

October 9, 2009

To: Academic Pentathlon Coaches  
From: Meredith Davis, Coordinator

Re: Update of the October 6 Meeting

- If you were unable to attend the coach's meeting last Tuesday, call me at 468-9030 or my assistant Pam at 468-4866 or email me at [mdavis@sjcoe.net](mailto:mdavis@sjcoe.net) to request your 2010 Study Guides. Please be sure to indicate which grade levels(s) you are interested in receiving. We will send them, a copy of the short selections under study, and the sample essay packets out to you directly, but only on request.
- In the 6th Grade Study Guide, there is a list of 8 (eight) essay prompts on the novel *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling and on the Super Quiz topic—Ancient Civilizations of India. One (not three) of these eight prompts along with a quotation from the enclosed list and with a generic quotation not previously seen will compose the three possible prompts on competition day. Students will be given two writing sheets for their compositions.
- In the 7th and 8th grade guides, the literature and Super Quiz prompts are samples only. On competition day, a new previously-unseen prompt either from the novel or from the social science topic will be included along with one of the listed quotations and a new quotation.
- The literature questions for 6th grade will cover only Book I of the *Jungle Books*. Also, in the 6th grade poem copies handed out at the meeting, only the section All The Beasts Together in the poem entitled "Parade-Song of the Camp-Animals" by Rudyard Kipling will be included on the test.
- On our website at <http://www.sjcoe.org/sae/pentath.aspx> you will find a link to all the necessary competition forms which are fillable online. They may then be downloaded to your desktop and emailed to us at [mdavis@sjcoe.net](mailto:mdavis@sjcoe.net) as an attachment or faxed to us at 468-9232. You will also find links to Important Dates, Meeting Agendas, Meeting Updates and Additional Information. Hopefully, this will lessen the amount of postage and paper we use this year.
- While the deadline to send in your Intent to Participate form is not until February 12, Pam and I would appreciate receiving it as soon as you are certain your school wishes to participate. This information is important in our planning. Also, early submission guarantees that you will receive your Practice Tests in January.

- Some important dates to remember are:

January—Practice tests sent to registered teams

February 12—Intents to Participate due

March 10—Spring Coaches' Meeting

March 26—Paperwork and fees due

**May 1—Competition for 7th/8th grades at East Union High**

**May 8—Competition for 6th grade at Manteca High**

- I have attached a number of documents to this email. They include the 7th/8th grade schedule and East Union High map, a 6th grade schedule and Manteca High map, a 2010 calculator policy, a list of the 2010 essay quotations for 6th, 7th and 8th grades, and a copy of the essay scoring rubric. These will also appear under Additional Information on our website.
- Registration fees remain \$100 per team with a maximum of 2 teams per grade level per school. Again, the deadline for paperwork is March 26. It is extremely important that team and alternate rosters be sent to us in a timely manner since test and testing room preparation for competition depends on having that information. The scoring room crew and I would appreciate no changes being made to team rosters the morning of the competition if possible. The Student Participation forms are needed for all starters and alternates and must be received by us before competition day. Students who do not have a parent-signed form may not participate.
- Although there is no maximum number, coaches are asked to bring only those alternates who have earned the right to participate in the competition. While we do not want any student who has studied and prepared to be left out on competition day, coaches may wish to consider a second team if GPAs allow it. Remember, students can always move up in category just not down. Also, if you have a team of only 6 with 2 students in each of the three categories, the team is still viable since only the top two student scores per category are used to calculate team scores. If you should still have more than 9 alternates per grade level, let Pam or I know ahead so plans can be made to accommodate all.
- We are asking that each school provide at least one Super Quiz proctor, one test proctor and an essay reader **per team**. Even more volunteers would be helpful. Our Pentathlon events are dependent upon volunteer support, so Pam and I truly appreciate your help. The jobs of test proctor and Super Quiz proctor require no previous experience. Parents, friends and colleagues are a great resource. For essay readers, we prefer people who have some experience with the writing process and with using a scoring rubric. Volunteer forms are available online at <http://www.sjcoe.org/sae/pentathforms.aspx>.
- Team organization remains the same—three Honors (GPA of 3.75 – 4.0), three Scholastic (GPA of 3.25 – 3.74) and three Varsity students (GPA of 0.00 – 3.24). All teams will be using only five classes on which to figure Pentathlon eligibility—mathematics, reading, language arts, social studies, and science. If you have only one

grade for language arts (with no separate grade for reading) then count that grade twice to arrive at the students' average. If your school is on a traditional semester schedule, count the first two quarter grades to establish team eligibility. On the trimester system coaches are asked to average either the first two trimesters if time before competition permits or the first trimester with midterm grades for the second trimester. If your school is using the SUSD or the Lammersville rubric grading system, I will be sending you a worksheet to convert your scores sometime soon. It may very well be that the break between categories for these two districts may be somewhat different from those noted above. Again, I will let you know.

