

2025–2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Interpersonal Communication



Interpersonal Communication challenges members to demonstrate their understanding of how people exchange messages, ideas, and information. Through an objective test, this event explores key concepts in verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, and relationship-building in personal and professional settings.

Event Overview

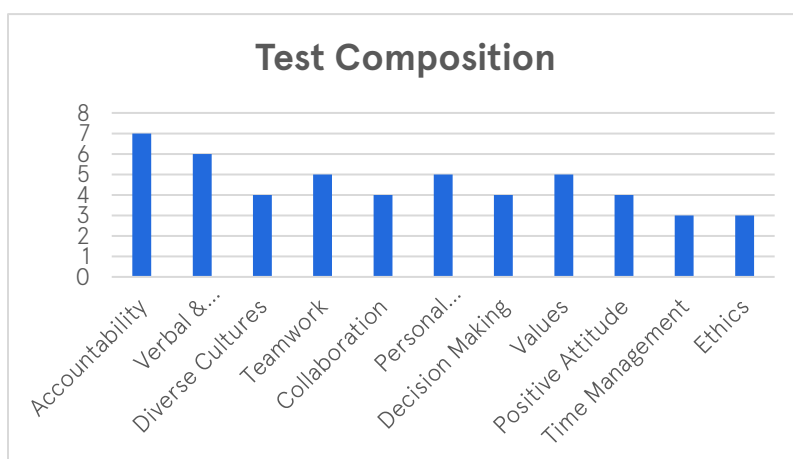
Division	Middle School
Event Type	Individual
Event Category	Objective Test
Event Elements	50-multiple choice questions

Educational Alignments

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

Knowledge Areas

- Accountability
- Verbal and Nonverbal Communication
- Diverse Cultures
- Teamwork
- Collaboration
- Personal Appearance
- Decision Making
- Values
- Positive Attitude
- Time Management
- Ethics



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.

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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)

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.

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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.

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.

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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

- A. Accountability
 - 1. Define accountability.
 - 2. Explain how effective leaders are accountable for their actions.
 - 3. Explain tenants of accountability (goals, expectations, successes, and failures).
 - 4. Describe how accountability is the key to great communication.
 - 5. Explain why accountability of all team members is important for success.
 - 6. Explain how personal accountability serves as a role model for other members of a team.
 - 7. Describe how improving communication in the workplace counts toward transparency and accountability.
- B. Verbal and Nonverbal Communication
 - 1. List examples of effective verbal communication skills.
 - 2. Explain the importance of active listening.
 - 3. Define open-ended questions.
 - 4. Emphasize the importance of speaking clearly and concisely.
 - 5. Describe how humor can enhance communication.
 - 6. Explain how open-ended questions gain greater insights.
 - 7. Explain how asking for clarification can improve communication.
 - 8. Define verbal communication.
 - 9. List the steps for effective verbal communication (strong, confident speaking voice, active listening, and avoid filler words).
 - 10. List examples of nonverbal communication.
 - 11. Define nonverbal communication.
 - 12. Give examples of effective visual communication for different audiences.
 - 13. Explain how to refine written communication skills (review written communications for accuracy and keep a file of writing you find effective or enjoyable).
 - 14. List and define forms of communication (verbal, written, and nonverbal).
 - 15. Describe types of nonverbal communication (proximity, body movements, posture, touch, facial expressions, and eye contact).
 - 16. List reasons why eye contact is important.
 - 17. Explain the relationship between effective communication and self-confidence.
 - 18. Define the benefits of self-confidence (improves problem-solving skills, improves company communication, overcomes workplace obstacles and challenges, and improves overall work performance).
- C. Diverse Cultures
 - 1. Explain the importance of communicating effectively with people from other cultures.
 - 2. Explain why it is important to learn about different cultures before meeting someone.
 - 3. Understand how cultures are impacted by hierarchies.
 - 4. Describe obstacles that must be overcome when communicating with individuals from other cultures.
 - 5. Explain the roles of respect and tolerance when communicating with people from other cultures.
 - 6. Define high-context cultures (heavily nonverbal).
 - 7. Define low-context cultures (depend largely on words).
 - 8. Describe how eye contact, touch, gestures, physical distance, facial expressions, appearance, posture, paralanguage, and context impact cultural communication.

