

OVERVIEW

Participants take a test of basic forensic science theory to qualify as semifinalists. Applying leadership and 21st century skills, semifinalists demonstrate expertise of forensic science concepts through the application of techniques within a limited time frame. Each year, three (3) skills or techniques will be posted on the [TSA website](#) under *Themes & Problems*. Students will need to be familiar with and able to demonstrate all three (3) skills. During the semifinalist portion, the students will demonstrate one (1) skill to the judges. Students will be notified of the presentation topic upon completion of the test.

ELIGIBILITY

One (1) team of two (2) individuals per chapter may participate. No individuals will be allowed to compete.

TIME LIMITS

PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. One (1) hour is allowed for the test. Both members must be present at the same time and take the test individually.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. Five (5) minutes is allowed to set up supplies and prepare the demonstration. Semifinalists are required to bring their own supplies.
- B. Ten (10) minutes is allowed to demonstrate the selected skill and answer questions from the judges.
 - 1. Seven (7) minutes for the demonstration
 - 2. Three (3) minutes for the interview.
- C. Three (3) minutes is allowed to clean the demonstration area.

ATTIRE

TSA competition attire is required.

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.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. Participants report for the test at the time and place stated in the conference program.
- B. A forensic science test is administered to both team members at the same time.
- C. Participants will be given a copy of the skill they are required to demonstrate upon completion of their test.
- D. Twelve (12) teams with the highest averaged scores are selected as semifinalists for the on-site problem.
- E. A list of semifinalists in random order is posted.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. Participants report at the time and place stated in the conference program to sign-up for the on-site skills challenge.
- B. Participants report at the assigned time and place for their on-site skills challenge. The specific skill will have been provided at the completion of the test.
 - 1. Participants use the allotted time to set up necessary materials and prepare the demonstration.
 - 2. Participants demonstrate the selected skill in the application of using proper forensic science techniques, and to respond to questions.
 - 3. Participants clean the demonstration area and pack necessary supplies for the next competitors.
- C. The top ten (10) finalists are announced during the conference award ceremony.

REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Students will work to develop their leadership and 21st century skills in 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.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. Team members take the test individually.
- B. Tests will be administered online only. Written (paper) tests will not be used unless deemed necessary prior to, or on-site at the national conference. Online testing will require each member to provide a laptop, and all members must take the test online. Please review the [National TSA Conference Competition Requirements](#).
- C. Participants are responsible for bringing two (2) sharpened No.2 pencils to the test site.
- D. In the event the test must be administered using a hard copy and scantron:
 - 1. Student identification numbers must be entered on the scantron form in the space indicated.
 - 2. Participants must stop work immediately when time is called.
 - 3. Should a participant complete the test before the time allocated is over, the participant will submit the test and scantron form to the coordinator without any form of communication with any other member. Failure to do so results in disqualification of the participant.
 - 4. All tests and scantrons must be turned in before leaving the test area.
- E. The average of the scores of the two (2) team members determines team ranking.
- F. These same two (2) team members compete in the semifinal round, should the team qualify.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. No reference may be made concerning the name of the team, the team members, or their school. Team members write their team identification number on any material used to demonstrate their skill.
- B. No reference materials may be used during this event.
- C. No observers are allowed in the event or preparation rooms during the event.
- D. Participants are responsible for bringing all of the necessary supplies to the semifinalist demonstration. National TSA will not provide any supplies.

EVALUATION**PRELIMINARY ROUND**

- A. The averaged team's test score

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. The demonstration/interview

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 has connections to the STEM areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

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:

- Crime scene investigator
- Forensic anthropologist
- Forensic pathologist
- Forensic engineering scientist

FORENSIC TECHNOLOGY

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.

