

**ENTRIES.** As many as **THREE** students from **GRADES 4 and 5 COMBINED** and **THREE** students from **GRADES 6, 7, and 8 COMBINED** (grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) OR ages 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 by Sept. 1 of the current school year, if in an ungraded school, may be entered in the Dictionary Skills District Contest from each school. Adults from each school will select contestants to represent the campus at the District Meet based on their abilities and interest in research, as well as other factors, which are decided upon by each school. **Grade levels are judged together, as indicated above, for the purpose of the top two advancing to State. Districts may elect to allow 3 entries per grade level, but only the top two scoring contestants in the combined grade level contests will advance to State.**

• **ADVANCING TO STATE.** 4 must compete in a grade for 2 to advance (See page 8 for complete rules.)

• **NATURE OF THE CONTEST.** The Dictionary Skills contest tests the contestant's ability to find information quickly in resource literature, specifically a dictionary. Using only **ONE** dictionary in competition, contestants answer 30 multiple choice test questions in a 30 minute time period. Although any dictionary may be used in contest, the adopted dictionary is the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition, 2003 or newer* printing. Answers on the test can only be verified with the adopted dictionaries. Dictionaries may be tabbed and written in, as desired, but no other printed material may be used in the contest. A magnifying device may also be used, as needed, in competition. **All contest materials, other than the test itself, must be supplied by the contestant.**

Below are representative problems of medium difficulty that might appear on a Dictionary Skills test:

1. The best synonym for the word "qualm" would be . . .  
 A. calamity                      C. demur  
 B. calm                              D. none of these
2. A word that best describes the final outcome of a complex sequence of events is . . .  
 A. denovo                          C. materialize  
 B. denouement                      D. postpartum
3. The major difference in a margay and a thrasher is that . . .  
 A. margays have spots  
 B. thrashers make prettier sounds  
 C. one is a cat and the other is a bird  
 D. a margay is a cat; a thrasher is a marsupial
4. On the Beaufort Scale, which of these would represent a wind speed characteristic of a strong gale?  
 A. 46 mph                              C. 48 KPH  
 B. 49 mph                              D. 89 KPH

• **WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CONTEST.** The contest director will announce the time and place that contestants and one adult should report for verification of the scoring of tests. Tests and answer sheets will be distributed to contestants face up, and contestants will be instructed to write their grade levels and their contestant ID numbers in the spaces provided on the front cover of the test and on the answer sheet. Contestants must not open the test until the start signal is given. The contest director will tell contestants their ID numbers, usually during roll call. (Alternates taking the place of absent registered contestants should be sure to let the contest director know as they enter the room to save time in roll call.) No alarm watches or other devices that emit sound are allowed in the contest room.

• **TIME ALOTTED.** Contestants will have 30 minutes beginning at the start signal to write their CAPITAL letter answers in the spaces provided on the answer sheet. No time warning will be given. Contestants will remain quietly in their seats until the time has expired.

• **MARKING ANSWERS.** Contestants may write on the test paper, but only the CAPITAL letter answer should be written in the answer space on the answer sheet. Any marking in the answer space will constitute an attempt. Contestants may place an X in the box provided where an erasure, mark-out, or undesired answer has occurred in order to not have points deducted for these errors. **(Skipping procedure examples are found on page 12.)**

• **SCORING.** Add 5 points for each correct answer. Subtract 2 points for each incorrect answer, or for each answer that was attempted, marked through or erased, and did not result in a correct answer. **No points** are added or deducted for skipped or unanswered test items, or erased, marked-out, or answered items when an X is placed in the box beside the answer blank.

• **VERIFICATION PERIOD.** No pens, pencils, papers, cell phones, or any other items should be in contestants' area while tests and answer sheets with keys are reviewed. Contestants and ONE coach OR parent OR adult have 15 minutes to check the computation of scores and ask questions about items counted incorrect. If the contest is held before **March 27**, tests must be turned back in to the contest director. Contestants will be disqualified from the contest should the paper be taken from the room prior to this date. After verification has been completed, awards will be issued. (See Rules for Verification Period on page 13 of the *PSIA Handbook* and on the *PSIA website* <[www.psiacademics.org](http://www.psiacademics.org)> under "Events." Awards should be given to the top 3 scoring students in each grade level, and an additional certificate award will be presented to each of the top two students from the 2 combined grade level contests, signifying their advancement to the State Meet.

• **MATERIALS.** Last years' PSIA Dictionary Skills tests and answer keys, plus tests from previous PSIA contests, are included in the PSIA Academic Study Materials Booklets, which may be ordered from the PSIA office. A PSIA Study Materials Order Form for these booklets is included in the appendix of this handbook.

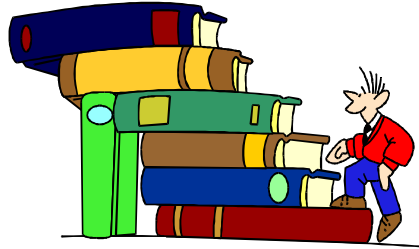
## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COACHES / CONTEST DIRECTORS

• **PREPARATION FOR CONTEST.** Read and follow all instructions provided in the “Information Pertaining to All Contests” section of the *PSIA Academic Handbook*. Observe and practice with students all rules and procedures delineated in the “Instructions to the Contestant” and in the “Checklist for Contest Directors” and the “Checklist for Graders.” Preparation for the Dictionary Skills Contest should include practice using a dictionary to locate a variety of information.

Contestants are at an advantage if they can research and mark their dictionaries to find information more quickly.

Dictionary Skills tests from previous years of competition (available on PSIA order forms) provide multiple practice problems for students.

However, be aware that a new edition of the dictionary is now available, and page numbers, as well as some answers, may not correlate with the older tests. Coaches may adapt these resources as deemed necessary.



• **PERSONNEL NEEDED FOR CONTEST.**

*Contest Director and Assistant Director* from two different schools, each knowledgeable of contest construction and administration.

*Graders.* Director and assistant director may also serve as graders. To expedite the grading process, provide at least two graders for every 15 papers.

• **SCORING (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION).** +5 for each correct answer, and -2 for each incorrect answer, erased answer that does not have an X in the answer box, or marked through answer that did not result in a correct answer. Graders should each use a different color pen or pencil to mark papers and place their initials at the bottom of the test answer sheet to indicate that they have graded the paper.

• **DICTIONARY AVAILABILITY.** The *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition*, is available at most book stores. Texas Educational Paperbacks (TEP) provides a discount to PSIA schools and individual members. Call **1-800 443-2078**. Fax to 1-800 437-7070.