- Only starters need their GPAs calculated, not alternates. All alternates are pooled together and have no category designation. Student Participation forms and Team Rosters must be signed by a school administrator to verify school enrollment and GPAs. I will not need copies of any transcripts.
- The Super Quiz will again consist of a written portion (taken by both starters and alternates) and an oral relay round (for starters only). Each portion will comprise 50% of a student's score except for alternates whose written test is 100% of their score. For the oral relay we will use the 30-question format with each group of three students getting 10 oral questions. Unlike the written test, the oral relay is collaborative with the designated team captain marking the single scantron for the group. Students have a total of 15 seconds to arrive at and mark an answer. Tables will be provided for 6th grade teams only. The captains of the 7th and 8th grade teams will be provided with a clipboard. All questions will be read orally by the Super Quiz master and will appear via PowerPoint on a screen. In addition each SQ proctor will have a booklet of questions to show his/her group. The Super Quiz topic for each grade is social science this year.
- Math is the only test to which students **may** bring electronic assistance in the form of calculators. All teams are required to follow the county calculator policy which is attached. Calculators should be the four-function variety with percent and square root functions if desired. Scientific, graphing, fraction calculators among others, are not allowed. Read the policy carefully and check student calculators for compliance before the event date. Please note that the county office will not be providing calculators for loan at the competitions.
- No electronic equipment (with the exception of calculators on the math test) or other unnecessary baggage i.e.backpacks will be allowed in the testing rooms or on the gym floor during the oral relay Super Quiz. All such prohibited items found will be removed and kept by the proctor until the end of the testing/relay. Students are asked to keep their hands out of their pockets and to avoid wearing hooded and multi-pocketed jackets/shirts. As always, it is important to keep the playing field level.
- Pencils will be provided at the competition for all students along with the tests, scantrons and writing packets. Students may wish to bring their own mechanical pencils; however, it is very important that the lead be #2 so that student answers are able to be read by the scanner.

- The math test time at all three grade levels will again be extended to 40 minutes. The written Super Quiz with only 25 questions will be 15 minutes long, and all other tests (essay, science and literature) will have 30 minutes to testing time. Schedules of the events are attached
  
- Essays will be expository again this year. There will be three prompts from which the students will choose. One will be sent from Orange County for grades 7 and 8 and will address either the science Super Quiz topic or the literature selection. There are practice essays in your Study Guides, but the prompt appearing at the competition for both 7th and 8th grades will be new to the students. At 6th grade, one of the eight prompts provided in the Study Guide will also appear on their prompt list at competition. The second prompt will be one of the 16 prompts that are attached. I will choose a different quote from the list for each grade level. The third quote will be a generic quote that the students have not seen before. Students are not to write more than two(2) singled-spaced pages. Should a student mistakenly get only one writing page in their writing packet, he/she may write on the back side or ask the testing room proctors for another sheet of paper.
  
- The essay scoring rubric is based on a 25 point grading system—up to 20 points for content and organization and up to 5 points for conventions. Each of the two readers will assign up to 25 point each. The scores will then be added together and multiplied by 20. A perfect score would result in a score of 1000. I have attached a copy of the rubric.
  
- Good sportsmanship is vital to the continued positive influence of these competitions on the lives of our student participants. Coaches are urged to discuss the issues of fair play and respect with their students.
  
- The County Office will provide midmorning snacks again this year for students/coaches/volunteers during the morning break. Lunch will be up to each team. There are large picnic areas at both high schools if you wish to bring lunches. Fast food restaurants are another option. Maps of restaurant locations will be sent out closer to the competition dates.
  
- We will continue to divide schools into A and B divisions. These divisions are loosely based on number of years in the program, past performance in the Pentathlon, and school size. I also make an effort to keep the two divisions fairly equal in size. The A and B divisions are used for recognition by plaque. For all other awards, every team competes directly against every other team.
  
- Awards for 2010 will be as follows:
  - alternate medals for first-fifth place in all five events (students pooled)
  - starter medals for first-fifth place per category in four events
  - U.S. Savings Bonds for the top ten overall individual scorers
  - Super Quiz plaques/medals for the first-third place teams
  - plaques to overall winning A and B division teams, first-third

- plaques/medals to overall winning teams, first-third
- participation recognition in the form of zipper pulls for all competitors

- For those of you who have not yet ordered your novels, there is a Milligan Order Form on our website under the Additional Information link.