☐ Team is present for demonstration

☐ ENTRY NOT EVALUATED

TEST SCORES (50 points)	
Record the average score of the two (2) team members in the box below. Record the team average in the column space to the right.	
Average score of the two (2) team members	
TEST 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 (50 points)	
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SKILLS DEMONSTRATION (80 points)				Record scores in the column spaces below.
CRITERIA	Minimal performance	Adequate performance	Exemplary performance	
	1-4 points	5-8 points	9-10 points	
Knowledge (X2)	The team is unprepared and unorganized for the presentation.	Team members have a general understanding of the forensic science skill and answer questions adequately.	There is clear evidence that team members have a thorough understanding of the forensic science skill; they answer questions well and confidently.	
Articulation (X1)	The team's demonstration is not logical or articulate; leadership and/or 21 st century skills are not evident.	The team's demonstration is logical and generally articulate; leadership and/or 21 st century skills are somewhat evident.	The team provides a concise, logical, and clear explanation of the skill they are demonstrating; leadership and/or 21 st century skills are clearly evident.	

SKILLS DEMONSTRATION (80 points) – continued			
Team Participation (X1)	Only one team member communicates with judges; there is no participation from the other team members.	Team members participate equally, but only one member seems to fully understand the concepts.	Team members seem to fully understand the concepts and share an equal role in the demonstration.
Skill Demonstration (X2)	Team members are unable to successfully demonstrate the designated skill.	Team members are able to partially demonstrate the designated skill.	Team members are successful and effective in their skill demonstration.
Technique (X2)	No indication of proper technique is used during the demonstration	Some indication of proper technique is used during demonstration.	Proper technique is used during the demonstration.
SKILLS DEMONSTRATION SUBTOTAL (80 points)			
<p>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.</p> <p>Indicate the rule violated: _____</p>			
SEMIFINAL SUBTOTAL (80 points)			
<p>To arrive at the TOTAL score, add any subtotals and subtract rules violation points, as necessary. TOTAL (130 points)</p>			

Comments:

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

JUDGE

Printed name: _____ Signature: _____

FORENSIC TECHNOLOGY

EVENT COORDINATOR INSTRUCTIONS

PERSONNEL

- A. Event coordinator
- B. Proctors
 - 1. Preliminary round, three (3) or more
- C. Judges
 - 1. 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. Stopwatches for timekeepers, one (1) per room
- C. Tables and chairs in the analysis room
- D. Copies of the selected skill, one (1) per team and one (1) per judge

RESPONSIBILITIES

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 event is to begin, meet with judges and assistants 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 event manager before the event begins.
- F. Ensure the judges have access to the online judging system.

PRELIMINARY ROUND

- A. Prior to the conference, the event coordinator shall become familiar with the format of the exam (refer to the [National TSA Conference Competition Requirements](#)).
- B. Begin the event at the scheduled time by closing the doors and checking the entry list.
- C. Late participants and/or entries are considered on a case-by-case basis and only when lateness is caused by events beyond the participant's control.
- D. In order to compete, participants must be on the entry list or must have approval of the CRC.
- E. All participants and judges should be in the room at this time.
- F. In order to compete, participants must be on the registration list or must have approval of the CRC.
- G. Monitor the one (1)-hour test.
- H. Upon completion of the test, students will receive a copy of the selected skill to be demonstrated during the semi-finals.
- I. Decisions about rules violations must be discussed and verified with the judges, event coordinator, and the CRC manager to determine either:
 - 1. To deduct twenty percent (20%) of the total possible points in this round
 - 2. To disqualify the entry
 The event coordinator, judges, and CRC manager must initial either of these actions on the rating form.
- J. Create a semifinalist sign-up sheet with fifteen (15) minute intervals.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

- A. Facilitate semifinalist sign-up times at the designated location.
- B. When each team enters the demonstration room, guide them to the demonstration area.
- C. Notify students when time begins. Allow teams five (5) minutes to set up and prepare for the demonstration.

- D. Allow ten (10) minutes for the students to demonstrate the selected skill, seven (7) minutes for the demonstration, and three (3) minutes for the interview.
- E. At the end of the ten (10)-minute period, allow students three (3) minutes to clean up the work space and then escort the students out of the competition room.
- F. Collect all materials, including any notes, prior to dismissing the participants.
- G. Discuss rule violations (e.g., 20% deduction, disqualification) and have all relevant parties initial the rating form.
- H. Manage security and removal of all materials from the competition area.