

# **Minnesota American Indian High School Language Based Quiz Bowl Handbook**

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**MINNESOTA AMERICAN INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE & CULTURE  
QUIZ BOWL HANDBOOK**

**PREFACE**

by

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This book is designed to assist students, faculty and staff in the process of understanding what the Indian quiz bowl does for our academic community. The activity is fun, its energetic, its spontaneous, it's healthy, and it relates intrinsically to our Indian students. This academic activity is a positive way to raise the self-esteem of our Indian people.

We Indian educators have discovered that when the learner reads material that is familiar to them and their community, the students will be motivated to complete that reading task. The Indian Quiz Bowl is very important in that it re-enforces the native language and thereby empowers our students to further growth by improving their academic over-all performance. Studies have shown that in the learning of another language a student gains intellectual perspective, which will influence their personal performance.

The Quiz Bowl is a very influential academic activity that stimulates positive study habits, helps the student develop social and partnership skills among their peers. Becoming involved in the Quiz Bowl activity further fosters daily attendance and insures the students of constant guidance and support. The American Indian student will be personally developing a healthy concept of his or her own indigenous identity. The students that participate have grown to be leaders in their school and continually contribute to their own community. Members of the Quiz Bowl schools have seen a tremendous maturity in the students. We have come to expect a high degree of academic excellence and a positive role model of citizenship among our students that participate with us. Join us in supporting and developing new ways to show case the American Indian Quiz Bowl for our students. Chi Mi Gwitch, Thank You!

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## INTRODUCTION

When the idea arose to modify computer scored timed-response devices to incorporate American Indian language in a competition setting in order to provide language study incentive, it was not known whether students, districts, elders or Indian communities would accept the concept. Indeed this was truly a new undertaking in the early 1990's. Very few districts formally taught Ojibwe or Dakota language and there was virtually no reason for students to stay after school and study their native tongue.

Once the students realized that they could participate in an extra-curricular activity that recognizes and rewards Indian language acquisition skills, and more importantly, was fun, they immediately knew they wanted more.

In the mid 1990's the first competitions featured simple nouns taken from a language dictionary. Typically, numbers, colors, animal names, days of the week, places, household objects, food subjects and simple verbs were utilized as initial competition round questions. At first these proved adequate and challenging. Local dialects were respected and controversial material was avoided. Then it became apparent that more complex verb phrases needed to be developed and employed. There are only a limited number of nouns in the Ojibwe language as 80% of Ojibwe words are verbs.

Difficulties also arose when questions involved classifying nouns as animate or inanimate as is required when pronouncing the plural form of the noun. Not all communities and dialects agreed completely on each subject. It became apparent that fluent elders from a broad range of regions need to be consulted and that common verb phrases be developed for use as language questions in the quiz bowl.

In order to streamline the language question development process, student teams were required to submit up to 50 language questions per meet. These questions were obtained from language texts or from a community elder or fluent speaker. The use of both double vowel spelling and phonetic descriptions were encouraged for moderator pronunciation. What began in the early nineties, as single nouns soon required complex verb phrases.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**ON-SITE MEET COMMITTEE**

This committee is essential to plan, fund and consider the details of the meet.

**DEVICE SIMILAR TO THAT USING PRESSURE SENSITIVE TABLE STRIPS**

See appendix for information on purchasing.

**SYSTEM FOR QUESTION DEVELOPMENT**

Options include student-generated questions.

**IMPARTIAL THIRD PARTY TO PROCESS QUESTIONS**

Checks and balances provide optimum conditions for an equal playing field. The third party or group also screens questions for acceptable specific answers.

**INSURE ACADEMIC RIGOR AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION SKILLS**

Students enjoy the challenge. This is a chance to let them exceed the height of the bar that is set.

**RECOGNIZING DIFFERENCES IN DIALECTS**

The best way to address dialectic differences is to:

- A. Have the question processor either consult several language speakers and omit any controversial text or;
- B. Choose a specific Ojibwe language phrase book and use only the contained word or phrase options.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR JUDGES**

Age likely will be a factor when considering the majority of fluent native language speakers. All health and comfort considerations must be employed when requiring assistance from our elders and knowledge keepers.

**IMPORTANT ON-SITE PERSONNEL**

- Moderators must exhibit a minimum fluency level and non-partisan affiliation.
- Computer technicians need to be trained in apparatus trouble shooting and game scenarios.
- Bracket specialist may refer to proper bracket text recommendation or design similar efficient elimination mechanism.
- Score keepers inform audience and confirm computer score.
- Host coordinators liaison between host agency, participants and spectators.

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**RULES AND GUIDELINES**

Each host site will determine competition game procedures and rules based on equipment available and other factors.

Most meets use game procedures similar to those employed by Minnesota Education Cooperative Service Unit's Knowledge Bowl.

A Typical Example of rules used previously follows:

17 Toss-up questions per round

1. Questions are worth one point each
2. Questions will be drawn from a resource list based on American Indian history, language, current events and culture.
3. After the moderator has begun reading the question, students may respond by activating the buzzer.
4. Upon buzzer activation, the student team must wait to be recognized by the moderator.
5. After recognition by the moderator, the team has 15 seconds in which to confer and answer the question.
6. One person from each team must respond clearly to each question.
7. If a team chimes in during mid question, the moderator will stop reading and expect an answer during prescribed time limit.
8. If the moderator is interrupted in mid-question, and the recognized team gives an incorrect answer, the moderator will complete the entire question for the opposing team(s) and a ten second time allotment will be given.
9. Neither team will receive points for an unanswered question.
10. All judges' decisions are final.

