



Exploring the World of Science

Treasure Valley Homeschool Science Olympiad Team

Information Sheet

What we are

A science competition team composed of 15 students, competing in 23 events (with each student taking on 3-4 events). Students must be from Ada or Canyon County only and cannot be registered with any public schools (in person or online) for any core classes. The middle school team is 6th-9th grade (up to five 9th graders accepted), and the high school team is 9th-12th. If you join the team, it is a year-long commitment, with the expectation that you will compete at the state tournament in April. We are a competitive team and have won the state competition several times and gone to the National tournament. However, while we do like to win, and work hard all year to do our best at the competitions, our ultimate goal is increasing knowledge, skills, character, and having fun in the process.

What we are not

A science club or co-op, a drop-off program, or a casual extracurricular activity.

How it works

Once they have decided to join the team, students will register and rank which events they would like to compete in, as well as three events they absolutely do not want. We try very hard to ensure the students have at least one or two of their top choices, and none of their least desired. However, because we are a team of 15 and have 23 events to fill, students may not always get their top choices, or may get assigned an event they didn't request. We ask for flexibility and willingness to try new things. Some past students have found a new passion from doing an event they weren't all that excited about to begin with.

Once events are assigned, students can begin to meet with their partners and learn the material. We try to sign up for 2-3 invitational competitions throughout the year to practice the events before the State competition. We also plan a few social activities throughout the year to help build team unity and have fun. The State competition is usually held in April, and if we win, we will compete at the National tournament in May.

Student Expectations

- Time commitment varies depending on which events you have and how many (usually 4-5 hours a week)
- Meet with partners at least *twice a month* (1-2 hours each meeting - to study, practice skills, take practice tests, build devices). Closer to competition you might meet every week.
- Study on own throughout the month (usually about 1-2 hours a week)
- Work hard, teachable attitude, team player
- Participation in State competition in April is expected, participation at invitationals and Nationals is encouraged.

Parent Expectations

- Be the primary coach for 1-2 events, and possibly assist other parent coaches
- Set up meetings with event partners and get student there
- Encourage study time during the week outside of meetings (verify work is being done, motivate)
- Assist in locating new resources to help with studying, builds, etc.
- Attend all team meetings and competitions

As homeschoolers, we have a distinct advantage to be able to put as much time and energy into the competition as we want. Some parents use Science Olympiad as their science curriculum for the year, while others use it as a supplement. **Parents are VITAL** to the success of the team and are therefore required to help coach events and facilitate their student's participation.

What makes a good Science Olympiad team member?

1. Curiosity and willingness to learn new things
2. Determination and grit to keep going when things are hard
3. Helps to be at least a little bit competitive
4. Good study skills or the ability to learn them
5. Ability to commit for the year
6. Willingness to work with a partner and do your fair share

For those not familiar with Science Olympiad, it can seem overwhelming at first. There is new lingo, lots of specific rules and procedures, 23 different events, and an abundance of resources and materials. It can get complicated when you have 3 different events with 3 different partners and are trying to schedule meetings twice a month with all of them. Throw in having to coach an event or two you may not be familiar with, and many parents (and students) think, "What have I gotten myself into!" But we promise, it does get easier as you go along, and there is always help available. And getting to the end of the year, seeing all you have learned and accomplished, and getting to test it all out against other teams, is immensely satisfying.

Student Testimonials

Hello! I'm Evelyn. Science Olympiad is one of my favorite things to do. I've learned so much through Science Olympiad. I discovered my love for science, learned teamwork skills, and had a lot of fun. One thing I didn't expect to learn from Science Olympiad is test-taking skills. I used to be afraid to take tests. They were intimidating and stressful, but through SO I've learned that it doesn't have to be that scary. My coaches have helped me learn amazing strategies to get better at quickly analyzing information and sharing what I've learned during competitions. Now I'm really good at taking tests, like, really good (#NotABragger), and don't stress over them as much. It's such an amazing way to learn, as the combination of science and healthy competition (CRUSH THEM!!!!!!) makes it such a fun experience. That's why I think you should join SO!

-Evelyn G. (Middle School Team)

"Hey, this is Weston! I've competed for the Treasure Valley Homeschool Science Olympiad Teams for five straight years now, and it's been a great experience for me. Science Olympiad has exposed me to nearly all parts of science in a friendly, competitive way, and I can thank SO for inspiring me in my career goals. Before I started in 7th grade, I had no idea what I wanted to pursue, and now I'm very passionate about microbiology and genetics, and without Science Olympiad I wouldn't have known about these areas. I met many of my closest friends through Science Olympiad and the social experience from it is something I love. Also, SO has taught me the values of teamwork and self-discipline that will last with me my whole life."

-Weston M. (High School Team)