

A Contest of Academic Strength

*Providing academic competition to encourage,
acknowledge and reward academic excellence
through teamwork among students of all
achievement levels.*



CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC DECATHLON

INTERVIEW Preparing A Self-Introduction

For More Information:

California Academic Decathlon

4522 Abernathy Road

Fairfield, CA 94534

Phone: (707) 438-3674

Fax: (707) 438-2667

kscarberry@solanocoe.net

www.academicdecathlon.org

Since 1968, the Academic Decathlon has grown into the premier scholastic competition in America. The Academic Decathlon was created to provide opportunities for high school students to experience the challenges of rigorous team and individual competition. Designed to provide a forum for celebrating and acknowledging scholastic achievement and academic excellence in the context of a team environment, the Academic Decathlon provides high school students the opportunity to participate in an educational forum that fosters a deep respect for knowledge, cooperation, and self-esteem.

Revised on 2009.11.12

The following information is guidelines offered to assist you prepare for your Academic Decathlon interview. Prepared well, your self-introduction is your key to interview success because it helps to create that all-important first impression, and helps you to build the rapport with the judges conducting your interview.

FIRST IMPRESSION ARE IMPORTANT

In an interview, first impressions are very important. The first thing the interviewer learns about you, you teach him or her by how you introduce yourself.

Be very assured and self-confident when entering the room. Offer a handshake and be sure that it is firm and demonstrates confidence. Be sure to remember the names of the judges interviewing you. The interview will progress on better terms if you are able to respond using the name of the person you are speaking with. Do not assume that there is a particular place for you; wait until the interviewer motions to where he or she would like to have you sit. Once you are seated and introductions are over the interview is ready to begin.

PREPARING A SELF-INTRODUCTION

In preparing your self-introduction, ask yourself this question: 'What do the interviewers want to know about me?'

The way to create a favorable first impression is to be sure you appear confident and open. When you meet your interviewer for the first time, make eye-contact at the introduction and repeat the interviewer's name as you shake hands and thank them for inviting you to the interview.

As you get seated, smile to indicate you are ready to get down to business. What often follows is the invitation to you to 'tell them about yourself', which allows you to commence your self-introduction.

Prepare exactly what you are going to say. This is not some lengthy story about your life, but a short focused statement that sounds interesting to the listener. You make it interesting by keeping it short (30 seconds) and by showing that you are interested in sharing and listening.

In your self-introduction consider including some examples of your strengths and achievements. The way you outline your self-introduction, in particular the way you speak, tells the interviewer whether you are confident in your abilities so don't try to be what you are clearly not.

Practice your self-introduction with someone with a critical ear, because if it sounds false it will set the alarm bells ringing with the interviewers. They will detect that it is not the real you and it will destroy the rapport you are trying to build up. Practice speaking faster or more slowly, louder or quietly and try to vary it throughout.

The key question for a successful and effective self-introduction is: how much and what information do you want the interviewers to know about you? Do not write an award winning autobiography; consider developing an introduction around an aspect of your life. That aspect should feature who you are and what you are about.

FOR PRACTICE

Look at the sample self-introduction topics below and pick out the aspects of your personal life you want to share with the interviewers. Approach the list below with the Who, What, Where, Why, How and When questions. It is an effective way to outline your first thoughts for introducing yourself.

1. What activity has played or plays an important part in your life? Tell the story and distract the message.
2. What is your main personal goal?
3. What do you like very much?
4. What do you hate or dislike?
5. Have you developed a very special skill?
6. What is your lifestyle?
7. Can you come up with a turning point or milestone in your life?
8. What is your hobby or interest in your spare time?
9. What is a pet peeve or another very familiar topic you like to talk about, to do or to discuss?
10. Where you are from? Do your roots reveal something about yourself that is new to the interviewers?
11. Is there an object or prop that means a lot to you?
12. What distinguishes you from other individuals?