AUDIO PODCASTING

OVERVIEW

Applying leadership and 21st century skills, participants use digital audio technology to create original content around a pre-determined technology theme. Podcasting encourages good storytelling, voice acting, and folly sound effects to create a coherent creative work. The theme will be posted on the TSA website under *Themes & Problems*. Semifinalists complete an on-site challenge to produce additional podcast(s). Required criteria, such as lines of dialog, topics, etc. will be revealed at the semifinalists orientation meeting.

ELIGIBILITY

Three (3) teams per state may participate. Teamwork is strongly encouraged, but an individual may participate solo in this team event.

TIME LIMITS

PRELIMINARY ROUND

A. All components of the chapter's entry (audio file URL and documentation PDF) must be finished, submitted, and accessible via the Internet by 11:59pm ET on a designated date mid-May.

B. The audio piece must be more than one (1) minute and less than five (5) minutes in length.

C. A deduction of five (5) points total will be incurred for each fifteen (15) seconds under the one (1) minute minimum and for each fifteen (15) seconds over the five (5) minute maximum length.

D. The timing starts with the first sound and continues until the last sound ends.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

A. The number of podcasts and timing will be revealed at the semifinalist orientation meeting.

B. Participants have thirty-six (36) hours, beginning at the semifinalists meeting, to complete and submit the entire production.

C. The time limits for the on-site audio podcast will provided at the semifinalist orientation meeting.

D. A deduction of five (5) points will be incurred for each fifteen (15) seconds under the minimum and for each fifteen (15) seconds over the maximum length.

E. The timing starts with the first sound and continues until the last sound ends.

ATTIRE

TSA competition attire is required for this event.

PROCEDURE

PRE-CONFERENCE

A. Participants review the TSA Honor Statement for Competitive Events found in the General Rules and listed in the individual competitive event rules.

B. Participants design an original audio podcast piece.

C. Participants record their design process within a documentation portfolio.

D. Participants submit a URL to the audio file (in MP3 or suitable format) and a documentation PDF of the required documentation by 11:59pm ET on a designated date in mid-May.

E. Submission information will be provided on the TSA website under *Competition Updates*.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

A. Judges independently assess the entries using the following procedure:

1. Judges score the Audio Podcast criteria to determine the top twenty-four (24) preliminary contestants, which will not be posted.

2. Judges score the Documentation Portfolio criteria of those top twenty-four contestants to determine the top twelve (12) semifinalist teams.

B. A list of the twelve (12) semifinalists (in random order) will be posted on the first full day of the conference.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

A. Semifinalists report at the time and place stated in the conference program to receive the on-site challenge information. TSA competition attire is required to receive the on-site challenge.

B. The event coordinator distributes the materials, information, directions, and deadlines to each team.

C. Each team supplies its own audio production and editing equipment to complete its entry.

D. Teams are responsible for submitting a hyperlink of their audio solution and a PDF of a completed Student Copyright Checklist (see 2026 & 2027 Forms Appendix) using the submission procedures provided by the event coordinator.

E. Entries are reviewed independently by judges.

F. The top ten (10) finalists are announced at the awards ceremony.

REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Students will work to develop their leadership and 21st century skills iin the process of preparing for and participating in this TSA competitive event. The development and application of those skills must be evident in their submission, demonstration, and/or communication pertaining to the entry.

PRE-CONFERENCE

A. The audio podcast and required documentation must be uploaded or located online and accessible for evaluation by the posted deadline.

B. The entry must point directly to the team's entry. Entries that require a software download or a request that access be granted will not be judged.

C. Entries received, or changes made to submitted entries after this deadline will not be judged.

D. The audio podcast may include the first name of the students in the podcast and is exempt from the general rule that no identifying information may be used. However, students will not be allowed to use last names, their school name, or the state they are from.

E. Audio Podcast:

1. The URL must point directly to the audio file and not require any permissions or installation of software for evaluation.

2. Music may accompany the audio piece but is not required.

3. The audio piece must be greater than one (1) minute and less than five (5) minutes in length.

4. There will be a five (5)-point deduction for:

a. each five (5) seconds under the one (1)-minute minimum

b. each 15 seconds over the five (5)-minute maximum length.

5. All audio pieces must be the original work of the team and must have been completed within the current school year.

6. Free, non-copyrighted sounds, loops, or other audio elements may be incorporated into audio pieces. The sources of these elements and the way in which they are used in the audio piece must be described in the portfolio.

7. Each actual and/or synthesized voice used in the final piece must be illustrated in a timeline format in the portfolio.

8. Where applicable, all ideas, sounds, and loops from other sources must be cited. If copyrighted material is used, proper written permission must be included.

