Specific Guidelines

Is Documentation Necessary?

The first thing to determine is if a documentation portfolio is even needed, and, if so, what the requirements are for that specific portfolio. For the most part, the answer will be yes though there are some events (dragster, for example) that do not require a full portfolio instead needing only drawings and the LEAP documents. If a project does not require a documentation portfolio, all that should be turned in is what the contest guidelines call for and nothing more…and nothing less. If more materials are turned in than are required, there is a good chance that all the additional material will NOT be considered by the judges - or worse, assessed penalty points because it is “extra material.” If the material turned in is less than is required, penalty points could be assessed, or…worse…the project could be disqualified entirely. In any case, it’s a good idea to carefully read the rules (ALL THE RULES) for an event before beginning to work on a project or portfolio.

Another key is to assemble the portfolio as the project is being completed. It’s not wise to leave the documentation until the last minute. A portfolio should be started when the project/competitive event is begun so the information presented can be accurately recorded as tasks are accomplished (like work logs).

Where are the Rules?

The rules for all of the competitive events are located in the Competitive Events guides, of which there are two:

- National TSA Competitive Events Guide (there is one for the high school and one for the middle school).
- Colorado TSA State Competitive Events Guide (this one contains all the rules for both the middle and high school events that are only offered at the state level).

In each of these books, the competitive events are listed alphabetically and broken into several sections as follows:

National Competitive Events Guide

- Overview – A brief summary of the event.
- Purpose – This tells you the goal of the event – what you are supposed to learn/do.
- Eligibility – This tells you how many individuals/teams from your chapter/state can compete in a contest.
- Time Limits: This tells you how long certain portions of the contest will take.
- Attire – This section tells you what the uniform requirements are for the contest. This is what you must wear to compete in the event at the state or national level. If you are not wearing appropriate attire, you will be assessed a rules violation or disqualified.
- Procedure – This section tells you how the contest will work.
- Regulation – These are the “rules” for the event. It explains in detail what you should include in your project – a display, a documentation portfolio, a model, etc.
- Evaluation – This tells you how the project will be graded. Use this with the rubric to see exactly what the judges will be looking for.
- Notes – Specific notes for you that relate to the project.
Specific Guidelines

COTSA State Competitive Events Guide

- **Purpose** – This tells you the goal of the event – what you are supposed to learn/do.
- **Eligibility** – This tells you how many individuals/teams from your chapter can compete in a contest.
- **Specific Regulations** - These are the “rules” for the event. It explains in detail what you should include in your project – a display, a documentation portfolio, a model, etc.
- **Procedure** – This section tells you how the contest will work.
- **Evaluation** – This tells you how the project will be graded. Use this with the rubric to see exactly what the judges will be looking for.
The Documentation Portfolio

The documentation portfolio should begin at the same time a project is started. Most contests will require that contestants keep a work log or include preliminary drawings as they work through the design/problem-solving process, so it’s best to complete these items as the project develops rather than try to remember and document all the crucial steps at the very end. Waiting until the last minute may result in leaving out key steps and information which in turn could mean the difference between winning a medal or not.

Portfolio Requirements

The requirements for what should be in a documentation portfolio will be listed in the specific competitive event rules under the REGULATIONS or SPECIFIC REGULATIONS sections. In these sections will be EXACTLY what is required for the contest, including information on the documentation portfolio. Below is an example from the High School National Competitive Events Guide showing the Regulations Section.
The Documentation Portfolio

As stated before, some events will require that all the documentation for a project be created and then scanned and converted into a single, multi-page PDF document for submission on a USB flash drive; other entries require a hard copy of the portfolio. For those latter events, all the required documentation should be secured in a clear front report cover. An example of the cover is shown below and here: http://www.staples.com/Oxford-Clear-Front-Report-Covers/product_SS1003226. Page protectors may be utilized to prevent pages from being accidentally ripped/torn out, or worse yet, lost. Pages should not be double-sided in the protectors unless it is specifically indicated in the competitive event rules; failure to follow this specification can result in point deductions or disqualification.

