

**The Greenhorn's Guide to**

# The Literary Decathlon

**The Flagship Literary Event at**

Pravega

## About

# Pravega

Pravega is the Sanskrit word for acceleration, and aptly describes the manner in which we wish to push towards excellence as undergraduates. In its third edition, just as in the past two years, every aspect of the fest is designed to challenge and motivate students to reach for greater heights of scientific understanding, technical expertise and cultural expression.

We propose to achieve this in a variety of ways. Our cultural as well as technical competitions are carefully designed to provoke and reflect, and invite students to experience the beauty and power of science and arts as those at IISc see it every day. They are completely original. The array of events on offer attracted participants and sponsors in large numbers in its first two editions, and this is expected to increase significantly in this edition and those that follow.

We will foster the atmosphere of excellence by organizing workshops in fascinating areas of science and arts, as well as lectures from distinguished speakers who have in their own fields achieved the high ideals that we aspire to. On the other side, we are arranging a number of events that will give the fest the essential elements of fun, colour and vibrancy, ranging from science inspired games to live performances by famous bands and creative artists.

Our vision for Pravega is that it will become a symbol of the immense opportunities offered by an institution such as IISc, and that it will become a meeting place for talented students, distinguished experts, and institutions all over the country to exchange ideas in the best possible environment.

## About

# The Literary Decathlon

The Literary Decathlon is an amalgamation of various literary posers, that will test the literary and vocabulary skills, as well as the general awareness of the participants. This is a pioneering event that has been designed to suit the diversity among the participants as well as the audience. The name is derived for its having ten rounds, including a special qualifier round, which is called the Mixed Bag. This assortment involves some of the most classic puzzles ever posed in literary sphere. Progressive rounds test the speaking skills of the participants as well as their ability to display quick wit to a given situation.

# A Brief List of Events

## **Mixed Bag (Preliminary Round)**

Cryptic Crossword

Acrostics

Word Ladder

Word Polygon

Letter Bank

## **Stage Rounds (in order)**

Spell Bee

JAM

Fictionary

Jumble

Ghost (One team eliminated)

Summit

Taboo

Rebus (One team eliminated)

Balloon Debate (Final round)

## **How it goes**

- Six teams will be selected for the stage finals
- Teams will get eliminated in the 5<sup>th</sup> (Ghost), 8<sup>th</sup> (Rebus) and 9<sup>th</sup> (Balloon debate) rounds of the stage finals

**The following events are a part of the Mixed Bag (preliminary round) and consist of some of the most classic literary posers:**

Event name: **Cryptic Crossword (Mixed Bag)**

Cryptic crosswords are crossword puzzles in which each clue is a word puzzle in itself, a cryptic clue. In essence, a cryptic clue leads to its answer as long as it is read in the right way. What the clue appears to say when read normally (the *surface reading*) is a distraction and usually has nothing to do with the clue answer. The challenge is to find the way of reading the clue that leads to the solution.

**Rules:**

- All regular crossword rules apply. (And well, I suppose any Tom, Dick or Harry would know how a regular crossword works.)
- The only difference lies in the clues themselves. Clues given to the solver are based on various forms of wordplay. They may contain anagrams, double definitions, homophones, hidden words, spoonerisms or related entities.

Examples include:

1. *Not seeing window covering (5) – BLIND*

*Blind* can mean both "not seeing" and "window covering". (Double Definition)

2. Flustered, I forget rarer chilly compartment (12) –

REFRIGERATOR "I forgot rarer" (is an Anagram of the answer).

3. Outlaw leader managing money (7) - BANKING

"BANKING" formed by BAN for "outlaw" and KING for "leader". The definition is "managing money". (Charade)

Event name: **Acrostics (Mixed Bag)**

An Acrostic is a type of word puzzle in which sets of letters taken in a particular order form a different word or a phrase. A puzzle of this kind typically consists of two parts. The first part is a set of lettered clues, each of which has numbered blanks representing the letters of the answer. The second part is a long series of numbered blanks and spaces, representing a quotation or other text, into which the answers for the clues fit.

