The ability to communicate complex ideas to one’s peers is an important skill in all facets of life, especially as technology’s role increases.

ESSAYS ON TECHNOLOGY

OVERVIEW

Participants will write a synthesis essay to make insightful connections based on a current technological topic.

PURPOSE

Participants have the opportunity to show the relationship(s) between two (2) or more sources provided on site to compose a research-based argument.

ELIGIBILITY

Participants are limited to three (3) individuals per state.

TIME LIMITS

The allotted time to complete the essay is ninety (90) minutes.

ATTIRE

Competition attire, as described in National TSA Dress Code (www.tsaweb.org/Dress-Code), is required for this event.

PROCEDURE

A. Participants report to the event area at the time and place stated in the conference program.

B. Each participant will be provided with lined paper. Participants are responsible for bringing a blue or black ink pen to the event site. The pen may be “erasable.” The participant may also bring correcting fluid or correction tape to the site.

C. Participants will be provided with a prompt and a series of two (2) or more articles on a current technological topic.

D. Time begins after participants have received all materials.

E. After ninety (90) minutes, participants stop writing. Each participant turns in an essay not exceeding five (5) pages, and one (1) works-cited page.
Essays on Technology

F. Entries are reviewed by evaluators. Neither students nor advisors are present at this time.

G. Ten (10) finalists are announced at the awards ceremony.

It is essential that students and advisors routinely check the TSA website (www.tsaweb.org) for updated information about TSA general rules and competitive events. This information is found on the website under Competitions/Updates and Clarification. When students participate in any TSA competitive event, they are responsible for knowing of updates, changes, or clarification related to that event.

REGULATIONS

A. Each participant is allowed to bring a dictionary and a thesaurus to the event. The dictionary and thesaurus must be in print format, not electronic format; this includes translators.

B. Only participants are allowed in the event area. Should a participant finish before the allotted time expires, the participant is allowed to leave quietly but may not reenter the event room.

C. Participants are responsible for bringing a blue or black ink pen to the event site. The pen may be “erasable.” The participant may also bring correcting fluid or correction tape to the site.

D. Each essay must have the participant entry number only placed in the upper right-hand corner of the first page, just above the title of the report.

E. The length of the essay is limited to five (5) handwritten pages, one (1) side of the paper only, and double-spaced. The list of references is not included in the five (5) pages.

F. With the essay, participants must turn in a one (1)-page bibliography written on one (1) side of the the paper only, using proper MLA bibliography format.

G. All essays become the property of TSA, Inc. and will not be returned.

EVALUATION

Entries are evaluated according to the criteria listed on the official rating form.
STEM INTEGRATION

This event aligns with the STEM educational standards noted below. Please refer to the STEM Integration section of this guide for more information.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS) INTEGRATION

Please refer to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Integration section of this guide for more information.

PRIMARY LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leadership skills promoted in this event:

- COMMUNICATION — Students communicate through written language. Suggested leadership lessons: Fact or Fiction and Listening Skills
- CRITICAL THINKING — Students conduct research to write a well-developed essay. Suggested leadership lessons: Figure It Out and The Hidden Message
- SELF-ESTEEM — Students gain confidence in understanding a topic by synthesizing information and formulating an argument. Suggested leadership lessons: Define U and The Little Engine That Could

Additional leadership skills promoted in this event: decision making, evaluation

TSA AND CAREERS

This competition connects to one or more of the career areas featured in the TSA AND CAREERS section of this guide. Use The 16 Career Clusters chart and the TSA Competitions and The 16 Career Clusters grid as resources for information about careers.

CAREERS RELATED TO THIS EVENT

- Economist
- Engineer
- Research technician
- Scientist
- Technical writer
ESSAYS ON TECHNOLOGY

EVENT COORDINATOR INSTRUCTIONS

PERSONNEL

A. Event coordinator

B. Two (2) or more evaluators for the first reading, and two (2) or more semifinalist evaluators for the reading of the top-rated twenty (20) essays

C. Timekeeper

MATERIALS

A. Coordinator’s notebook, containing:
   1. Event guidelines, one (1) copy for the coordinator and for each evaluator
   2. Official rating forms
   3. List of entries with finalist report
   4. List of evaluators/assistants
   5. Marking pens for evaluators
   6. Stopwatch
   7. Calculators, one (1) for each evaluator
   8. Results envelope

B. Tables and chairs for evaluators

C. Tables and chairs for participants

D. Securable room (preferable) during time of the event

E. Lined paper, ten (10) sheets per participant

F. Series of articles on a current technological topic; one (1) set per participant and one (1) set per judge

G. Paper clips and/or staplers for securing essays

RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Upon arrival at the conference, report to the CRC room and check the contents of the coordinator’s notebook. Review the event guidelines and check to see that enough evaluators/assistants have been scheduled.

B. Inspect the area or room in which the event is being held for appropriate set-up, including room size, chairs, tables, outlets, etc. Notify the event manager of any potential problems.
C. One (1) hour before the event is scheduled to begin, meet with your evaluators/assistants to review time limits, procedures, and regulations. If questions arise that cannot be answered, speak to the event manager before the event begins.

D. For participants who violate the rules, the decision either to deduct 20% of the total possible points or to disqualify the entry must be discussed and verified with the evaluators, event coordinator, and a CRC manager; all must initial either of these actions on the rating form.

E. Begin the event at the scheduled time by closing the doors and checking the entry list. All participants should be in the room at this time. Participants not present may be disqualified. In order to compete, participants must be on the entry list or must have approval of the CRC chairperson. An individual who is not on the entry list is permitted to participate, but the coordinator MUST confirm the individual’s eligibility. If it is found that the individual is not registered for the event, the individual is disqualified. Late entries are considered on a case-by-case basis and only when the lateness is caused by circumstances beyond the participant’s control.

