

Special Rules and Procedures for the 2021 Remote German Contests

Due to the uncertainties and risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, **the regional and State German contests for 2021 will be conducted entirely remotely and with a substantially reduced slate of events.** This decision was not taken quickly or lightly. The state steering committee met for about 14 hours over two days in June and July in addition to multiple meetings of subcommittees. While we hope for a miraculous reversal of the current pandemic trends, it is far more likely that life will not be back to “normal” by February. The committee has made the call to go virtual *now* so that we could thoroughly prepare for an online contest rather than assuming business-as-usual and having to scramble to go virtual at the last minute.

Following is a summary of the plan for conducting contest online. Of course, nothing is certain in these difficult times, so the plan may have to be adjusted further. We will keep you informed as we work out more details. For each contest, the usual rules will apply unless specific exceptions are noted below.

- The traditional contest days (the first and last Saturdays of February) will remain the focal point of contest events. This year, those dates will be **February 6 for the regional contests** and **February 27 for State**. Events that will be conducted “face-to-face online” will happen on those dates, and for all other events, the deadline to upload digital submissions will be 9:00 a.m. on “contest day.”
- **Judging** will occur remotely over several days. The fact that judges will not need to gather physically in one place at the same time will expand our pool of potential judges immensely – for instance, people who live out of state. The goal will be to have submissions available online to the judges by the Saturday afternoon of contest day, and they will then have until 11:59 p.m. on the following Tuesday (February 9 for regionals / March 2 for State) to evaluate the student work and submit the results. As usual, two or three judges will be assigned to each event, but they will be able to work independently of each other on their own timelines except perhaps for some quick phone or email communication at the final stage to break ties. The form for recording and submitting results will be streamlined and user-friendly, with much information such as student names and schools already pre-filled. Every measure will be taken to minimize the tech expertise required of judges. It should involve no more than receiving and sending an email or two and clicking on a series of links to PDFs and YouTube videos to view the submissions.
- After the results come back from the judges, the organizers will take the next few days to compile the results and record an online “**awards show.**” The awards presentations will go “live” at a certain time on the Saturday following the contest date (February 13 for the regional contests and March 6 for State) – socially-distanced watch parties, anyone?! – but the shows will remain available for later viewing as well. Results spreadsheets will be posted shortly thereafter, as usual. In particular, we hope to have high production values for the State awards video, incorporating some of the winning performances and shooting it on the campus of Texas State University. It will certainly be more than just uploading a winner spreadsheet or reading a list of names.
- The regional and State contest directors will sort **trophies, medals, and ribbons** by school and arrange one or more times/places for teachers to come and pick up their winnings (both for regional and for State, although teachers may prefer to wait until after State to pick up both sets of prizes at one time). State T-shirts and patches purchased by your students will be also be distributed this way.
- Schools will NOT receive individual **critique sheets** for each entry but will receive a master spreadsheet, customized for that school, showing each judge’s score on each grading criterion for each student’s entry along with some comments (although probably fewer than in the past).

- Because there will be a one-week delay in finding out the results of the regional contests, **the early bird deadline to register for State** will be Wednesday, February 17, and the regular deadline will be Monday, February 22.
- The promotional video contest, the Mary El-Beheri Award, and the Gail Cope Scholarships and Teacher Grants will continue as usual.
- These events will be **DROPPED entirely** for 2021 (but don't worry; they'll be back post-COVID!):
 - **all written tests** except Timed Writing, namely: **Advantaged Speaker Test, Culture, Grammar, Listening Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, Vocabulary**
 - **all drama events** except Duet Acting, namely: **Play, Puppet Show, Skit**
 - **all music events** except Contemporary Music (solo acts only) and Vocal Solo, namely: **Chorus, Classical Ensemble, Einzeltanz, Folk Dance, Polka Band**
 - **Pass auf!**
 - **Scavenger Hunt**

Many of the events on this list are group events that would be nearly impossible to rehearse and perform while maintaining social distance if we are physically in school and equally difficult to rehearse and perform if schools are closed and everything has to occur online. Singing and dancing in groups are particularly risky activities. While it would certainly be possible to conduct the written tests remotely, the measures we would have to take to ensure test security and to prevent cheating would be onerous for the students, teachers, and contest organizers. While it is possible to imagine a way to conduct most of these contests virtually – and the committee did discuss each one at great length! – the list of safety and anti-cheating precautions became too long when we considered all the contingencies. In the end, and keeping in mind that this will already be a very stressful year for teachers and students, we decided it would be best to focus on a smaller group of events that are mostly individual in nature, easy to conduct live online, and/or easy to submit digitally.

