JSA
BE THE PEOPLE

TEACHER ADVISOR
MENTOR & ADVISOR

JUNIOR STATE OF AMERICA
TEACHER ADVISOR GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for serving as a Teacher Advisor for your JSA Chapter.

Teachers are the backbone of JSA Chapters and an integral part of sustaining strong and healthy Chapters year to year. JSA owes much of its success to the thousands of educators who shepherd their Chapters and help their students realize their potential. Thank you for your hard work and commitment!

JSA Teacher Advisors are educational partners to chapter leadership. They provide guidance in developing strong chapter activities or serving as a sounding-board to the students.

This resource guide aims to answer the most essential questions about advising JSA Chapters. It contains information on your role, guidelines for supporting your students, and resources to help you succeed. JSA recommends reviewing this guide at the beginning of the year and referring to it as needed.

The JSA Foundation is here to serve and support you. If we can be of further assistance to you or your chapter, please reach out to your program director at (800) 334-5353 or email jsa@jsa.org. Thank you for being a part of JSA.

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OVERVIEW

What Is A Teacher Advisor?

JSA uses the term Teacher Advisor (TA), as opposed to sponsor, to emphasize the student-run nature of our organization. As a TA, it is your role to support students and guide them throughout the year. It is not your role to do the planning and work involved in the day-to-day activity of the Chapter. Different students will need different levels of support, but JSA believes that all students are capable of being effective leaders with the right guidance and mentorship.

JSA recognizes that teachers work incredibly hard and balance many other commitments. We are here to help you. JSA staff members provide support, can respond to any questions and also connect you with other experienced TAs. Thank you for donating your time to our organization and supporting the mission of strengthening democracy by developing effective leaders.

JSA's Mission

The mission of the Junior State of America is to strengthen American democracy by educating and preparing high school students for lifelong involvement and responsible leadership in a democratic society.

In the student-run JSA, our civic education programs and pre-college programs during the summer cultivate democratic leadership skills, challenge young people to think critically, advocate their own opinions, develop respect for opposing views and learn to rise above self-interest to promote the public good.

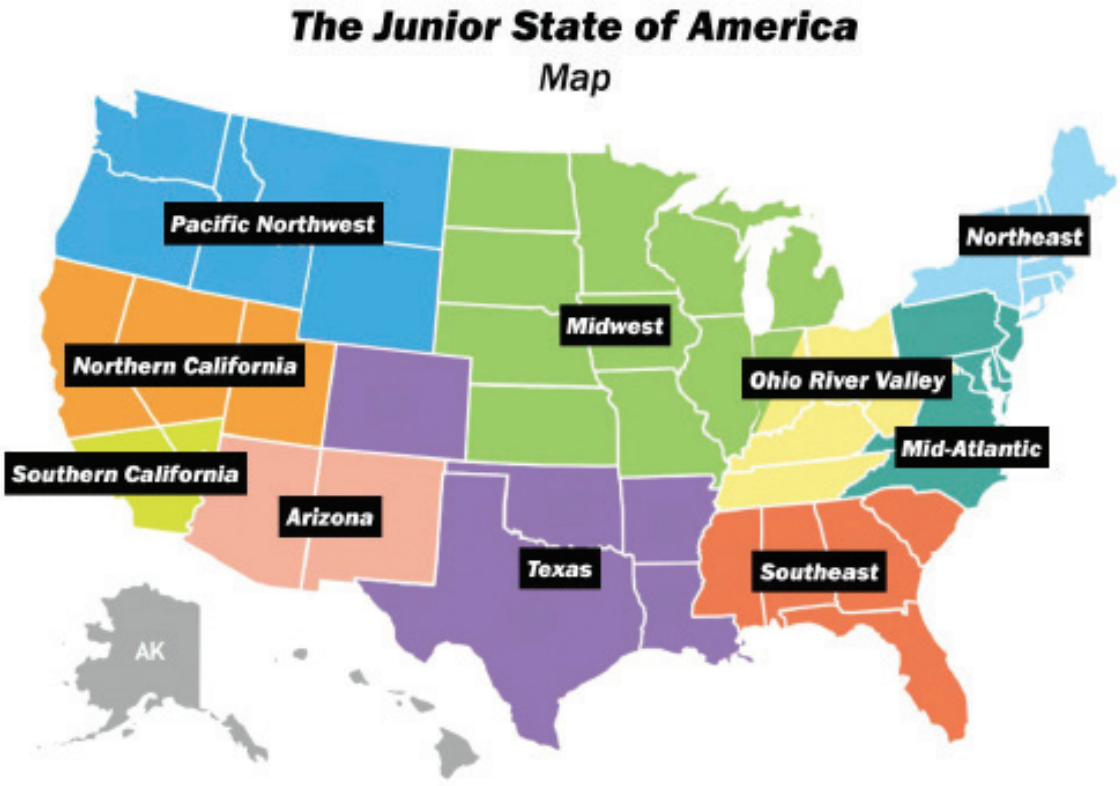
What does being a "Student-Run" organization mean?

