

Elementary and Junior High Events

Art Contest

This contest involves the study of paintings from the [National Gallery of Art](#) in Washington, D.C. and paintings or pictures from selected Texas museums. The *Art Smart Bulletin*, published every other year, is the source for study of history and art elements relative to the 40 art selections and is the final authority in the spelling of artists' names and titles of art works. As part of their study, students will demonstrate an understanding of art history and interpret ideas and moods in original artworks while making informed judgments about the artwork.

Part A of the contest requires the contestant to identify the names of 15 selected artists and titles of pictures selected randomly by the director from the official list of 40 pictures. Part B consists of 30 questions about art history and art elements characteristic of the 40 art selections.

Calculator Applications

The calculator applications contest is designed to stimulate the development of mathematical and calculator skills for students in grade 6, 7 and 8. Goals are both intellectual and practical: developing mathematical reasoning and knowledge and requiring the application of problem-solving skills toward realistic problems. Students will take a test containing 80 problems in 30 minutes. The contest consists of problems which may include calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, roots, and powers. It also includes straight-forward calculation problems, and simple geometric and stated problems similar to those found in recently adopted textbooks.

Students may use any silent, hand-held calculator that does not require auxiliary electric power. The calculator data and program memory should be cleared prior to the contest; students may not use pre-recorded programs during the contest.

Creative Writing

The contest is designed to promote creativity in an academic format and to encourage writing skills at an early grade level. Through preparation for the contest, students in second grade will be able to evaluate their own writing and the writing of others.

Contestants will be given a prompt with several captioned pictures. From these pictures, the students will create an original story based on their selections in 30 minutes. The stories must contain at least one of the pictured items, but it is not required that all items on the page be included.

Dictionary Skills

Thorough knowledge of the dictionary is a way to increase a student's ability to find the information that is needed for classwork as well as everyday living. The subject matter of all tests is taken from the [Merriam Webster's Intermediate Dictionary](#), 1998 and subsequent editions. Contestants may use other dictionaries in the contest, but the contest subject matter will be found in Webster's Intermediate.

Each test consists of approximately 40 objective and short answer questions to be completed in 20 minutes. Contestants use dictionaries during the competition, which may be tabbed. Contest questions cover word origins and histories, parts of speech, pronunciation, variant spellings, plurals, alphabetizing and other such elements. Test questions are also taken from charts, tables and lists contained in the dictionary.

Editorial Writing

The Editorial Writing Contest is designed to develop the persuasive writing skills of the participants. Students must advocate a specific point-of-view in response to a prompt. Seventh and eighth-grade students have 45 minutes in which to complete their editorials.

Impromptu Speaking

This contest provides opportunities for students in grades 7 and 8 to evaluate speeches given by others; to explore the use of the voice and body in speaking situations; to examine the different purposes for speaking; to organize ideas; to prepare and deliver various speeches; and to develop self-confidence.

Contestants will draw three topics and have three minutes to prepare a speech, which must be presented without any notes. The contest gives participants experience in thinking, organizing, formulating clear thoughts, and delivering those thoughts to an audience effectively.

The maximum time limit for each speech is five minutes. There is no minimum time limit. Students who exceed the allotted five minutes shall be penalized one rank.

Listening

The listening contest is designed to help students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 recognize the importance of effective listening skills and to identify problems they may have in listening effectively. It also provides a challenging format to test the improvement of their listening abilities. Through preparation for the contest, participants will listen actively to a variety of material and learn to analyze and evaluate a speaker's message critically. Tests will include, but not necessarily be limited to, language arts, fine arts, natural sciences and social studies. The objective tests will measure skills such as identifying the main idea and supporting ideas, drawing conclusions, distinguishing fact from opinion, and mastering other listening and thinking skills.

Contestants will listen to a script ranging from seven to ten minutes in length, take notes as needed, and use their notes to answer 25 multiple choice, true/false and short answer test questions. A variety of subject matter will be used for the listening tests.

Maps, Graphs & Charts

The maps, graphs & charts contest is designed to help students learn to get information from a variety of maps, graphs and charts including world maps, pie charts, bar charts and local area maps. The objective test will measure skills such as using a reference book to locate information, making comparisons, estimating and approximating, using scale and interpreting grid systems, legends and keys.

Students will be given an objective test containing approximately 75 multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions which must be answered in 45 minutes.

The contest is written using only the 2003 and 2004 editions of the [Nystrom Desk Atlas](#). Students may use either one, or any other atlas they choose, but the test questions are written using this source.

Mathematics

Students begin taking math in elementary school and continue taking it in high school. Learning to complete math problems quickly is a valuable skill in all facets of life including engineering, accounting, completing a tax return and even grocery shopping. This contest includes problems covering, but not limited to: numeration systems, arithmetic operations involving whole numbers, integers, fractions, decimals, exponents, order of operations, probability, statistics, number theory, simple interest, measurements and conversions. Geometry and algebra problems may be included as appropriate for the grade level.

The contest, designed for students in grade 6, 7 and 8, consists of 50 multiple choice problems.

Modern Oratory

In Modern Oratory, the seventh and eighth grade contestants will select one of the topics, determine the critical issues in the topic, and acknowledge both pro and con points citing support discovered in their research. Students will choose a side they will defend and support that side with additional evidence. Along with the skills of analysis, research, note-taking, documentation, evaluation and decision-making come those of delivery and the skill of memorization.

