

Official Conventions, Precedents, and Standards for Answer Acceptance

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Note: In some cases, in an effort to standardize rules across academic competitions, the guidelines below are identical with NAQT (National Academic Quiz Tournaments) Correctness Guidelines as online at <http://www.naqt.com/correct-answers.html> Identical sections are written *in italics below*, and NAQT is credited with the authorship of those sections.

I. General Notes

- A. The below listed Conventions, Precedents, and Standards for Answer Acceptance (hereafter CPSAA) are valid at all International Academic Competitions events.
- B. The CPSAA are valid for all instances where they come into effect. IAC reserves the right at all times to add to CPSAA to foster clarity, though at an organization wide level, this will not be done during tournaments, but rather between them. Moderators and Tournament Directors should not be expected to be familiar with all of the CPSAA (and all of the Official Rules in general) but should be expected to reference them off the website if need be.
- C. The version of this document as posted on the IAC website, shall be considered the final say.
- D. IAC coaches and students are encouraged to submit possible circumstances to IAC in advance of tournaments if they are not listed in the CPSAA below to acquire an official ruling. The CPSAA document will then be updated accordingly

II. Matters of Geography

- A. "Russia" is an acceptable answer for the largest successor state of the Soviet Union (i.e. the Russian Federation) or for the pre-Revolutionary Russian Empire. "Russia" is not synonymous with the Soviet Union, and should not be considered correct or prompted, if the answer is the Soviet Union as a whole. "Russia or Russian" however, can refer to persons or things in the Soviet period that were characterized by a location with the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic.

In cases of ambiguity (e.g. a question that asks what country Maxim Gorky or Boris Yeltsin was from), it is possible, however, that both "Russia" and "Soviet Union" may be considered correct and/or promptable. The wording of the question will typically contain directions in this case, though if there is ambiguity, a student may protest, and the matter may be dealt with accordingly by the Tournament Director and/or Protest Committee.

- B. "England" "Scotland", "Wales", and "Northern Ireland" are constituent countries of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. If, as such, an answer of any one of them is technically correct under the terms of the question asking for a country, then it shall be considered correct. For example, a question asking for the birth country of Winston Churchill could be correctly answered with "England", "Britain", or the "UK", but not "Scotland". For another example, a question asking for the country where Tony Blair served

- as Prime Minister could be answered by “England” “Scotland”, “Wales”, and “Northern Ireland” or “Britain” or the “United Kingdom”.
- C. “Britain” and “Great Britain” are synonymous with each other for purposes of IAC. Both are acceptable answers for questions where the answer is the UK.
 - D. The United Kingdom is not an island, and answers of the “UK” or “England” where the question is asking specifically for the island of Great Britain will not be considered correct or promptable.
 - E. “UK” is acceptable for “United Kingdom”. “US” or “USA” are acceptable for the United States. “UAE” is acceptable for “United Arab Emirates”. “CCCP”, “USSR” or “Soviet Union” are acceptable for “the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” Other acronyms and abbreviations may be acceptable or promptable, depending on how familiar they are. NATO, NAFTA, EU, WTO, IAEA, UN, WHO, ASEAN, SEATO, and OPEC, for example, are all fine as abbreviations (there are others as well).
 - F. “United States” is always to be considered a reference to “the United States of America” even if there are other countries whose official names contain the words “United States” or their foreign language equivalents.

