

GUIDELINES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BRAIN BOWL 2008

Getting Started:

1. A team consists of any number of players up to 18. Only 6 of the players may participate in a single game. Substitutions may be made between, but not during the games.
2. Each school may select its team members by whatever method it chooses.
3. A match shall consist of the best 2 of 3 games. Each game shall consist of 20 questions selected from the categories of social studies, science, math, language, the arts, literature, history and general information.
4. The host school provides the moderator for each match held at that school. The moderator could be a teacher, administrator or a team coach if necessary.
5. The coaches for competing teams will serve as judges at each contest in which their teams compete. The moderator shall act as the third judge.
6. Game ties will be broken with a sudden-death question.
7. The division champion will be the team with the best win-lose-by record at the end of the round-robin portion of the competition. Ties will be broken by:
 1. Head-to-Head Competition.
 2. Most two game wins (excluding bye or lowest score if necessary).
 3. Most points from the two game wins (excluding bye or lowest score).
 4. No two game wins - total score from all games (excluding bye or lowest score).
 5. To be determined if needed.
8. Electronic buzzer boxes help to clearly indicate which team has responded first to a question. Boxes can be purchased from various companies. Jackson ESD will help maintain buzzer systems. If no buzzer boxes are available, students may slap the table to "buzz in."

Rules of Play:

1. Questions will be organized in packs of 20 for each game: 60 for a match. A few extra questions are included as alternates to be used if other questions are discarded or for sudden-death tiebreakers. The questions come in a sealed envelope and should not be opened until both coaches are present (unless the moderator who is NOT a team coach has viewed them for practice).
2. For each game, one member on each team shall be designated the team captain. The captain shall serve as team spokesman in case of procedural questions. The captain may designate a spokesperson for answering individual questions if desired.
3. Either team has 10 seconds in which to respond to a question. The 10 seconds begin with either the sound of the buzzer (if the moderator has not yet completed the question) or with the completion of the question. Math questions may have 5-10 extra seconds to allow for calculator use (will be indicated on question sheet).
4. The responding team members may consult among themselves. The team captain will speak for the team, but may indicate another member to respond. Only the first answer given is to be accepted by the moderator.
5. Scoring:
 - A. A correct answer is worth two points. An incorrect answer is worth negative one point.
 - B. In the event of an incorrect answer, the other team may pass or must buzz with five seconds if members wish to answer the question. Passing on the question incurs no penalty.
 - C. If the moderator has completed the question, it will not be repeated. If the first team to respond interrupts the question, the moderator will repeat the entire question at the request of the second team's captain. The second team then has 10 seconds to decide to buzz or pass.
 - D. If the second team answers correctly, one point is awarded. An incorrect answer incurs a one-point penalty.
6. Pencil and paper should be provided for each player. Any or all students may use calculators. It is an individual decision. Teams supply their own calculators.
7. The results of each game and match will be recorded by one of the judges at the time of the competition. Forms will be provided for this purpose. **The results will be faxed or e-mailed to the Middle School Brain Bowl Coordinator (MSBBC) as soon as possible.**
8. A team may call a maximum of one time-out, not to exceed two minutes in duration, during any one game. The team captain or the coach may call a time-out. Coaches may confer with their teams during the time-out. No substitutions may be made during time-outs.

The Role of the Moderator:

The moderator's conduct of the match is critical. The performance of the moderator can make a match an exciting, harmonious and pleasant experience for all concerned. If the moderator is not impartial, not a good reader, or not familiar with the rules, the match can be a frustrating experience for everyone. The guidelines for Middle School Brain Bowl Moderators are as follows:

1. It is essential that a new moderator have an opportunity to practice before his/her first match.
2. Rules should be reviewed quickly for the benefit of players and audience.

3. Coaches will introduce players.
4. The team captain is identified before each game. The team captain only may address the moderator on procedural questions.
5. Moderators should review all questions well before the match (unless the moderator is also coach of one of the teams). Check pronunciation and wording so questions can be presented accurately and smoothly.
6. Each packet contains extra questions. Use as needed to replace a question or as a sudden-death tiebreaker.
7. Students may interrupt a question. If interrupted by a buzzer, stop reading immediately. Follow the procedural rules for answering and scoring.
8. The moderator should respond to any answer by saying only "Right" or "Wrong" or "That is correct" or "That is not correct." Nothing should be said that might give the second team an unfair advantage. If an answer is nearly correct but not exact, the moderator should say, "You have one opportunity to clarify or improve your answer." Judgment should be used in determining the correctness of variant answers. For instance, "Roosevelt" may or may not be specific enough. Your decision can be overridden by the vote of the other two judges (the coaches of the competing teams). You state the final decision.
9. The moderator should ask for response **immediately** when time is called.
10. If neither team answers a question correctly the moderator should give the correct answer, for the benefit of the audience and team members. The moderator may ask the audience to respond if he/she chooses.
11. Moderators should discourage rambling answers that are too inclusive. They may interrupt such responses and ask for the precise answer.