Three-ring binders should NOT be used. A portfolio that is NOT submitted as specified by the rules - either on a flash drive or in a clear report cover - will not be evaluated!
The Documentation Portfolio

The Documentation

The heart of any project - whether it’s for TSA or for an employer - is the documentation. Documentation has the ability to either make or break a project, so students should plan on spending as much time (if not more!) on the documentation than they do on the project itself.

Again, all documentation should be word processed. Handwritten documentation should not be included unless it is specifically called for in the event guidelines. Some events may require competitors to include notes and sketches – and those pieces of documentation are acceptable if handwritten. However, the remainder of the documentation must be typed on a computer and printed on an ink jet or laser printer.

The documentation should be printed on 8.5” x 11” paper unless otherwise stated by your event guidelines.

The documentation should be printed single-sided unless otherwise stated by your event guidelines.

All entries must be in English.

Unless otherwise specified, there should be absolutely NO IDENTIFYING INFORMATION on a project or in a documentation portfolio other than an identification number (individual or team). Exceptions to this rule are those events that require content aligned with a school or community (e.g., Construction Challenge).

The portfolio should be proofread for grammatical and spelling mistakes. And then it should be proofread again. And then it should be proofread a third time. Several different people should proofread it and check for any errors before it is submitted for competition. Students should not rely solely on the spelling/grammar checker on the computer; it’s good, but it’s not perfect. The computer may not pick up on the wrong usage of words such as “HEAR” vs. “HERE” or “THEIR” vs. “THERE”. The misuse of words in the documentation could result in point deduction and that could translate into a lost medal or trophy!
The Documentation Portfolio

Here the specifications that should be used in creating the documentation portfolio:

**Font Size**

- Use only 11 or 12 point type. Do not shrink type to fit on a page; and conversely, do not increase the size of the type to fill a page. Instead, use concise language to get text to fit! Don’t be afraid to edit!
- Do not mix and match type sizes in within the documentation. Keep all text the same size unless specifically instructed to do otherwise.

**Font Style**

- Throughout the documentation, contestants should be consistent in the use of fonts and typefaces, both in style and in size. Fonts should not be mixed and matched; mixing and matching is visually unappealing and makes the portfolio look unprofessional. Contestants should pick ONE typeface and stick with it throughout all of the documentation.
- A standard type font such as Times New Roman or Arial should be used throughout the documentation. Yes, it may be “boring,” but if any last minute work needs to be done on someone else’s computer, there’s usually a good chance those two typefaces are on it. Using a standard, nondescript typeface would prevent having to reformat the entire document. Besides, using one of these two fonts will make the documentation easier for the judges to read.
- Word Art should NEVER be used! Just because it’s available doesn’t mean it should be used. For headings, subheadings, and titles, a bolded or bolded/italic version of the same font used for the body text will suffice.

**Character Spacing**

- Only one (1) space is required after punctuation ending a sentence. Thanks to computers handling spacing, only one is necessary. Consistent use of spaces in the document is also critical.
- Only one (1) space after a semicolon (;) comma (,) or colon (:)
- Only one space between any state abbreviation and zip code is necessary.

**Line Spacing**

- Unless otherwise specified in a competitive event’s guidelines, all text should be single-spaced with a double-space put in between paragraphs.
- When using bulleted lists, single space individual items; double space between numbered items.

**Margins**

- In general, unless otherwise stated in the competitive event guidelines, all margins should be 1” (one inch).
- Do not shrink or stretch the margins. Margins should not be increased to help stretch the length of the text. Conversely, margins should not be made smaller to accommodate a lengthy document. Fudging the margins makes the document look unprofessional and messy. It is far better to edit the text to fit the space instead.
The Documentation Portfolio

**Page Numbers**

- Page numbers should be included. This will help judges easily find information in the documentation.
- Page numbers should be in the same font size and style used throughout the documentation.
- Page numbers should be 0.5” from the bottom of the page at the right margin starting on page 2.

Below is an example of what a page of text in a documentation portfolio should look like:

---

For bulleted lists, single space individual items; double space between numbered items.