F. Distribute ten (10) sheets of ruled portfolio paper to each participant. Provide additional paper as needed.

G. Instruct participants to identify their essay with only their entry number in the upper right-hand corner of the essay. Advise participants to write their entry number on each page submitted. No other identifying information can be included.

H. Remind participants to double space their written work and submit only five (5) essay pages (each with their entry number in the upper right hand corner), plus a single page for references.

I. Distribute both the prompt and the articles on a current technological topic to all participants. The prompt will list the topic and instructions for composing an essay related to the articles.

J. Instruct participants who finish before time is called that they may submit their work and leave quietly.

K. Five (5) minutes before the ninety (90) minutes up, make an announcement that the participants have five (5) minutes to complete their essays. Exactly ninety (90) minutes after beginning, call time and collect the essays, including the works-cited page, and unused paper.

L. Supervise and assist the evaluators during the reading of the essays. Each entry must be read and evaluated independently.
by two (2) evaluators. Evaluators keep working until each entry has been assessed twice.

M. The two (2) scores for each entry are averaged and the top twenty (20) entries are turned in to the coordinator. These twenty (20) are then reviewed by a NEW group of two (2) evaluators (semifinalist).

N. The two (2) semifinalist evaluators read and assess each of the top twenty (20) entries. The average of the two (2) semifinalist evaluators determines the final ranking. Evaluators discuss and break any ties.

O. Complete and submit the finalist report, which includes a ranking of the ten (10) finalists, and all related forms in the results envelope to the CRC room.

P. If necessary, manage security and the removal of materials from the area.
## ESSAYS ON TECHNOLOGY

### 2015 & 2016 OFFICIAL RATING FORM

**Essay (100 points)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-4 points</td>
<td>5-8 points</td>
<td>9-10 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluators: Using minimal (1-4 points), adequate (5-8 points) or exemplary (9-10 points) performance levels as a guideline, record the scores earned for the event criteria in the column spaces to the far right. The X1 or X2 notation in the criteria column is a multiplier factor for determining the points earned. (Example: an “adequate” score of 7 for an X1 criterion = 7 points; an “adequate” score of 7 for an X2 criterion = 14 points.)

### Thesis (X1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The thesis is not a complete thought and/or is inappropriate for the essay; the title and thesis do not correlate with one another, or the thesis lacks creativity.</td>
<td>The thesis is evident and the idea behind it is somewhat concise and fairly creative; the essay title correlates with the thesis.</td>
<td>The thesis is well structured, concise, positioned appropriately, and creative; the essay title is authentic and correlates well with the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Introduction paragraph (X1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The introduction explains the background but may lack detail; introduction does not help to establish the writer’s position.</td>
<td>The introduction creates interest and clearly states the position.</td>
<td>A well-developed introduction engages the reader and creates interest; the introduction states a significant and compelling position.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Supporting paragraphs (X2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraphs lack main points to support the thesis, and/or there is a poor development of ideas.</td>
<td>Paragraphs include main points that are related to the thesis, with adequate supporting details and a fairly well developed narrative that presents the story.</td>
<td>Paragraphs provide well-developed main points directly related to the thesis; supporting examples are concrete and detailed; the narrative is developed with a consistent and effective point of view that presents the story in detail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Concluding paragraph (X1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion is recognizable but it does not effectively summarize the topic.</td>
<td>The conclusion effectively summarizes the topic and restates the thesis.</td>
<td>The conclusion wraps up the point of the essay and creatively restates the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organization (X1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no discernible organization; transitions are not present.</td>
<td>A logical progression of ideas is evident; transitions are present throughout the essay.</td>
<td>The essay conveys a logical progression of ideas, with a clear structure that enhances the thesis; transitions are mature and graceful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Style (X1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The style is confusing and hard to follow; it contains fragments and/or run-on sentences; word choice is simple, ordinary, and/or uncompelling.</td>
<td>The style is clear, sentences are somewhat expressive, and word choice is appropriate.</td>
<td>The style is smooth, skillful and coherent; sentences are strong and expressive, with varied structure; word choice is appropriate and mature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mechanics (X1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The essays contains distracting errors in punctuation, grammar, and spelling.</td>
<td>Punctuation, spelling and grammar are generally correct, with few errors.</td>
<td>Punctuation, spelling, and grammar are correct with no errors evident.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Research base (X1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal performance</th>
<th>Adequate performance</th>
<th>Exemplary performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The essay lacks an adequate research base and/or uses minimal support from articles.</td>
<td>The research is conducted appropriately and uses adequate support from articles.</td>
<td>The essay conveys a detailed research base that includes comprehensive support from articles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ESSAYS ON TECHNOLOGY (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Works cited (X1)</th>
<th>References are not used effectively, and/or they do not pertain to the topic; limited quality sources are cited.</th>
<th>Most sources used are credible and of good quality; most references help to support the essay topic.</th>
<th>The essay incorporates multiple and varied sources all of which are credible, appropriate and support the topic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**SUBTOTAL (100 points)**

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Rules violations (a deduction of 20% of the total possible points) must be initialed by the evaluator, coordinator, and manager of the event. Record the deduction in the space to the far right.

**Indicate the rule violated:** __________

(To arrive at TOTAL score, add any subtotals and subtract rules violation points, as necessary. Check your math twice!) **TOTAL (100 points)**

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**Comments:**

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I certify these results to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

**Evaluator**

Printed name: _______________________________________ Signature: _________________________________________