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## SPORTSMANSHIP

- A. Good sportsmanship is required. Students, remember that you are representing your schools.
- B. Use of profanity and other un-sportsmanlike behavior will be considered grounds for removal from the game.
- C. Students exhibiting un-sportsmanlike behavior may be removed without prior warning. If this occurs, the following will apply:
  - No mid-game substitutions will be allowed
  - Teams will continue to play with remaining players
- D. The school districts will be held responsible for the actions and behavior of the students and coaches representing their school. Misbehavior, vandalism, gang colors, and un-sportsmanlike behavior will not be acceptable.

## COMPETITION STRUCTURE

Competitions commonly utilize the Minnesota Education Cooperative Service Unit Knowledge Bowl equipment/software or similar computer scored timed response apparatuses. The Knowledge Bowl apparatus allows up to three teams to simultaneously compete head to head during a single round. Using a three-team competition format has the advantage of reducing the number of questions required and the time needed to complete a competition.

## LOCAL COMPETITIONS/REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Each district may consider hosting and/or participating in language based quiz bowl meets at their own discretion. Currently, there are no qualifying competitions to participate in the Jack Briggs, Northwest Regional Language Based Quiz Bowl Championship sponsored by the Minnesota Johnson O'Malley/Title VII Conference Committee, Fond du Lac Ojibwe School, Fond du Lac Tribal College and other agencies. This competition is generally recognized as the Minnesota State Championship. This is an open springtime competition. The Minnesota Indian Education Association hosts an annual fall open meet at their annual conference.

## AWARDS

## MODERATOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Moderators or readers are key to a successful competition. Moderators must be carefully selected based on their impartiality, language fluency, competition experience, ability to work with judges and overall organizational skills.

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**EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS**

The following comments were made after the *The Future of American Indian Quiz Bowls Conference* held at Itasca Community College in the Spring of 2002:

**I recommend the following to improve overall fairness of competitions:**

- Create a pool of judges that have been trained – 1
- Create a statewide competition – 2
- Create and provide access to resources where answers can be found and studied – 2
- Allow non-Native students to participate (e.g., if involved in a relevant class) – 3
- Convince the state to recognize competitions as worthy of lettering (e.g., with guidelines such as, a team member placing in the top 3 more than once) – 3
- Publish a calendar of events/improve communication re: upcoming events – 2
- Hold competitions at a consistent time -- 1
- Get school districts to give students credits for participating – 1
- Establish student eligibility criteria tied to academic performance/attendance (e.g., passing all core classes with an ADA of 80% or above) – 2
- Hold a social event in conjunction with the competition (for students from different teams to interact) – 1
- Ask enough questions per round of competition (e.g., 15) – 2
- Use cards with sources sealed in envelopes for host schools – 1
- Use a double elimination format with standardized brackets – 1

**Additional comments:**

- It was a great meeting! Great and positive recommendations. Good results.
- A beginning organizational meeting is necessary.
- Adopt the 15 recommendations that were presented at the meeting.

**JUDGES RECOMMENDATIONS**

A language specialist judge can determine unanticipated correct responses to complex language phrases. Decisions need to be made on responses to that related to other non-language related matter. This may require an additional judge or judges that have a combination of training or experience.

Language judges need to be at least semi-fluent in the Ojibwe or Dakota language. Language specialist judges need to peruse the language related questions before the competition in order to determine acceptable responses to questions, replace potentially controversial questions and agree with sponsoring personnel how lenient or flexible to be during a particular competition.

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## **JUDGES RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)**

Fluent language speakers are often elderly and need special accommodations and considerations. These include meals and refreshments that are diabetic friendly, shift duration limitations and student response microphones that allow for clear interpretation. Language judges often need to be consulted during a competition and a separate, private, nearby space serves best for this purpose. It is best to stagger elder judges' shifts in order to avoid fatigue.

Non-language specialist judges make decisions on all other questions in conjunction with the moderator. These decisions involve American Indian history, culture, pow-wows, treaty dates, current events, and specific questions relating to resource material.

The moderator quickly decides the more obvious correct or incorrect responses based on the answers provided on the question card. The moderator defers to other judges when a questionable response is provided.

## **QUESTION PREPARATION**

- American Indian history and culture
- Ojibwe/Dakota language
- Other indigenous language
- Current events
- Topic specific
- Resource list
- Question format

Neutral or non-district competition hosts may utilize a question database for use during a competition.

Hosting districts need to employ a neutral party from which to funnel and organize questions.

A host site will often solicit a minimum number of questions from participating district students for use in competitions. These questions are generated from a list of resources provided to participating districts. Questions require specific answers, possible acceptable answers and the reference cited. Questions submitted are preferably printed on a 3"x 5" white note cards.

A non-partial competition question processor or sub-committee must go through each question submitted in order to avoid duplication, vague, non-challenging or controversial questions. District students that submit quality questions may have an advantage in that most or all of their questions submitted may be used during a competition.