

THEME Official Tournament Rules 2026 - 27

[AGLOA THEME playing forms are available on the agloa.org website.]

Bold and yellow highlighted entries mark changes/additions from 2025-26.

- TH1** All AGLOA competitors are expected to preserve the integrity of the competition by conducting themselves in a fair and ethical manner. In cases of unfair play, unsportsmanlike conduct, or clear violations of tournament rules, the Penalties Policy in the AGLOA National Tournament Administration Manual should be consulted.
- TH2** Three- or four-person games are played.
- TH3** Resources to be used to prepare for the THEME rounds are reference books, i.e., historical reference texts on the chosen topic, RELIABLE internet-based programs, and other basic text references. Reference books are NOT permitted at the table.
- TH4** The THEME topic outline is a separate document from the rules. THEME topics are chosen by the Social Studies Committee annually according to the following rotating categories
- Year 1 Mythology / Ancient Civilization
 - Year 2 Decade / Era
 - Year 3 War
 - Year 4 Wild Card

Year 2 and 3 topics will be coordinated with Presidents ranges, when possible. War topics will alternate between contemporary (Korea and later) and historical wars.

Elementary Division THEME

- TH5** The following version of THEME is played in the Elementary Division (Rules **TH5** to **TH11**). See Rules **TH12** to **TH21** for the Middle, Junior, and Senior Division versions of THEME.
- TH6** A total of 32 questions are played in Elementary Division THEME as follows:
Round 1—THEME Lightning Round 1 (16 questions)
Round 2—THEME Lightning Round 2 (16 questions)
- Questions are multiple-choice with four alternatives marked A, B, C, and D. At least one of the four alternatives is correct as determined by reliable resources. Participants must use a NON-ERASABLE blue or black ink pen in recording all answers.
- TH7** For each Elementary Division THEME Lightning Round, students will be asked 16 questions with assigned values of 2, 4, or 6 points. It will be in a multiple-choice format.
- TH8** For each Elementary Division THEME Lightning Round, the central reader announces a category and reads aloud the question and the four alternative answers. The reader may read the question and alternatives twice and only twice. The question and the picture are displayed as the central reader reads, then each answer choice is displayed as the reader reads them. Then the reader reads the question-and-answer choices again and students are directed to mark their answer. Questions 1 to 4 are 2-point questions, Questions 5 to 8 are 4-point questions, and Questions 9-16 are 6-point questions. Point values are also on the answer sheet.
- TH9** There is no THEME Wager Round for the Elementary Division.
- TH10** While the question and alternatives answers are being read aloud, players must put their pens down on the table. From the end of the second reading, each player has 15 seconds to circle her/his answer on the Answer/Wager Sheet. Students may pick up their non-erasable pen to make an answer selection only AFTER the second reading. Using a

non-erasable pen only, each player may circle one and only one answer per question. Marking out or changing an answer must be initialed by a monitor with a red pen. If the change is not signed by a monitor, the answer is automatically wrong or can incur a -1-penalty depending on the situation.

TH11 Scoring for the Elementary Division THEME Lightning Rounds:

NO reference materials may be used. In addition, wagering is not permitted and there are NO abstentions. The value of each question (2 or 4 or 6) is announced by the central reader prior to the reading. If the student's choice is correct, the assigned point value is awarded; if the student's choice is incorrect, no points are awarded. If a player is not at the table to answer a question, they score 0 for that question. Players cannot receive a negative score in Elementary Division THEME.

Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME

TH12 The following version of THEME is played in the Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions (Rules **TH12** to **TH21**). See Rules **TH5** to **TH11** for the Elementary Division version of THEME.

TH13 A total of 30 questions are played in Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME as follows:

Round 1—THEME Lightning Round 1 (18 questions)

Round 2—THEME Wager Round 2 (12 questions)

Questions are multiple-choice with four alternatives marked A, B, C, and D. At least one of the four alternatives is correct as determined by reliable resources. Participants must use a NON-ERASABLE blue or black ink pen in recording all answers.

TH14 For the Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME Lightning Round 1, students will be asked 18 questions with assigned values of 2, 4, or 6 points. It will be in a multiple-choice format.

TH15 For the Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME Lightning Round 1, the central reader announces a category and reads aloud the question and the four alternative answers. The reader may read the question and alternatives twice and only twice. The question and the picture are displayed as the central reader reads, then each answer choice is displayed as the reader reads them. Then the reader reads the question-and-answer choices again and students are directed to mark their answer. Questions 1 to 6 are 2-point questions, Questions 7 to 12 are 4-point questions, and Questions 13 to 18 are 6-point questions. Point values are also on the answer sheet.

