

AFLTA Festival Guidelines

2010 Festival Committee

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The Arkansas Foreign Language Teachers Association State Foreign Language Festival is one of the major events sponsored by the organization each year. The festival was created to encourage excellence among students in several critical areas of foreign language learning and to develop enthusiasm for the cultures from which the languages come. Teachers are encouraged to have their students participate in festival competitions to increase interest and enthusiasm for language study and to motivate students to achieve at the highest levels.

AFLTA recognizes that organizing and conducting a festival on the district or state level is a monumental undertaking. We recommend that committees of people work on these events at both levels. We realize that it is the dedicated volunteers in our organization who make festivals possible for all our students. We are grateful for the hours that are given and the expertise that is shared to create festivals that encourage and challenge our students and provide enrichment opportunities each year.

The current festival system involves an AFLTA district-level festival that may include any number of activities including those that will be repeated at the state-level festival. Students must qualify for state competition by competing in these events and scoring at the specified level. Once they qualify, students attend and compete for top honors at the state festival.

This Festival Guidelines document is intended to clarify the rules and procedures that will be followed at the state level. Where applicable, specific directions are given to those organizing and conducting the district festivals, as well. It is recommended that districts follow the state rules and procedures as closely as possible for those events in which students will compete at the state level in order to minimize confusion and maintain continuity.

I. Rules

1. General festival rules

A. Sportsmanship

- i. AFLTA appreciates all teachers and students who choose to participate in the festivals, both district and state. AFLTA expects that all teachers, students, and observers will exhibit the highest level of sportsmanlike behavior in following festival rules including competing at the appropriate level, treating others with courtesy at all times, respecting the property of the host school, accept the judges' and officials' decisions, and

represent their schools in a professional manner. All teachers and students who register for festivals agree to meet these expectations.

- ii. AFLTA expects that teachers will register heritage learners at the appropriate level for competition purposes REGARDLESS of the class in which the student is enrolled at school. Any judge may recommend disqualification of a student whom s/he determines to be a heritage learner who has been incorrectly registered into a lower level. The final decision will be made in consultation with the festival director and at least one other teacher. That student may compete in the heritage/native level on that same day in any competition that has not concluded when the decision is made. Teachers are encouraged to inquire in advance about the proper placement of their students when there is a question. Teachers should consult the guidelines for the National Spanish/French Exam category determinations for guidance in student placement (For example, a student who qualifies as “outside experience” or “bilingual” should compete in the “Heritage” level REGARDLESS of the class in which the student is enrolled in school. Please see www.nationalspanishexam.org or www.legrandconcours.org.

B. Student participation

- i. Each teacher may bring a maximum of 20 students, at district and at state.
- ii. Each teacher may bring up to 5 additional art pieces from students who are not attending. Art entries per teacher may not exceed a total of 5 pieces. Students who do not attend and who send artwork still have to pay the registration fee. At the state level, the teacher must bring the art piece on the day of the festival, not mailed in advance. Artwork should be labeled with student’s name and teacher number on an adhesive label (NOT a post-it note) on the back of the art piece.
- iii. Group events-will now be called “Performance Events” and WILL be open to the public regardless of whether district “Performance Events” are open or not.
- iv. If students bring recorded music to be played on the equipment provided, it must be in mp3 format. Otherwise, students need to bring their own equipment to play recorded music in other formats.
- v. Students CAN participate in both a drama and a talent event.
- vi. Each teacher may have one talent AND one drama entry.
- vii. Teachers bringing students to state in “Performance Events” may substitute students in performance GROUPS as long as it does not change the essence of the performance. This does not apply to solo acts.
- viii. A student cannot compete at the state festival unless his/her teacher or an approved proxy teacher can be present. If the proxy teacher is another teacher with students of his/her own at the festival, the proxy teacher’s total number of students cannot exceed 20 including the “adopted” students. An approved proxy teacher might be another language teacher from the same school or a teacher in another subject area. The proxy teacher would need to be willing to serve as a judge, when appropriate, as a worker in the tally room, or in a student-activity area.

