

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONTESTANT AND COACH

• **ENTRIES.** As many as **THREE** students from each grade level (grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) OR ages 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 respectively 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. **Grade levels MAY be judged separately at District, but only the top 2 scoring students in combined grades levels 4 and 5 and combined grade levels 6 through 8 will advance to State.**

• **ADVANCING TO STATE.** A minimum of four students from at least two different schools must compete at the district meet in order for the top **two** students from the combined grade levels (4/5 and 6-8) to advance to State. (See page 8 for complete rules.)

• **NATURE OF THE CONTEST.** The Listening Skills contest tests the contestant's ability to listen carefully and recall intricate detail. Note taking skills are enriched through preparation for this contest. Practice in notetaking not only enables students to prepare best for competition, it also sharpens skills for writing down important information to be tested in any subject area. Contestants listen to a recording of a passage of primarily objective material. The material could be about any subject. Some subjects included in the past have included historical information, geographical articles, travel to different places, and subject information (such as How to ..). Each year, at least one of the articles used in competition is about a person.

After taking notes while listening to the recorded passage, contestants are given a 10-minute, 30-item multiple choice, true/false test over the passage. All contest materials, other than the test itself, must be supplied by the contestant.

• **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. Contestants should have two sheets of clean paper (lined or plain) that they have brought to contest. No writing should be done on the paper until the start signal is given. Tests 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. 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.

The recorded passage (usually in a male voice) will then be played for contestants. Notes may only be taken on



the blank paper during the time that the passage is playing and approximately 30 seconds after the recording is completed.

• **TIME ALLOTTED.** When the start signal is given, contestants will have 10 minutes to use their notes to answer the 30 objective test questions. Contestants will remain quietly in their seats until the time has expired.

• **MARKING ANSWERS.** Contestants may write on the test paper, but only the **PRINTED 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. ( See Skipping X-box examples-p. 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 31**, 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.** Previous years' tests and short informational readings. **CDs of 2009, 2010 & 2011 PSIA test passages, tests and keys are available at PSIA.**

• **PREPARATION FOR CONTEST.** Practice taking notes while listening to spoken or recorded passages is essential. Because the tests include minute detail, students should be trained to listen for statistical information, detail, as well as main idea, overall attitudes and point of view implied in the passage. Preparing for the contest can take place in the classroom throughout the year, within any subject area. Emphasis on following oral directions should improve students' performances and reduce time spent in repeating instructions.