

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONTESTANT

• **ENTRIES.** As many as THREE students from EACH GRADE LEVEL (grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) OR ages 7, 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 Spelling District Contest from each school. Designated adults representing each school will select contestants to represent the campus at the District Meet based on their abilities in spelling, as well as other factors, which are decided upon by each school.

• **ADVANCING TO STATE.** 4 must compete in a grade for 2 to advance (See page 7 for complete rules.)

• **NATURE OF THE CONTEST.** *The PSIA Spelling Contest consists of two parts: The spelling test and the tiebreaker spelling test:* Contestants learn by memory to write or print (in pencil or dark ink) the spelling words found on the current year's "PSIA Spelling List." The spelling lists are different for each year, but the full list usually consists of 600 words for grades 2-4, 800 words for grades 5-6, and 900 words for grades 7-8.

The tests in competition consist of the following numbers of words:

Grades 2-3: 40 words on test / **10** tiebreaker

Grades 4-5: 60 words on test / **15** tiebreaker

Grades 6-8: 80 words on test / **20** tiebreaker

Exactly 20% of the words pronounced in the spelling test will be from "outside." OUTSIDE for the purpose of this competition means that the words pronounced are taken from the official source for spelling verification, the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*. Outside words are not on the study list. Some words on the test may be derivatives of the original word, or have different suffixes or prefixes. (example: "orderly" may be "orderliness")

• **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 are then given answer sheets for the Spelling test, including the tiebreaker, on which they are to write their grade levels and their contestant ID numbers in the spaces provided. The contest director will tell contestants their ID numbers, usually during roll call. (If you are an alternate taking the place of a registered contestant who is absent, be sure to let the contest director know as you enter the room to save time in roll call.)

The contest director will begin the contest by pronouncing words TWICE at approximate 5-second intervals, and at about 6 words per minute. Additional time may be provided for more difficult words for which the pronouncer provides a sentence

and/or definition. As contestants hear the words pronounced, they should begin writing/printing the spelling of the word in the spaces provided on the answer sheet. Monitor(s) in the room will listen to pronunciations while viewing their own copies of the tests. If a word seems to have provided difficulty, or the pronunciation was varied or otherwise faulty, monitors may request that a word be re-pronounced at the end of the contest. Contestants may NOT request the re-pronunciation of words, and they may not speak during the contest pronunciation time. Contestants must use clean erasers and they may not write on their erasers or on any of their body parts before or during the contest. Words should be written only on the blanks provided on the test answer sheet. Immediately following the regular part of the test, all contestants will take the tiebreaker test.

• **SCORING.**

Add 5 points for each word spelled correctly. No points are added or deducted for misspelled, skipped or unanswered test items. For tiebreakers, one point is added to the score for each word spelled correctly. The score in a tie should be posted with the original score and a + sign followed by the number of points earned in the tiebreaker --ex: 95+9; 95+7; 95+6.

• **VERIFICATION PERIOD.**

The contest director is required to set aside a verification period of 15 minutes prior to the announcement of official results. **Only one coach OR parent OR adult and the contestant** may attend the verification period. Those present at the verification period shall be given an opportunity to view their own contest papers only with a test and key. No pens, pencils, papers or cell phones or items, other than those specified for the contest (example: dictionary) may be in contestants' hands or in the area of the contest papers throughout the verification period. Questions should be directed during this 15-minute period to the contest director, who will contact the district director who will contact the state office for a ruling, if necessary. Anyone may call the state office if a concern is not being addressed. If an error is found in the test, key, or scoring, all papers affected by the error shall be rescored. Contestants must remain in the verification room until dismissed by the contest director. If tests must be rescored, a time and place to reassemble for a 5-minute re-evaluation before awards should be announced. Tests taken from the contest room prior to release date constitutes student disqualification. **The test release dates for 2009 are March 28 for District and May 2 for State.** No changes in scores or ranking will be allowed after awards have been issued. Posting errors may be corrected on a limited basis with State approval

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 Spelling Contest should include instruction in the rules of the English language, prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Providing meanings and definitions for words that are more difficult or those that have multiple meanings and spellings is helpful in providing differentiation during the contest.

• **PERSONNEL NEEDED FOR CONTEST.**

1. *Contest Director/Pronouncer.* Should NOT be a coach of contestants in the contest.

2. *Assistant Director.* A knowledgeable coach from a different school other than director’s.

3. *Monitor/Verifier(s).* One or two knowledgeable coaches from different schools. NOTE: Monitor must not pronounce words. He/She may ask the pronouncer to re-pronounce words by their numbers only AFTER the initial pronunciation of all test words. Monitor may consult with pronouncer privately to clarify pronunciation.

4. *Graders.* Pronouncer, assistant director, and monitor(s) may also serve as graders. To expedite the grading process, provide at least two graders for every 15 papers.

(Note that detailed instruction will come in the packet to the Contest Director/Pronouncer regarding the functions of each person assisting with the contest.)

• **SCORING (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION).**

The contestant’s score shall be determined by **awarding 5 points for each correct spelling.** There are no deductions for missed words or for mark-outs and erasures. On the regular portion of the test, place a checkmark ✓ before each correct word. At least 2 people should score each paper with a different color of ink or pencil, and a third person must score papers that appear to rank in the top 10. After marking all correct words, count the number of words correct and multiply by 5 to compute the test score. The contestant with the highest score shall be given first place; the one with the next highest score, second place; and so on. ALL scores of all contestants MUST be placed in PENCIL on the Contest Roster for verification. Post ranks only to 10.

TIES. If scores of individual contestants among the top ten are tied, the tiebreaker portion of the contest should be scored in this manner: Add one point to the original score for each tiebreaker word that is spelled correctly. Rank contestants only after the ties have been broken. If contestants remain tied after the tiebreaker has been scored, then each shall share the points of the two ranking places. To indicate the score after the tie, use + and the number of correct tiebreaker items (Example: 275 + 7; 275 + 10; 275 + 6).

Remember to have a *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*, on hand during grading and at the Verification Period. These will be the only “official” sources for word spellings. Unless otherwise indicated on the official Spelling List, British spellings of words are not to be considered as correct spellings in this contest.

If a contestant scores 100% in this contest at the District or State level, Contest Directors should notify the state office by faxing the form found in the index of the *PSIA Academic Handbook*.

• **SPELLING LISTS and RESOURCES.**

The official current year Spelling list, consisting of rules, tips, and spelling words for all grade levels may be ordered for \$3.00 on the PSIA “Study Materials Order Form” found in the back of the *PSIA Academic Handbook* and on the PSIA website www.psiacademics.org, under “All PSIA Forms.” CDs, tapes, definitions, sentences, computer practice software:

ASW Enterprises

Box 737

Abilene, TX 79604-0737

800 627-9030

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