

• **ENTRIES.** As many as **THREE** students from **combined** grade levels (grades 4 & 5) and **THREE** students from combined grade levels (6, 7 and 8) may be entered in the Dictionary Skills District Contest from each school. **Grade levels MAY be judged separately and additional entries may be allowed up to 3 per grade level at District, BUT only the top 2 places in combined grades 4-5 and 6-8 will advance to State.**

• **ADVANCING TO STATE.** First and second place winners will advance from the grades 4-5 contest and from the grades 6-8 contest. Third place winners will be alternates. (See page 8 for complete rules, and see page "PSIA Elementary and Middle Schools — 2026 Scheduling Contests" on page 109 for an abbreviated chart for contest administration.)

• **NATURE OF THE CONTEST.** The Dictionary Skills contest tests the contestant's ability to find information quickly in resource literature, specifically a dictionary. For grades 4 & 5, contestants use only **ONE** dictionary to answer 30 multiple choice test questions in a 30 minute time period. **For grades 6-8, additional resource pages are provided and contestants answer 40 multiple choice test questions (same 30 as for grades 4 & 5, plus 10 additional questions using a combination of the dictionary and resource pages).** Although any dictionary may be used in contest, the adopted dictionary is the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition, 2012* 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 other than the provided resource page, no other printed material may be used in the contest. A magnifying device may also be used, as needed, in competition. **All contest materials (pencils, pen, eraser, dictionary), 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 abbreviation used in *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* to indicate Indo-European is ...
 

A. IndE	C. IDE
B. IND	D. IE
2. The order of meanings within a dictionary entry is ...
 

A. historical	C. random
B. alphabetical	D. spatial
6. Which of these is a tableland?
 

A. Niobrara	C. Ogaden
B. Suzhou	D. Mycale
7. The word "googol" would most likely be used by ...
 

A. a mathematician	C. chef
B. comedian	D. person searching internet

• **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. (Substitutes taking the place of absent registered contestants should be sure to let the contest director know as they enter the room to save time at roll call.)

Answer sheets will be distributed to contestants first, followed by contestant ID-labeled tests distributed by student name. Contestants will be instructed to write their grade levels and their contestant ID numbers in the spaces provided on the answer sheet. Contestants must not open the test until the start signal is given. No alarm watches or other devices that emit sound are allowed in the contest room. Disqualification will result if such device makes a sound while placed in any portion of the room.

• **TIME ALLOTTED.** Contestants will have 30 minutes beginning at the start signal to write their **PRINTED 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 **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.

• **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.

• Mark-outs are acceptable, as long as a correct answer is written beside the mark-out. If an answer is marked out and no correct answer is written in the answer space, 2 points deducted. Erasures are permitted. Any erased correct answer that can still be seen is counted correct. An erased answer that is not correct and does not have a correct answer written over or beside it constitutes an incorrect answer, whereby 2 points are deducted.

• **VERIFICATION PERIOD.** See page 14.

• **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" and "Test Packet Order Form" for these booklets are included in the appendix of this handbook and on the PSIA website: [www.psiacademics.org](http://www.psiacademics.org).





## Dictionary Skills 4-5

*GRADERS: Write scores and initial.*

Meet: \_\_\_\_\_

Score 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Score 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Score 2: \_\_\_\_\_

FINAL: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Contestant Answer Sheet*

Contestant ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTIONS: Place the PRINTED CAPITAL letter of each answer choice (A, B, C, or D) in the blank corresponding to the test item number. SCORING: +5 for each correct answer; -2 for each incorrect answer; no deduction for skipped or unanswered items. Visible erasures and mark-outs constitute a 2-point deduction ONLY if a correct answer is not written in the answer space.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

25. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

26. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

27. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

28. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

29. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

30. \_\_\_\_\_

*Contest Director: Match to Contestant ID-labeled test AFTER scoring*



## Dictionary Skills ♦ 6-8

*GRADERS: Write scores and initial.*

Meet: \_\_\_\_\_

Score 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Score 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Score 2: \_\_\_\_\_

FINAL: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Contestant Answer Sheet*

Contestant ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTIONS: Place the PRINTED CAPITAL letter of each answer choice (A, B, C, or D) in the blank corresponding to the test item number. SCORING: +5 for each correct answer; –2 for each incorrect answer; no deduction for skipped or unanswered items. Visible erasures and mark-outs constitute a 2-point deduction ONLY if a correct answer is not written in the answer space.

- |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 16. _____ | 31. _____ |
| 2. _____  | 17. _____ | 32. _____ |
| 3. _____  | 18. _____ | 33. _____ |
| 4. _____  | 19. _____ | 34. _____ |
| 5. _____  | 20. _____ | 35. _____ |
| 6. _____  | 21. _____ | 36. _____ |
| 7. _____  | 22. _____ | 37. _____ |
| 8. _____  | 23. _____ | 38. _____ |
| 9. _____  | 24. _____ | 39. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 25. _____ | 40. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 26. _____ |           |
| 12. _____ | 27. _____ |           |
| 13. _____ | 28. _____ |           |
| 14. _____ | 29. _____ |           |
| 15. _____ | 30. _____ |           |

*Contest Director: Match to Contestant ID-labeled test AFTER scoring*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COACHES / CONTEST DIRECTORS

• **PREPARATION FOR CONTEST.** Read and follow all instructions provided in the “Official Rules for ALL Participants” 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.” 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 2020 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 FOR CONTEST.**

1. *Contest Director.* May be a knowledgeable coach of contestants in the contest.

2. *Assistant Directors.* **Two** knowledgeable coaches from different schools other than director’s.

3. *Graders.* Director and assistant director **SHOULD** 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, or erased or marked-over answer that does 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.

