

Vocabulary

2026-2027
Qual ♦ Dist ♦ State

GRADES: 5, 6, & 7-8 | ENTRIES: 3 PER SECTION | TIME: 30 MIN

SECTIONS. Grades 5 and 6 compete separately. Grades 7-8 compete together. the room.

ENTRIES. As many as THREE students from each grade levels may be entered in the Vocabulary District Contest from each school.

ADVANCING TO STATE. First and second place winners from each section will advance to State. Third place winners will be alternates.

NATURE OF THE CONTEST. The Vocabulary Contest is similar to a SAT preparation course. Test items are very similar in construction and content to those that might be found on a SAT verbal test. The vocabulary list for the current year consists of 300 words, and is found on the following pages of the *Academic Handbook* and in the PSIA Resources section of the website. Although each test item will be composed using at least one of these words, a well-read student who has a broad, cumulative vocabulary will perform best in this contest, for many of the words used within the tests are not used in everyday middle school language. The contest contains 30 items—approximately 10-12 sentence completion, 10-12 analogies, and 8-10 questions over a reading passage that is approximately 900 words in length. Test time is 30 minutes.

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 any sound while placed in any portion of

TIME ALLOTTED. Contestants will have 30 minutes beginning at the start signal. A 5-minutes left time warning will be given, but contestants should be responsible for their own time management. Contestants will remain quietly in their seats until the time has expired.

MARKING ANSWERS. Contestants will use a dark ink pen or pencil to **print CAPITAL** letter answers in the blanks provided on the test. 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, deduct 2 points. 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.

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” and the “Checklist for Graders.” Preparation for the Vocabulary Contest should include researching definitions in the *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 12th edition*. Provide students with multiple opportunities to take practice tests from SAT preparation books, such as Barron’s and Gruber’s. Test taking strategies for SAT and PSAT type tests are also beneficial. Practice tests from previous year’s contests are available for purchase on the PSIA

Store.

PERSONNEL NEEDED 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. One Assistant Director may serve as the Hall Monitor when the testing begin.*
3. **Graders.** *Director and assistant directors 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.

♦ ♦ ♦

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.