JSA empowers its students to take up leadership roles at every level of the organization. Students can run for positions within Chapters, on a regional level, or to the national Council of Governors, made up of students elected by their peers.

By having real responsibility in the organization, students have the opportunity to practice their leadership skills and learn how to be successful leaders in their communities.

JSA Organization

The Junior State of America is divided into 10 regions or "Junior States." Each region is led by elected students and an appointed cabinet of student leaders, supported by JSA Staff. The regions are comprised of Chapters located on high school campuses.



Common JSA Terms

- State Constitution: Each constitution outlines the rules and structure of each state and is amended through state legislative processes.
- Governor: Each state is lead by an elected student governor. The governor serves as the executive of the region and is in charge of conventions, appointing a cabinet, and overseeing the growth and operations of the region.
- Program Director: PDs are full-time staff members who support the region and mentor student leaders. PDs help with the logistics of each Junior State and act as a resource to student leaders, chapters, parents, and teachers.
- Cabinet: Governors appoint a cabinet to run the affairs of a JSA region. Roles include Convention Coordinator, Director of Debate, and other positions as determined by the Governor.
- Elected Officials: Students are elected to state positions including Lt. Governor, Speaker, Senator or Mayor. Positions vary by JSA state.
- Chapter President: This refers to the student in charge of each JSA Chapter.
- Chapter Constitution: All chapters are required to have a Chapter Constitution that outlines the rules and structures of the chapter. The Constitution must be on file with JSA to be verified as an active Chapter.
- Teacher Advisor: A TA is the educator responsible for supporting each JSA Chapter and its student leaders.

TEACHER ADVISOR ROLE

Mentor & Advisor

Mentoring Student Leaders: Support, Guidance, and Coaching

As a TA for your Chapter, you should work with your student leaders to identify the qualities of effective leaders. By encouraging students to step out of their comfort zone, you can help students exceed their own expectations. It is not your role to lead the Chapter, but you play an important role coaching student leaders.

Effective Leadership Techniques

Identify Chapter Goals

Have student leaders identify their goals for the year. Effective goals will keep your Chapter on track.

- Identify SMART Goals: Goals should be (S)pecific, (M)easurable, (A)chievable, (R)elevant, & (T)ime-based
- Revisit goals throughout the year to track progress and make adjustments

Calendars

Develop a calendar that outlines conventions, events, and other Chapter activities. The calendar should include school dates as well as JSA national events. You can view national events at jsa.org/calendar.

Backwards Planning

Plan with your end goal in mind. List the steps to achieving your goal on your calendar.

- Quantify goals and plan out how to achieve goals on the calendar
- Break down the goal step-by-step
- Mark each step on the calendar and assign responsibility for the step

Meeting Agendas & Notes

Keeping thorough and organized records will allow your chapter to stay on task.

- Agendas should be sent out in advance and in a timely manner
- Outline what will be discussed and who is responsible for agenda items
- Use minutes to record decisions, ideas, and other important information
- Publish notes using your chapter website or a shared folder on a Google Drive

Debrief Meetings & Events

Have your student leaders reflect on meetings and events afterwards in order to build on successes and make improvements.

- Meetings: attendance, decisions made, and action steps
- Events: successes, challenges, and lessons learned

"Action Steps"

Action steps are tasks assigned to students. Encourage your students to assign action steps in order to ensure that work gets done.

