High School STRUCTURAL DESIGN AND ENGINEERING
2020 PROBLEM STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

Structural engineers design and analyze structures that support or resist loads, such as buildings, large non-building structures, machinery, medical equipment, vehicles, or any item for which structural integrity affects function or safety. Structural engineering work is based on physical laws and practical knowledge about the performance of different materials and geometries.

Structural engineers use of a number of simple structure elements to build complex structural systems. Through structural analysis (a key component in the structural design and engineering process), engineers determine the effects of loads on structures and their components. Applied mechanics and mathematics, and materials science are used in structural analysis to help compute a structure's deformations, internal forces, stresses, support reactions, accelerations, and stability. Analysis results help to verify a structure's fitness for use and, in many cases, can eliminate the need for actual physical tests.

CHALLENGE

Research **Trestle Bridge** structures and develop a design for a railroad trestle bridge that spans a canyon that has a river running through it. The bottom ends (or feet) of the trestle sit on concrete bases that are on the banks of the river and abut the near vertical canyon walls. The trestle must support the weight of the railroad and the ore carrying trains that pass over the canyon. Another company also uses the river to run sightseeing tours on a restored steam paddle boat, so the bottom middle of the trestle must be open to allow the boat to pass through safely.

Consider the following:

1. Aesthetics	4. Live load at different locations of a span
2. Measurement requirements	5. Minimalist design and engineering concepts
3. Test block size	6. Materials

The submitted structure will be tested using a TSA-designated testing instrument. Prior to testing, a random draw of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 inches will determine how far off center of the bridge that the center of the testing block will be placed. Consideration of the placement of cross members and other pieces must be used to allow the rod of the tester to be able to pass up through the bridge at any of these locations.

The structure, along with required documents and drawing must be submitted at check-in in a box with a top. The team is to construct the entire box and lid from standard poster board/paper. The size of the box is to be 18” long, 10” wide, and 5” deep. Instructions for the box are attached.

Balsa wood is the designated construction material; participants may choose their own glue type. The test block will rest on the top of the carrier surface.

SIZE CONSTRAINTS

The Trestle (1/16” tolerance)	**Opening for the Boat**
Length 17"	Height Minimum 4”, no maximum
Width 2 ½”	Width Minimum 7”, no maximum
Height 8"	

MATERIALS

1/8" x 1/8" Balsa wood strips
1/8" x ¼" Balsa wood strips

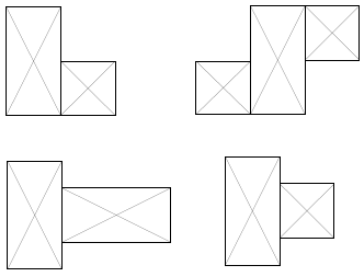
DESIGN CONSTRAINTS

1. Teams must design and construct the trestle structure applying the principles of engineering while using the least amount of materials. The design should emulate and serve as a modular component for a trestle bridge.
2. The top of the trestle should be flat and designed in such a way that railroad ties and rails could be laid once the bridge is erected. The very top should be flat the entire way from end to end and not have any cross members on it. Cross members may be used even with, or immediately under the very top, as well as anywhere else on the bridge.
3. At check-in, teams must present a proper mechanically drawn or computer-generated full size orthographic, three-view drawing (all views on one side of an appropriate sized sheet) that shows each structural member of their design. The drawing may be folded or rolled and is not to be placed in the portfolio
4. Exact amounts of designated materials are not being specified for the pre-built. However, a designated amount of material will be used for the semifinalist portion of the event.
5. Each designated material must be utilized in the construction of the structure.
6. Contestants should remember that the use of too many materials will be a negative factor when calculating the efficiency of the structure after testing.

CONSTRUCTION CONSTRAINTS

1. Substructures that extend below the bottom ends (feet) of the trestle are not allowed.
2. *Lamination* is the combining of two or more pieces of like materials (or size) with the grain running in the same direction. Only the examples of allowable laminations shown below are permitted.