- ix. If a group has to leave before the awards ceremony is over, the teacher MUST appoint a representative to collect trophies for his/her students. Trophies will not be mailed to those who are not present to collect them.

C. State competition procedure - Does not have to be followed at district festivals.

- i. NEW STATE PROCEDURE– Round 1 - Round 2 System for all competitions except talent, drama, art (currently judged by panel) that have the following numbers of participants (at the discretion of the festival director): Poetry – 20; Extemporaneous Reading – 15; Extemporaneous Speaking - 10 .
- ii. Round 1 - Students compete in front of one judge. The judge scores according to the rubric. After hearing all students in that session, the judge will determine the top three scores that s/he hears. Those three students move on to Round 2.
- iii. Round 2 – All Round 2 finalists will compete again before a panel of judges. The panel will determine the first, second, third place students from among the finalists. Students in first, second, third places will receive trophies, and finalists will receive ribbons.
- iv. In competitions with fewer students than those listed above, there will be no Round 1. Instead, students in smaller competitions will compete only once before a panel of judges. The panel will determine first, second, third places from among the finalists.

2. Continuity between state and district festivals

- A. At the state level, a language group must have students from at least three schools in order to compete. The language organization representing those teachers is responsible for securing judges for those events and materials for the events.
- B. Any student may participate in any one district festival regardless of geographic location as long as the student’s teacher attends that festival with the student.
- C. Students must qualify for state competition by competing in a district festival. If no competition is held in any given district in any given year, the students in that district must travel to another district to compete and qualify. Extenuating circumstances (i.e. weather) will be considered on an individual basis.

3. State attendance requirements

- A. Students will be required to score 15/20 points on the 2010-revised rubrics in order to qualify for state competition.
- B. Any district’s judges may reserve the right to not qualify students for state in any competition if performances and/or scores are deemed inadequate.

4. Vocabulary Bee RULES

- A. District festival chair provides the names of the five students who are eligible to compete at state. No substitutions will be allowed if any of the five qualifying students are unable to compete.

- B. Once the vocabulary bee starts, no students will be allowed to enter. Any student who is not in the room at the first word given will not be allowed to participate.
- C. The only people in the room will be those students competing and the judges. No spectators will be allowed to remain in the room.
- D. Each student will be given a new word. If the student misses the word, the correct answer is given, and the student signs out and leaves the room. The next student will be given a new word.
- E. In the first round, students are given Spanish words and have to give English definitions as published on the official list. In all consecutive rounds, the students will be given English words and have to give Spanish definitions as published.
- F. The panel of judges may decide to go to the next highest level of words in order to eliminate students or when the current list is exhausted. The change to the next highest level of words must occur at the beginning of the next round. If the current list is exhausted mid-round, the judges will recycle words that have already been given through the end of the round.
- G. Judges may decide to go off the published list in the final rounds in order to eliminate students and determine the top five students. The language associations will provide a list of tie-breaker words in the judging packets that have not been previously published.

5. Culture Game RULES

- A. District festival chair provides the names of the five students who are eligible to compete at state. No substitutions will be allowed if any of the five qualifying students are unable to compete.
- B. For the 2012 festival, the language associations will add 50 current event questions (from January 2011 through July 2012) to the pool of questions used for the culture game. These questions will be published in the fall version of the *AFLTA Bulletin*. Beginning with the 2013 festival, the language associations will add 100 current event questions to the pool each year to be published in the fall. AFLTA recommends that the language associations re-evaluate the list of questions regularly to eliminate those that are no longer relevant.
- C. No later than one week before the state festival, a topic (theme related, if possible) will be published by each language association from which tie-breaker questions will be chosen. The topics will be those that can be researched online. Examples might include: Tour de France, World Cup, South American politics, developments in European art/music.

II. Rubrics

- A. For Drama/Talent, rubric will say: Cultural connections (appropriate links to target culture as presented in student introduction in English).
- B. For Drama/Talent, because of the audience in attendance, student vocabulary and dress must be school appropriate.

