

## The 50 International & National Competition Wins Colleges Most Value

#	Competition	Category	Why It's Highly Valued
1	Regeneron Science Talent Search (STS)	STEM Research	Known as the “Junior Nobel”; /extremely prestigious
2	International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)	STEM Research	Global recognition; top prizes are highly competitive
3	USAMO / USAJMO (Math Olympiad)	Math	Top-tier math talent funnel into MIT/Harvard
4	International Math Olympiad (IMO)	Math	International gold = god-tier accomplishment
5	US Physics Olympiad (USAPhO / IPhO)	Physics	Highly selective, few students reach the team level
6	USA Biology Olympiad (USABO)	Biology	Finalists go to training camp; international team is prestigious
7	International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO / USNCO finalists)	Chemistry	National finalists are elite; top 20 go to training camp
8	International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI / USACO Platinum)	Programming	Extremely hard; IOI medal = CS admissions booster
9	Davidson Fellows Scholarship	Multidisciplinary	Awards \$10K–\$50K for exceptional projects; few awarded
10	Google Science Fair	STEM Innovation	International visibility; top prizes show ingenuity
11	International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL / NACLO)	Linguistics	Critical thinking + analytical skills = niche and elite
12	Tournament of Champions (TOC – Debate)	Debate	The Ivy League of debate; top-tier credibility
13	National Speech & Debate Tournament (NSDA)	Speech / Debate	Top national ranks are extremely competitive
14	Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)	Research	Winning at ISEF is among the highest academic feats
15	MIT THINK Scholars Program	STEM Research	MIT-run; only a handful accepted annually
16	Science Olympiad – Nationals (Top Placement)	STEM Team	Team-based but high prestige for leaders/top scorers
17	National Economics Challenge (NEC)	Econ/Finance	Finalists at national level are highly respected

18	<b>National History Day – National Medalist</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Recognized for historical research and scholarship</b>
19	<b>American Invitational Math Exam (AIME Qualifier)</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Baseline for serious math students (top ~5% AMC scorers)</b>
20	<b>AMC 12 – Distinguished Honor Roll (top 1%)</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Indicates elite quantitative ability</b>
21	<b>John Locke Institute Essay Competition (Finalist/Winner)</b>	<b>Philosophy / Politics / Economics</b>	<b>International prestige, especially for humanities applicants</b>
22	<b>Scholastic Art &amp; Writing Awards (National Gold Medal)</b>	<b>Writing / Art</b>	<b>Ivy/Stanford recognize this especially for creatives</b>
23	<b>Breakthrough Junior Challenge</b>	<b>Science Communication</b>	<b>Video-based; creativity + deep knowledge; very selective</b>
24	<b>Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI) – Global Finalist</b>	<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<b>Less known but rigorous; showcases applied problem-solving</b>
25	<b>Odyssey of the Mind – World Finalist / Winner</b>	<b>Creative Problem Solving</b>	<b>Combines engineering, drama, and creativity</b>
26	<b>USA Computing Olympiad (USACO – Gold/Platinum)</b>	<b>CS / Algorithms</b>	<b>Recognized indicator of serious CS ability</b>
27	<b>Codeforces / CodeChef / Leetcode (Top Rankings)</b>	<b>Programming</b>	<b>Demonstrates ability on par with college CS students</b>
28	<b>MIT PRIMES</b>	<b>Math Research</b>	<b>Very selective; work with MIT mentors on real research</b>
29	<b>Stanford Math Circle Advanced Track / Olympiad Training</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Not a competition, but part of elite math pipeline</b>
30	<b>Conrad Challenge</b>	<b>STEM / Entrepreneurship</b>	<b>International pitch competition; business + science blend</b>
31	<b>International Public Policy Forum (IPPF)</b>	<b>Debate / Policy</b>	<b>Global-level written + oral policy debate</b>
32	<b>YoungArts (National Winner)</b>	<b>Performing / Visual Arts</b>	<b>Recognized by Juilliard, USC, Ivy League for arts talent</b>
33	<b>TSA National Conference – 1st Place</b>	<b>Tech / Engineering</b>	<b>National tech-based project competition</b>
34	<b>Technovation Challenge (Global Finalist)</b>	<b>Tech / Entrepreneurship</b>	<b>Girls coding + social impact; highly competitive globally</b>
35	<b>FIRST Robotics Competition – World</b>	<b>Robotics</b>	<b>Hands-on engineering,</b>

	<b>Championship Finalist</b>		<b>teamwork, national exposure</b>
<b>36</b>	<b>VEX Robotics World Championships</b>	<b>Robotics</b>	<b>International field; winning = elite engineering skill</b>
<b>37</b>	<b>DECA – National Finalist (Top 10)</b>	<b>Business / Marketing</b>	<b>Colleges know DECA; top results carry weight</b>
<b>38</b>	<b>FBLA Nationals – 1st Place</b>	<b>Business / Finance</b>	<b>Shows business acumen and leadership</b>
<b>39</b>	<b>Fed Challenge (Federal Reserve)</b>	<b>Economics</b>	<b>Policy presentations + financial analysis</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Stossel in the Classroom Essay Contest (National Winner)</b>	<b>Econ / Essay Writing</b>	<b>Good for libertarian/econ-focused thinkers</b>
<b>41</b>	<b>International Mathematical Modeling Challenge (IMMC)</b>	<b>Math + Real-World Applications</b>	<b>College-level modeling; team-based rigor</b>
<b>42</b>	<b>MathWorks Math Modeling Challenge (M3 Challenge – Finalist)</b>	<b>Applied Math</b>	<b>Sponsored by SIAM; highly regarded</b>
<b>43</b>	<b>National Merit Scholarship (Semifinalist/Finalist)</b>	<b>Academic (PSAT)</b>	<b>Recognized but less selective than others on this list</b>
<b>44</b>	<b>Varsity Tutors National Academic Competition (Finalist)</b>	<b>General Academic</b>	<b>Shows breadth of knowledge across disciplines</b>
<b>45</b>	<b>Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS – National Finalist)</b>	<b>STEM Research</b>	<b>National recognition for presenting original research</b>
<b>46</b>	<b>International Youth Math Challenge – Finalist</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Growing in recognition; high-level problem solving</b>
<b>47</b>	<b>Model UN – Best Delegate at Nationals/Harvard/Yale</b>	<b>International Affairs</b>	<b>Leadership, diplomacy, communication skills recognized</b>
<b>48</b>	<b>National Latin Exam – Gold Summa Cum Laude + Perfect Paper</b>	<b>Classical Languages</b>	<b>Shows strong humanities focus; Latin seen as rigorous</b>
<b>49</b>	<b>Future City Competition – National Top Team</b>	<b>Engineering / Design</b>	<b>Hands-on, interdisciplinary team competition</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>International Space Settlement Design Competition (ISSDC – Finalist)</b>	<b>Aerospace / Engineering</b>	<b>International competition judged by NASA engineers</b>