Princeton Quiz Bowl Tournament
Information for Participants

Game Format

All decisions of the tournament director are final. Questions regarding the tournament should be directed to the tournament director at cbowl@princeton.edu. Complete rules can be found here.

Each team consists of five players, although teams may play with fewer. Each game consists of 10 tossup questions, each with a corresponding bonus. From the quarterfinals on, games double in length, with a halftime between the two 10-tossup halves.

For a tossup question, the moderator will begin reading the question and a player who wishes to answer can signal with the buzzer at any time during the question, at which point the moderator will stop reading and the player will be given a chance to answer. Tossups are individual questions – there is no conferral or discussion allowed between teammates.

Tossups are generally worth 10 points. However, if a player answers correctly at a point in the question where clues are still bolded (see sample questions below), that player has gotten a “power” and receives 15 points for the question instead of 10.

If a player answers a tossup incorrectly before the end of the question, that player receives a “neg” and is assessed a 5-point penalty. Once a player has negged, none of her/his teammates may buzz in – only one player can attempt to answer per team per question. Answering a question incorrectly after the moderator has finished reading it will incur no penalty – one can only neg when the question hasn’t been finished yet. Additionally, only one team can neg per question. If one team has already negged, the other will not lose points for a wrong answer at any point in the question.

If a player gets a tossup, her/his team is read a bonus question. Bonuses typically consist of three parts, each worth 10 points. Generally, each bonus will have an easy, a medium and a hard part. A team may receive 0, 10, 20 or 30 points on a bonus, depending on how many parts were answered correctly. Bonuses will be similar in subject to their corresponding tossups.

Teammates may confer on bonus questions, and the bonus can only be answered by the team that won it (no rebounds). Typically, the captain is expected to answer the bonus, but any answer that is directed towards the moderator will be accepted.

If neither team answers a tossup correctly, that tossup goes “dead” and is discarded. The corresponding bonus will not be read for any team.

Tiebreakers are resolved by reading tossups until the score changes. No bonuses will be read.

Each time gets one timeout per game. Timeouts may be used between tossup-bonus pairs, NOT between a tossup and its corresponding bonus, and not during any question.

Substitutions are allowed during timeouts or, from the quarterfinals on, at halftime. A team may bring any number of substitutes to a game.
Teams A and B are playing. The moderator reads the following tossup question:

This alumnus died of a heart attack while reading the Princeton Alumni Weekly. He was played by Tom Huddleston in “Midnight in Paris.” Though he later said that he could have been more comfortable in Quad, this man bickered Cottage. Characters this author created include Dick Diver, Amory Blaine, Daisy Buchanan and Nick Carraway. FTP, name this husband of Zelda, the author of “Tender is the Night,” “This Side of Paradise” and “The Great Gatsby.”

ANSWER: F. Scott Fitzgerald

A player on team B buzzes in with “John Smith” after “Weekly” is read. The answer was wrong, so that player has “negged” and the team receives a 5-point penalty. The moderator continues reading.

A player on team A buzzes in (an act of vulturing, explained below) and answers with “F. Scott Fitzgerald” after the moderator finishes reading “Paris.” It should be noted that the player only needed to say “Fitzgerald” to get the points, because only “Fitzgerald” was bolded and underlined. Since the player answered correctly while the moderator was still reading bolded text, he has “powered” the question, receiving 15 points, and his team is read the following bonus question:

F. Scott Fitzgerald never actually graduated from Princeton. Name some other people who failed to graduate, FTPE.

[10] This 35th president was at Princeton for six weeks before illness forced him to take it easy and transfer to Harvard.

ANSWER: John F. Kennedy [accept JFK]

[10] After leaving Princeton, this billionaire studied martial arts before returning to Gotham City to fight criminals like Catwoman, Two-Face and the Joker.

ANSWER: Bruce Wayne [accept Batman]

[10] This playwright may have been expelled for throwing a beer bottle through Woodrow Wilson’s window. He wrote “The Hairy Ape,” “The Iceman Cometh” and “Long Day’s Journey Into Night.”

ANSWER: Eugene O’Neill

Team A answers “Kennedy” for the first part and “Batman” for the second, but does not know the answer to the third part. Team B does know that the answer is “O’Neill,” but can’t answer, because team A won the bonus question and no rebounds are allowed. Team A receives 20 points for answering two parts of the bonus correctly.