F. Podcast Cover Art

1. All entries must include a podcast cover art graphic (JPEG or PNG).

2. The graphic must fit a square ratio, set to 1400 x 1400 pixels.

3. The podcast cover art must be visible (attached) to the audio clip and visible when listening to the podcast.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

A. Documentation Portfolio:

1. The documentation portfolio should be complete, well written, and professional in organization and appearance.

2. Documentation materials (comprising a "portfolio") are required and must be submitted as a multi-page PDF document with pages in this order:

a. Title page with the title of the audio piece, the event title, Chapter ID, the conference city and state, and the year; one (1) page

b. Table of contents; pages as needed

c. Podcast Cover Art. The graphic must fit a square ratio, set to 1400 x 1400 pixels.; one (1) page

d. Work Log (see 2026 & 2027 Forms Appendix); pages as needed

e. Self-evaluation of the piece using criteria from the official rating form; pages as needed.

f. Audio composition. Each actual and/or synthesized voice used in the final audio must be illustrated graphically using a timeline format; pages as needed

g. When audio elements are used that were NOT created by the team, the source, effects applied, the way each element was incorporated into the audio piece and how each element corresponds to the audio must be included; pages as needed.

h. List of hardware, software, and instruments used in the development of the audio piece; one (1) page

i. List of references that includes sources for materials (non-copyrighted); pages as needed

j. Completed Student Copyright Checklist (see 2026 & 2027 Forms Appendix); one (1) page

SEMIFINAL ROUND

A. Semifinalists report at the time and place stated in the conference program to receive the on-site challenge information. TSA competition attire is required to receive the on-site challenge.

B. The event coordinator explains any recording restrictions for the specific property.

C. All participant voice audio must be the original work of the team and must have been completed during the event timeline.

D. On-site Submission Information:

1. Participants may choose any audio hosting site (such as an UNLISTED YouTube URL), or a sharable link in cloud storage, as long as the audio podcast is located online and accessible for evaluation.

2. The URL must point directly to the participant's entry. Entries that require a software download or request access be granted will not be judged.

3. Entries received or changes made to submitted entries after the deadline will not be judged.

4. Students must complete the Student Copyright Checklist (see 2026 & 2027 Forms Appendix) and save it as a PDF to be submitted electronically with the entry online.

5. When applicable, all ideas and sounds from other sources must be cited. Copyright materials may NOT be used. If including a citation page, the page must be included as the second page of the Student Copyright Checklist in the PDF in D.4.

6. National TSA will not provide wireless Internet.

EVALUATION
PRELIMINARY ROUND
Tier 1

A. The audio podcast

Tier 2

B. The documentation portfolio

SEMIFINAL ROUND

A. The completed on-site audio podcast(s)

Refer to the official rating form for more information.

TSA HONOR STATEMENT

All work must be created and completed by individual competitors or teams. Plagiarism, the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) software, copyright violation, cheating, and falsification of information are prohibited. Participants may NOT use any generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Gemini, GitHub Copilot, etc.). Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Competitors at any level of TSA competition understand and agree to abide by the TSA Honor Statement.

If it is determined that a student violated the TSA Honor Statement, a rules violation of twenty percent (20%) will be incurred.

STEM INTEGRATION

This event aligns with the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) educational standards.

LEADERSHIP AND 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

This event provides opportunity for students to build and develop leadership and 21st century skills including but not limited to – Communication, Collaboration/Social Skills, Initiative, Problem Solving/Risk Taking, Critical Thinking, Perseverance/Grit, Creativity, Relationship Building/Teamwork, Dependability/Integrity, and Flexibility/Adaptability

CAREERS RELATED TO THIS EVENT

This competition has connections to one (1) or more of the careers below:

- Artist
- Audio designer or engineer
- Audio operator or technician
- Broadcast technician
- Music composer

AUDIO PODCASTING
2026 & 2027 OFFICIAL RATING FORM
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Judges: Using minimal (1-4 points), adequate (5-8 points), or exemplary (9-10 points) performance levels as a guideline in the rating form, record the scores earned for the event criteria in the column spaces to the 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.) A score of zero (0) is acceptable if the minimal performance for any criterion is not met.

Go/No Go Specifications

- Before judging the entry, ensure that the items below are present; indicate presence with a check mark in the box.
- If an item is missing, leave the box next to the item blank and place a check mark in the box labeled ENTRY NOT EVALUATED.
- If a check mark is placed in the ENTRY NOT EVALUATED box, the entry is not to be judged.

