

# TEXAS FOREIGN LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM

## Information and Event Rules

(last modified 1/20/2026)

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Eligibility:** All student participants must be enrolled in an **in person, teacher-instructed Spanish class** for the current year **at a public school or public charter school**. Students completing their language requirement through computer programs ONLY or who are NOT ELIGIBLE to compete.

- All teachers with students participating **MUST BE CURRENT MEMBERS of NETOLE. Current membership dues are \$35.00 per teacher.**

#### 1. Entry Fee

Entry fee is **\$10.00 (non-refundable)** per student (not per event). Mail payment to address of the treasurer. **Email** the enrollment form by the **enrollment deadline of February 16, 2026**. A school purchase order **sent by the deadline** is acceptable, if payment is to be sent by the school district.

#### 2. Enrollment

- Enrollment is **by school**, not by teacher, and **ALL teachers whose students compete MUST BE MEMBERS of NETOLE for the current year.**
  - Middle schools participate with the feeder high schools in their district and will not be considered independent from the high school in the TFLS competition **unless their feeder schools are not participating.**
  - No more than two entries will be allowed *per event per school*. (Exception for bilingual/heritage essay which allows for two entries per participating teacher.)
- High schools within a district must compete as separate entities and **MAY NOT** join together as a single competing school.
- Students in private schools, grades seven to twelve, and public charter schools are eligible to participate in the 2026 Symposium.
- Students **must currently be enrolled in an in-person, teacher-instructed course in their school in the language in which they are competing.** Students completing their language requirement through computer programs or online ONLY are NOT ELIGIBLE to compete.
- Students must compete **on their level of study or higher** and **at their appropriate level of proficiency.** **TEACHERS: PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT STUDENTS ARE CORRECTLY PLACED TO AVOID DISQUALIFICATION.**
- Please remember that the CLASS COUNT TOTAL # should be a count of ALL students enrolled in your classes, not just the number of students the teacher is bringing to competition.**

#### 3. Membership Dues

Membership is open to **CLASSROOM TEACHERS**, only. Aides, secretaries, assistants, etc. are not eligible for membership. Each teacher who participates must send **membership dues of \$35.00** and submit a completed membership form *annually* by **designated due date**. An additional late fee of \$5 will apply for membership sent after that date. *No late membership will be accepted after the late membership date except by **director exception AT THEIR DISCRETION. DUES PAYMENT ARRIVING AFTER THE DEADLINE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED LATE IF THE MEMBERSHIP FORM HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE.***

#### 4. Judges

- Participating teachers are expected to serve as judges and/or monitors.

- b. Each teacher **MUST** provide **at least two additional, QUALIFIED adult judges** and **one monitor**. Judges **MUST** be proficient in the language for oral performance events. Arts and crafts, dance and vocal judges should be proficient in their areas and able to competently judge performances. Monitors do **NOT** have to be language or culturally proficient.

## 5. Lunch

NETOLE will provide lunch vouchers for the cafeteria Food Court located downstairs in the RSC (Rayburn Student Center) **for teachers, judges and non-ETAMUC adult monitors**.

- Students and other accompanying school personnel/chaperones (bus drivers, aides, parents, etc.) are responsible for paying for their own snacks and meals.

## 6. Student Behavior

- a. When not competing, students should remain on the first floor until the time of their competition and return to the first floor after they've finished competing.
- b. **When on the second floor where competitions are taking place, students MUST remain quiet in all areas. No practicing performances (dramas, dances, vocal, etc.) should take place on the upper floor. Passing areas MUST remain clear and navigable.**
- c. Students are to use the stairs unless physically challenged.
- d. **ALL Food or drink should remain downstairs.**
- e. Students/competing schools are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.
- f. Students **MUST** immediately comply with contest and behavior-related instructions/requests from adults involved with the Symposium or the University. Failure to do so will result in the student's name badge being taken by the adult (thus removing them from eligibility to compete), and their behavior will be reported to their teacher and/or administrator.
- g. Student attire and demeanor should reflect their school and district policies, but **may not contain any reference to the school, identifiable groups or the town name. This will result in disqualification.**
- h. **REMEMBER THAT UNIVERSITY OFFICES WILL STILL BE OPEN, CLASSES MAY STILL BE IN SESSION AND CAMPUS EVENTS MAY BE OCCURRING. PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL OF THE ONGOING OPERATIONS AND THE CAMPUS ITSELF BY KEEPING DOWN THE NOISE LEVELS IN CHECK.**

## 7. Levels of Competition

**It is the teacher's responsibility to correctly determine the competition level for each student. If placement is in question or difficult to decide, the teacher MUST consult with the TFLS directors.**