- Outline action steps by deciding:
    - What needs to get done
    - When it needs to get done
    - Who is responsible for completing it
- Record action steps and refer back to them as needed
- Follow-up on action steps to know what work is being completed and to see if students need help or additional resources

Emphasize Organization and Results

Train your student leaders to stay organized and be effective by using agendas, meeting minutes, action steps, and debriefs. Clear communication and delegation of responsibility will help your Chapter be more efficient and teach students how to be accountable for their work.

Build a Strong Culture of Leadership

Strong Chapters have a thriving culture of leadership. Experienced students identify underclassmen and mentor them; encourage delegation and assign responsibility, by assigning responsibility students learn how to become effective leaders. By emphasizing a culture of leadership, students can realize their potential. On the next page are a few techniques for developing a culture of leadership.

Delegate Responsibility

Teaching students to delegate responsibility is a valuable skill. Effective delegation can help prevent burnout and gives more members ownership of the Chapter.

Delegating can be difficult for students, but it is an important skill to learn. Effective delegation allows student leaders to maximize their impact

Cultivate Talent

Encourage your students to help sustain your Chapter over the long-term by training future leaders.

- Identify underclassmen who are dedicated and have leadership potential
- Purposefully train these underclassmen so they are ready to lead the club

Continually Improve

Even strong chapters can improve. Encourage your students to be thoughtful and examine how to make your chapter even better. Focus on what you can control. Use data to make your decisions (membership numbers, funds raised, etc.)

Keep a positive attitude and focus on results!

Always offer support and help before criticism. Student leaders sometimes drop the ball on their responsibility. Encourage your students to hold each other accountable, but they should seek to help each other before criticizing another student's performance.

CHAPTER LOGISTICS

Although JSA is student-run, students cannot oversee every facet of running a chapter. It is up to TAs to support students with matters like securing school approval, handling funds, enforcing school policies, and supervision at conventions.

Liaison to School Administration

TAs act as a liaison to school and district administration. You should work with your school administration (principal, vice-principal, or student activities director) to ensure that your Chapter meets school requirements.

Beginning of Year: Meet With Administration

JSA recommends that you meet with your school administration near the beginning of each school year in order to review school and/or district policies. Your school administration can provide you with information on school and/or district policies and guidelines for clubs. Specifically, consider asking your administration about:

- School approval for your chapter
- Policies regarding money and chapter funds
- Overnight conventions
    - Timeline for approval
    - Chaperone policy: what ratio of adults to students? gender requirements? can parents chaperone?
    - Student medication
- Transportation to and from events (JSA does not allow students to drive themselves)
- Other considerations specific to your school

Working With JSA

In addition to working with school administration to enforce school policy, TAs help Chapters connect with the JSA Foundation. JSA relies on TAs to communicate policies with their Chapters and to make sure that Chapters follow JSA rules and guidelines.

Establishing a Chapter

Every new chapter must do the following:

- Have a teacher at the school agree to be the Teacher Advisor
- Submit a Chapter Constitution
- Pay "taxes" or membership dues for at least eight members. *Taxes are dues that help pay the administrative functioning of JSA.*

Refer to the Chapter Startup Guide for more information and resources.

Maintaining a Chapter

In order to maintain official recognition, every year Chapters must:

- Pay "taxes" or membership dues for at least eight members
- Provide the names of chapter officers and TA to JSA.
- Have a Chapter Constitution on file with JSA

Enforcing JSA Policy

JSA relies on TAs to communicate and enforce JSA policies and procedures. This is particularly relevant for conventions, which will be outlined in the "T/A Role: Conventions" section of this guide.

CHAPTER AFFAIRS

TAs are a great resource for Chapters when it comes to providing ideas for events, debates, activism, or other Chapter initiatives. Additionally, TAs should guide students in running meetings, debates, and other Chapter activities.

Chapter Membership

Membership is one indicator of Chapter health. TAs are a valuable asset for student leaders when it comes to recruiting and retaining members.

Advertise the Chapter

Support your students in thinking creatively about ways to advertise Chapter meetings and events.

- Traditional advertising: announcements, posters, classroom visits, club fair, word of mouth
- Digital advertising: social media (have an official Chapter facebook group/page, instagram account, snapchat account), website, etc.

