

2025–2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Exploring Business Communication



Exploring Business Communication challenges members to demonstrate their knowledge of foundational communication skills through an objective test. This event introduces members to the principles of effective information sharing within and outside of a business setting.

Event Overview

Division	Middle School
Event Type	Individual
Event Category	Objective Test
Event Elements	50-multiple choice questions

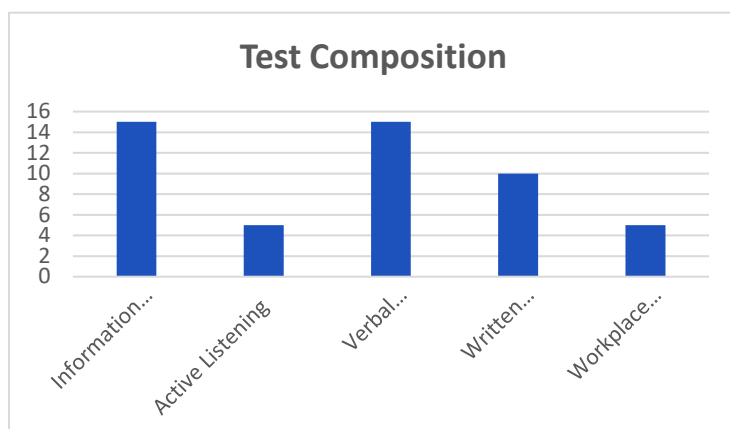
Educational Alignments

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

Knowledge Areas

- Information Literacy
- Active Listening
- Verbal Communication
- Written Communication
- Workplace 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.



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 specific instructions and deadlines.

National

Required Competition Items

Items Competitor Must Provide	Items FBLA Provides
• Sharpened pencil • Fully powered device for online testing • Conference-provided nametag • Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code	• One piece of scratch paper per competitor • Internet access • Test login information (link & password provided at test check-in)

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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., *Annual Chapter Activities Presentation* or *Community Service Presentation*).
- **Participation Requirement:** To be eligible for an award, each competitor must complete all components of the event at the National Leadership Conference.
- **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.
 - All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.
 - Schedule changes are not permitted.

Event Administration

- **Test Duration:** 30 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.

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- **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

- A maximum of 10 entries (individuals or teams) may be recognized per event.

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.

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

This study guide shows the skills and knowledge you'll be tested on for this event. Objectives followed by a two-letter, three-digit code in parentheses are based on the National Business Administration Standards from MBA Research and Curriculum Center. Some objectives also reference MBA Research's Learning Activity Packages (LAPs)—resources with readings, activities, and assessments to help you learn. For more information, visit MBAResearch.org/FBLA.

Information Literacy (15 test items)

1. Identify sources that provide relevant, valid written material (CO:054) (PQ)
2. Extract relevant information from written materials (CO:055) (PQ)
3. Apply written directions to achieve tasks (CO:056) (PQ)
4. Assess information needs (NF:077) (CS)
5. Obtain needed information efficiently (NF:078) (CS)
6. Evaluate quality and source of information (NF:079) (CS)
7. Draw conclusions based on information analysis (NF:278) (CS)
8. Apply information to accomplish a task (NF:080) (CS)
9. Utilize note-taking strategies (CO:085) (CS)
10. Organize information (CO:086) (CS)
11. Select and use appropriate graphic aids (CO:087) (CS)

Active Listening (5 test items)

1. Explain communication techniques that support and encourage a speaker (CO:082) (PQ)
2. Follow oral directions (CO:119) (PQ)
3. Demonstrate active listening skills (CO:017, LAP-CO-017) (PQ)

Verbal Communication (15 test items)

1. Explain the nature of effective verbal communication (CO:147) (PQ)
2. Ask relevant questions (CO:058) (PQ)
3. Interpret others' nonverbal cues (CO:059) (PQ)
4. Provide legitimate responses to inquiries (CO:060) (PQ)
5. Give verbal directions (CO:083) (PQ)
6. Employ communication styles appropriate to target audience (CO:084) (CS)
7. Defend ideas objectively (CO:061) (CS)
8. Handle phone calls in a businesslike manner (CO:114) (CS)
9. Participate in group discussions (CO:053) (CS)
10. Make oral presentations (CO:025) (SP)

Written Communication (10 test items)

1. Explain the nature of effective written communications (CO:016) (CS)
2. Select and utilize appropriate formats for professional writing (CO:088) (CS)
3. Edit and revise written work consistent with professional standards (CO:089) (CS)
4. Write professional emails (CO:090) (CS)
5. Write business letters (CO:133) (CS)
6. Write informational messages (CO:039) (CS)
7. Write inquiries (CO:040) (CS)

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Workplace Communication (5 test items)

1. Explain the nature of effective communications (EI:007, LAP-EI-140) (PQ)
2. Explain the nature of staff communication (CO:014) (CS)
3. Choose and use appropriate channel for workplace communication (CO:092) (CS)
4. Participate in a staff meeting (CO:063) (CS)

References for Knowledge Areas & Objectives

MBA Research and Curriculum Center. *National Business Administration Standards*.

<https://www.mbaresearch.org/local-educators/teaching-resources/standards/>

Asana. *12 tips for effective communication in the workplace*. <https://asana.com/resources/effective-communication-workplace>

Forbes. *A guide for mastering the art of business communication*.

<https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/11/20/a-guide-for-mastering-the-art-of-business-communication/>

Indeed. *Essential business communication skills: Definitions and examples*. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/business-communication-skills>