- **These events WILL be offered in 2021**, modified as necessary for a virtual contest. See the rules addenda below for specific rule modifications for this exceptional year.
 - **all art events**, namely: **Club Album, Crafts, Digital Logo Design, Doll Costume, Gingerbread House (Traditional and Non-Traditional), Needlework, Original Models, Photo Essay, Photography, Poster, Shirt, Video**
 - **all oral tests**, namely: **Directed Dialogue***, **Extemporaneous Speaking***, **Pair Discussion***, **Oral Presentation, Sight Reading***
 - **Poetry and Prose**
 - **Contemporary Music (solo acts only)**
 - **Vocal Solo**
 - **Duet Acting**
 - **Timed Writing***
 - **Research Paper**
- Events marked above with an asterisk (*) will be conducted **“face-to-face online”** on the day of contest. For the rest of the events, the products will be submitted online by the teacher or a student **through a Google Form**.

Rules Addenda for Each Event

Arts:

- With the exception of Digital Logo Design and Video, **follow this general procedure for submitting all art entries:**
 - Document your entry in a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation; you may use other programs as well, but make sure that whatever program you are using has the capability to convert the slide show into a PDF file, because **all submissions must be converted to and submitted as PDF files.**
 - On the first slide, include **your name(s), school, the name of the event** (yes, sometimes there is confusion as to which category the item belongs in, so make it crystal clear by telling us which category you are entering), and the **title of the project** (if applicable).
 - On the next slide (or several slides), include images of your **receipts** (if required by the rules of that event). Feel free to add explanatory comments.
 - On the next several slides, include **pictures of your entry.** It is strongly encouraged to take pictures as you make the item to illustrate your creative process as well as pictures of the finished product. Take pictures from every conceivable angle. Take close-ups of details that you want the judges to notice. However, always make sure that there is at least one picture that shows the entire project. There is no upper limit on the number of pictures you can include, although you also don't want to completely overwhelm the judges. Feel free to type comments as well.
 - When you are finished with the PowerPoint/Slides/etc. presentation, **save it as a PDF file.** A good model for the file name would be your last name-school-event, for example: "Smith-LubbockHS-TradGingerbread."
 - Recent change as of 1/23/2021: The teacher or a student will submit the PDF file through a **Google Form.** (We had previously said that we would use Google Classroom, but we changed our minds about that.) Teachers will receive links to various Google Forms from the contest director for this purpose. These links will mostly likely not be posted on the contest website, so if the teacher wants the students to upload their own work, the teacher will need to share the Google Form links with the students. Upload only ONE file (the PDF referred to above) to the Google Form. We do not want and will not accept multiple files per entry!
 - **All submissions are due no later than 9:00 a.m. on contest day.** However, it is advisable to submit your work well in advance of that deadline.
- **Club Album:** Follow the general procedure above. For this year, you may make a traditional physical album and document it by taking pictures of the cover and each page, or you may make a digital album directly in PowerPoint/Google Slides/etc. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- **Crafts:** Follow the general procedure above. The rules of this event require the creation of a backdrop or diorama. That requirement is still in place this year, and it must be a physical backdrop or diorama, not just some pictures and/or information that you include in the digital presentation. Make sure to include some pictures of your item in front of/inside the backdrop/diorama, although you can also certainly take pictures of the item itself that don't include the backdrop/diorama. If you have text on the backdrop/diorama, either take very clear pictures of it for inclusion in your presentation or copy and paste the text directly into the presentation; you want it to be easily legible for the judges. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- **Digital Logo Design:** For this event, some aspects of the general procedure above do not apply. The rules of the event allow you to submit the logo as a .jpg, .gif, or .pdf file. Upload the file containing your logo to the appropriate Google Form no later than 9:00 a.m. on the contest day. Use this pattern for naming the file: your last name-school-DLogo, for example, "Smith-LubbockHS-DLogo."