Targeted Recruiting

By connecting with other teachers (particularly social studies teachers), your Chapter can identify politically engaged students who might be interested in JSA. Ask other teachers if a JSA Chapter member can do a short presentation to their class on JSA.

Invite these students to a recruitment event or meeting with a letter explaining JSA and why they should join.

Meetings

Chapter meetings are an important part of any JSA Chapter. Good meetings can help increase membership and are important for planning Chapter activities. Ineffective or boring meetings can hurt the Chapter. Encourage your students to consider how to make meetings efficient and fun.

- **Set a consistent time and location**
- **Use an agenda and keep notes**
- **Develop routines and traditions**
  Having regular meeting items can keep meetings relevant and entertaining. They also can save time on having to decide an agenda. Ex: Starting with a short impromptu debate, reviewing current events, etc.

Debates & Thought Talks

For many Chapters, debates and Thought Talks are staple activities. TAs can support students by making sure that debate topics are relevant, controversial, appropriate, and varied. TAs can also help instruct students on debating skills and encourage students to be serious about their preparation and delivery. Thought Talks are a great way to have students discuss their perspectives on a controversial issue.

- For more information on debates and Thought Talks refer to JSA Chapter Resources available on www.JSA.org. Among the resources online is the Chapter Management Guide and Debate Handbook that includes sample Thought Talks, moderator tips, and debate styles and videos.

Chapter Activities & Curriculum

Successful JSA Chapters participate in varied events. JSA is at its best when students identify issues that they care about and take action. This might mean connecting with elected leaders in their community, advocating for an issue, or participating in some other form of service or civic project.

Suggested Chapter Activities

- candidate forum
- meeting with elected officials
- lobbying elected officials
- letter writing campaigns
- op-eds/editorials
- voter registration drives
- service learning
- art-ivism (activism through art), signature campaigns
- attending political events and meetings (school board meetings, city council, etc.)
- invite guest speakers to meetings
- chapter fundraising events, and many more!

For ideas, review JSA's Chapter Management Guide.

Share Your Chapter's Successes!

Is your chapter doing great work in the community? Let us know! We want to hear about your student's accomplishments and work. Please feel free to contact your state program director with your Chapter activities and successes. Also, ensure your Chapter president records Chapter Activities in MyJSA.

CONVENTIONS

Conventions are a major part of JSA. There are typically three conventions held in each region: Fall State, Winter Congress, and Spring State. At conventions, students have the opportunity to participate in debates, workshops, dances, and other activities while connecting with a diverse population of students from other schools. Conventions can expose students to perspectives and ideas that they might not otherwise encounter in their local communities.

TAs play an important role at conventions. TAs are responsible for supervising their Chapter as well as assisting JSA staff in maintaining a safe and welcoming atmosphere. This section of the Teacher Advisor Guide explains how to effectively register for and attend conventions.

Beginning of the School Year

TAs should check with their school administration about policies and procedures regarding overnight conventions.

- **Determine how to secure approval to attend overnight conventions**
  Check with your administration about what your Chapter needs to do to attend overnight conventions and review any relevant school or district policies. Review convention dates and locations. All convention dates and locations are listed on the JSA website at jsa.org/conventions.
- **Review how to secure transportation**
  Sometimes transportation must be scheduled far in advance of conventions. Check with the appropriate personnel at your school about booking buses or securing approval for parents to drive.
- **Permission Forms and Liability**
  Determine if your school or district requires additional permission forms to be submitted. Each student must complete a JSA Permission Form.
- **Announce convention dates to your Chapter**
  Dates and locations may be found at www.JSA.org/calendar or by contacting your region's Program Director.

Before the Convention

Work with your Chapter leadership to register for the convention and review convention policies.

Before you register...

Convention registration usually closes one month before a convention takes place. Your region's Program Director can help you with any issues or questions that you have about convention registration.

- **Registration Packet:** download your region's registration packet from www.jsa.org. *The registration packet details convention fees. You will also receive a copy from your Program Director.*
- **Announce Convention:** distribute the registration packet to your chapter members and review convention dates and deadlines.
- **Scholarships:** explain your region's process for scholarship applications. *Most regions offer scholarships for students to attend conventions. Contact your Program Director for more information.*
- Registering for conventions

Please work with your Chapter to submit your registration in a timely fashion. Keep your Program Director in the loop about any potential issues.