TH16 The Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME Wager Round 2 is a wagering round. The wager categories are in large, bold print in the outline. A central reader announces a category. Each player begins the round with 0 points. Before each question is read aloud, each player writes a wager of 2, 4, or 6 on his/her wager/answer sheet based on the category the central reader announces. All wagers at a table are revealed simultaneously, then recorded on a common score sheet before the question is read.

TH17 For the Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME Wager Round 2, the central reader announces a category and reads aloud the question and the four alternative answers. The reader may read the question and alternatives twice and only twice. The question and the picture are displayed as the central reader reads them, then each answer choice is displayed as the reader reads them. Then the reader reads the question-and-answer choices again and students are directed to mark their answer.

- TH18** While the question and alternative answers are being read aloud, players must put their pens down on the table. From the end of the second reading, each player has 15 seconds to circle her/his answer or abstain on the Answer/Wager Sheet. Students may pick up their non-erasable pen to make an answer selection only AFTER the second reading. Using a non-erasable pen only, each player may circle one and only one answer or abstention per question. Marking out or changing an answer must be initialed by a monitor with a red pen. If the change is not signed by a monitor, the answer is automatically wrong or can incur a -1 penalty depending on the situation.
- TH19** A player may abstain from answering during the Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME Wager Round 2, but each player may abstain no more than twice per round. If a player abstains more than twice, the player loses his/her wager for that question and receives the highest negative score (-3).
- TH20** Scoring for the Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME Lightning Round 1:
NO reference materials may be used. In addition, wagering is not permitted and there are NO abstentions. The value of each question (2 or 4 or 6) is announced by the central reader prior to the reading. If the student's choice is correct, the assigned point value is awarded; if the student's choice is incorrect, no points are awarded. If a player is not at the table to answer a question, they score 0 for that question. Players cannot receive a negative score in the Lightning Round.
- TH21** Scoring for the Middle, Junior, and Senior Divisions THEME Wager Round 2:
NO reference materials may be used.
- If a player's answer agrees with the reader's answer, that player wins his wager. (6 or 4 or 2)
 - If a player's answer disagrees with the reader's, the player loses HALF his wager. (-3 or -2 or -1)
 - If a player abstains, the player neither gains nor loses points, provided he has not exceeded the abstention limit of two (see **TH19**).
 - If a player fails to wager and the player's answer agrees with the reader's answer, the player wins two points. If a player fails to wager and the player's answer disagrees with the reader's answer, the player loses three points.
 - If a player answers any question during the round but is not at the table before or after to answer a question, that player scores -4 for each question missed.

All Divisions of THEME

- TH22** Play proceeds until all questions have been read and answered in a round. The ultimate winner in a division is determined by the total number of points in both THEME rounds. In case of a tie for first place only (individual or team), a four-question playoff will be held following the rules set forth in the AGLOA National Tournament Administration Manual.
- TH23** The Tournament Director will appoint a chief monitor and/or a designated timer for each room to help resolve any issues involving rules, including penalties and behavior. Any behavior or infraction penalties must be agreed upon by two monitors — one being the chief monitor — to ensure consistency.
- TH24** Certain forms of behavior interfere with play and annoy or intimidate opponents. If a player is guilty of such conduct, a monitor can take action — from a verbal warning to immediate disqualification for that round or all subsequent rounds — to discontinue the offensive behavior. Thereafter during that round or subsequent rounds, if the player again

behaves in an offensive manner, the player may be penalized by -1 point for each violation after the warning.

This rule includes (but is not limited to):

- the use of any electronic device (smartphone, tablet, watch, smart glasses / eye-wear like Google Glass or Ray-Ban Meta, earbuds or earphones, etc.)
- constant talking, tapping on the table, humming or singing, loud or rude language
- intentionally knocking items off the table

TH25 The first time a player marks an answer on the wrong line in a round, there is no penalty, although a monitor must initial the correction with a red pen. Any other answers marked on the wrong line by that player the remainder of the round incur a one-point penalty that must be initialed by a monitor with a red pen.

TH26 Certain infractions that give a player an unfair advantage or completely disrupt the reader may draw an immediate disqualification without a warning, if the chief monitor and another monitor agree.

Examples include:

- announcing an answer to other players before the correct answer is revealed
- consulting notes that were written before the match began
- making signals or other gestures to another player during the reading of a clue
- intimidating an opponent verbally or with threatening gestures or body language
- refusing to continue play when told to do so by a monitor, and so on.

TH27 A monitor may be called over at any time if a player is missing materials, feels another player is competing unfairly, or has a medical emergency that should not wait. During the reading of a question/example, no player may call over a monitor to fix a mistake on an answer sheet or score sheet. Any issues dealing with writing on the wrong line, changing or marking out an answer, or marking a player's score incorrectly must be dealt with after the answer is revealed but before the next clue/question/example is read.