- Doll Costume: Follow the general procedure above. The rules of this event require the creation of a backdrop. That requirement is still in place this year, and it must be a physical backdrop, not just some pictures and/or information that you include in the digital presentation. Make sure to include some pictures of your doll in front of the backdrop, although you can also certainly take pictures of the doll itself that don't include the backdrop. If you have text on the backdrop, either take very clear pictures of it for inclusion in your presentation or copy and paste the text directly into the presentation; you want it to be easily legible for the judges. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- Gingerbread House (traditional and non-traditional): Follow the general procedure above. Take LOTS of pictures! Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- Needlework: Follow the general procedure above. The rules of this event require some sort of documentation; make sure to include that in your PowerPoint/Google Slides/etc. presentation. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- Original Models: Follow the general procedure above. The rules of this event require the creation of a backdrop or diorama. That requirement is still in place this year, and it must be a physical backdrop or diorama, not just some pictures and/or information that you include in the digital presentation. Make sure to include some pictures of your item in front of/inside the backdrop/diorama, although you can also certainly take pictures of the item itself that don't include the backdrop/diorama. If you have text on the backdrop/diorama, either take very clear pictures of it for inclusion in your presentation or copy and paste the text directly into the presentation; you want it to be easily legible for the judges. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- Photo Essay: Follow the general procedure above. For this year, do NOT affix your photos to a poster board. Rather, construct your photo essay directly in PowerPoint/Google Slides/etc., making sure to include the text of the story along with the pictures. Don't forget to convert to a PDF! (On a side note, for future years when we go back to using actual poster boards, we have updated the rules to reflect the correct size of poster boards (22"x28") and to specify that the poster may not be larger or smaller than that size. But again, DON'T use a poster this year!)
- Photography: Follow the general procedure above. The rules of this event require inclusion of your original, unedited photograph(s) along with the final, edited image. Include both of these in the PowerPoint/Google Slides/etc. (and it would be a good idea to clearly label which is the original photo and which is the final image so that there's no confusion for the judges). There is no need to physically print, frame, or mat the photograph this year. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- Poster: Follow the general procedure above. Yes, even though we are submitting digitally this year, for this event, you will still use an actual poster board (the rules have been updated this year to reflect the correct size of standard poster boards, 22"x28", and to specify that the poster may not be larger or smaller than that size). You must include at least one picture that shows the entire poster, but you may also include close-ups of certain areas of the poster that you want the judges to notice. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- Shirt: Follow the general procedure above. Don't forget to convert to a PDF!
- Video: For this event, you do not need to follow the general procedure above. Step 1: When you have finished making the video, upload it to YouTube or Vimeo. Step 2: The rules of this event require that you also submit a script of your video. Type your script in Word/Google Docs/etc. At the top of the first page of the script, include the **student names, school, title of the video, AND the YouTube/Vimeo hyperlink to the video**. Step 3: Convert the document to a PDF. Include your school name in the file name of the PDF. Step 4: The teacher or a student uploads the PDF of the script to the appropriate Google Form no later than 9:00 a.m. on the contest day. Note: If you are concerned about privacy and want to password-protect your video, then you must include the password along with the hyperlink in the PDF script document.

Oral Tests:

- Directed Dialogue: You will join a Zoom meeting at a specified time on the contest date. You will wait in the virtual “waiting room” until admitted by the moderator. The moderator will ask you 5 questions from the question bank that is published on the contest website (2 pre-selected questions that will be asked to every contestant and 3 other randomly selected questions from the bank). The interaction between you and the moderator will be recorded so that the panel of judges can evaluate it later.
- Extemporaneous Speaking: You will join a Zoom meeting at a specified time on the contest date. You will wait in the virtual “waiting room” until admitted by the moderator. The moderator will offer you two topics from which to choose (regional) or give you one topic (State) and then send you back into the waiting room for your prep time. The prep time this year may be shorter than the 10 minutes specified in the official rules, but it will be the same for each contestant. Since it will be impossible to monitor whether you are using reference materials during your prep time, we won’t try to police that, and we will also waive the rule that you can’t use the notes you made during your prep time when giving your speech. Your speech will be recorded by the moderator so that the panel of judges can evaluate it later. For the Advantaged level, the time limit will be changed to 3-4 minutes for this year only (it’s normally 3-5 minutes).
- Oral Presentation: This will be the only oral-testing event not done “face-to-face online” on the day of contest. Step 1: Record yourself giving your presentation (or have someone else record you). You may do as many “takes” as you want until you’re satisfied with the result, but the submitted recording must be a single continuous take, not a spliced-together compilation of the best parts of multiple takes. The rules for this event instruct you to show your notes to the judges at the end of your speech (if any were used). This can be done by holding your note card(s) up to the camera for at least 5 seconds (each) so that the judges can get a good look at it (them). Also, the rules say that you can incorporate a wordless “visual component” into your presentations. If you want to do that at all, the visual component will need to be something you can physically hold up while the camera remains on you; you cannot use an application that allows you to share your screen to display the visual such that the judges see only the visual for a certain period of time while you are off-camera. If doing a presentation in the “real world,” of course you would want to use tech to seamlessly alternate between showing your face and your visual. But for contest purposes, we need to see your face 100% of the time, so keep it “low-tech.” Step 2: Upload the video of your presentation to YouTube or Vimeo. Step 3: Create a single Word document or Google Doc with (a) your name, (b) your school, (c) an image (or images) of your “visual component” if you used one, and (d) **a hyperlink to your YouTube/Vimeo recording**. If you are concerned about privacy and want to password-protect your video, then you must include the password with the hyperlink in the document. Step 4: Convert this document to a PDF file. Step 5: The teacher or the student uploads this PDF to the appropriate Google Form no later than 9:00 a.m. on the contest day.
- Pair Discussion: Both contestants in the pair will join a Zoom meeting at a specified time on the contest date. They will wait in the virtual “waiting room” until admitted by the moderator. The moderator will give them their topic and their 30 seconds of silent “reflection time” and then begin recording their conversation for later evaluation by the judges.
- Sight Reading: You will join a Zoom meeting at a specified time on the contest date. You will wait in the virtual “waiting room” until admitted by the moderator. The moderator will display the reading selection by sharing their screen within the Zoom platform. It is strongly recommended that you join the virtual meeting using a desktop or laptop computer or a tablet (rather than a smart phone) so that you will be able to see the reading selection clearly. You’ll be given one minute to read over the selection, and then the moderator will record you reading the selection for two minutes for later evaluation by the judges. Don’t forget to read the title!

Declamation:

- Poetry Memory and Poetry Reading and likewise Prose Memory and Prose Reading will be consolidated into simply “Poetry” and “Prose.” There will be 5 levels of each: 1, 2, 3, 4, and Advantaged. You may decide whether to read the text, to recite it from memory, or to use some combination of reading and memory. Typically, though, a well-memorized (or mostly memorized) presentation will come across better than one that relies heavily on reading. In essence, the challenge is to present the most dramatic and most entertaining interpretation of the text that you can muster. Step 1: Record yourself performing the piece (or have someone else record you). Don’t forget to say the title and author. You may do as many “takes” as you want until you’re satisfied with the result, but the submitted recording must be a single continuous take, not a spliced-together compilation of the best parts of multiple takes. Step 2: Upload the video of your presentation to YouTube or Vimeo. Step 3: Create a single Word document or Google Doc with (a) your name, (b) your school, (c) the name and level of the event, e.g., “Poetry 2,” “Prose Advantaged,” (d) the full text of the selection including the title and author, and (e) **a hyperlink to your YouTube/Vimeo recording**. If you are concerned about privacy and want to password-protect your video, then you must include the password with the hyperlink in the document. To get the text of your reading selection into the document, you can cut and paste it if you have access to an electronic version of the piece or simply take a (clear!) picture or pictures of the text if you are working from a hard copy and paste the picture(s) into the document. Step 4: Convert this document to a PDF file. Step 5: The teacher or the student uploads this PDF to the appropriate Google Form no later than 9:00 a.m. on the contest day.

Music:

- Contemporary Music: There is a huge caveat this year: while this event normally allows entries with anywhere from 1 to 5 members, this year, each school’s entry may have **ONLY ONE MEMBER**, i.e., it must be a solo act. As usual, you must memorize your song and may sing either *a cappella* or with a pre-recorded accompaniment or may accompany yourself on an instrument while singing. Step 1: Record yourself performing the piece (or have someone else record you). You may do as many “takes” as you want until you’re satisfied with the result, but the submitted recording must be a single continuous take, not a spliced-together compilation of the best parts of multiple takes. Step 2: Upload the video of your presentation to YouTube or Vimeo. Step 3: Create a single Word document or Google Doc with (a) your name, (b) your school, (c) the full text of the selection including the title and composer/songwriter, and (d) **a hyperlink to your YouTube/Vimeo recording**. If you are concerned about privacy and want to password-protect your video, then you must include the password with the hyperlink in the document. If you have sheet music with the notes and lyrics, take a clear picture (or multiple pictures) of it and paste the picture(s) into the document. If you have only the lyrics, cut and paste them from an electronic source, take a picture of them if you’re working from a hard copy, or if necessary type them into the document yourself. Step 4: Convert this document to a PDF file. Step 5: The teacher or the student uploads this PDF to the appropriate Google Form no later than 9:00 a.m. on the contest day.
- Vocal Solo: As usual, you must memorize your song and may sing either *a cappella* or with a pre-recorded accompaniment or may accompany yourself on an instrument while singing (although this would be rare for Vocal Solo). Step 1: Record yourself performing the piece (or have someone else record you). You may do as many “takes” as you want until you’re satisfied with the result, but the submitted recording must be a single continuous take, not a spliced-together compilation of the best parts of multiple takes. Step 2: Upload the video of your presentation to YouTube or Vimeo. Step 3: Create a single Word document or Google Doc with (a) your name, (b) your school, (c) a clear picture or multiple pictures of the sheet music of the song including the title and composer/songwriter

pasted into the document, and (d) **a hyperlink to your YouTube/Vimeo recording**. If you are concerned about privacy and want to password-protect your video, then you must include the password with the hyperlink in the document. Step 4: Convert this document to a PDF file. Step 5: The teacher or the student uploads this PDF to the appropriate Google Form no later than 9:00 a.m. on the contest day.

Drama:

- Duet Acting: **Starting this year but continuing even when we return to normal, Duet Acting will have only two levels, but may have two entries per level**: Lower (any combination of two students from level 1 and 2; time limit 3-5 minutes) and Upper (any combination of two students from level 3, 4, and 5; time limit 5-7 minutes) – similar to how we have always done Puppet Show (except that no Advantaged Speakers are allowed). Participation levels in this event have simply been too low the past few years to sustain separate competitions for levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. Step 1: Record yourselves performing the piece (or have someone else record you). Don't forget the introduction required by the rules. You may do as many "takes" as you want until you're satisfied with the result, but the submitted recording must be a single continuous take, not a spliced-together compilation of the best parts of multiple takes. While we hope that the two of you will be able to get together in person to make a recording (while creatively maintaining social distance), if absolutely necessary, you may submit a recording made using Zoom, Teams, or some other online meeting platform. Step 2: Upload the video of your performance to YouTube or Vimeo (even if it was recorded within a virtual meeting platform). Step 3: Create a single Word document or Google Doc with (a) your names, (b) your school, (c) the full text of the selection including the title and author, and (d) **a hyperlink to your YouTube/Vimeo recording**. If you are concerned about privacy and want to password-protect your video, then you must include the password with the hyperlink in the document. To get the script into the document, you can cut and paste it if you have access to an electronic version of the play or simply take (clear!) pictures of the text if you are working from a hard copy and paste the pictures into the document. Step 4: Convert this document to a PDF file. Step 5: The teacher or a student uploads this PDF to the appropriate Google Form no later than 9:00 a.m. on the contest day.

Written Tests:

- Timed Writing: This event was piloted at Houstonfest last year but will be new this year to the Sprachfest and Winterfest regions and to State. There can be one contestant per level in levels 1 and 2. Contestants will receive a prompt (in English) and have 15 minutes to handwrite a response (in German). (Under normal contest circumstances, the time limit will be 25 minutes, but to streamline things this year, we will reduce that to 15 minutes.) Logistics for this year: You will join a Zoom meeting at a specified time on the contest date. Make sure that you have paper and a black pen. You will need to position your webcam so that the proctors can monitor you as you write and clearly see that you are not using any aids, electronic or otherwise. When the 15 minutes are up, you will use your smart phone to take a picture of your text. The proctors will provide you with the link to a Google Form through which you will upload the picture. This must be completed within 10 minutes of the end of the writing session.

Research Paper:

- This event will function as it usually does, except that you or your teacher will submit the paper as a PDF through a Google Form by 9:00 a.m. on the contest date; disregard what the rules say about submitting on the Tuesday before contest. Consistent with the rules, papers will be checked for plagiarism. Include a title page according to the instructions in the rules. If you have supplemental materials such as pictures that you would normally have included (according to the rules) on a USB drive, include them in the paper itself this year, after the Works Cited.