- **Determine Attendees:** figure out who will attend the convention (including potential chaperones.)
- **Create MyJSA Accounts:** all students attending the convention are required to make a MyJSA account at jsa.org
  Students should use correct information and their primary email account to register. It is important that they list their contact information correctly in case of an emergency.
- **Collect Payments:** Schools can make checks payable to JSA. Credit card payments may be made online. Contact your program director for more information.
- **Collect Parent Permission Forms:** Permission forms are located in registration packets.
  JSA recommends collecting payments and permission forms before registering your Chapter in order to have a more accurate count of delegates who plan to attend **Register on MyJSA.**
  You or your Chapter President can register by logging in to MyJSA at https://myjsa.force.com
    - Select the convention to attend
    - Select your delegates from the drop down list (this list shows MyJSA accounts for students associated with your school that have not yet graduated)
    - Assign delegates to rooms.
      Please note that JSA may assign students from other schools into rooms with open slots.
    - Submit the registration
- **After Registering:** Once your Chapter's registration has been submitted, the Program Director will be notified. Once the Program Director has reviewed and accepted the registration, you and your Chapter President will be sent a registration confirmation and invoice.

- **Late Registration:** There is a fee for late registration. Contact your Program Director about registering after the registration deadline has passed.
- **Changing Registration:**
    - **Dropping delegates:** before the registration deadline closes, you may drop delegates by contacting your Program Director (if your registration has not yet been submitted you can change it yourself in MyJSA)
    - **Dropping delegates after registration closes:** Contact your Program Director. Hotel rooms must be blocked well in advance of conventions. JSA is unable to issue refunds after the registration deadline has passed.
    - **Adding delegates:** Contact your Program Director to add delegates. Delegates added after the registration deadline may be subject to late fees.

Before the Convention...

Frame the convention for the students. This is an awesome opportunity for them to hear different political perspectives, meet other students, and have fun. Encourage students to have a positive and open attitude.

- Review convention information and dates.
- Remind students to bring money for meals.
- Encourage students to sign up for debates. Information on debates is available by contacting the Debate Director, Governor, or Program Director.
- Review proper debate behavior: emphasize how to be a supportive and friendly audience. Debating in front of so many people takes courage!
- Review and emphasize JSA Convention Policies outlined in the Permission Form:
    - No drugs or alcohol
    - Students may not be in the rooms of students of the opposite gender
    - Students may not drive themselves to conventions
    - Students may be sent home for violating convention rules. If a student is sent home, their parent(s) must pick them up.
    - Convention Dress Code (during the day and at the dance.)
    - Review your own expectations and procedures for conventions.
      When/where to check in with you, how to get a hold of you in emergencies, etc.

At the Convention

As a TA, your primary role as a chaperone is to ensure the health and safety of your students. This means knowing where they are through regular check-ins during the day and room checks at curfew. Make sure to have a means of contacting your students.

- **Registration:** At the beginning of the convention, go with your Chapter President or delegation leader to register your Chapter at the registration desk.
    - Review and settle any payment discrepancies or missing permission forms.
    - Double check the registration to make sure students' names and gender are correct.
    - Notify JSA of any students on the delegate list that are not attending.
    - Distribute agendas and name tags to students (name tags must be worn at all times!)
- **Debate Blocks:** Make sure your students attend all debate blocks.
    - TAs are encouraged to attend debate blocks as well (particularly when your students are debating; they love it when their teachers show support by attending blocks).
- **Mandatory TA Meeting:** Check the agenda for the time and location of the TA Meeting
  It is important that all TAs and chaperones attend this meeting in order to receive important announcements and register for night-time supervision.
- **Meals:** Make sure your delegates know the plan for meals. JSA recommends having your delegation eat as a group. This gives you a chance to check-in and take roll while also encouraging Chapter bonding and inclusiveness.
- **Night-time Activities**
  In order to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all students, JSA relies on TAs and chaperones to help with evening supervision.
    - **Supervision:** TAs help in supervising night-time activities by signing up for a supervision block. Please show up for your block or notify JSA staff if for some reason you cannot attend so that we can ensure full coverage. Supervision may include:
        - Patrolling hallways
        - Supervising the dance
        - Supervising entrances/exits
    - **Be present:** By being a visible adult, you are helping cut down on inappropriate behavior.
    - **Correct inappropriate behavior:** If you see something you are uncomfortable with, please step in and correct it. Most students will respond right away to an adult asking them respectfully to stop inappropriate behavior.
    - **Communicate with JSA Staff:** If you see or hear anything suspicious or out of the ordinary, let JSA Staff know. This helps us have a complete picture of the convention and piece together information.
- **Curfew:** Students should be in their assigned rooms at curfew.
    - **Room checks:** TAs go to each room of their delegation to ensure that all students are present and accounted for.
    - **Students may not leave their rooms after curfew:** This rule helps us to keep students accounted for and safe. It is strictly enforced.
- **Final morning of the convention:** Please make sure that students are out of their rooms with their luggage stored at the appropriate time and location.

