



Listening Skills

2026-2027
Qual ♦ Dist ♦ State

GRADES: 4-5 & 6-8 | ENTRIES: 3 PER SECTION | TIME: 6 MIN

SECTIONS. Grades 4-5 compete together. Grades 6-8 compete together.

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 Listening 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.

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, but usually focuses on social studies and history. Some subjects included in the past have included historical information, geographical articles, travel to different places, science, space, and subject information (such as How to...). Sometimes the article used in competition is about a person.

After taking notes while listening to the recorded passage, contestants are given a 6-minute, 25-item multiple choice, true/false test over the passage. All contest materials (pencil(s), pen, note paper, eraser), 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. (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.) 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. 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. Answer sheets will then be distributed to contestants by the Director and/or one of two Assistant Directors, followed by contestant ID-labeled tests distributed by student name. A second Assistant Director will also serve as Hall Monitor. 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. When the start signal is given, contestants will have **6 minutes** to use their notes to answer the 25 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.

SCORING. Award 5 points for each correct answer. Deduct 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 are 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 16.

MATERIALS. Previous years' tests and audio in .mp3 format is available for purchase from PSIA.

CONTESTANT PREPARATION. Practice taking notes while listening to spoken or recorded passages is essential. Because the tests include the smallest details, 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.

COACHES PREPARATION. Read and follow all instructions provided in the "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 Listening Skills Contest should include instruction in taking effective notes. Listening to one-page passages, such as those used in contest, or descriptive articles that contain much detail, are helpful in preparing for this contest.

Emphasis on following oral directions should improve students' performances and reduce time spent in repeating instructions. Digital audio passages, printed passages, tests, and keys are available to order for practice.

PERSONNEL NEEDED FOR CONTEST.

1. *Contest Director/Timekeeper.* The 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. One Assistant may serve as the hall monitor when the contest begins.

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.

Shall and Must List

Contestants **shall** use PRINTED (no cursive) CAPITAL (not lowercase) LETTERS for this contest.

Result: Count the question incorrect if the wrong type of response is given.

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Contestants **shall** write their Contestant ID on the Answer Sheets and not their name or their school name.

Result: Contest director should remedy the answer sheet by erasing or covering up the identifying information.

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Contestants **shall** write only their contestant ID and their answers on the answer sheet.

Result: Extraneous marks in answer blanks result in incorrect response for that answer. Extraneous marks outside the answer blanks should receive a warning to the contestant, but not a disqualification.

STRATEGIES FOR TAKING GOOD LISTENING NOTES

- Take well-organized notes in outline form.
- Take notes in complete thoughts, but abbreviate, reduce, and simplify.
- Make your notes easy to read.
- Be an aggressive note taker.
- Start taking notes as the audio begins.