecdotes about discoverers or discoveries and it is exactly those anecdotes that tend to find their way into questions. It's also true that there aren't so many of these books around--you are likely to read some that are also used as references by the people, whoever they may be, who are writing the questions for your next tournament.

Clearly writers who use any of these popular sources should make doubly sure that their questions aren't merely summaries of the articles and don't duplicate any of the peculiar phrases found in them!

7. **Lists.** The most stereotypical, most mocked, and least fun means of preparing for tournaments is studying lists of facts. There are many good topics: foreign capitals, Nobel Prize winners, geologic periods, European monarchs, Chinese dynasties, authors of novels, artists of paintings, nicknames of symphonies, vice presidents of presidents, and so forth. Even just a few practice games will suggest many other common linkages that could be put into tabular form and memorized.

This is a powerful tool for those with the proper motivation, but it is best leavened with reading, question writing, and actual gameplay, because the time spent on the pure lists of facts will go much further with mental structures to which to attach them. Learning that [Christopher Isherwood](#) wrote *Goodbye to Berlin* will not stick in the mind nearly so well if you know nothing else about him. Conversely knowing something about Isherwood will make it easier to buzz on the words "wrote *Goodbye*" if the previous clues in the question suggest 1930s' Germany.

NAQT sells [frequency list study guides](#) of the works of literature (1,401 titles), art (257 titles), and music (522 titles) that have come up most frequently since its very first packet set in November 1996. The lists include the title of the work, the creator, the genre of the work, and its year of creation. The lists are also available on a subscription basis so you can get updated ones each year at a fraction of the cost of the original.

Don't be afraid to study lists if you think that your team has a shot at greatness; nearly all top-echelon players have done so at some point in their careers. Just don't allow lists to become the principal focus of your preparation.

8. **Notebooks.** A technique that several players have used with great success is taking a pocket notebook to tournaments and practices. The idea is not to record every single unknown fact for later memorization, but to make a list of answers of which you have never, or only vaguely, heard. After the tournament, you should go through the notebook and look up basic information (an online encyclopedia article, perhaps) about each one so that you will at least know the giveaway clues if the answer comes up again. Even better would be the practice of writing a question or two about each new topic to cement the knowledge.

This is more useful than it sounds because once a topic has come up in quiz bowl it is very likely to do so again. Players writing questions for invitational tournaments will tend to write about subjects that they know have been asked before; many are also intrigued by new topics and new ideas and the circulation of tournament questions as practice material ensures that many other players will have heard the same new question as you and been motivated to learn about it as well. And if they learn about it by writing questions, those questions will probably end up being submitted to a tournament.

The overall difficulty of the collegiate circuit began to dramatically increase after 1993 when the widespread availability of the Internet made it easier to organize tournaments and purchase practice questions; as teams practiced on questions from all over the country, answers that had previously been considered new, or even impossibly difficult, became comparatively commonplace and teams accepted the growth of what was considered "askable" as a fact of the game. A similar phenomenon has taken place at the level of nationals-caliber high school teams.

This is good in the sense that players are exposed to a great deal more information and have undoubtedly learned much to stay competitive, but it has also raised the bar for new players and new schools looking to get involved; in 1993 four well-read students from a variety of majors could form a team that expected to win some of its games at its first tournament. In 2003 it's unlikely that four inexperienced players could take even one match from varsity teams with two years' experience. Younger teams shouldn't despair, though; there are plenty of juniorbird tournaments and other events with them in mind and everybody improves with practice. Everything that you ever hear a question on, you *will* eventually hear another question on, so take the time to learn at least the basic facts behind every answer you encounter.

9. **Current Events.** A significant element of NAQT play (comparatively more at the collegiate level than at the high school) consists of questions about current events, with about 50% of the material pertaining to the United States and 50% to the rest of the world. You can prepare for these by subscribing to--and reading--just about any

newspaper, news magazine, or [Internet news site](#). Almost all such questions will be from the past 18 months, with most focusing on the previous six.

NAQT emphasizes events of major importance--diplomatic initiatives, economic policies, elections, military actions, natural disasters, scientific discoveries, etc--and will ask relatively few questions about scandals or crimes. It shouldn't be hard to pick out the major news threads of the past several months and make notes of the people, places, groups, and ideas involved.

At the very least, you'll want to be able to name the most recent of Nobel Prize winners, the [current cabinet](#), the [presidents and/or prime ministers of major countries](#), recent Supreme Court decisions, and prominent [senators](#) and [governors](#).

10. **Visual Art.** Few high schools offer courses on art history and, while many colleges and universities do, not many quiz bowlers elect to make one part of their electives. Nonetheless, NAQT (and nearly every other group of question writers) believes the fine arts to be an important part of a well-rounded education and devote a significant, if small, quota to painting and sculpture.

These questions are low-hanging fruit for players willing to expend some time preparing since there are [relatively few works of visual art that come up with any regularity](#), in part because the lack of a standardized curriculum prevents detailed questions about harder works. [Looking up those works](#) would be an excellent way to have a good shot at the half-dozen-or-so painting and sculpture tossups per tournament. NAQT favors questions that describe the composition, detail, symbolism, and style of works of art (rather than just asking for their creators), so you'll want to make sure you can recognize the painting or sculpture from a description.

These are ten ideas that have worked for players in the past and which we recommend to teams interested in taking their game to the next level. We would be very interested in hearing from experienced players about other techniques that have helped them prepare for tournaments.

How Do I Reward and Recognize My Players?

Recognition is important for everyone. I do a number of things to recognize players for hard work and great play. I post practice standings weekly. I post a merit board prominently in my room and award stickers (kind of like football players get helmet stickers for great plays). I award stickers for: each 1000 level of points attained, playoff appearances and wins, highest monthly scores, most improved monthlies, tournament MVPs, highest report card averages, students of the month, Governor's Honors nominees, other academic awards, etc.

At the end of the year, I award engraved medals for MVP and Most Improved at both levels, and a medal recognizing any tournament places or trophy wins (i.e. region win, 3rd place, etc.). I also award a trophy for Coaches' award, not necessarily the best player, but the most committed and most commendable in work ethic.

Secure a prominent trophy case in the school to display awards. I keep two perpetual plaques in ours, one for each year's Team MVP and one for the "3000 Club." Each year, I have their names engraved. I chose 3000 kind of arbitrarily. Every player that gets 3000 or more practice points in a year or better gets recognized. It averages out to 4-5 names a year. If you don't have trophies? Make some until you do. Put something in to recognize the team.

Players may letter just as in a sport. You set the criteria, based on practice attendance, tournament attendance and performance, practice performance, etc.

Announce achievements to the school and in emails to faculty. Have them put on the school webpage. If you happen to appear on High Q, have the episode aired over school TVs during study hall or something. Include certificates and awards in your school's honors night program.

Make sure to keep principals informed!

- Morning assembly announcements on Monday's after meets with trophies is always good.
- We set a Faculty vs Academic Team Assembly that is always popular - especially when the students win which is not very often. We play a one round game.
- Announcements in all our publications when something good happens.
- Emails to advisors or general faculty if one or more of the team does something special in a meet. (Wayne Parker, Lovett)