



MESA DAY CONTEST RULES

2026-2027

(DRAFT)

Team Math Challenge

LEVEL:	Middle School (MS) & High School (HS)
DIVISION(S):	Grades 6-8 (combined) and Grades 9-12 (combined)
COMPOSITION OF TEAM:	2-3 students per team
NUMBER OF TEAMS:	Preliminary – Determined by your local MESA center Regional - # of teams per division at the discretion of each region (Northern, Central, LA/Central Coast, and Southern)
SPONSOR:	California State University, Los Angeles MESA College Prep University of California, Santa Barbara MESA College Prep

OVERVIEW: Teams of two or three students will work together to solve a series of challenging math problems emphasizing critical thinking, problem-solving, computation, and mathematical reasoning. The objective is to earn the highest score in the shortest amount of time. **Participation logistics and limits may vary by host site. Advisors and students are responsible for verifying this information with their local MESA center.**

This competition will be in-person for 2026-2027 but can also be hosted virtually, dependent upon the Host Center. These rules are written for in-person events; however, they can be adjusted for virtual events. The Host Center will also determine how the questions are administered, which may include:

- A paper-based test, or
- A third-party platform, such as Kahoot, Google Forms or Math Mania.

MATERIALS: The Host Center will provide the following:

- One set of math problems for each team or access to the designated online competition platform
- Computer lab with internet access, space for teams to use their own computers, or an appropriate competition space
- Scratch paper
- Pencils
- A Zoom meeting invitation, if the competition is held virtually

Teams must bring the following:

- Calculator(s)
- Own computers, if required

GENERAL RULES:

- 1) Teams must consist of 2 to 3 students. Teams consisting of 1 (one) student will not be allowed to compete.
- 2) There is no restriction on the composition of a team; teams may consist of students from any grade or math level. It is suggested that teams consider the math levels of their teammates; they should have a good balance of math knowledge within their team. For example, a team can consist of one 6th grader, one 7th grader and one 8th grader.
- 3) The students' full name, grade level, school name, and MESA center must be clearly entered on the testing paper or platform. A 10% penalty in the team score will be assessed for failing to properly label.
- 4) The competition consists of the following:
 - a) Five math challenges
 - b) One "Complete the Phrase" problem
- 5) Teams will have **60 minutes** to:
 - a) Solve five math challenges.
 - b) Complete the extra-credit phrase.
 - c) Submit final answers.
- 6) Teams may complete the math challenges in any order.
- 7) Each team must designate one student as the Team Leader. The Team Leader is responsible for:
 - a) Entering or recording the team's final answers.
 - b) Managing the team's competition session.
 - c) Submitting the team's answers during the timed portion.
 - d) Submitting the team's scratch paper immediately after the timed portion ends.
- 8) Teams must bring their own calculators and adhere to the following:
 - a) Standard, scientific, or graphing calculators are permitted.
 - b) Cell phones, laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices may NOT be used as calculators.
 - c) Calculators may NOT have internet access or artificial intelligence capabilities.
- 9) Teams must submit their scratch paper at the end of the competition. Scratch paper must have the following:
 - a) Show meaningful mathematical work used to solve the problems.
 - b) Student names, Grades, School, and MESA Center.
- 10) No outside help (e.g., online resources, AI, textbooks, etc.) is allowed at any time during the 60 minutes. Violation will result in disqualification.
 - a) The use of artificial intelligence tools is strictly prohibited. Prohibited tools include, but are not limited to: ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Claude, Perplexity, or any other AI-powered assistant or application.
- 11) Digital media (e.g., photos, video recordings, screen recordings, etc.) of any kind is not permitted.
- 12) **All judging decisions are final.**

ONLY IF VIRTUAL:

- 1) All team members must login to the Zoom meeting 15 to 20 minutes prior to the competition start time so that proctors can put them in their break-out rooms and a quick overview of the competition can be given.

- 2) Each team member's name, school name, (and MESA center for Regionals only) must be listed as the login name for Zoom to be placed in the appropriate break-out room.
 - a) There are only 15 characters available for your Zoom name
 - i) For Preliminaries, names should look like: School Name_Team Member Name
 - ii) For Regionals, names should look like: MESA center_Team Member Name

JUDGING:

- 1) The lead competition proctor will review the competition procedures, explain the rules, and answer procedural questions.
- 2) Teams will receive a total of five math challenges and one extra-credit phrase. Once the proctor has signaled the beginning of the contest, teams may begin solving the challenges in their preferred order.
- 3) Once a problem is solved, the team will record their answer and continue solving problems until all five questions are completed or time is called.
- 4) The proctor will announce when there is five (5) minutes and one (1) minute remaining.
- 5) Once a team has completed all five challenges or time is called, they will submit their answers, scratch paper, and pencil to the competition proctor.
- 6) Teams which finish the challenge prior to the 60 minute mark may quietly leave the competition room at the proctor's discretion.

SCORING:

- 1) **20 points** will be given for each correctly solved math challenge (maximum of 100 points).
- 2) **1 extra-credit point** will be given for correctly completing the final phrase.
- 3) Teams will first be ranked by their final competition score. If two or more teams have the same score, the following tie-breaker will be applied:
 - a) The team with the fastest official completion time will receive the higher ranking.

AWARDS:

- Medals will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place.
- Please check with your MESA center to determine the number of teams that advance to Regional MESA Day.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A: Math Subjects
- B: Math Concepts
- C: Score Sheet

A: Math Subjects

Middle School Level

- General mathematics
- Pre-Algebra
- Algebra I

High School Level

- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Pre-Calculus

B: Math Concepts and Resources

The following math concepts may be used in any variation in the challenges, but the challenges are not limited to these concepts:

- Geometry
- Two- and three-dimensional figures
- Area, surface area, volume, and circumference
- Probability
- Rational and irrational numbers
- Equations and inequalities
- Fractions
- Ratios and proportions
- Percentages
- Algebraic reasoning
- Measurement
- Data analysis

A single problem may combine several mathematical concepts.

Teams should focus on:

- Strengthening core math skills
- Developing problem-solving strategies
- Showing clear and meaningful mathematical work
- Working collaboratively
- Becoming familiar with the competition format and online platform, when applicable

C: SCORE SHEET FOR MATH ESCAPE CHALLENGE

Team Name or Number: _____

School: _____

MESA Center: _____

Division: ☐ Middle School ☐ High School

Item	Points Earned
Math Challenge 1	/ 20
Math Challenge 2	/ 20
Math Challenge 3	/ 20
Math Challenge 4	/ 20
Math Challenge 5	/ 20
Extra Credit: Complete the Phrase	/ 1
Subtotal	/ 101
Labeling penalty (10% deduction)	–
Final Team Score	/ 101

Official Completion Time: _____

Final Placement: _____

Judge's Notes:

Lead Judge's Signature: _____