To reiterate the essential elements of play and to provide a guide for conducting the match, the moderator usually uses the following summary of game procedures:

1. The moderator should read the questions and answers in advance of the match and check on any doubtful pronunciations or possible ambiguities.
2. At the beginning of the competition, the moderator...
 - A. Has coaches introduce their team members.
 - B. Identifies the student who will be team captain for each game.
 - C. Conducts a buzzer check.
 - D. Explains briefly the following rules of competition:
 - a. The first team to win two games wins the match. The third game may still be played for practice.
 - b. The first answer given is the answer that must be accepted or rejected by the judges (unless the student corrects him/herself in the middle of the word). However, if an answer is very nearly correct but not exact, the moderator will give the team one opportunity to clarify or perfect the answer.
 - c. Judges consist of the moderator and each team's coach. Two of the three may decide an issue. Moderator states final decision.
 - d. Teams have up to 10 seconds to buzz after a question is asked.
 - e. Teams can buzz before the question is complete. They have ten seconds to respond after buzzing. Math computation questions may allow fifteen or twenty seconds as indicated on the question and announced by the moderator.
 - f. If an answer is incorrect, the other team can buzz within five seconds to accept the question. If the first team interrupted the question, the moderator may read the question a second time allowing ten seconds for the second team to accept the question.
 - g. Scoring:
 - (1) Two points for first correct answer.
 - (2) One point for correct answer if first team answers incorrectly.
 - (3) One point penalty for incorrect answer given by first or second team to respond, or for buzzing and then failing to give an answer.
3. If no answer is given or an incorrect answer is given, provide the players and audience with the correct answer.
4. If the question was interrupted by the buzzer, reread the question after the correct answer was given for the benefit of the audience and the other team.

TIMEKEEPER AND SCORER:

The timekeeper and scorer must understand their tasks before the match begins. It is helpful to use the same timekeeper each time a given school hosts the match. Experience shows that a member from each team who is not participating in a specific game can do an accurate job of scorekeeping. The following are the rules for scorekeeping and timekeeping.

Directions for timekeeper:

1. After the moderator has completed a question, either team has a maximum of ten seconds to buzz. If neither team buzzes by the end of ten seconds, say "time." The moderator will give the correct answer, then will proceed to the next question.
2. After a team buzzes, whether or not the moderator has completed the question, members have ten seconds in which to answer. At the end of the ten second period, say "time." The team that buzzed must give an immediate response at that time, or the other team has an opportunity to answer. The second team has five seconds in which to buzz or pass (unless the moderator is asked to complete an interrupted question, then they have ten seconds).
3. Some questions, usually math which involve calculations, may be allotted fifteen or twenty seconds. The moderator will announce this before asking the question.
4. Use a stopwatch, a sweep second hand clock, or a watch for timing.
5. Each team may be granted one time-out, not to exceed two minutes, during any one game.

Directions for Scorekeepers:

1. Use numbers (2,3,4) rather than tally marks.
2. Do not erase. Keep a running tally as the game progresses. Draw a line through the last score as the new one is posted. This procedure allows a quick re-check in case a posted score is challenged.
3. Score two points for a correct answer from the first team that buzzes in.
4. Subtract one point for any incorrect answer (by first or second team), or if a team buzzes but fails to give an answer.
5. Score one point for a team that answers correctly after the other team has given an incorrect answer or has failed to answer after buzzing.
6. The judges may throw a question out if they determine it to be ambiguous. No points would be scored in this case.
7. Record the final score for each game in the match on the scoresheet provided. After the match get the signature of both coaches. These are placed on the report sheet and sent to the MSBBC.

CHECKLIST FOR MATCH:

1. Moderator
2. Timer
3. Scorekeeper
4. Buzzer boxes
5. Table and chairs
6. Podium for moderator
7. Scoreboard, chalk and eraser
8. Stopwatch
9. Paper and pencils for team members
10. Calculators may be used. Each team brings its' own.
11. The Match Questions!