Examples are a little long, so it is not being included here but can be easily be found at dedicated acrostics websites.

Event name: **WORD LADDER (Mixed Bag)**

A word ladder puzzle begins with two words, and to solve the puzzle one must find a chain of other words to link the two, in which two adjacent words (that is, words in successive steps) differ by one letter.

**Rules:**

- The player is given a start word and an end word.
- The player must change the start word into the end word progressively, creating an existing word at each step.
- Each step consists of a single letter substitution.
- One who reaches the final word from the original word in least possible steps wins.

An example has been given for reference: word ladder puzzle between words "cold" and "warm" can be any of the following:

COLD → CORD → CARD → WARD → WARM

COLD → CORD → CORM → WORM → WARM

Event name: **WORD POLYGON (Mixed Bag)**

A word polygon consists of a core and tiles surrounding it so as to form a polygon. The most common form of this puzzle is a word square, where there is a 3x3 grid and the core is the middle tile. All the tiles have a letter associated with them. The job of solving involves creating as many words as possible from the given tiles such that the letter in the middle tile is present in all the words constructed. The word length should be 4 letters or more.

**Rules:**

- The player is given a word polygon.
- The player has to make the maximum number of words as per the description above.

- If a word is considered, its plural is not given the status of a new word.
- Each word formed will carry points and the number of letter used in each word will provide the bonus points.
- The nine letter words carry triple the points than any other word.

An example has been given for reference:

S	E	T
R	H	O
C	A	R

Say, the word square is as on the left side. Do the words that can be formed are: (4 letters) ACHE, ARCH, CASH, CHAR, CHAT, COSH, EACH, ECHO, ETCH, HARE, HART, HAST, HATE, HATS, HEAR, HEAT, HERO, HERS, HOES, HOSE, HOST, RASH, SHOE, SHOT...(5 letters) CHAOS, CHART, CHASE, CHEAT, CHEST, CHORE, CRASH, EARTH...(Others) ARCHER, CHASER, RATHER, SACHET...SHORTER,

**CARTHORSE, ORCHESTRA**

### Event name: **LETTER BANK (Mixed Bag)**

A letter bank is a relative of the anagram where all the letters of a given bank should be used to form meaningful words or phrases.

#### **Rules:**

Every participant will be given a “bank” of letters wherein all the letters must be used at least once to form a new word or phrase. Every word formed out of the “letter bank” will carry points. The word lengths would serve as a criterion for bonus points. Every letter used more than once (after all other letters that are given are used) will carry the as many points as it has been used more than once.

An example of this is as follows:

A letter bank ‘SENT’ can be used to form tens, Tennessee, nest, nets and nests.

**The following events are a part of the main stage event:**

### Event name: **SPELL-BEE**

A spelling bee is a competition in which contestants are asked to spell a broad selection of words, usually with a varying degree of difficulty. It is such a famous event, that perhaps an extended introduction would be a waste of words.

**Rules:**

- Each team will have to nominate one member for each round\* of questioning.
- The answering will involve spelling out the word.
- The teams are allowed to clarify their doubts on a word, i.e. word meaning, etymology, use in a sentence etc...
- A team will be eliminated in a round if they give a wrong answer and are not allowed to participate in further Spell Bee rounds\*.
- The game continues until 7 rounds\* are completed or/and all teams are eliminated (whichever happens first).
- Teams get points for each correct answer they give. The scoring is cumulative.

(\*Here round refers to a sub-round within the Spell Bee round of Decathlon.)

**Event name: JAM**

Just a minute (JAM) is a game which tests the speaking skills of a team. Here, one person from a team will be given a topic and he needs to talk on that topic for 60 seconds without “hesitation, repetition or deviation”.

**Definitions:**

- Hesitation : Momentary pause , tripping over one's words , riding laugh will be considered as hesitation
- Repetition : Repetition of words or phrases
- Deviation : Significant deviation from the topic that is given to talk
- Riding laugh: Stopping the talk because of audience laughter or applause.

