

2025-2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Business Communication (High School)



Business Communication challenges members to demonstrate their knowledge of effective communication practices in the workplace through an objective test. This event covers topics such as written and verbal communication, digital correspondence, and professional etiquette essential to business success.

Event Overview

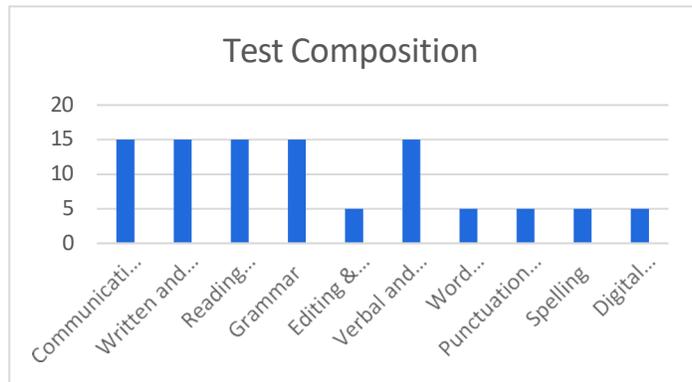
Division	High School
Event Type	Individual
Event Category	Objective Test
Event Elements	50-minute test, 100-multiple choice questions

Educational Alignments

Career Cluster Framework Connection	Marketing & Sales
NACE Competency Alignment	Career & Self-Development, Communication, Critical Thinking, Professionalism, Technology

Knowledge Areas

- Verbal & nonverbal communication
- Communication concepts
- Written & report applications
- Grammar
- Reading comprehension
- Editing & proofreading
- Word definition & usage
- Punctuation & capitalization
- Spelling
- Digital communication



Test questions are based on the knowledge areas and objectives outlined for this event. Detailed objectives can be found in the study guide included in these guidelines.

District

Vermont FBLA does not host district conferences.

State

Testing will take place prior to the State Leadership Conference. Testing must occur at school under the supervision of an adult proctor. Check the Call to Conference for the specific instructions and deadlines. See below for a list of required competition items; Vermont FBLA requires the same items set by National FBLA at our State Leadership Conference. Vermont FBLA will also provide the items listed below, except for the objective test.

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National

Required Competition Items

<u>Items Competitor Must Provide</u>	<u>Items FBLA Provides On-site</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharpened pencil• Fully powered device for online testing• Conference-provided nametag• Photo identification• Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One piece of scratch paper per competitor• Internet access• Test login information (link & password provided at test check-in)

Important FBLA Documents

- Competitors should be familiar with the Competitive Events [Policy & Procedures Manual](#), [Honor Code](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [Dress Code](#).

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in FBLA competitive events at the National Leadership Conference (NLC), the following criteria must be met:

- **Membership Deadline:** FBLA national membership dues must be paid to the specific division by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 1 of the current school year.
- **Repeat Competitors:** Members may only compete in an event at the NLC more than once if they have not previously placed in the top 10 of that event at the NLC. If a member places in the top 10 of an event at the NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at future NLCs, unless the event has been modified beyond a name change. Chapter events are exempt from this procedure.
- **Conference Registration:** Members must be officially registered for the NLC and must pay the national conference registration fee to participate.
- **Official Hotel Requirement:** To be eligible to compete, competitors must stay within the official FBLA housing block.
- **State Entry Limits:** Each state may submit up to four entries per event.
- **Event Participation Limits:** Each member may participate in:
 - One individual or team event, and
 - One chapter event (e.g., *Community Service Project* or *Local Chapter Annual Business Report*).
- **Participation Requirement:** To be eligible for an award, each competitor must complete all components of the event at the National Leadership Conference.
- **Identification at Check-in:** Competitors must present valid photo identification (physical or digital) that matches the name on their conference name badge. Acceptable forms include a driver's license, passport, state-issued ID, or school ID.
- **Late Arrivals:** Competitors will be allowed to compete until such time that the results are finalized, or participation would impact the fairness and integrity of the event, as determined by Competitive Events staff. Five penalty points will be assessed for late arrivals in any competitive event.
- **Event Schedule Notes:**
 - Some events may begin before the Opening Session.

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All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.
○ Schedule changes are not permitted.

Event Administration

- **Test Duration:** 50 minutes
- **Format:** This event consists of an online objective test that is proctored and completed on-site at the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- **Materials:** Reference or study materials are not permitted at the testing site.
- **Calculators:** Personal calculators are not allowed; an online calculator will be available within the testing platform.
- **Question Review:** Competitors may flag questions within the testing platform for review prior to the finalization of results at the NLC.

Scoring

- Each correct answer is worth one point.
- No points are deducted for incorrect answers.
- Tiebreakers are determined as follows: (1) The number of correct responses to 10 pre-selected tiebreaker questions will be compared. (2) If a tie remains, the number of correct responses to 20 pre-selected questions will be reviewed. (3) If a tie still remains, the competitor who completed the test in the shortest amount of time will be ranked higher.
- Results announced at the National Leadership Conference are considered official and will not be changed after the conclusion of the National Leadership Conference.

