



Storytelling

2026-2027
Qual • Dist

GRADES: 1, 2, 3 | ENTRIES: 2 PER SECTION | TIME: 6 MIN (SOFT LIMIT)

SECTIONS. Grades 1, 2, and 3 compete separately.

ENTRIES. As many as TWO students from each grade levels may be entered in the Storytelling District Contest from each school. Districts may elect to allow up to 3 contestants from each grade level.

LEVELS OF COMPETITION. Contestants have two levels of competition—Qualifier and District—with top performers earning medals and recognition at the District level. **This contest concludes at District and does not advance to the State Tournament.**

NATURE OF THE CONTEST. Contestants in Storytelling hear a short story of about two-to-three 8-1/2" × 11" pages in length (approximately 1000 to 1200 words). Contestants then retell the story **before a required audience** and an odd number of judges (one or three) within about 6 minutes. The object is for students to demonstrate their ability to speak before an audience, organize detail, and creatively retell the story that they have just heard. The judges have not heard the story; therefore, they are not listening for minute detail, but for expression, intonation, characterization, and enthusiasm in the student's voice as he or she speaks. Eye contact with judges and audience, posture, articulation, and effective but not overuse of gestures, are also important to the judging. **Students should be ranked lower if school uniforms or costumes are worn, but not disqualified.**

SECTIONING. Schools should enter their strongest student in the first position when registering for this contest. The meet program separates the strongest contestants into different sections. At District, contestants from the same school will be placed in different sections whenever possible. At State, contestants advancing from the same District will be assigned to different sections whenever possible. Once the speaking order has been set for a tournament, it may not be changed without permission from the District or State Meet Director.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CONTEST.

1) The contest director will announce the time and

place that contestants and adults should report for receiving evaluations and the announcement of contestants advancing to the final round.

- 2) All persons, other than contestants, will then be dismissed from the room. If there are 7 or fewer contestants in the contest, only one round is needed. If there are 8 or more contestants, up to six students will be assigned to a section (or provided a Second Reading, see below). The contest director also serves as the reader for the section. The contestants and the reader only will be in the room when the story is read.
- 3) As roll is called and substitutes OR alternates are checked in, each contestant will be given a card on which the letter of his/her speaking order is written, in accordance to the Contestant Roster (**Do NOT change speaking order.**)
- 4) The Director/Reader shall read the story aloud to contestants only, while one Assistant Director keeps the hallway quiet and the other Assistant Director stays in the classroom to help the Contest Director, watching for infractions and helping to manage getting students in and out of the contest room.
- 5) Contestants then assemble quietly **outside** the room. One Assistant will organize children, while the other monitors **inside** the room. **Wait about two minutes before beginning the contest.**
- 6) The judge(s) may enter and make ready for the first contestant **by sitting in various parts of the room, NOT together.** Because the PSIA events are intended to be educational, audiences are **required** and welcome to the capacity of the room. **Contestants must wait outside the room with their letter cards.** (Coaching students between the time the story is read to them and their retelling of it is prohibited.) Once the first contestant is called in to speak, **NO ONE** should enter or exit the room, unless specified on the roster to do so. Make the verbal announcements in accordance to the Checklist. **ANNOUNCE the title of the story.**
- 7) Contestants will be called into the room by their letters one at a time according to speaking order listed on the roster. Contestants must stay in the contest room after their presentations **and maintain**

silence throughout the contest.

- 8) Contestants will deliver their own versions of the story that they heard read to them. **Contestants should NOT state their names or schools in their presentations.** Contestants may provide gestures to express meaning, but they should not walk around the room. We suggest that coaches tape off a 6 foot by 6 foot square and limit children's movement to within that box during their presentations. Children will be encouraged to speak no more than 6 minutes. A BEE reminder card may be held up for contestants who have spoken 5-1/2 minutes, but speaking more than 6 minutes is NOT a disqualification. **Judges should take no more than 1-1/2 minutes following the contestant presentation to complete his/her evaluation.**
- 9) After a couple of minutes following the last speaker, the director will accept judges' ballots and with the witness of the Assistant Director(s), place their independent rankings on the Ranking Sheet. The Director will use the **"Ranking Procedures for Speech Contests"** (page 17) to determine the winners.
- 10) The Contest Director will place Contestant ID Labels on each of the contestants' evaluation pages, which are to be returned to contestants at the Viewing Period and announcement of those advancing to Finals, if a prelim round.

PREPARATION FOR CONTEST. 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 Storytelling Contest should include multiple opportunities for the student to listen to short stories (picture books for ages 4-8 are best) and retell them to an audience. Training in the speech curriculum provided by the school as it coordinates with the evaluation elements of this contest is essential.

SECOND READING. For contests where there are 8 or 9 total contestants, instead of breaking into prelims and finals, districts have the option of running a single finals round with a Second Reading. In this format, speakers A through D are read the story first at the beginning of the contest while the rest of the contestants are taken to

another room and read the story about 25-30 minutes later. Try to use the same reader for both groups. One Assistant Director should remain with the second group at all times. After the second group has been read the story, the AD takes them to join the line in the hallway, quietly. The contestant continues and judges rank all 8 or 9 contestants. If there are 7 or fewer contestants or 10 or more contestants, Second Reading is not an option.

APPROPRIATE GESTURES

The Storytelling contest rules include the following instructions: Responsive use of the body (i.e., spontaneous changes in posture, gesture, and place-to-place movement) are permissible. This active use of the body should:

- (A) be appropriate to the demands of the speech;
- (B) be a NATURAL outgrowth from the oration;
- (C) not call attention to itself;
- (D) be limited in scope;

One or two steps are acceptable during presentation, but taking additional steps does not result in disqualification. Rather, excessive movement should be considered by the judge in evaluating the contestant's presentation.

THE JUDGE'S DECISION IN THIS MATTER IS FINAL.

Shall and Must List

Contestants **shall not** use props, including the audience, during their speech.

Result: This should be a consideration by the judges, but not a disqualification.

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Contestants **should not** identify themselves or their school during their speech, orally or by wearing or displaying school identifying articles (e.g., school uniforms).

Result: This should be a consideration for the judges, but not a disqualification.

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Contestant **shall not** go over the 6-minute time limit.

Result: Contest director should cue the contestant when they reach 5 min 30 sec with the "Bee Stop Sign." When they reach 6 min, give the contestant a few more seconds, but encourage them to "wrap up their story" soon, especially if it appears the contestant is struggling.