III. Matters of Grammar

- A. *Some questions will have an answer line with the note **(accept forms)** or **(accept word forms)**. This means that the answer is a generic word and any reasonable inflection of that word should be counted correct. For instance: **disease (accept word forms)** means that **disease, diseases, diseased**, and so on would all be acceptable. Even without that indication, word forms are accepted within reason. This ultimately is at the tournament director’s discretion, if a protest is lodged.*
- B. *If an underlined section includes a generic word (e.g., “war” in **Korean War**) and that generic word appears in the question itself, then a player need not repeat that word if he or she is answering after it has been read. For instance, if the above question ended, “For 10 points--name this 1950-1953 war,” a player would need to say **Korean War** prior to the final word, but could just say **Korean** after the question was completed. If the generic word is all that is underlined, then that’s all that needs to be said, regardless.*
- C. *Titles of works must be exact, except that leading articles may be omitted. All words other than leading articles must be correct (e.g., **Bridge of San Luis Rey** is acceptable, but **Bridge over San Luis Rey** is not.) Rarely will subtitles or working titles be accepted for the published title.*
 1. *If an incorrect leading article is used, the response is incorrect (e.g., **A Bridge of San Luis Rey** is not acceptable.)*
 2. *Insertion of a leading article before a title where none exists will not invalidate an answer (e.g., **The San Francisco Chronicle** for **San Francisco Chronicle**), so long as no other ambiguity is introduced (e.g., **Invisible Man** by H. G. Wells is acceptable; **The Invisible Man** by Ralph Waldo Ellison is not.)*
 3. *Commonly used titles may be accepted if the actual title is long and cumbersome (e.g., **Wealth of Nations** in lieu of **Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations**).*

4. *Players are not prompted if they give a partial title (e.g., saying **San Luis Rey** for **The Bridge of San Luis Rey**); partial titles do not count as "accurate and precise knowledge" except in the cases listed above (or when directed by specific notes on the question).*
- D. *Postal abbreviations are not acceptable for the names of states.*
 - E. *Neither chemical symbols nor atomic numbers are generally acceptable for the names of elements.*
 - F. *Answers that are religious figures or concepts belonging to more than one tradition may generally be given in the corresponding form of any of the traditions unless the question is specifically about differences or similarities among the various traditions. For instance, **Ibrahim** is generally acceptable for **Abraham**. It would not be acceptable, however, if the question were specifically asking for Biblical equivalents of given Qur'anic figures.*
 - G. *Questions that refer to "Greek myth" or include unambiguous references to Greek mythological characters generally require that the Greek forms of names be given as answers (e.g. **Poseidon** rather than **Neptune**). Similarly, questions that specifically mention "Roman myth" or include unambiguous references to Roman mythological characters generally require that the Roman forms of names be given as answers. The names of corresponding figures from other mythological traditions will not generally be prompted.*
 - H. *Both common and official English names are always acceptable for modern-day countries and other political entities. Foreign-language names for countries and other political entities are generally not acceptable unless specifically requested by the question. Historical questions may require the contemporary names of political entities and may or may not specify prompting on other names depending on the nuances of the question. Historical names of countries, cities, and other political entities are generally not acceptable if the question does not involve the time period in which they were in use.*
 - I. *At IAC tournaments outside the USA, more leeway may, at the moderator or Tournament Director's discretion, be given regarding accepting answers given in foreign languages or approximate English pronunciations, provided that the student is displaying clear knowledge of the specific answer required.*

IV. Matters of Names

A. General Procedures

1. *Students must respond by providing what is underlined and bold in the answer space on the question packet.*
2. *Last names are sufficient unless there is sufficient ambiguity, in which case, the student should be prompted. Additional prompts may continue to be given as long as the answer is at no point incorrect (e.g. "Bush", "George Bush", "George W. Bush")*
3. *When prompted, students who give correct information, but not relevant information may be prompted, though this is then at the moderator's discretion in terms of whether the information is relevant or not. For example, a prompt on an answer of "George Bush" where the student says "the one who publicly disliked broccoli" should not be prompted again, even though this is correct and does in some (bizarre) way serve to distinguish between the two. If the student says "Bush 41", however, he should be prompted again.*
4. *First names are rarely acceptable or promptable, except where they coincide with regnal names. Among the exceptions to this rule are figures like Galileo, Raphael, and Dante who*

lived in eras when the use of surnames was less well established, and are commonly known by their first names.

5. Compound last names are promptable, if one part of the last name is given (eg. "George" for David Lloyd George. For Hungarian family names, the family name must be given even though in Hungarian the family name is written first. For Japanese and other names where the family name is written first, these will be considered on a case by case basis, depending on which name is commonly used. In rare instances, either may be considered acceptable (e.g. "Ichiro" for Ichiro Suzuki). For Chinese and Korean names, if an individual name is given, it will be considered promptable (e.g. "Jong-Il" for "Kim Jong-Il"). Regarding pseudonyms vs. birth names, in many cases, (e.g. "Mark Twain" or "Samuel Clemens") both may be acceptable; in other cases, just the birth name, or (more rarely) just the pseudonym. Where only one is taken, the other may be promptable, but this can vary on a case by case basis.