Penalty Points

- Competitors may be disqualified if they violate the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.
- Five points are deducted if competitors do not follow the Dress Code or are late to the testing site.

Recognition

- The number of competitors will determine the number of winners. The maximum number of winners for each competitive event is 10.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- FBLA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by providing reasonable accommodations for competitors. Accommodation requests must be submitted through the conference registration system by the official registration deadline. All requests will be reviewed, and additional documentation may be required to determine eligibility and appropriate support.

Electronic Devices

- Unless approved as part of a documented accommodation, all cell phones, smartwatches, electronic devices, and headphones must be turned off and stored away before the competition begins. Visible devices during the event will be considered a violation of the FBLA Honor Code.

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Sample Preparation Resources

- Official sample test items can be found in [FBLA Connect](#). These sample items showcase the types of questions that may be asked on the test and familiarize competitors with the multiple-choice item options.

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Study Guide: Knowledge Areas and Objectives

- A. Communication Concepts
 1. Describe the forms of communication.
 2. Identify the five C's of communication.
 3. Discuss the role of letters, memos, and reports in business.
 4. Manage telephone communications and use appropriate techniques to gather and record information.
 5. Discuss communication techniques as they apply to internal and external customers.
 6. Describe and analyze the impact of cultural diversity on the communication process.
 7. Employ appropriate communication strategies for dealing with dissatisfied customers (e.g., face-to-face discussions, electronic correspondence, and writing).
 8. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of the office "grapevine" and office politics.
 9. Discuss discrimination and sexual harassment and its implications in the workplace.
 10. Use bias-free language (e.g., gender, race, religion, physical challenges, and sexual orientation).
 11. Plan a meeting to achieve an identified purpose (e.g., schedule the facilities, arrange for a speaker, and notify the participants).
 12. Demonstrate effective negotiation and consensus-building techniques to provide or obtain appropriate feedback and resolve conflicts.
 13. Evaluate appropriate and inappropriate methods of interacting with others in the workplace, including team-based workgroups.
 14. Define and differentiate workplace relationships including supervisor, employee, client, and team member.
 15. Define and interpret upward, downward, and horizontal communication and organizational structures.
 16. Investigate and define the characteristics and advantages/disadvantages of team-based work groups including members, roles, and expectations.
- B. Written and Report Applications
 1. Produce organized, coherent, and developed paragraphs with a clear topic sentence, effective transitions, and a relevant conclusion.
 2. Describe and demonstrate the stages of the writing process to include planning, writing, editing, proofreading, and revising.
 3. Write and design and document (e.g., memo, letter, report) using the correct style, format and content (e.g., letter, memorandum, report, e-mail) that is appropriate for the type of correspondence (e.g., persuasive, positive, negative).
 4. Plan, compose, and produce instructions/directions, and descriptions.
 5. Conduct research using the five basic steps: planning the search, locating sources of information, organizing the information, evaluating the sources, and using the information to prepare a short report on a business topic.
 6. Identify and utilize traditional and electronic research sources such as encyclopedias, reference manuals, periodicals, internet, etc.
 7. Interpret, analyze, and evaluate information for relevance, purpose, timeliness, and authenticity.
 8. Document all sources (e.g., print and electronic) using current standards.
 9. Distinguish between paraphrasing, documentation, and plagiarism.

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10. Comprehend copyright laws and their applications to text, visual art, design, music and photography.
 11. Use scanning hardware and layout, design, and graphics software to enhance documents.
 12. Compose and evaluate common types of business reports including informational reports, news releases, proposals, and policy statements.
 13. Prepare presentation documents to include publicity, agenda, handouts, follow-up report, etc.
- C. Reading Comprehension
1. Read and follow directions.
 2. Demonstrate reading comprehension by restating or summarizing.
 3. Differentiate between fact and opinion.
 4. Summarize the important points of a document.
 5. Identify and explain enhancements such as graphs, charts, tables, and illustrations/photographs for visual impact.
 6. Interpret information from articles, manuals, etc.
 7. Select the appropriate reading method (e.g., skimming, scanning, speed-reading, and in-depth reading) for a particular situation.
 8. Identify factors that affect readability of text (e.g., sentence length, word selection, and type size).
 9. Investigate the need for various reading skills in the workplace such as reading for information, summarization, drawing conclusions, making judgments, and following directions.
 10. Evaluate the quality and reliability of source information.
 11. Analyze information presented in a variety of formats such as tables, lists, and figures.
 12. Use note taking skills that incorporate critical listening and reading techniques.
- D. Grammar
1. Describe and identify the eight parts of speech in context sentences.
 2. Identify the difference between adverbs and adjectives.
 3. Identify the categories of pronouns and uses of reflexive pronouns.
 4. Identify features of prepositions and uses of prepositional phrases.
 5. Identify types of conjunctions.
 6. Use a verb that correctly agrees with the subject of a sentence.
 7. Describe the types of verbs and demonstrate the six tenses.
 8. Use irregular verbs and their different forms properly and distinguish transitive and intransitive verbs.
 9. Identify subjects, predicates, verbs, adverbs, pronouns, direct and indirect objects, and prepositional and infinitive phrases in sentences.
 10. Select pronouns properly and use them correctly in a sentence.
 11. Correctly use a possessive noun in a sentence.
 12. Create the plural form of a noun.
 13. Identify and correct misplaced and dangling modifiers.
 14. Describe and write the four kinds of sentences – declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory.
 15. Recognize types of sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and double negatives.