**Rules:**

- One member from each team will be playing.
- The topic should be selected based on lottery which will be done exactly one minute before his talk i.e. The player will get 1 minute for preparations
- Hesitation, repetition and deviations made by the participant will be penalised by the judges.

**Event name: FICTIONARY**

Fictionary, also known as The Dictionary Game or simply Dictionary is a word game in which players guess the definition of an obscure word. Each round consists of one team



selecting and announcing a word from the dictionary, and other teams composing a fake definition for it. The definitions are collected by the selector and read aloud, and teams vote on which definition they believe to be correct. Points are awarded for correct guesses, and for having a fake definition guessed by another player.

**Rules:**

- The number of rounds played should equal the number of teams or a multiple thereof. For each round, the dictionary passes clockwise to a new person.
- In each round,
  - One defending team gives a word 'x' which is read out.
  - If any of the other five teams say team 'A' knows the meaning of word 'x', they tell the host what they think the meaning is. If the team is correct, they get some points. If not, points are deducted. Either way, this team is not involved in the next phase of the game.
  - The other teams which didn't know the meaning of 'x' write down what they think the word could mean on a piece of paper.
  - The actual meaning and the guesses by the other teams are read out in no particular order.
  - The teams (other than the defending team and team 'A') vote for what they think is the likeliest to be correct. (NOTE- The teams cannot vote for their own answer.)
  - Teams get points if they vote for the correct answer
  - The team with the dictionary gets points only if no one voted for the true definition.

Here are a few sample words, each with a list of definitions, only one of which is true.

- cacoepy
  1. a tent with roof holes for astronomical observations
  2. telling fortunes with dregs of hot chocolate
  3. a dwelling constructed of dried dung
  4. bad pronunciation
  5. medical procedure for examination of the retina
  6. a dwarf coconut tree
- melicrate

1. to smoothe the way
2. a wooden container for ballast
3. a beverage of honey and water
4. to rule with kindness
5. to besmirch a reputation
6. a drip meter
- taghairm
1. a method of divination in which a person was wrapped in a fresh bullock's skin and laid down alone by the bottom of a waterfall
2. an elaborate stew prepared only on ceremonial occasions
3. a condition of nervous exhaustion brought on by excessive indulgence in running games
4. an ancient system of classifying animals by spiritual levels
5. a five-roped braid of hair
6. a tree in which two or more trunks have fused into one

Event name: **JUMBLE**

The game Jumble is pretty simple. There will be jumbled word displayed on the screen and some hint related to the word would be given to the teams. Teams hit the buzzer if they get the word. Points are deducted for incorrect answers.

Event name: **GHOST**

Ghost is a written or spoken word game, in which players take turns adding letters to a growing word fragment, trying not to be the one to complete a valid word. Each fragment must be the beginning of an actual word.

**Rules:**

- The first letter of the word is decided by a team (each team will get three opportunities to start a word).
- The game then proceeds clockwise; each team has to add a letter to the word.

- When a team makes a valid English word (longer than 3 letters), then the other teams can press the buzzer and say “Ghost” to steal their points!
- At any point, if there is any doubt whether there exists a valid word starting with the current sequence of letters, then any team can press the buzzer and “Challenge” the last team to add a letter. The team that wins the challenge gets to steal the points of the other team.

### Event name: **SUMMIT**

Summit is a word game where each English letter will be assigned to a number. There will be a question asked which will be having more than one answer. Each answer will get an index mark according to the letters used for that answer.

#### **Rules:**

- Each letter is assigned a numerical value based on its location in the English alphabet like A=1, B=2 and so on.
- The aim of the teams would be to minimize or maximize the score procured from the words they make in accordance to the questions and the rules.
- Every team will be given same questions which they need to answer simultaneously.
- There will be a time limit of 30 seconds for each question.
- Teams getting an answer with lowest index mark and highest index mark will get maximum points.
- Teams giving relevant answers will also be given some points.
- No negative marks in this round.