1. Aliquam tempus suscipit neque, eget suscipit ante suscipit in.
2. Interdum et malesuada fames ac ante ipsum primis in faucibus. Donec malesuada sed sem.
3. Ut varius venenatis justo et amet varius.


Ut interdum malesuada fames ac ante ipsum primis in faucibus. Donec malesuada sed sem.

Interdum et malesuada fames ac ante ipsum primis in faucibus. Ut varius venenatis justo et amet varius.

---
The Documentation Portfolio

Inside the Documentation

Here’s what should be included in a documentation portfolio, along with any specific items the event guidelines call for:

The Cover Page

Every portfolio should have a cover page. This will help a) make sure the project is placed in the right area to be judged; b) aid the judges when they are evaluating the portfolio/project. The cover should be blank, except for:

- The Event Title
- The Conference city and state (this will need to be changed if the project progresses from the state conference to the national conference)
- The Year
- There should be NO NAME OR ANY OTHER IDENTIFYING INFORMATION on the cover beyond an ID number (individual or team). For nationals, no identifying information whatsoever should be on the cover page. When a project is turned in at nationals, they give the contestant a sticker with an ID number (one that is completely different from the state conference ID number) to put on it.

That’s it – plain and simple. No art, graphics, sketches, logos, or other information - not even the official TSA logo! It may be dull and boring, and it may not look all that attractive, but each competitive event calls for a simple cover to identify the portfolio and the event to which it belongs. That’s it - nothing more. Competition is sometime so close that even a small thing like the cover page can determine a winning entry.

Here is an example of what a cover page should look like:

Digital Photography
Denver, CO
2014
The Title Page

The Title Page is different from the Cover Page. The title page is the start of the written documentation and appears as the FIRST page, INSIDE the portfolio after the cover page. Here are the specifications for a Title Page:

- The Title Page is one (1) page in length and should not include any graphics (including Word art), logos, sketches or other identifying information.
- The Title Page should include:
  - The Event Title
  - The Conference City and State
  - The Year of the Conference
  - The Team/Chapter ID Number – This number is provided to each chapter advisor after registration for the state conference. This number will change if the project progresses from the state conference to the national conference. There should be no identifying information like name or school name on it whatsoever. At the national conference, when turning in an entry, sticker with a unique ID number will be provided at check in.

Here is an example of what a Title Page should look like:

Digital Photography
Denver, CO
2014
The Documentation Portfolio

Table of Contents

Most documentation notebooks will require a Table of Contents. Here are the specifications for the Table of Contents:

- The Table of Contents can be as many pages as needed.
- The Table of Contents heading should be centered at the top of the page, followed by a double-space.
- The items in the table of contents should include all the items called for in the event’s guidelines and they should be in the same order as called for in the guidelines.
- The names of the items in the table of contents should be flush left.
- The page numbers should be right-aligned with leader lines.

Here is an example of what a Table of Contents should look like:

![Table of Contents Example](image-url)
The Documentation Portfolio

Tables

Tables are useful in showing data and they should be used where appropriate. However, unless they are formatted neatly and consistently, the data becomes lost or unusable. Here are the formatting guidelines for tables:

- Use bold type for titles and column headings
- Column headings should be centered over column.
- Tables using one- and two-line column headings should be aligned at the center of the cell.
- Unless specifically required by the event’s guidelines, gridlines should be used.
- Include the dollar sign ($) when showing dollar amounts in columns.
- All columns containing numbers should be right-aligned or decimal aligned.
- All columns containing text should be left aligned (with the exception of column headings).
- The body of the table should be single-spaced.
- Tables should be centered on the page horizontally unless otherwise indicated.

Here is an example of how a table should look:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column Heading</th>
<th>Column Heading</th>
<th>Column Heading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text goes here. It is flush left.</td>
<td>Text goes here</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The table is centered on the page. Note that text can only go on one line.</td>
<td>Text can also go here.</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use gridlines for anything you create. And so this</td>
<td>And so this</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure you align your decimal places.</td>
<td>And this is, too</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables should be centered on the page horizontally unless otherwise indicated.
The Documentation Portfolio

Resumes (NOT LEAP Resumes!)

