

2025–2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Exploring Computer Science



Exploring Computer Science challenges members to demonstrate their understanding of foundational concepts in computing through an objective test. This event introduces members to key areas such as hardware, software, algorithms, and computational thinking.

Event Overview

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

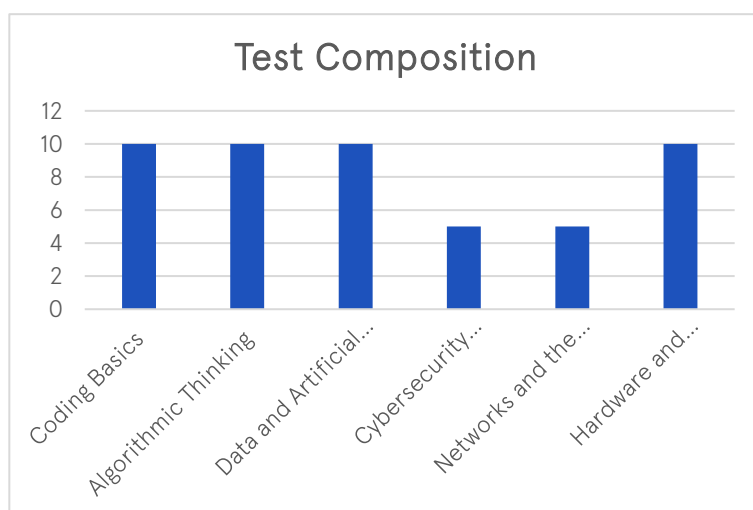
Educational Alignments

Career Cluster Framework Connection	Digital Technology
NACE Competency Alignment	Career & Self-Development, Critical Thinking, Technology

Knowledge Areas

- Coding Basics
- Algorithmic Thinking
- Data and Artificial Intelligence Concepts
- Cybersecurity Concepts
- Networks and the Internet
- Hardware and Systems Concepts

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

Check with your State Leader for state-specific competition information and deadlines.

National

Required Competition Items

<u>Items Competitor Must Provide</u>	<u>Items FBLA Provides</u>
• 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.
- **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.

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- 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 [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

Coding Basics (10 test items)

1. Describe basic programming elements (e.g., variables, loops, conditionals)
2. Describe the parts of a function call
3. Predict the output of a function given its definition and input
4. Trace the value of variables through a program
5. Distinguish between runtime and compile-time errors

Algorithmic Thinking (10 test items)

1. Identify basic search algorithms (e.g., linear, binary, two-pointers)
2. Identify basic sorting algorithms (e.g., bubble sort, heap sort, merge sort)
3. Distinguish between common data structures (e.g., lists, arrays, sets, queues)
4. Describe a solution to a problem as a series of simple steps

Data and Artificial Intelligence Concepts (10 test items)

1. Describe modern uses of AI (e.g., chatbots, LLMs, autonomous vehicles)
2. Describe basic applications of AI concepts (e.g., image processing, perception, game playing)
3. Discuss the use of datasets for training and refining AI models
4. Describe the uses of datasets for research, analysis, and business decisions
5. Explain how relational databases are structured (e.g., tables, keys, relationships)

Cybersecurity Concepts (5 test items)

1. Describe the dangers of unprotected information (e.g., identity theft, scams, doxing)
2. Identify common scams and attacks (e.g., phishing, scam emails, viruses)
3. Describe the importance and use of common digital security measures (e.g., strong passwords, password managers, multi-factor authentication, antivirus)
4. Describe common network security measures (e.g., firewalls, antivirus, permissions and account management)

Networks and the Internet (5 test items)

1. Describe networks and their relevance to the modern internet
2. Describe the importance of networking protocols for communication and security
3. Identify common networking protocols (e.g., TCP/IP, UDP, SNMP)
4. Identify internet connection equipment for a home or small office

Hardware and Systems Concepts (10 test items)

1. Describe computer components (e.g., CPU, motherboard, GPU)
2. Describe operating system responsibilities
3. Translate between binary and decimal number representations
4. Describe how computer hardware and software interact to process instructions

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References for Knowledge Areas & Objectives

BootDev. *A complete overview of computer science for beginners.* <https://blog.boot.dev/computer-science/computer-science-for-beginners/>

Code Academy. <https://www.codecademy.com/>

Computer Science Teachers Association. *K-12 Computer Science Standards.* <https://csteachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2017-csta-k-12-standards-progression-chart.pdf>

GeeksforGeeks. <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/>

Ohio Department of Education. *Ohio's Learning Standards in Computer Science.* https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Computer-Science/Ohio-s-Learning-Standards-in-Computer-Science/OCS_Adopted-2022.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US