Comment [RD1]: •Current “score sheets” are being re-written as true rubrics with descriptors for performances in each category, on a 4-point scale.

Comment [RD2]: •To description of both Performance Events in published materials, change last Talent sentence to and add to Drama the following: “Students should make a short introduction to their performance in English stating the cultural connection and context, as necessary.”

III. Judging

- A. At no time should judges ask questions or make comments to elicit the name of a student's school or teacher.
- B. Recommendation: Judges on panels should take notes on performances and/or record scores in rubric categories in pencil as they watch/listen. After hearing/seeing all performances, panels MUST choose first, second, third place.
- C. If changes must be made to scoring on rubrics, judges are asked to rewrite those rubrics so that students don't see scores that may have been changed during the panel discussion.
- D. For the vocabulary bee, judges may wait 5 minutes to allow for late students. Once the first word is given, no students will be allowed to enter the room.
- E. Judges will be advised that in any given year (especially in individual competitions) with any given group of students, about 50% should qualify for state. This is not a hard and fast rule, but merely a very general guideline to help judges realize the level of expectation that might be appropriate.
- F. Comments from judges should be areas for improvement and as specific as possible, especially at the district level.

IV. Recommendations for district festivals

- A. Teachers need to be advised very clearly about which students qualify for state competition as quickly as possibly following the festival. Explicit recognition of these students at the awards ceremony would be preferable, but if that is not possible, it should be noted clearly on the tabulation form given to teachers on the day of the festival.
- B. Districts should use the state tabulation form to standardize the way that results are reported to teachers.
- C. Districts are encouraged to give awards to students using the following scale in order to recognize more students at that level: Distinguished – 18-20; Advanced – 16-17; Proficient – 14-15; Honorable Mention – 12-13
- D. Suggestion: Teachers and students should be aware of possible bias caused by wearing clothing that identifies the student's school/teacher. It is recommended that students do not wear such identifying garments while being judged.

V. Recommendations to Vice President for State Festival:

- A. Consider working with a committee that might include the following positions/tasks:
 - i. Registration Officers – assure that the registration form complies with State Festival eligibility requirements, seek approval of the registration form from the AFLTA Executive Committee as per the AFLTA Bylaws, accept registration forms and payments from member schools by post and email, send all money to the AFLTA Executive Director for deposit, coordinate on-site registration
 - ii. Compliance Officers-attend district festivals, advise district judges on state eligibility rules, work as additional district judges

- iii. AAT Judging Directors-compile judging materials for state festival
 - iv. Tabulation Officers-compare and/or average judges' scores to determine state trophy winners, recruit additional workers to prevent award ceremony delay, submit final results to VP for State Festival or award ceremony designee, publicize final results
 - v. Trophy Officer-order state trophies, coordinate award ceremony, recruit additional workers to facilitate trophy distribution
- B. Consider with working an assistant or "shadow" VP who would learn how to do the job while not responsible for the whole festival and might be willing to take over the VP position eventually.
- C. The director will attempt, whenever possible, to assign more-experienced judges in the first round of competition and less-experienced judges with more-experienced judges in the second round panels.

VI. Host School Responsibilities

We kindly ask the host school/faculty to:

- provide the facilities for festival: including a cafeteria, a gym or auditorium, and a large room or mini-auditorium that will accommodate 60 students for vocabulary bee (some students may sit on the floor if there are not enough chairs).
- coordinate date of festival with the host school administration (usually a Saturday in mid to late February)
- provide a festival Co-Chair to be in charge of creating the judging/overall schedule of events
- provide an additional volunteer to be in charge of food (judges' lunches - paid by AFLTA district; also, student snacks/drinks -usually "on your own", and the host school keeps any profits)
- provide an additional volunteer to be in charge of arts/crafts and TV rooms (if desired by the host school - See district festival chair for budget restrictions).
- coordinate post-festival custodial (paid through AFLTA district)

Prepared by Denise Bullinger, District IV 2010

VII. Festival Director's Timeline – for use by both district and state festival directors as applicable.

Comment [RD3]: Wendy will provide this.