- a. Students must register for the appropriate level for each contest.
- b. Students **may not compete below their current level of study**. (See guidelines below for competing above their level of study.) **Proof of level of study will be required** for the 2026 Symposium.
- c. Levels are defined as:
  - **BEGINNER** (Spanish 1), **INTERMEDIATE** (Spanish 2), **ADVANCED** (Spanish 3 and 4)  
Students are **not Spanish speaking or heritage students** with Spanish language and cultural experiences limited to brief vacations to Spanish speaking countries/areas or common regional experiences (ex. restaurant visits, general television/radio/social media use, etc.)
  - **ADVANTAGED A** (Spanish 1 and 2) and **ADVANTAGED B** (Spanish 3 and up)  
Students have had extensive and/or consistent exposure to the language and/or culture but typically may not possess adequate communicative skills. This can give them an "advantage" over students who have not had this exposure or experiences such as random vocabulary recognition, cultural understanding and cues, accuracy in pronunciation and accent, etc.

- **BILINGUAL/HERITAGE A** (Spanish 1 and 2) and **BILINGUAL/HERITAGE B** (Spanish 3 and up) Students are oftentimes English speakers (but may also be Spanish only speakers) who have the ability to function and communicate with a relative degree of ease/comfort in Spanish speaking situations even if they may have weaknesses in some areas (such as inadequate vocabulary, grammar or spelling and pronunciation errors, etc.) These students' language and culture exposure and skills may have been influenced by living in a Spanish speaking household or community or by having been born and educated (particularly during the formative years of language acquisition) in a Spanish speaking country.
- Students competing at a level above their current level of Spanish study should do so in the following manner:
  - ⇒ **BEGINNER** (Spanish 1) may compete at **INTERMEDIATE** (Spanish 2)
  - ⇒ **INTERMEDIATE** (Spanish 2) may compete at **ADVANCED** (Spanish 3 and up)
  - ⇒ **ADVANCED** (Spanish 3) and **ADVANTAGED A** (Spanish 1 and 2) may compete at **ADVANTAGED B** (Spanish 3 and up);
  - ⇒ **ADVANTAGED B** (Spanish 3 and up) and **BILINGUAL A** (Spanish 1 and 2) may compete at **BILINGUAL B**.

**PLEASE MAKE SURE WHEN ENROLLING STUDENTS TO COMPETE ABOVE THEIR LEVEL OF SPANISH STUDY THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF PERFORMING AT THAT LEVEL.**

- d. **STUDENTS MAY NOT COMPETE AT A LEVEL BELOW THEIR LEVEL OF SPANISH STUDY OR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.**

## 8. Rating Sheets

- a. All competitors **MUST** submit **two (2) copies of the current year's rating sheets** to the judges of each event. (exception: Only one rating sheet is need for the Spelling events and the Scholarship Exam.)
- b. Rating sheets **MUST BE COMPLETELY AND CORRECTLY FILLED** out prior to presenting them to the judges. **ANY RATING SHEET ISSUE MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION.**
- c. Assigned school number should be included on all rating sheets. **School numbers are provided to teachers prior to the competition.** School name **MUST NOT** appear on the rating sheets or on other performance materials submitted to judges or the student(s) will be disqualified.
- d. Handwriting must be legible on rating sheets or competitors may be disqualified.
- e. **Correct rating sheets for each event MUST be used.** Please, **do not edit a rating sheet** to use for a different event as each rating sheet's evaluation/tabulation is event specific.

## 9. Materials

- a. Materials for each year's competition will be available online at **netole.org** as soon as possible after the start of the spring semester.
- b. Competitors in **memorized poetry, memorized prose, prepared speech, drama, and vocal music** events **MUST** also submit **two (2) copies** of their performance material to the judges with their names and school numbers written on the material. Every effort will be made to return performance copies (speech, drama, vocal) with the rating sheets.
- c. Copies of materials for sight-reading poetry will be provided to the judges. Competing students will not provide these as they will receive these selections at the time of the contest. Students are required to alert the monitor/judges if they are familiar with the selection they receive so that an alternate selection may be given.
- d. Handwriting must be legible on all materials submitted to judges or disqualification will occur.