JSA LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

JSA offers students many opportunities to learn about politics and government while also strengthening their leadership skills. Additionally, JSA allows students to meet a diverse population of students that they may not have been exposed to in their normal communities. By sharing ideas and meeting new people, JSA members can become more effective leaders for our democracy.

TAs can help connect their students to the many opportunities JSA offers. This includes our pre-college summer programs and as well as our other leadership programs.

Junior State Leadership

TAs should encourage their students to become leaders in their regions. Elected office and serving on cabinet are great ways for students to be challenged and grow.

Running for Office

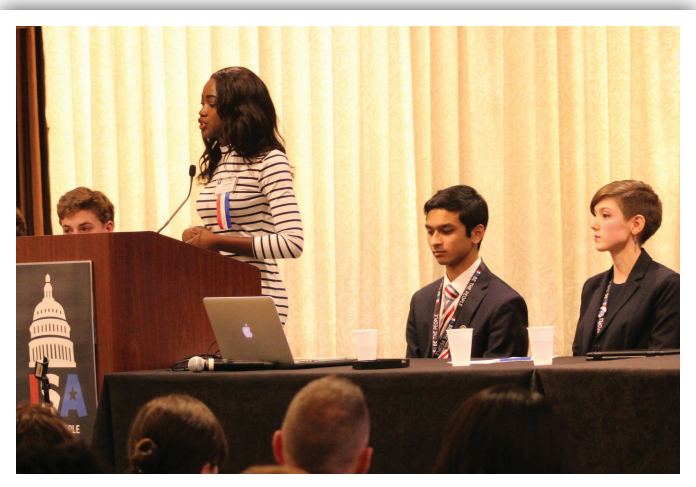
- If you have a student who you think would be a great elected leader, encourage them to run! A student with potential might not consider running unless you nudge them in that direction.

Applying for Cabinet

- Each region needs talented students with a wide range of skills for cabinet. Cabinet applications are usually released in the early summer. Contact your Program Director for more information.

Montezuma Leadership Summit

- Select students are invited to attend the Montezuma Leadership Summit in the Santa Cruz mountains of Northern California to learn about the founding of JSA and participate in JSA specific leadership training. A group of TAs are also invited to this summit to share their experience with other educators and students about the role of the Teacher Advisor.



JSA Summer Programs

JSA hosts a variety of summer programs at college campuses around the country and internationally. These programs are designed to educate students on important topics such as government, international relations, and economics. Additionally, JSA's summer programs expose students to leaders through speakers programs and institutes. Scholarships and fundraising opportunities are available.

JSA Summer School

- 3-4 week college level courses at a university campus.
- Students can hone their public speaking skills through JSA's debate program which is led by university faculty.
- Classes include AP Government, AP Macroeconomics, Speech & Political Communication, and more.
- Students get to experience residential life at schools such as Stanford, Princeton, Georgetown, and Beijing's Union University.
- Over $600,000 in scholarships are awarded each year.

JSA Summer Institutes

- 3-5 day residential programs at a university campus.
- Leadership workshops.
- Speakers programs.
- In-depth examination of important and relevant political topics.

Learn more at www.jsa.org/summer

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OUR LOCATIONS

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