### Event name: **TABOO**

Taboo is a word guessing game first introduced in 1989. While playing Taboo, there will be a clue giver in a team who should make their team mates guess the word given to him in a card (Taboo card) using hints which do not involve the ‘taboo’ed words.

#### **Rules:**

- Taboo card will have one word that is to be guessed by the team playing and 5 taboo words which are not to be used by the clue giver while playing Taboo.
- From the deck of cards provided, clue giver can take a card and start giving hints.

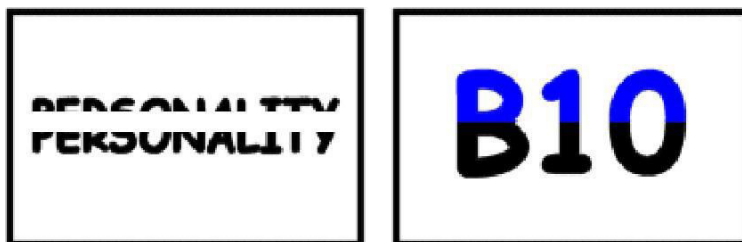
- Time given to each team will be 2 minutes and by that time they can complete guessing as many words as possible.
- Each correct guess will be awarded some points.
- If clue giver uses a Taboo word, there will be a penalty for each word used.
- No negative marks for wrong guesses.

Some examples are:

<p>variable</p> <hr/> <p>x number letter algebra</p>	<p>math</p> <hr/> <p>subject english science numbers</p>
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Event name: **REBUS**

A **rebus** is an allusive device that uses pictures to represent words or parts of words. Famous phrases or idioms will be expressed through characters or pictures and have to be guessed based on the given clues.



As examples, the above puzzles represent '**split personality**' and '**beaten black and blue**' respectively.

Event name: **BALLOON DEBATE EQUIVALENTS**

'Balloon debate equivalents' are a class of events in which a number of speakers attempt to win the approval of an audience. In the original balloon debate, the audience

is invited to imagine that the speakers are flying in a hot-air balloon which is sinking and that someone must be thrown out if everyone is not to die. Each speaker has to make the case why they should not be thrown out of the balloon to save the remainder.

Typically each participant speaks on behalf of a famous person, profession, fictional character, etc. Other perilous situations may take the place of the sinking balloon, for example, a shipwrecked raft, a crashing aircraft, a wrecking ship or a nuclear bunker.

**Rules:**

- The actual situation of the BDE will be given on the day of the event (morning) before the prelims.
- One person from each team is allowed to take part in this round.
- Judges will judge the speaking skills and the convincing ability of the participant.
- Each participant has to make three different main speeches in order:
  - Constructive speech (2:30 min): The first speech is called a constructive speech because it is when you build (*construct*) your case for being allowed to stay alive in a given situation. Three broad reasons must be presented to show why you have had the greatest impact on society, and it must be supported with a minimum of five pieces of evidence!
  - Refutation (1:30 min): The second speech is called a refutation, and it is when you argue *against* each of your opponents. You will have to present a minimum of three reasons why *each* of your 3 opponents should not be allowed to survive. Those reasons should be based on valid research and your opponents' ability, or inability, to follow the rules that govern the debate.
  - Rebuttal (1:00 min): The third speech is called a rebuttal, and it is when you *rebuild* your case after it has been attacked by your opponents. Your job is to explain away the arguments levied against you and clarify any character flaws or past actions that might be considered by the jury as grounds for your removal from the game.
- After this main round, the person receiving the lowest score will be debarred from the next sub-rounds, which will involve one minute of speech by each of the remaining participants and an elimination leaving two participants, who would then give a one minute speech each to the jury and the winner will be declared based on jury vote. The winner will get special bonus points and all the participants will get points for their speeches.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Atlanta Chakraborty  
Mobile: +91- 8277753412  
Email: atlanta@pravega.org

Ashok Suresh Das  
Mobile: +91-8277061531  
Email: ashok@pravega.org

## OUTREACH TEAM

Aditya Hardikar  
Mobile: +91-9632161981  
Email: aditya@pravega.org