Music Memory

The focus of the Music Memory contest is an in-depth study of fine pieces of music literature taken from a wide spectrum of music genres to expose students to great composers, their lives and their music. In the course of preparing for the contest, students should be given the opportunity to describe and analyze the music, relate the music to history, to society and to culture, and to evaluate musical performance.

Students will listen to approximately 20 seconds of up to 20 musical selections and identify the name of the major work, selection and the name of the composer.

To receive full credit for an answer, all information about the music selection must be complete as shown on the official list. **Spelling and punctuation are considered in the grading of this contest.** Please click on the Constitution and Contest Rules link below for a complete description of the Music Memory Contest.

Number Sense

Individuals are called upon every day to use their ability to make quick mental calculations to make decisions. The development of such abilities should be an integral part of the math curriculum. Concepts covered include, but are not limited to: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, proportions, and use of mathematic notation.

Students will be given a 10-minute, fill-in-the-blank test which they must complete without doing calculations on paper or on a calculator. Erasures and mark-outs are not permitted.

The handbook, *Developing Middle School Number Sense Skills*, is available. It is the same edition first published in 1996.

One-Act Play

Students will have the opportunity to work in all aspects of the production of a 40-minute play. During the production of the play they will be able:

1. to satisfy the competitive, artistic spirit with friendly rivalry among schools, emphasizing high quality performance in this creative art;
2. to foster appreciation of good acting, good directing and good drama;
3. to promote interest in that art form most readily usable in leisure time during adult life;
4. to learn to lose or win graciously, accepting in good sportsmanship the judge's decision and criticism with a view to improve future productions; and
5. to increase the number of schools that have adopted theatre arts as an academic subject in school curricula.

Schools will produce a play in accordance to the rules and regulations in the current *One-Act Play Handbook* and Section 1033 and Section 1034, with the following exceptions:

1. All deadlines and schedules are to be determined by the district executive committee.
2. Enrollment and Title Entry Cards are not required for junior high schools and will not be available from the League office.

Oral Reading

Reading literature out loud provides opportunities for students to analyze the text, to grow and to develop as a performer, to communicate a message to an audience and to perform an artistic creation. The oral reading competition should be an extension of the classroom literary and language arts activities in poetry, short stories and children's fiction. See the link below for frequently asked questions about oral reading.

Students in **grades 4, 5, and 6** read a selection of poetry. Each selection may be one poem, a cutting of a poem, or a combination of poems. The same selection may be read in all rounds, but different selections are permissible. Selections must be published although the poet may be unknown or anonymous.

Each may be a single reading, a cutting from a longer selection, or a combination of several selections. The same selection may be read in all rounds, but different selections are permissible. Selections must be published although the author may be unknown or anonymous. Prose readings may include sketches, fables, tales, science fiction, fantasy, mysteries and the like. The maximum time for each presentation is six minutes. The selection may be a cutting from a short story or novel of may be nonfiction

Science

Emphasis for the Science contest, for students in seventh and eighth grades, will be placed on knowledge of scientific fact, understanding of scientific principles and the ability to think through scientific problems. The contest was designed to test not only memory but the ability to critically think about science and scientific processes and concepts. Such concepts include, but are not limited to: matter and energy, equilibrium, force and motion, physical and chemical properties, the relationship between organisms and the environment, the components of our solar system, the composition of matter and genetics. The contest will build upon the vast body of changing and increasing knowledge described by physical, mathematical, and conceptual models.

Each test will consist of approximately 35 multiple choice questions which will be taken from current state-adopted science textbooks and the curriculum.

Social Studies Pilot

- Two divisions: grades 5/6, grades 7/8
- 40 questions
- 30 minutes
- based on the TEKS for social studies
- taken from state adopted text books and identified primary sources

Grades 5/6

- 20% from fourth grade TEKS (Texas)
- 50% from fifth grade TEKS (US)
- 30% from sixth grade TEKS (World)

Grades 7/8

- 20% from sixth grade TEKS (World)
- 50% from seventh grade TEKS (Texas)
- 30% from eighth grade TEKS (US)

Storytelling

To tell a story, the participant must develop skills in listening, thinking and speaking. This contest also allows for the development of creative expression, something being given more attention in the professional world. For practice, teachers can use stories from any good children's books or magazines.

Contestants in the second and third grades shall listen to a storyteller read a brief story (between 600 and 1100 words long) only once, and then retell that story in their own words before a judge or judges.

There are no time restrictions on the length of the story the student creates.

Ready Writing

Texas has put a great emphasis on writing skills at all levels of school and all levels of state-wide testing. Ready Writing, a contest for students in grades 3,4,5,6,7 and 8, builds upon those skills and helps students refine their writing abilities. In particular, this contest helps them to learn to write clearly and correctly a paper that is interesting and original.

A standard dictionary or thesaurus may be used during the contest.

Contestants are given a choice between two prompts which defines the audience, and provides the purpose for writing. Students should be encouraged to analyze the prompts for the purpose of writing, the format, the audience and the point of view. The format may be, for example, a letter, an article for the newspaper or an essay for the principal. Various writing strategies may be stated or implied in the prompt. Some of these include:

1. description to inform -- describe the happening or person/object from imagination or memory;
2. narration -- write a story;
3. persuasion -- describe and argue just one side of an issue; describe both sides of an issue then argue only one side; write an editorial; write a letter to persuade, etc.

There is no minimum or maximum number of words the contestants must write.