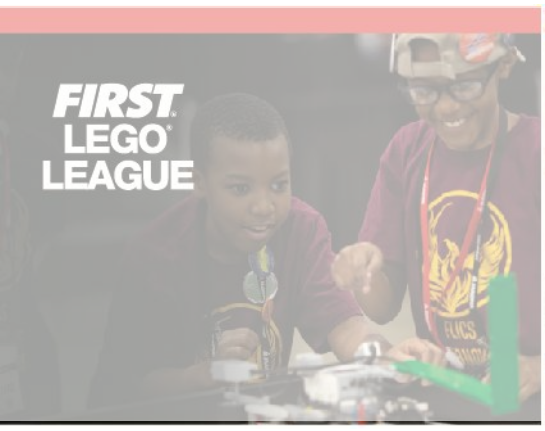
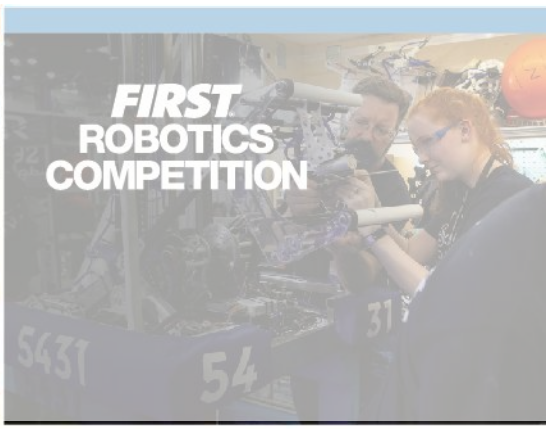
Judging Question Bank

Judging Resources

FIRST® is a global robotics community that prepares young people for the future.







www.firstinspires.org

Revision History	
Revision	**Description**
26-27.1	Initial 2026-27 Season Release

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About This Document

This document is intended to act as a starting point for Judges to ask questions to teams during the Initial and Pit Interviews. This list is not a complete list of questions, and Judges may ask additional questions that are not included in this document.

> Judges **must not** ask teams about religion, politics, gender, disabilities, or how the students are doing in school. These topics have no bearing on any *FIRST* award criteria.
>
> Questions should also avoid comparing one team to another team and instead should focus on the strengths or unique qualities of a team.

In the Initial Interview, during the question-and-answer portion, Judges must first ask all teams the questions selected by the Judge Advisor prior to asking their own questions. Judges may make a note in the "Required?" column in this document as a reminder of which questions were selected by the Judge Advisor.

After the Judges ask the required questions, each judging panel may ask additional questions, depending on the content provided in the interview. These questions may vary team-to-team.

Questions that contain multiple parts, or may warrant follow-up questions, contain a bulleted list that the Judges may use to gather all the information they may need to best advocate for a team to be considered for a specific award.

Think Award

Think Award Questions	Required?
Can you walk us through your brainstorming process? • Did you use trade-off or cost/benefit analysis, and what methods proved a design would work?	
How did your team improve or iterate on your robot throughout the season? • Did you ever start over? • What data told you a change was needed?	
Can you describe your engineering design process?	
Give us an example of a lesson your team learned while working on your robot this season? • What did you do differently as a result, and how did mentors contribute to that learning?	
How did your team track accomplishments or challenges throughout the season? • What was your biggest of each?	
Did your team use a method to measure progress to their goals throughout the season? (for example, “score x number of points by this time in the season”) • How did you know if you were on track?	

Team Attribute Awards

Connect Award

Connect Award Questions	Required?
• How did your team set your goals and strategies for this season – and are you meeting them?	
• Has your team brought in new STEM professionals, and have any become mentors? • What have your learned from them?	
Did your team create a learning plan this season? • How did you decide what's on it or, if not, how did you figure out what training was needed?	
What skills has your team learned by being a part of the team, and what impact has that had?	
How does your team collaborate with other FIRST teams locally or online? • How do you choose what to work on together, and what have you learned?	