B. Specific Instances

1. For John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the USA, an answer of "John Adams" is neither acceptable, nor promptable (despite those being his first and last names), as this is assumed to be a reference to John Adams, the second president of the USA.
2. Likewise, an answer of "George W. Bush" is always assumed to refer to the 43rd president of the USA, not the 41st (even though one of his two middle names begins with a W.). For the 41st president, say George HW Bush, or George Herbert Walker Bush, or even George Bush the elder, but NOT George Bush Sr. (or Jr. for the 43rd president).
3. TR, FDR, JFK, LBJ, RFK, and MLK are deemed acceptable and complete answers for Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Robert Francis Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr. No other figures in history may be referred to by their initials, though as long as an answer of the initials of a person is given and they are indeed the correct initials, the student should be prompted.

V. Matters of Pronunciation

- A. *Pronunciations do not have to be exact. A plausible or phonetic pronunciation is usually acceptable, unless it demonstrates a fundamental lack of understanding about the correct answer (e.g., **Malcolm the Tenth** is not acceptable for **Malcolm X**). As a general rule, while leeway may be given to vowel sounds, consonants should be in the correct order (e.g., **Olduvai** is not the same as **Olvudai**), and syllables should not be added or omitted.*
- B. *It is not the case, however, that "vowels do not matter." Correctly pronounced answers are always acceptable. Plausible pronunciations of answers according to standard English phonetics are acceptable, so long as they do not create ambiguity. Plausible pronunciations of answers according to other languages may or may not be acceptable depending on the exact context. For instance, **mee-jee**, **mye-jye**, and **may-ih-jee** would all be acceptable for **Meiji**. **Moo-joo** or **may-jay** would be incorrect. The intent of this rule is to avoid penalizing players for learning by reading without an opportunity to hear words pronounced correctly.*
- C. *A player may be prompted to spell a phonetically close response. In such cases, the exact spelling is not always required (e.g., a player says **muh-NAY** and is prompted. A response of **M-A-N-A-Y** would be sufficient to remove ambiguity with **Monet**.)*

VI. Matters of Excessive Answers and Specificity

- A. Providing extra information beyond what is required to answer the question is acceptable as long as it is correct, and not excessive or a random string of information.
- B. For example, “Vienna, Austria” is perfectly fine, even if just “Vienna” is needed. An answer of “Vienna, Swaziland” would be considered incorrect.
- C. An answer of “that capital city on the Danube, oh what’s its name, uh, Vienna” is fine, as long as it is completed within the time allotted to answer the question. Beginning an answer like this right at the time limit is deemed incorrect, even if the student answering does not pause.
- D. If a student is recalling information and says something incorrect, but this is not directed at the moderator, this does not make the answer incorrect.
- E. An answer of “Maria Theresa, Schonbrunn, Pragmatic Sanction, Vienna” is incorrect, as this is just random information strewn together.
- F. “Creator-Creation” is always acceptable – for example “Hamlet by Shakespeare” though, again, all parts must both be correct to each other and correct in the context of the question. “Hamlet by Millard Fillmore” is thus always incorrect whereas “A Midsummer Night’s Dream by Shakespeare” is incorrect if the work in question is actually the musical work with the same name by Felix Mendelssohn.
- G. On the other hand, if the question requires a specific answer (e.g. “Pigagus”), but this is not inherently clear in the wording (and e.g. the student responds with an answer of “pig”) the student may either be prompted, or the answer may be considered correct at the discretion of the moderator, and/or Tournament Director upon protest, even if there was no prompt. Questions will be edited to limit potential examples of this occurring. Generally speaking, in ambiguous circumstances, we will try to give the answering student the benefit of the doubt, and not expect him or her to know exactly what the question was looking for.
- H. On matters of dates, if a student gives a two-digit year answer and the correct answer is any year from 1900 to the present, the student should be prompted for a complete answer. All dates are assumed to be AD, unless students mention BC or BCE as part of their answer.