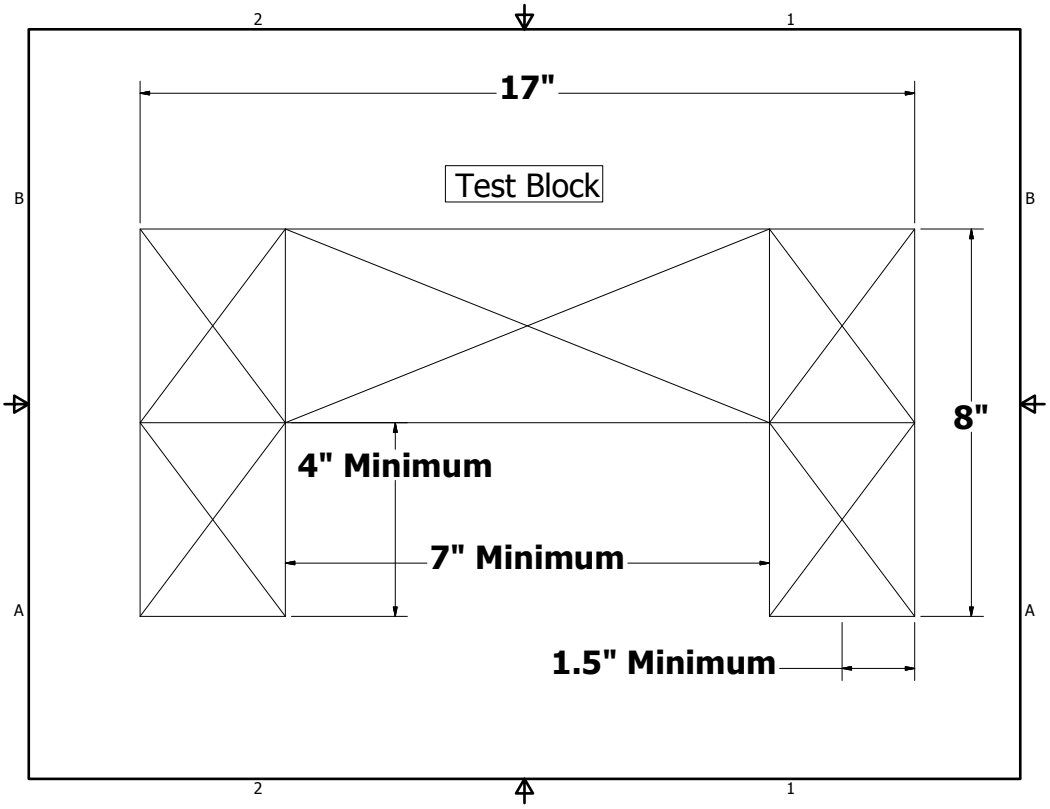
Examples of Laminations that are allowed.
1/8" x ¼" to 1/8" x 1/8" to create an L or rabbet shape
1/8" x 1/8" to 1/8" x ¼" to create two offsets
1/8" x ¼" to 1/8" x ¼" to create a T shape
1/8" x ¼" to 1/8" x 1/8" to create a T shape



3. Lap joints are allowed and involve gluing two pieces of balsa material with the grain pattern normally at right angles; however, any lap joint less than 10° or greater than 170° would circumvent the lamination guidelines and be ruled unacceptable.
4. The opening for the boat may be rectangular or arched, but must be large enough to allow a piece 4" high and 7" wide to pass through.

TESTING

1. A TSA designated structural testing instrument will be used for stress testing of structures.
2. Testing block: 2 ½'" wide x 3" long x ¾" high.
3. The structure will be placed on the tester with the bottom ends (feet) of the trestle resting on the tester supports.
4. The span of the tester will be 14", but based on the random draw, the testing rod could be anywhere from 0 to 6 inches off center. The judge will solely determine which side of the bridge will face him/her when testing.
5. Each bottom end (foot) of the structure must be a minimum of 1 ½" long
6. Failure of a structure occurs when the testing instrument records structural failure, which is when the tester stops recording a higher force.
7. Structures that sag or bend in testing without indication of structural failure, will have the highest force indicated used as the failure weight.



The following drawing pattern is provided for each team to utilize in the layout and fabrication of a storage box using 22” x 28” standard poster board. The pattern shows the bottom section of the box and must also be used to create the top section. Teams should note that making both the top and bottom sections the same size will result in a rather snug fit. The 10” wide x 18” long bottom size should be decreased slightly (no more than 1/8” each direction) so that the top can be removed and replaced without difficulty. Each team structure must be placed in the team’s completed box along with all other required documents and drawings for submission to the event coordinator during the designated project check-in time.