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About 250 Kansas high school students studying German at 17 schools spent March 1 at the University of Kansas, where they competed at the annual Schachkonnepferde for awards that recognize their proficiency in German language and culture. Schachkonnepferde, which translates to "shah's conquest," included contests in poetry recitation, prose reading, and language proficiency; spelling; prose writing; and cultural items that cover geography, history and culture.

The Kansas Association of Teachers of German sponsors the event in cooperation with K-12's Department of German, Languages and Literatures, whose faculty and graduate teaching assistants are among the judges of the competition. William Kolb, chair of K-12's German, Language and Literature Department, said the event ceremony recognizes a local community of the Olympic athletes competing for medals and prizes contributed by the consulate of Germany, Botolphshay and Austin as well as the Goethe Institute in Chicago and the German Information Center in New York City. The first Schachkonnepferde was held in 1969 at KU's older building, among other activities which have its administration at KU since 1999 with one exception. Winning students can receive cash awards.

Local universities and colleges, including the University of Kansas, also participate. The event supports Kansas high schools which participate in their efforts to promote the teaching of other languages and cultures. Prizes consist of awards for poetry, spelling, prose and culture, students compete at levels ranked by their stage of study of German. In last five months an awarded at each level. Each cash prize and prize awarded the most students this year, with about 100 at Level 1 prize and more than 70 at Level 1 prize.

Prize contest entries addressed the Schachkonnepferde theme, "German Ties Grow" in the category, which are limited to one entry each, and prizes were given for students' joint collaborative efforts. Prizes winners from Lawrence Southwest Senior High School, Deer, Sandy Valley High School, Leavenworth, second and Aldine High School, third. Individual competitors at Schachkonnepferde this year were Aldine High School, Deer Valley High School, second; Deer Valley, Northwood High School, Crawford Park, Deer Valley, West High School, Crawford Park, High School, Junction City High School, Lawrence High School, Lawrence Southwest Senior High School, Norman High School, Olathe East High School, Olathe North High School, Olathe Northwest High School, Smith Valley High School, Leavenworth, Topock 19 Individual award winners are listed below by school, name, prize and school city. Students listed more than once earned awards in multiple categories.