Some contests require that a resume be included as part of the documentation portfolio (like Career Prep, for example). This resume should not be confused with a LEAP resume which is a completely separate document with a different purpose. This resume is the kind used when someone is looking for a job. When creating a resume, whether for a competition or for job hunting, there are several things to keep in mind:

- Keep the resume clear and readable! Resumes today are read by optical scanners in helping human resource departments screen candidates. Even though a resume in a documentation portfolio won’t be scanned at a TSA conference, it’s still a good idea to keep a resume clean and simple.
- Use a single, non-decorative font (Arial or Times New Roman are the most common)
- Be sparing in the use of boldface, italics and underlining.
- When it comes to bullets, do not use round hollow bullets as they can be misread by scanners. For example, the hollow bullets could be misread as the lowercase letter “o” or the digit zero. Instead, round, solid bullets should be used.
- Avoid using any shading or boxes on the resume.
- Be careful to not have letters that touch each other. Scanners have trouble interpreting text when characters touch or overlap.
- Do not use ampersands (&) percent signs (%) or foreign characters as the scanner may not read them properly.
- Try not to use lines or other graphic elements on the resumes. Scanners have a tough time translating them.
- Do not use a multi-column format. Scanners read text left to right and cannot distinguish between columns like the human eye can.
- Begin each line at the left margin and do not justify the right margin.

Here is an example of how a resume might look. This is only a sample; there are many other examples on the Internet or from the chapter advisor.

Sample Resume

Johanna S. Bach
123 Main Street
Anytown, US 12345
(555) 555-5555

Objective:
A very impressive and convincing objective statement should be written to enrich worth of a resume. Resume objective can be two to three lines in length. Be concise and mention the name of the position you are applying for.

Employment History:

Company Name, City, State – Month/Year to Month/Year
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
Company Name, City, State – Month/Year to Month/Year
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
Company Name, City, State – Month/Year to Month/Year
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
- Bullet points of job duties go here.
- Bullet points of job duties go here.

Skills:
- Job related skills will be written here as bullets.
- Job related skills will be written here as bullets.
- Job related skills will be written here as bullets.

Education:
- Degree/Diploma/Certificate, School, City, State, Year Earned
- Degree/Diploma/Certificate, School, City, State, Year Earned
- Degree/Diploma/Certificate, School, City, State, Year Earned

References:
Available Upon Request

For employment date ranges, be specific for each experience.

List skills that directly relate to the job you are applying for.

Prepare a list of references (at least 3 and include all contact info) ahead of time just in case the interviewer asks for them.

Be careful! Don’t put your real name or other identifying information on a resume unless the contest specifically asks for it!

Use common subject headings followed by a colon.

Last Updated 2019-2020
The Documentation Portfolio

References/Sources/Works Cited

Competitors are required to cite the sources of the information used in the creation of their projects. These could range from magazines and newspaper articles, websites, and books. DO NOT think that documentation can be created by cutting/copying/pasting from random websites around the Internet - that is plagiarism and it will get a project disqualified faster than anything! The purpose behind research is to take in the information…read it…digest it…analyze it…and even quote it…but it needs to be cited! (And no, www.google.com is not a reference. Google is a search engine. It’s the website Google leads to that’s the source - and even then, it may not be the original one!)

In TSA documentation, the MLA format (MLA stands for Modern Language Association) must be used. For more information on MLA format, visit this website: www.mla.org/style. For convenience, a quick reference checklist has been created below. The checklist, provided courtesy of FBLA-PBL, shows how each of the various sources should be cited in a References section in a portfolio. (FBLA-PBL Format Guide. Reston, VA. FBLA-PBL, 2014).

References - MLA Style

- **Sample Book Reference:**
  

- **Sample Book Reference Without Author:**
  

- **Sample Magazine Reference:**
  

- **Sample Magazine Reference without Author:**
  
The Documentation Portfolio

Continued from previous page

• **Sample Internet Reference:**


• **Sample Encyclopedia:**


• **Sample Interview Reference:**


• **Sample Booklet/Pamphlet Reference:**


• **Sample DVD Reference:**


• **Sample Radio/Television Reference:**


• **Sample Government Pubs Reference:**