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D. Teamwork

1. Explain the use of teams in organizations.
2. Explain the difference between a group and a team.
3. Explain advantages and disadvantages of teamwork.
4. Describe characteristics of effective teams and the role of leadership.
5. Contrast characteristics of different teams (functional, cross-functional, and self-managed).
6. Describe the difference between leader-centered and group-centered decision making.
7. Explain the difference between individual and team decision making.
8. Explain how successful teams build relationships that thrive.
9. Explain how effective teamwork involves openly communicating ideas without the fear of outrage.
10. Explain the importance of respecting team members' ideas for effective communication.
11. Explain how effective teams create workplace satisfaction.
12. Explain how effective teams increase employee engagement and foster a more productive and talented workforce.
13. Describe how effective teams create a safe place for people to think creatively.

E. Collaboration

1. Define collaborative communication.
2. List skills that contribute to successful collaboration.
3. Explain how successful collaboration depends on the ability to get along with people, be able to listen, and be open-minded.
4. Describe how the roles of compromise, ability to see the big picture, and problem-solving abilities have a direct relationship to collaboration.
5. Explain the role of conflict negotiation for groups.
6. List essential skills for successful collaborators and project managers.
7. Define brainstorming.
8. Describe the need for commitment and enthusiasm for effective collaboration.

F. Personal Appearance

1. Describe how personal appearance affects communication.
2. Explain how personal appearance is nonverbal communication.
3. Explain why personal appearance is important in the workplace.
4. Describe assumptions individuals make based upon a person's appearance.
5. Describe the elements of personal appearance (choice of color, clothing, hairstyles, and other factors).
6. Describe how personal appearance provides the visual and video modes of human communication.
7. Explain stereotyping based upon personal appearance.

G. Decision Making

1. List the steps of the decision-making process (identify the decision, gather relevant information, identify alternatives, weigh the evidence, and select an alternative).
2. Identify the four stages of the decision-making process (intelligence, design, choice, and implementation).
3. Describe an autocratic leader.
4. Describe a democratic leader
5. Describe how decisions are based upon past personal experiences.

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6. Explain why it is important to evaluate decisions.
 7. Explain how decisions are based upon precedent.
- H. Values
1. Define values.
 2. Explain how interpersonal communication is impacted by personal values.
 3. Explain how different values can result in a breakdown of communication.
 4. Explain the importance of respecting individuals who have different values.
 5. Explain the high value placed upon free speech.
 6. Understand that workplace teams will have individuals with differing values.
- I. Positive Attitude
1. Explain the relationship between positive attitude and open communication.
 2. Explain how effective communication depends on the ability to read the attitudes of other persons or groups.
 3. Explain how attitude can affect business communication in both positive and negative ways.
 4. Define the four types of attitudes (passive, passive aggressive, aggressive, and assertive).
 5. Explain how your emotions and your awareness of others' emotions could improve your communication.
 6. Explain how pleasant, respectful, upbeat, attitudes throughout an office improve upward and downward communication, which increases morale, productivity, and sales.
- J. Time Management
1. Define time management.
 2. Explain how time management involves setting priorities.
 3. Describe how time management involves goal setting.
 4. List time management skills (organization, prioritization, goal setting, communication, planning, and delegation).
 5. Define delegation of duties.
 6. Describe time saving techniques.
 7. Explain why it is important to evaluate project end results to improve time management.
- K. Ethics
1. Explain the fundamentals of ethical communication.
 2. Describe how interpersonal communication ethics are different from other forms of communication ethics.
 3. Explain how interpersonal communication is the ethical mandate to protect and promote the good of the relationship.
 4. List the fundamentals of ethical communication (transparency, consideration of potential roadblocks, and development of relationships).
 5. List the principles of ethical communication (truthful and honest, active listening, speaking non-judgmentally, speak from your own experience, and consider the receiver's preferred communication channel).
 6. Explain how ethical communication strives to understand, avoids a negative tone, does not interrupt others, respects privacy and confidentiality, and accepts responsibility.
 7. List examples of businesses directly involved with ethical issues (medical, education, and real estate).