

FAQ

Question about AD at JHS - who do I contact? E-mail me: [Jonathan Frishman](#) or [Divya Kaushal](#)

What is Academic Decathlon? Academic Decathlon is a nationally recognized, intellectually competitive, and fun academic team competition designed to include students from all academic backgrounds. Each team consists of three “A” students (Honors), three “B” students (Scholastic) and three “C” students (Varsity). The competition consists of a seven-minute interview, a one-hour essay and two speeches, and written comprehensive exams are given in music, art, language/literature, mathematics, economics, science, and social studies. In addition to the topic content, which changes from every year, there are general knowledge questions in math, economics, music, literature, and art. AD is a fun way to challenge yourself intellectually, be part of a competitive team, and win scholarship money. Competition is at the District, Regional, State, and National levels.

Academic Decathlon is weighted as a 5.0 elective. In the course catalog, the potentially three years during grades 10-12 are listed as follows:

- 1st Year - 0161 Independent Study in English I KAP: Texas Academic Decathlon
- 2nd Year - 0162 Independent Study in English II KAP: Texas Academic Decathlon
- 3rd Year - 0163 Independent Study in English III KAP: Texas Academic Decathlon

How will the team be picked? - In Order of Importance

1. Dedication and Priority - your dedication to the program must be one of your top priorities; if we are going to be successful, we must have students who are willing to go that extra mile and do whatever it takes to make us one of the top teams in the state.
2. Positive Attitude - anything can be accomplished with a positive attitude. Your attitude influences everything that you do.
3. Discipline and Work Ethic - do you go to all the meetings, do you stay for them all, do you come prepared for all meetings, are you prepared for all tests, have you turned in all your assignments on time and complete.
4. Test Taking Ability - this competition thrives on strong test takers. To be competitive, we must have strong test takers - but notice that this is last in priority. Good test takers can be beaten by the first three. It happens all the time.

How many people make the Decathlon team? Nine (9) people make the AD team based on three (3) GPA ranges –

- 3 Honor: 3.80 – 4.00
- 3 Scholastic: 3.20 – 3.799
- 3 Varsity: 3.199 and below

When is the decision made about who makes the AD team? Typically, in December after the Pearland AD Scrimmage we will select the final 9 members - we may attend an additional meet after this to help in the selection process as well. Either case, a decision will be made before the Winter Break.

Is there a class for AD? And do I have to be in it to make the team? KISD does have an AD preparation class, called Humanities KAP (0160), which is open to 10th, 11th, or 12th graders, after conferencing with a coach. This class meets every day during 5th period and students interested in trying out for the AD team must enroll in this class. To have a chance to make the final nine, it is required, however, there are a few exceptions to this rule should 5th period prove impossible.

When does preparation for AD begin? The summer before the competitive school year. There will be an information meeting at the end of the current school year for those interested in trying out for the AD team the following year.

What if I don't make the team, can I try-out the following year? What if I make the team, do I have to retry-out the following year? Yes, to both questions. Each year is a new season, while being on the team the previous year will give you advantages; it does not guarantee you a spot for the following year.

Does my AD GPA change within the school year? No, your AD GPA will be set once the Fall Semester begins; that is, your AD GPA at the start of the Fall Semester will be the GPA you will use the entire year. Your fall and spring grades will only affect your standing for the following year.

How do I calculate my AD GPA - do all classes count? No, only your core classes count for the AD GPA (e.g., math, science, English, social studies, and foreign language) and only your grades for the past two years will count toward your AD GPA (e.g., if you are a sophomore, then your 8th and 9th grades would count toward your AD GPA). Also, your AD GPA is a non-weighted GPA (e.g., an A in AP U.S. History would only be a 4.0, although it is an AP class).

What is NO-PASS-NO-PLAY? A rule established by the UIL, which governs all academic and athletic extra-curricular activities in the State of Texas. It says that to be eligible for extra-curricular activities, you must pass all classes. This rule applies to AD as well.

How much of a commitment is AD? This is one of the most difficult questions to answer - AD is the equivalent of a Varsity Athletic sport, therefore, the commitment will be at the same level of that. Any successful program requires hard work and a high level of commitment from all involved, students, parents, coaches, principals, etc. - being part of the AD team is one of the biggest commitments a student can make in high school.

How does the competition work - what do we do at the tournaments? The competition consists of comprehensive multiple-choice exams in 7 academic areas, along with speeches, interviews, and a written essay.

How much of a commitment does AD expect from the parents? There is very little expected from the parents, the main thing is to support the students and coaches in the decisions we make.