



Official Rules Summary – 2021 National Championships

This document is intended as an outline of the rules of the competition. If you have specific questions regarding more detailed aspects of the rules, please reference the full Official Rules (accessible in PDF form at <http://www.historybowl.com/resources/official-rules/>). In History Bowl matches, players will be playing as a team of up to four players at once against another team of up to four players at once in a game that consists of four quarters. The minimum number of students on a team is one. The maximum number is unlimited at Nationals. Students will hear a series of tossups, bonuses, and category-based questions.

Please note the following generalities:

- At no point in the course of the games for the Bowl will players be deducted points for an incorrect answer.
- Players may substitute members of their team between quarters of play. In the 3rd quarter, substitutions must be made before the categories are announced.
- If players wish to protest a question or answer, **they must bring it to the moderator's attention before the first question of the next quarter is read, or before they leave the room at the end of the fourth quarter.** If the moderator botches a question (this does not involve pronunciation, which is not protestable unless it clearly misleads the wording of a question), there are makeup questions with each round that can be used. Only students actively competing on a team who are playing in that quarter and one designated coach per team (if present) can protest per team.
- During any tossup (i.e., buzzer) question, students may not confer verbally or in writing with their teammates. They may raise their hand, extend their buzzer, or gesture in a clear and single way that indicate they know the answer, but not convey what the answer itself is or any further clue to it. Only the student who rings in can answer a question; they cannot designate a teammate to answer for them.
- On second quarter bonuses and the third quarter questions talking to one's teammates is permitted and encouraged. Conferring illegally with teammates on a buzzer question will be treated as if a player buzzed in and answered the tossup incorrectly.
- If a student starts giving an answer who has not buzzed, that team is disqualified from the question, and the other team gets a chance to ring in regardless of what the first person who talked said. Ideally, moderators should catch this before saying correct or incorrect and just say "I'm sorry you spoke out of turn, I'll continue for the other team" but if a moderator does say correct, the backup question is read alone to the other team. If the moderator says incorrect, they finish the same question for the other team and do not go to the backup.

The first quarter consists of ten (eight in the Middle School and Elementary Divisions) relatively short buzzer questions worth 10 points each for a correct answer. If one player rings in and answers incorrectly, neither that player nor one else on their team can ring in again on that question. After a player has rung in, they have **five seconds to start giving their answer**. They cannot stall on answering if they are outside the initial five seconds, but they can take the full five seconds if needed. If a team is incorrect while answering during the question, and the question has not been finished, the moderator does not go back to the start of the question, but picks up from where they had left off.

At the end of the question, the moderator counts to five, then calls time if no one buzzes. If one team rings in after the question and gets it wrong, if the other team is still alive (i.e. they haven't answered incorrectly), then they get **five** seconds to buzz in regardless of how much time the first team took to ring in.

If one team buzzes after the question has been read to completion and is incorrect, the other team (as long as they have not yet answered incorrectly) then receives **five** seconds after the moderator says "Incorrect" to the first team regardless of how much time the first team took.

Moderators do not prompt on buzzer questions at all, and they simply count to themselves; they do not need a timer. All timing decisions throughout the match are at the discretion of the moderator and are not protestable. These rules on reading and timing hold for all buzzer questions.

For all questions throughout the match, regardless of what style, once a player begins to speak, players can go back and correct themselves (e.g. Lincoln, I mean Washington!) until the moderator indicates they are correct or not, though once the moderator has started ruling (and they should rule quickly), the answer will be taken as the moderator thought the player answered; players cannot protest this. On any question, players may give extra information if it doesn't make the answer wrong (e.g. saying "Vienna, Austria" even if "Vienna" would suffice or "Hamlet by Shakespeare") but they cannot "go fishing" (e.g. "Hapsburg Empire, Maria Theresa, Schloss Schonbrunn, Vienna!").

The second quarter consists of eight buzzer questions worth 10 points each for a correct answer. If a team answers one of these correctly, that team will be entitled to one bonus question, which is also worth 10 points. If neither team gets the buzzer question, neither team hears the bonus. In this quarter, the other team also cannot "steal" or "rebound" the bonus; **our bonuses do not "bounce back"**. On bonus questions (and third quarter questions), someone on the team needs to say "Final" or "Final answer" or otherwise make abundantly clear what their answer is so that the moderator is not confused if they are still conferring or giving their final answer (though if they neglect to do this and it's unclear what a team's answer is, the moderator should please ask them directly to clarify. They do not disqualify them on the question if they don't say "final", but should remind them to say "Final" before giving their answer next time.) On bonus questions, the moderator should prompt for the answer **eight** seconds after having finished reading, and then allow an extra **five** seconds for the team to start giving an answer.

The third quarter consists of category rounds. **The team that is leading** will have a choice from three categories. If the teams are tied, then the team that was most recently leading picks first. Each category has a theme and 8 short questions (6 in the Middle School or the Elementary Divisions) fitting the theme.

Like with the second quarter bonus questions, the team that first hears the question gets **eight** seconds to confer, then a prompt (e.g. "answer please") then **five** seconds to answer. If they don't know an answer, a team may pass, but that counts as an incorrect answer; they do not get to come back to it.

