

FAQs

1. How can Symposium help my French program?

Students practice for oral events (poetry, prose, sight reading, drama), scantron tests (grammar, listening, civilization, vocabulary), as well as expand into music, art, video, cartoon, and soccer events. Competition over such a broad field is very motivating!

2. Is Symposium a UIL event?

No, but it is the French competition in Texas recognized by the American Association of Teachers of French and the French government. It is broader in scope than UIL competitions.

3. If I have only a few students, how can my school compete with larger schools with much larger enrollment in French?

Schools are limited to 40 students maximum, no matter what the size of the school. In addition, there are now small school sweepstakes awards as well as regular sweepstakes awards.

4. Do I have to bring a judge?

Yes! Each school is required to bring a judge. If you cannot find a judge for French events, there are needs for art, music, and soccer judges.

5. How can I prepare my students?

Meet with students (or groups of students) on a regular basis to practice for the competition. More advanced students or francophone individuals can help you with your practice sessions.

Poetry, prose, drama, and music selections should be made during the first semester. You can create a file of selections that can be used from year to year.

Group events (bac, drama, vocal music, instrumental music, video) require a lot of preparation and should be started early.

Previous scantron tests can be studied (you can keep copies in your Symposium file and provide a key for students to check their answers).

6. Where can I find selections for poetry, prose, drama, and music?

*Vive Voix from Wheaton College is a useful resource for poetry. You can download text and listen to recorded poems. (Google Vive Voix)
Prose and theater selections can be taken from textbooks or novels. ABU is a free French online library of public domain texts.*

For music, contact music teachers.

Be sure that the selection is by a francophone author (attach biographical information if the person is not well-known) and is NOT Anonymous.

Remember that most selections have a time limit of 3 minutes.

Drama group and video limit is 10 minutes.

Music limit is 5 minutes.

7. Do pieces have to be memorized?

Only poetry, drama, and video pieces have to be memorized. Prose should be practiced so that a student can look up occasionally.

But any oral performance is a dramatic performance! Practice using pauses, change of tone, gestures.

8. If I have a student with an advantage, what level should I assign the student for the competition?

Please see the TFS Constitution for the discussion on placement. Some students may need to compete at one level higher than their level at school. Some may need to compete at even higher levels depending on the number of advantages the student has. (Advantages can include a francophone family member, study or living in a francophone country, etc.)

9. If my student grew up speaking French, can he/she compete at TFS?

Unfortunately no! (But Le Grand Concours has a division for native speakers.)

10. What if a student that I registered moves or has to drop out. Can I replace the student with another?

You will have until November 14 to register students. After the students are registered, you will enter their events. After that time, you will be able to reassign events to other previously registered students until the cutoff date in January. Please note that you cannot replace the person--you can just reassign events that the student who dropped was going to do.

11. Do I have to judge and proctor tests?

Yes! Teachers are the best proctors and by judging, teachers are more aware of the way students are evaluated. The competition depends on the pool of dedicated judges and teachers who push the students to do their best.

12. How do I prepare a bac team?

Select two students each from level 1 and level 2. Then the remaining four can be from any level. You'll need to prepare questions in French and English with a cultural emphasis and develop grammar questions. Please see the Constitution for more details and sample questions. You and your team must practice on a regular basis with a buzzer system or have the students slap their desks to determine who answered first.

13. Why are the deadlines earlier for video and bande dessinée?

These two events must be judged prior to the actual competition because of the time it takes to properly evaluate the entries.

14. What do my students do when they're not competing?

During the competition, there are many events that students can participate in: do chalk art, dance, watch videos that were submitted for the contest, visit the art displays, attending soccer matches. Students should also bring schoolwork or games to do when they have down time.

15. How long does the competition last?

After the Friday check-in (usually 3:30-4:45 PM), students will go to their rooms for the Scantron tests. They will complete the four Scantron tests and have a few minutes before starting the preliminary rounds (8:00-9:30 PM).

On Saturday morning, events start at 8 AM and continue through semi-final and final rounds until the dance and dinner. After dinner, the awards ceremony is held. Usually, the ceremony ends between 9:00 and 9:30 PM.