## 10. Nametags

- a. Participating students **must wear a nametag with NAME and SCHOOL NUMBER at all times**, except when in costume for drama, dance or vocal performance.
- b. In all non-costumed events, students without a nametag will not be allowed to compete.
- c. Teachers will provide nametags that include the student's **name and school number ONLY**.
- d. **Please indicate media release position by placing a green dot in the bottom right corner of student badges for those whose parents have responded "yes" to allowing their student's picture to be used on current and future NETOLE social media posts and/or promotions. (Signed MEDIA RELEASE forms MUST be submitted at the start of the competition day.)**

## 11. Trophies

All awards will be available at the Rules Committee Meeting to be held within ten school days of the Symposium, when possible. Each school should send a representative to participate in the meeting and to pick up rating sheets and awards. Schools that are not represented at the meeting will be responsible for arranging to have their rating sheets and awards mailed to them or arrange pick up at the directors' convenience.

### **Disqualification Notice:**

#### **Individual students may be disqualified for...**

- using copies of materials for events requiring memorization
- competing at a level below their level of Spanish study
- not providing correct/legible rating sheets and copies of materials required for an event
- exceeding the maximum number of entries allowed for their school in any event
- wearing/displaying any identification of school, school related organization or town
- behavior that may result in badges being confiscated or organization/campus personnel referral to teachers or directors

#### **Teachers/Schools may be disqualified for...**

- non-compliance with expectations of the competition
- non-payment of membership and/or student fees

**Disqualified teachers/schools will be notified of their disqualifications.**

## EVENT RULES

### **1. Entry Limits (All entries are PER SCHOOL with the exception of the Spanish Essay.)**

- a. **Academic Events:** 2 entries per level per language
- b. **Drama:** 1 entry per level
- c. **Craft:** 1 entry per category
- d. **Dance:** 2 entries TOTAL
- e. **Exceeding the entry limit in an event will disqualify all of the competitors for that event from that school.** Teacher or student error is no excuse.

## 2. Judging Criteria

- a. Judges' decisions are final and may not be challenged. Contest Directors may review and correct any errors in judging (mathematical miscalculations, disregard of information/requirements for the event, etc.)
- b. Judging criteria will be based on **meritorious performance** with awards given on that basis when standards are met. A grade of "incomplete" may be given to a student in place of a score less than "70" but, as students are accustomed to numerical evaluation, even a low numerical score is preferred.
- c. **A score below "70" WILL NOT be awarded 1st - 5th places.**
- d. See individual rating sheets for specific point values.
- e. Judges are volunteers who carry out their responsibilities in good faith and must be respected.
- f. Challenging a judge's decision, berating a judge, or impugning his/her honesty and impartiality is considered unprofessional and may result in a school's disqualification and/or exclusion from future competitions.
- g. Judges will verify eligibility of rating sheets. If rating sheets are not legible or are not filled out properly and completely, students may be disqualified.

## ACADEMIC EVENTS (Leveled enrollment)

### 1. Spelling (available on all levels)

- a. The competition will be written and in the target language.
- b. Each school is limited to **two entries per level**.
- c. Words will be taken from the appropriate level of state-adopted textbooks or other authentic language sources.
- d. Instructions and words will be given by the judges who will monitor throughout the entire 30-word session.
- e. While judges' accents or mispronunciation of words is not ideal, student familiarity with the lists is imperative and will assist their comprehension in such cases. Subsequently, misunderstood pronunciations are not grounds for challenging the results.
- f. Judges will grade the rating sheets as a standard spelling test. The student with the fewest errors will receive 1st place.
- g. Additional words may be given and will serve, when necessary, to break ties between two or more contestants.

### 2. Drama (available on all levels)

- a. Drama is limited to ten (10) minutes, including setup, introduction and exit.
- b. Memorization of the lines is required. Using scripts or prompts will result in disqualification.
- c. Only **one entry per level** will be allowed.
- d. Two copies of the script must be presented to the judges.
- e. Two copies of rating sheets must be presented to the judges.
- f. All sound effects and musical accompaniment must be furnished by the competing school.
- g. Judging criteria are: pronunciation/ enunciation, intonation, audibility, characterizations, staging (costumes and props), memorization, and level of difficulty.
- h. Audiences are allowed, but must remain quiet and should not enter or exit during a performance.
- i. All props and other competition material must be completed before arrival at A&M-Commerce. No painting or construction is allowed on university premises.
- j. Props are restricted to designated areas. Do not store them at other locations on campus.
- k. Students may remove their nametags while in costume.

### 3. Memorized Prose and Poetry (available on all levels)

- a. Students must choose one of the designated selections available on the website for the current year's symposium.
- b. Copies of selections will be provided to judges by the INDIVIDUAL STUDENT/TEACHER.
- c. Each school is limited to **two entries per level in each event**.
- d. Judging criteria are: pronunciation, intonation, movements and gestures, interpretation, comprehension of material, and projection of voice.
- e. Poem and prose selections MUST be fully memorized.
- f. Audiences are not allowed.
- g. Contestants will be admitted into the room one at a time.