☐ TIER 1 – Audio composition was submitted in proper format and accessible

☐ TIER 2 – PDF of the documentation portfolio was submitted

☐ ENTRY NOT EVALUATED

TIER 1 – AUDIO PODCAST (70 points)

Record scores in the column spaces below.

CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
Creativity and Uniqueness (X1)	The podcast feels like a standard piece; it does not make strides to distinguish itself from any other podcast.	The work involves some original aspects or manipulations of podcast ideas and form; it explores and includes at least one (1) or more podcast elements.	The episodes includes highly original, unusual, or imaginative episode ideas; it explores and includes at least two (2) or more podcast elements.	
Artisanship (X1)	The work gives no sense of a completed podcast episode idea; there is no clear beginning, middle, or end section; the form appears random, rather than organized.	One (1) podcast element has been used to organize the episode's ideas, content, and overall form, which are somewhat coherent.	The episode(s) presents at least one (1) complete episode idea; the piece has a coherent and organized form with a clear beginning, middle, and end; additional elements are used to organize the episode's ideas and form.	
Energy and Style (X2)	The piece lacks liveliness, vitality, and vigor; there is no flair, elegance, or grace to the form.	The episodes generates an initial level of energy that appeals to the listener; the style and content is somewhat distinctive.	The liveliness and forcefulness of the episodes excite the listener; the style is truly unique and electrifying.	
Appropriateness (X1)	The podcast episodes, ideas or concepts are not appropriate and acceptable for use in the event.	The podcast idea or concept presented is acceptable and somewhat fitting.	The podcast episodes' ideas or concepts presented are fitting and serve as an excellent example of the type of work expected.	
Overall Appeal (X2)	The work does not present an effective general impression; the podcast content does not hold the listener's interest.	The podcast includes some interesting content and form ideas; the general impression is pleasant and moderately effective.	There is strong, interesting, and effective audio appeal; the work is designed to be enjoyed by the listeners.	
TIER 1 – AUDIO PODCAST SUBTOTAL (70 points)				

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

Indicate the rule violated: _____

TIME DEDUCTIONS

There will be a five (5) point deduction for each fifteen (15) seconds under the minimum time or each fifteen (15) seconds over the maximum time allowed for the audio podcast.

Total time under		Fifteen (15)-second intervals under		Under time deduction	
Total time over		Fifteen (15)-second intervals over		Over time deduction	
				TOTAL TIME DEDUCTION	

TIER 1 – SUBTOTAL (70 points)

Record scores in the column spaces below.

TIER 2 – DOCUMENTATION PORTFOLIO (50 points)

CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points
Portfolio Components (X1)	Portfolio is unorganized and/or is missing three (3) or more components.	Portfolio has most components and is generally organized per the order of the event guide listing; it has sufficient content.	All components are included in the portfolio; content and organization per the order of the event guide listing are excellent.
Podcast Cover Art (X2)	The cover art is present, but not creative and doesn't reflect the podcast.	The cover art is present and the correct size; the cover art is of good quality and creates the desire to enjoy the podcast.	The cover art is present and the correct size; the cover art is exemplary and truly promotes the podcast; it is evident that the team connects the cover art to the podcast.
Work Log and Self-Evaluation (X1)	The Work Log and/or self-evaluation are incomplete, and/or missing key components.	The Work Log and/or self-evaluation are somewhat complete and incorporate reflections and efforts of the team.	A complete and concisely written Work Log and self-evaluation are provided and incorporate the efforts and reflections of the team.
Track Timeline (X1)	The track timeline is incomplete and/or not created correctly; the timeline does not correlate with the actual music production.	The track timeline is largely complete and attempts to correlate with the actual podcast production.	The track timeline is of exemplary quality; it correlates completely with the podcast production and is easy to follow.
TIER 2 – DOCUMENTATION PORTFOLIO SUBTOTAL (50 points)			

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

Indicate the rule violated: _____

PRELIMINARY SUBTOTAL (120 points)

SEMIFINAL ON-SITE PODCAST (70 points)

CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points
Creativity and Uniqueness (X1)	The podcast feels like a standard piece; it does not make strides to distinguish itself from any other podcast.	The work involves some original aspects or manipulations of podcast ideas and form; it explores and includes at least one (1) or more podcast elements.	The episodes include highly original, unusual, or imaginative episode ideas; it explores and includes at least two (2) or more podcast elements.
Artisanship (X1)	The work gives no sense of a completed podcast episode idea; there is no clear beginning, middle, or end section; the form appears random, rather than organized.	One (1) podcast element has been used to organize the episode's ideas, content, and overall form, which are somewhat coherent.	The episode(s) presents at least one (1) complete episode idea; the piece has a coherent and organized form with a clear beginning, middle, and end; additional elements are used to organize the episode's ideas and form.
Energy and Style (X2)	The piece lacks liveliness, vitality, and vigor; there is no flair, elegance, or grace to the form.	The episodes generate an initial level of energy that appeals to the listener; the style and content is somewhat distinctive.	The liveliness and forcefulness of the episodes excite the listener; the style is truly unique and electrifying.
Appropriateness (X1)	The podcast episodes, ideas or concepts are not appropriate and acceptable for use in the event.	The podcast idea or concept presented is acceptable and somewhat fitting.	The podcast episodes' ideas or concepts presented are fitting and serve as an excellent example of the type of work expected.
Overall Appeal (X2)	The work does not present an effective general impression; the podcast content does not hold the listener's interest.	The podcast includes some interesting content and form ideas; the general impression is pleasant and moderately effective.	There is strong, interesting, and effective audio appeal; the work is designed to be enjoyed by the listeners.
SEMIFINAL ON-SITE PODCAST SUBTOTAL (70 points)			

Record scores in the column spaces below.

TIME DEDUCTIONS

There will be a five (5) point deduction for each fifteen (15) seconds under the minimum time or each fifteen (15) seconds over the maximum time allowed for the audio podcast.

Total time under		Fifteen (15)-second intervals under		Under time deduction	
Total time over		Fifteen (15)-second intervals over		Over time deduction	
TOTAL TIME DEDUCTION					

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

Indicate the rule violated: _____

SEMIFINAL SUBTOTAL (70 points)

To arrive at the TOTAL score, add any subtotals and subtract rules violation points, as necessary. **TOTAL (190 points)**

Comments:

_____

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

JUDGE

Printed name: _____   Signature: _____

AUDIO PODCASTING
EVENT COORDINATOR INSTRUCTIONS

PERSONNEL

A. Event coordinator

B. Assistant for check-in, one (1)

C. Judges:

    1. Preliminary round, two (2) or more

    2. Semifinal round, two (2) or more

MATERIALS

A. Coordinator's packet, containing:

    1. Event guidelines, one (1) copy for the coordinator and for each judge

    2. TSA Event Coordinator Report

B. Copies of an on-site challenge for semifinalist teams and judges.

C. One (1) computer with monitor as needed for judges

D. One (1) extension cord and one (1) power strip as needed for judges

E. Tables and chairs for event coordinator, judges, and participants

RESPONSIBILITIES

PRE-CONFERENCE

A. National TSA will collect entries until 11:59 p.m. ET on a designated date in mid-May. The results are shared with the CRC manager, event coordinator, and assigned judges.

B. Review entries as they are submitted to the designated online storage utility.

C. Manage communication and pre-conference evaluation (at least two [2] or more judges should be recruited earlier in the year). Coordinate with the Judge Manager.

D. Judges determine the twelve (12) semifinalists and discuss and break any ties.

AT THE CONFERENCE

A. Attend the mandatory event coordinator's meeting at the designated time and location.

B. Report to the CRC room and check the contents of the coordinator's packet.

C. Review the event guidelines and check to see that enough personnel have been scheduled.

D. Inspect the area(s) 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.

E. At least one (1) hour before the evaluation of entries is to begin, meet with your judges and check in, personnel to review time limits, procedures, regulations, evaluation, and all other details related to the event. If questions arise that cannot be answered, speak to the CRC event manager before the evaluation begins.

F. Ensure the judges have access to the online judging system.

SEMIFINAL ORIENTATION

A. Prior to the semifinalist orientation meeting, the coordinator should tour the facilities and develop a list of restricted areas and/or specific restrictions for the event. This event should be shared with the event manager prior to the event meeting. The coordinator should mention at the event meeting that teams must be courteous to all guests in common areas or designated filming areas.

B. Meet with all participants at the designated time and place to deliver the specific criteria, including any required props and dialog.

    1. Ensure that all participants understand regulations regarding equipment allowed, behavior, deadlines, and submission requirements.

    2. Share the online submission link with the participants.

    3. Late entries are considered on a case-by-case basis and only when the delay is caused by events beyond the participant's control.

    4. In order to compete, participants must be on the entry list, or must have approval of the CRC.

SEMIFINAL SCORING

A. Close the online submission link.

B. Ensure judges have access to the entries.

C. Judges independently evaluate the entries.

D. Decisions about rules violations must be discussed and verified with the judges, event coordinator, and CRC manager to determine either:

    1. To deduct 20% of the total possible points or

    2. To disqualify the entry

    The event coordinator, judges, and CRC manager must initial either of these actions on the rating form.

E. If necessary, manage security and the removal of materials from the event area.