Categories

The question categories are, in approximate relative frequency: Princeton people (alumni, faculty and others), campus life, Princeton in pop culture, buildings and locations, Princeton history, Princeton in the news and miscellaneous. Each round will have at least one question from each category.

Questions are not necessarily restricted to pure Princeton trivia. The tournament tests general knowledge as well as knowledge of Princeton, and is intended to reward well-rounded knowledge of a diverse array of subjects. However, each question will be related to Princeton, somehow.
Tournament Format

The tournament is single-elimination, with four brackets: small, medium, large and huge (residential colleges and eating clubs). The bracket winners will meet in the semifinals and finals.

A small team represents an organization with 20 members or less. A medium team represents an organization with 20 to 40 members. A large team represents any organization with more than 40 members that is not an eating club or residential college.

Statistics will be tracked for teams and individuals. Players will provide their names at the start of each round. Players are required to provide their actual names. To provide a false name or impersonate another player is forbidden and will result in expulsion from the tournament.

Eligibility

Eligible teams include varsity sports, club sports, student groups registered through ODUS, other student groups, eating clubs and residential colleges. Teams that ambiguously fit these criteria should contact the tournament director, who will make the final decision on whether they can play.

Eating clubs and residential colleges can register two teams for the tournament. Other organizations are limited to one.

Participants may play for an organization if they are in fact a member of that organization. Each participant can only play for one team at a time, and can play each round only once. A player may switch teams if and only if her/his previous team has been eliminated from the tournament.

Teams should designate a captain. The captain has precedence when answering bonus questions and is expected to be the primary student spokesperson for the team and available for the duration of the tournament. The team captain is responsible for getting her/his players to games on time, making sure that players know the rules, and communicating with tournament officials. The captain should read and understand the complete rules.

Ethics

All participants, including spectators, should behave according to the principles expressed in the Honor Code, and treat the tournament as a serious academic event where cheating is unacceptable.

Players and spectators should not reveal any information about question content until the questions are cleared for discussion by the tournament director. Players should not attempt to gain an unfair advantage through knowledge of questions yet to be played. Violators will be severely punished, with penalties including and up to public disqualification of an entire team.

Spectators are encouraged to watch games in appropriate venues. However, spectators may not participate in the tournament and may not discuss question content until questions are cleared for discussion. Moderators may eject spectators that are unruly, disruptive or blurting out answers.

Any sanctions the tournament director chooses to impose cannot be appealed.
Prizes

The overall winner of the tournament will receive $500 and a trophy. The best-performing residential college will also receive a trophy (ties broken by points scored per game).

The five best individual players, as measured by points per tossups heard, will be named to the tournament All-Star team and will receive prizes. To be eligible, a player has to have played at least 20 tossup questions, or two games.

Tips and Tricks

Listen carefully for the word “this.” “This” will identify what kind of thing the answer is, e.g. “this book,” “this man,” “this character,” etc. Many a quiz bowler has given a character or an author when the name of a book was desired.

In a similar vein, pay close attention to pronouns. If a question mentions “he” several times, make sure you answer with the name of a person.

“Vulturing” – the act of buzzing in on a question after the opposing team has already negged but before the moderator has finished reading – is highly frowned upon. Since teams that neg cannot buzz in again and there is no time limit, there is literally no chance that the opposing team will get the question, so it’s in your interest to wait until the end of the question to ensure that you get it right. Vulturing is only considered acceptable if there’s a chance to power the question, a la the example above.

Try not to answer more than the question requires, as it puts you at a greater risk of negging. If the answer is “F. Scott Fitzgerald,” and you buzz in with “F. Scotch Fitzgerald,” you will be wrong, even though you got “Fitzgerald” right.

Conversely, if you’ve answered a question but haven’t provided enough information, the moderator will indicate that by saying “prompt,” “I need more,” or something similar. For example, if you answer with “Roosevelt,” the moderator will prompt you to add if it's Teddy, Franklin or Eleanor.

There is no reason to answer a bonus question before the moderator has finished reading. Listen carefully to the entire question.

There is no shame, only points.