### 4. Sight-reading Poetry (available on all levels)

- a. Each school is limited to **two entries per level**.
- b. Students will be given a selection and allowed three minutes to study before recitation.
- c. Dictionaries, electronic devices and any outside assistance are not allowed. (Please make sure that students do NOT bring electronic devices with them...cell phones, smart watches, etc...to use in translating materials.) Participants may not converse with others about the poem they are to present. ATTEMPTING TO USE PROHIBITED DEVICES OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR WILL LEAD TO DISQUALIFICATION.
- d. Judging criteria are: pronunciation, interpretation, and projection of voice.
- e. A monitor will be present to time and ensure security of the student's preparation of the selection.
- f. Students studying should have different selections from those being read for the judges.
- g. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the monitor if he/she has prior knowledge of the selection he/she has been given.

### 5. Verbal Fluency (available on all levels)

- a. No questions or topics will be made available prior to the time of the event. Students should be prepared to speak on typical topics relevant to their level of study using appropriate vocabulary and structures.
- b. Each school is limited to **two entries per level**.
- c. Beginning students will converse with a judge for 1-2 minutes.
- d. Intermediate students will converse for 2-3 minutes.
- e. Advanced students will converse for 3-4 minutes.
- f. Advantaged and Bilingual students will converse for 4-5 minutes.
- g. Judging criteria are: comprehension, correct vocabulary, pronunciation, correct grammar, and response without undue hesitation.
- h. Judges speak with students one at a time, using the sample questions provided in the judges' packet as a starting point, if they wish to do so. Judges are not limited to these questions.

### 6. Prepared Speech (available for all levels)

- a. Topics are to be selected from the official list.
- b. Schools are limited to **two entries per level**.
- c. Speeches should not include any identifying characteristics (school, town, teacher's name).
- d. Speeches must be written by the student in the target language with no assistance from others nor artificial intelligent or electronically generated material.
- e. Teachers may assist the student by pointing out grammatical errors ONLY. They may NOT correct student errors in grammar, vocabulary, content, format, etc.
- f. Speeches should be level appropriate.
- g. The speech **must be memorized**.

- h. Student **must submit two typed or legibly written copies of the speech** to the judges.
- i. The student should be prepared to answer three or four questions about his/ her speech in the target language at the judge's discretion, time permitting.
- j. Judging criteria are: pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar that is both correct and level-appropriate, comprehension, intonation, and memorization.
- k. Speeches are limited to three (3) minutes in length.

## 7. Scholarship Exam (available to Juniors and Seniors only)

- a. The East Texas A&M University Languages faculty will sponsor three scholarships for students intending to enroll at the University and planning to complete a minor or major in their department including the following programs: Communication Studies, English, English and Teaching, Hispanic Studies, Spanish Minor, Legal Studies minor, TESOL Minor, or Women and Gender Studies minor.
- b. First place: \$750  
Second and Third places: \$500
- c. NETOLE does not have the funds for matching these scholarship amounts at this time.
- d. The exam is open to Junior and Senior students ONLY. It consists of an objective exam and an essay.
- e. The University will notify all participants of their results and identify the winners.

## 9. Essays (Bilingual/ Heritage speakers only)

- a. Each school is limited to **two entries per teacher**.
- b. Essays will be written on site the day of the competition by the student with no help from teachers, translating devices, applications or websites. Print dictionaries will be provided upon request.
- c. Essays should be no longer than three pages in length.
- d. Judging criteria are: form, content, and mechanics (see rating sheets for specifics)

## CULTURAL EVENTS (Open enrollment)

### 1. Dance

- a. The dance contest is divided into two categories: **solo/duet** and **group**. Dances must contain authentic material/steps, not just be interpretive. (i.e. salsa steps should be used in a dance to salsa music and presented as such)
- b. Schools are limited to **two entries regardless of category**.
- c. Two correctly completed copies of the rating sheets must be submitted to the judges.
- d. A CD/Cassette player or **aux cord/bluetooth speaker** *may* be available at the contest site. No piano will be available. Participants may bring their own devices for their performances but must make sure that volume on devices will be adequate (loud enough to be heard for the performance.)
- e. **Performances are open to the public**. Audience members shall remain quiet and may not enter or exit during a performance.
- f. Performances are limited to four (4) minutes including set up, introduction and exit.
- g. Judging criteria are: skill/ mastery, costuming, reflection of culture, general effect, and introduction (may be in English).