Reach Award

Reach Award Questions	Required?
What community service or outreach does your team do, and who organizes it? • What are you trying to accomplish?	
What has resulted from your outreach – and how has it supported the promotion of *FIRST*?	
How does your team plan its outreach activities to achieve your outreach goals	
Has your team successfully recruited anyone to participate in *FIRST*? • Can you give us some examples? • What are they doing now?	
Do you consider your team to be an ambassador for *FIRST*? • What does that look like, and what impact are you having?	
How does your team market itself and build awareness of *FIRST*? • How have you adjusted based on feedback?	
How does your team create and improve its outreach or promotional materials?	

Sustain Award

Sustain Award Questions	Required?
Does your team have a sustainability plan: including how you fundraise, budget, and avoid relying on one or two big income sources? • Can you describe your sustainability plan? • Can you describe how you fundraise, and budget?	
What risks or constraints could affect your team's future, and how do you plan for them?	
How does your team plan a season (timeline, tools, tracking progress) and how do you balance short-term needs against long-term goals?	
How are roles, sub-teams, and leadership positions assigned and tracked over a season?	
How do you get new members engaged from the start, and how do you grow them into future leaders?	
Apart from time, what gets in the way of your team's best work and how do you respond to those risks?	

Machine, Creativity, and Innovation Awards

Innovate Award sponsored by RTX.

Innovate Award Questions	Required?
Walk us through your design: • How did you brainstorm and decided what to implement? • Did your goals or process change during the season?	
Is there an aspect of your robot that you consider unique or creative?	
Which game objectives can your robot reliably achieve? • What criteria did you use to call the design a success? How did your team test for reliability?	
What evolution did your robot go through this season, and what did you learn from what worked and didn't?	
What risks or trade-offs did your team identify in the design and what unexpected failures did you encounter or address?	
Can you tell us what evolution or iteration that your robot features took this season? • Did your team use any process for determining what changes to make?	
(Not For Initial Interviews) Can you share any CAD drawings or sketches or photos that highlight your design evolution?	N/A

Control Award

Control Award Questions	Required?
What sensors and hardware did you use: what worked, what didn't, and how did you	
Tell us about your code: • What libraries or custom routines did you write? • Which software choices worked or didn't?	
How does your robot: • Know where it is on the field? • Control acquisition of scoring elements? • Measure and control the speed of the motors?	
What specific game tasks was your control system built to solve? • What did you automate for Auto and/or Teleop?	
Walk us through the engineering process your team followed to develop your robot's most complex autonomous routine or control feature? • Did you find that it worked well for your team? • What was the biggest obstacle or failure your team encountered? • How did your team measure reliability?	

Design Award

Design Award Questions	Required?
How did your team arrive at the overall design of your robot? • What tools did you use? • What game/design strategies did you set out to meet?	
How does your team measure whether a design decision actually meets your goals? • How do you document and plan around those goals?	
Did your team look at how components work together as a system, and how did you balance functionality, simplicity, and reliability against each other?	
What specific problem came up this season that changed your current design? • What did your team choose to optimize when you could not do everything?	
Did your design originate from an existing concept (e.g., in industry, another sport, or a previous season), or something novel? • Did your team have to compromise or change any of your goals to make it work?	

Judges' Choice Award

Judges' Choice Award Questions	Required?
Tell us your story – how is your team making a difference through *FIRST*?	
Can you give us a couple of examples to tell us what has it meant to you to be on a *FIRST* team?	
Can you tell us about a challenge that helped your team to grow or change?	
In what ways is your team unique?	
What is the one thing that we did not ask about that you most want the Judges to know?	
Describe a major failure or setback your team experienced—it could be a robot component failure, a lost grant, or a team conflict. • How did this failure force your team to think differently, leading to an unforeseen positive outcome or discovery that has changed how your team operates?	
(New Team) How did your team quickly bridge the knowledge gap to become competitive? **(Experienced Team)** How did your team's knowledge transfer lead to a part or subsystem that was completely built and owned by a new member?	