If the first team gets an answer wrong or time is called, then the other team gets an immediate chance to answer. At that point, the moderator should not reveal the answer or reread the question to the second team! The moderator just says "incorrect" or "bounceback" and then the other team then gets **eight** seconds to confer, and then a prompt, and then **five** seconds to start giving their answer, just like the first team. Then the first team goes back to their next question, etc.

Then, the team that had been trailing selects from one of the two remaining categories and the process repeats itself. If an answer is revealed inadvertently at any point by the moderator in this quarter, the moderator will wait until both teams are finished running through their categories as normal, then they will take the corresponding question number in the category that wasn't read, and read that as the replacement question.

If a team sweeps a category (including if they get all bounceback questions correct, which can occur, but does very seldomly), they get a 20 point bonus, otherwise all questions in this quarter are worth 10 points each.

A team can choose to “kill the category” at any point (which prevents the other team from hearing bouncebacks), but the first question is read by default; the first team cannot prevent the other team from hearing the first bounceback even if they don’t want to proceed further. If a team kills the category after they have heard a question, the other team does get a shot at that particular question, though – all questions after that question would not be read.

The fourth quarter consists of 8 longer buzzer questions worth **thirty, twenty,** or ten points each for a correct answer depending at what point in the question the question is answered. On the question sheets, **bold and underlined indicates a point in the question where it is worth thirty points. Bold only indicates where it is worth twenty points.** Regular text indicates where it is worth ten points.

At the end of the game, if it is tied, a tiebreak buzzer question is used to break the tie, though it only determines who wins the match, the tiebreaker itself has no point value (e.g., officially a game could still end 200-200, with one team receiving a Win). If no one gets the tiebreak, additional buzzer questions are used (moderators, ask in the staff room if you need one, do not read the backup bonus question provided as a tiebreak). Tiebreakers are used as needed until one team gets one right.

Rules Regarding Cheating and Conduct

Cheating is absolutely prohibited and teams that cheat are subject to immediate disqualification from the tournament. This includes illegal conferring among teammates that is not inadvertent, accessing outside resources, and other obvious situations where a clear and unfair advantage is being obtained. Students must have cameras on at all times.

Effective May 10, 2021: At all IAC events conducted using an online buzzer system, each player must have BOTH hands visible during gameplay. Students who have a smartphone or tablet may use that device to buzz in, while players who are only using one device must have their camera angled at their keyboard/mouse such that both hands are visible during gameplay.

If cheating is suspected (definitive proof is not needed; a suspicion from the moderator suffices), the moderator must immediately contact IAC at the end of the question by emailing info@iacompetitions.com with the subject line being “Moderator Cheating Suspicion in Room (Number).” The match then immediately stops. The moderator will explain the situation confidentially to IAC officials, who may take further preventative action as needed, e.g. by sending an official proctor to watch the match. If a player currently playing or the designated coach in attendance (these are the only people allowed to do this) suspects cheating, they may likewise bring it to the attention of IAC by calling “Cheating suspicion” between questions, then emailing info@iacompetitions.com with the subject line being “Player or Coach Cheating Suspicion in Room (Number).” The match then immediately stops and the player or coach must explain the allegation in a way that both teams can hear all communication. The player(s) who is/are being accused then has/have the right of reply.

IAC proctors and tournament staff (not the moderator) at all times have the right to assess any penalty with the exception of a ban from the tournament of a player or team at any point without further recourse to protest. In the event that a ban from the tournament is considered, then the situation will be explained to the Tournament Directors (Marshall Mullins, Deborah Pettingill, and Arthur Ramsay) and the Executive Director (David Madden). Both the Executive Director and two of the three Tournament Directors must concur for a student or team to be disqualified from the tournament. The directors may consult with team members, coaches, proctors, match officials, or others as necessary in this (or any other) punitive process.

International Academic Competitions reserves the right at any point to require additional anti-cheating/integrity measures from any student or team. These include, but are not limited to, asking students to maintain their hands in a certain manner, requiring screensharing, showing the camera around the room to instantly confirm no one else is in the room, etc. If a team refuses to comply, that team is subject to automatic disqualification from the tournament.

IAC tournament officials and their designees (but not moderators) reserve the right at all times to assess penalties including, but not limited to, banning a particular student from a quarter, the match, or the tournament; deducting points on a question or questions; having a team forfeit a match; or having a team forfeit the tournament.

Supremacy Clauses

If there is a discrepancy between the Official Rules file and what is on this summary, then it is this summary that in fact takes precedence. The file, accessible at <https://www.historybowl.com/resources/official-rules/> labeled **“Official Conventions, Precedents, and Standards for Answer Acceptance,”** also is considered to be an official part of the Official Rules for the purposes of the tournament.

As always, International Academic Competitions reserves the right to at all times make non-protestable executive decisions in the best interest of the tournament to handle situations that are not explicitly discussed in this summary or the Official Rules. This is particularly true for issues involving internet connectivity, the COBA buzzer, or other peculiarities of running this tournament online. Questions on the rules, or on any aspect of the tournament should be directed to info@iacompetitions.com.