



We the People THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

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NATIONAL FINALS 2023—NATIONAL FINALS GUIDEBOOK

Introduction

The Center for Civic Education has prepared this guidebook for use during the 36th Annual We the People National Finals in Leesburg, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., area, April 22-24, 2023.

It is essential that teachers of competing classes carefully study these guidelines for the national competition. The We the People program allows for variations in implementation at the congressional district and state levels to suit local needs. Therefore, procedures may differ slightly in district and state competitions from those at the National Finals.

Procedures

Competition Rounds

Each competing class will testify twice: once on Saturday and once on Sunday. The scores for each class from the two days will be combined, and the ten classes with the highest combined totals will be eligible to compete in the final round on Monday. **To determine the tenth through first places, the scoring breakdown will be 25 percent on Saturday, 25 percent on Sunday, and 50 percent on Monday (all three days will count). In addition, the top-ten classes will be announced in order of placement (from tenth to first place) at the awards ceremony.**

Hearing Schedules

Hearings will be scheduled in two-hour sessions from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Classes and judges will have different starting times each day. Schools are assigned to divisions for scheduling purposes only. All classes compete with all other states, not just the schools in their division. A new schedule will be used for Monday's final round of competition.

Hearing Room Assignments

Classes will be assigned to the same hearing rooms on days one and two. Each class will be given a schedule indicating the order in which its groups will testify on their unit. A new panel of judges will preside over the hearing for each testifying group.

The entire class will remain in the assigned room during the hearing session. Students are not to be in the hallways, nor are they to visit other classes' hearing rooms. Once a hearing has started, no one should enter the hearing room. Students may take restroom breaks between the ten-minute hearing periods. If many parents and other guests are traveling with the class, they may need to rotate in and out of the hearing room to observe their student's presentations, as space in the rooms is sometimes limited.

Hearing Questions

Classes identified as representing their state or a wild card at the National Finals have been sent national-level hearing questions to prepare for the competition. Students have studied three hearing questions with related sub-questions for each of the six units., The questions are available on the 2023 Nationals Finals page of the We the People website.

Use of Notes

Students may use notes on paper or note cards during the four-minute presentation. No other materials or references may be used. Neither notes nor other materials may be used during the follow-up question period.

Time Limits

For hearings on Saturday and Sunday, each group will have a total of twelve minutes for testimony. On Monday, each group will have a total of fifteen minutes. For all three days of the finals, the initial oral presentation portion of the hearing is limited to four minutes. For the first two days of the finals, the follow-up question time will be limited to eight minutes. On Monday, the follow-up question time extends to eleven minutes.

If a group uses only some of the four minutes of its initial oral presentation time, the remaining time will be used for follow-up questions.

It is within the judges' discretion to allow extra time to a group to compensate for any situation that has taken undue time from their presentation. The judges should specify how much additional time is allowed, and the timer should allow the extra time. Judges should make every effort to keep questions brief and to the point.

At all hearings, the timer will raise a one-minute warning card before the end of the prepared presentation and before the end of the follow-up question period. At the end of the four-minute presentation, the timer will say, "Time." At the end of the eight or eleven-minute follow-up question period, the timer will say, "Time." Judges will then ask follow-up questions.

Judges on the same panel are free to consult with one another about scoring; however, they do not need to agree on their scores. Judges may revise the scores of groups seen until the point at which the scores are turned in at the end of each day.

The individual scores from the three judges will be totaled for each group on each day. The six group scores will be tallied for each class to give the class its score for the round. Official scorekeepers, under the supervision of the head scorekeeper, will tabulate the scores.

Announcement of Top-Ten Finalists and the Awards Ceremony

The ten classes competing in the final round on Monday will be announced at the We the People Dance in the National Conference Center Ballroom at about 9:15 pm on Sunday, April 23. Visitors and family members may watch the announcement live-streamed. Or, they can view the Top Ten Finalists news on the Center's social media pages shortly after 9:15. Awards for the top

ten classes will be given out during the Awards Ceremony on Monday night, April 25, at the National Conference Center.

Additional awards will be given for classes that are outside the ten finalists. Recognition for high overall performance will go to one class from each division and one outstanding class in each of the six unit topics.

No class scores will be announced, and no overall rankings other than Top Ten will be announced. Teachers will be sent their class's ranking and scores during the month following the competition.

Visitors at Hearings

Visitors affiliated with a particular class may view only the hearings for that class on days one and two of the competition. We encourage classes that do not place among the Top Ten to view the hearings on Monday. However, anyone connected to one of the finalist classes should not attend any other class's final round of hearings.

Because of space limitations at competition venues, the number of visitors permitted in hearing rooms and at the student orientation may be limited by Center staff and competition volunteers. This applies to all visitors, including parents.

A visitor's pass must be obtained at the Center's Registration Desk on Saturday. Guests may reuse the pass on Sunday or request a new one at the Registration Desk or the Information Table in the North Building. The Registration Desk will be located near the Ballroom in the West Building of the National Conference Center, just inside the West Belmont Place entrance. The Information Table will be located just inside the door of the North Building.

Grievance Procedures

If the teacher of a competing class thinks that the hearing guidelines have been violated, the teacher may request a review by the Center for Civic Education Review Committee. Such requests must relate to a specific competition rule or guideline defined in writing by the Center or to the tabulation of scores. No review of the scores of individual judges will be considered.

A request for review must be accompanied by a brief written statement defining the alleged violation. It should be submitted at most four hours after the hearing session in which the alleged infringement occurred. A request for review can be submitted to any Center staff member, who will immediately refer the request to the Review Committee.

The committee will review the alleged violation in as timely and expeditious a manner as possible. It will make every effort to render a decision before the next scheduled hearing session of the class involved. The committee reserves the right to discuss the alleged violation with all parties who may provide information essential to resolving the matter. Based upon due consideration of all pertinent facts, the final decision may be rendered as an oral statement to be followed as soon as possible with a written summary.

The decision by the Review Committee shall be considered final, and no further appeal procedure shall be possible.

Miscellaneous Guidelines

Dress

The Center has no established policy regarding dress for competition participants. We generally recommend business attire or school uniforms for hearings. However, such attire is not required. Judges will be asked not to consider students' clothing in scoring performance.

For the Award Ceremony, we suggest business casual attire. Keep in mind that many classes will appear on stage and be photographed. Families should not find it necessary to purchase clothes, especially for the occasion.

Conduct

All hearings will be held at the National Conference Center. Students and guests must maintain respectful, professional conduct while in these buildings. Teachers should remain with their classes while in transit to their hearing rooms and while in the hearing rooms.

At the end of the Award Ceremony, students and guests should remain seated until closing remarks are made, and the event is brought to an official close, instead of leaving as soon as the winning class is announced.

Security

All participants will be issued special badges by the Center and **must wear these badges at all competition events.**