### 2. Vocal

- a. The vocal music contest consists of songs performed in the target language and is divided into two categories: **solo/duet** and **group**.
- b. Schools are limited to **two entries regardless of category**.
- c. A CD/Cassette player and aux cord/bluetooth speaker *may* be available at the contest site. No piano will be available. Participants may bring their own devices or instrumental accompaniment for their

performances but must make sure that volume on devices will be adequate (loud enough to be heard for the performance.)

- d. Musical performances will be open to the public. Audience members must remain quiet and will not be allowed to enter or exit during a performance.
- e. Lyrics must be memorized.
- f. **Two copies of the material to be performed must be presented to the judges** including sheet music, if available, and lyrics.
- g. Winners receive **academic points**.
- h. Performances may not exceed four (4) minutes from setup/introduction to exit. Entries exceeding this time limit by more than 30 seconds will be disqualified.
- i. Judging criteria are: pronunciation, interpretation, memorization, tone, general effect, and introduction.

### **3. Arts and Crafts (Manualidades)**

**Entries must be student handiwork and not AI generated. Entries must be in place by 9 a.m. on the day of competition and may be reclaimed after judging is complete. ALL unclaimed entries MAY BE DISCARDED. No responsibility will be taken by NETOLE or the host university for entries not claimed at the end of the contest day.**

- a. Schools are permitted **one entry per category**.
- b. Categories are:
  - **Drawing/Painting**
  - **3D/Sculpture**
- c. Entries must be **no larger than 3 feet x 3 feet x 3 feet**.
- d. All entries must be accompanied by a **5x8 card** (recommended size) labeled with **student name, school number, name of craft, and region of origin**.
- e. The card must also include a brief description of what the artwork/craft signifies and how it was prepared or constructed.
- f. Entries may be retrieved at the end of the competition. Contest directors will not be responsible for retrieving and returning entries that remain after the contest ends.
- g. Judging criteria are: color, neatness, complexity of preparation, skill/ mastery, reflection of culture, and general effect.

## DIRECTOR/TREASURER CONTACT INFORMATION

**EMAIL MEMBERSHIP, ENROLLMENT AND JUDGES' FORMS TO BOTH THE NETOLE DIRECTORS (netole6@gmail.com) and NETOLE TREASURER (emendoza@mpisd.net).**

**DIRECT QUESTIONS ABOUT EVENTS, JUDGING, RULES and any requests for clarification or help to NET-OLÉ CONTEST DIRECTORS:**

Cheryl Brown (netole6@gmail.com) (903) 268-3158

Nancy Hudson (nhudson75462@gmail.com)

Mark Hudson mhud75462@gmail.com)

### **MAIL ALL PAYMENTS TO NET-OLÉ TREASURER:**

Eduardo Mendoza (emendoza@mpisd.net)

Mount Pleasant High School

PO Box 1117

Mount Pleasant, TX 75456

## AWARDS

### 1. Academic Events

- a. 1st place will receive a medal. (**Exception: VOCAL GROUPS** will receive team trophy and individual blue rosettes. **VOCAL DUETS/SOLO** will receive blue rosettes.)
- b. 2nd place will receive red rosettes.
- c. 3rd – 8th places will receive ribbons.

### 2. Drama

- a. 1st place will receive a team trophy and individual blue rosettes.
- b. 2nd place will receive red rosettes.
- c. 3rd – 6th places will receive ribbons.

### 3. Cultural Events

- a. **Dance:** 1st place teams will receive trophy and individual ribbons.
- b. **Arts and craft:** 1st – 4th places will receive ribbons.

### 4. Overall Awards

- a. **High Point**--presented to the school receiving the highest total number of points
- b. **Excellence Awards**
  - One Excellence Award will be presented.
  - **Calculation:** total points divided by enrollment.
  - This formula allows smaller schools to compete more fairly with larger ones.
- c. Schools which fail to provide **accurate** enrollment figures will not be eligible for the Excellence award.
- d. No school may receive both High Point and Excellence Awards.

## 5. Point Values

### Academic Events/Vocal music

<b>1st</b>	30 points
<b>2nd</b>	25 points
<b>3rd</b>	20 points
<b>4th</b>	15 points
<b>5th</b>	10 points
<b>6th</b>	5 points

### Drama

<b>1st</b>	40 points
<b>2nd</b>	35 points
<b>3rd</b>	25 points
<b>4th</b>	20 points
<b>5th</b>	15 points
<b>6th</b>	10 points

### Cultural Events

<b>1st</b>	20 points
<b>2nd</b>	15 points
<b>3rd</b>	10 points
<b>4th</b>	5 points