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16. Recognize and correct problems in grammar and usage including, but not limited to, completeness, agreement, reference, and form.
 17. Write clear, descriptive sentences in a variety of sentence patterns (e.g., simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex).
 18. Write logical, coherent phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Incorporate correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- E. Editing and Proofreading
1. Proofread a paragraph and identify spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.
 2. Proofread written communications with errors, using proofreader's marks.
 3. Proofread and edit business documents to ensure they are clear, correct, concise, complete, consistent, and courteous.
 4. Review and edit for the effectiveness of word choices and sentence structure.
- F. Verbal and Nonverbal Communications
1. Demonstrate effective active listening and identify major barriers to listening.
 2. Listen objectively and record major points of a speaker's message.
 3. Explain the differences between verbal and nonverbal communication.
 4. List examples of how nonverbal messages have different meanings in various cultures.
 5. Identify and interpret the major types of verbal and nonverbal communication.
 6. Describe and demonstrate basic speaking skills and their implications in the communication process.
 7. Discuss various methods of presentation delivery including verbal, written, multimedia, teleconferencing, and interactive.
 8. Design effective presentations to include multimedia components of presentation software packages.
 9. Identify and evaluate different types of presentations to include information, persuasive, and debate.
 10. Use proper techniques to make an oral presentation.
 11. Ask questions to clarify information.
 12. Describe and analyze problems and barriers with differences in languages and customs on business operations.
 13. Provide a clear description of a simple system or process or give clear, concise directions.
 14. Express opinions and discuss issues positively and tactfully.
- G. Word Definition and Usage
1. Recognize how word selection and usage affects communication.
 2. Recognize slang, jargon, cliches, and common errors in word usage.
 3. Use proper sentence structure.
 4. Illustrate the proper way to divide words.
 5. Identify homophones, synonyms, and homonyms.
 6. Illustrate the ability to use a dictionary and thesaurus as an aid to spelling, pronunciation, and meaning.
 7. Use contextual clues to recognize word meaning.
- H. Punctuation and Capitalization
1. Determine appropriate use of periods, question marks, and exclamation points.
 2. Explain the use of commas, colons, and semicolons.

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3. Recognize and correct problems in punctuation including, but not limited to, commas, semicolons, and apostrophes.
 4. Use apostrophes to indicate contractions and possessive constructions.
 5. Use quotation marks to set off the words of a speaker or writer and to set off titles of short works and use punctuation with quotation marks.
 6. Define the grammatical rules that govern the use of special punctuation marks such as the dash, hyphen, and parentheses.
 7. Use appropriately ellipses, italics, and underlining.
 8. Identify how to capitalize sentences, proper nouns, abbreviations, adjectives, and titles correctly.
 9. Write and use numbers according to standard practice in a sentence.
- I. Spelling
1. Illustrate the ability to spell correctly the words regularly used in writing.
 2. Illustrate the ability to use a dictionary and thesaurus as an aid to spelling, pronunciation, and meaning.
 3. Identify prefixes and suffixes.
 4. Apply spelling rules to homonyms and commonly confusing words such as effect and affect.
 5. Demonstrate application of spelling rules such as l before e, silent e, words ending in y, etc.
- J. Digital Communications (e-mail, messaging, netiquette, etc.)
1. Identify various forms of electronic communication, including new and emerging communication technologies.
 2. Demonstrate and select the appropriate use of electronic messaging technologies (e.g., voice mail, conference calls, chat rooms, and e-mail).
 3. Manage e-mail to include composing and sending a message; retrieving, reading, and printing a message; and sending an attachment by e-mail.
 4. Operate an e-mail account while using folders and address books.
 5. Examine proper use of e-mail and other appropriate internet/intranet communication capabilities, including business-related terminology and language.
 6. Explain the concept of copyright laws and their applications to text, visual art, design, music, and photography.
 7. Recognize the legal implications of violating federal and state laws in multimedia/digital publishing.
 8. Apply the etiquette rules for electronic messaging (e.g., e-mail, cell phone, and voice mail).
 9. Discuss ways to keep data secure from theft and destruction.
 10. Identify and describe new and emerging communication technologies.