

2025-2026 Competitive Events Guidelines

Introduction to Retail & Merchandising



Introduction to Retail & Merchandising challenges members to demonstrate their understanding of basic principles in retail operations and merchandising strategies through an objective test. Topics include product placement, inventory control, customer experience, and sales techniques within the retail environment.

Event Overview

Division	High School (9 th & 10 th graders only)
Event Type	Individual
Event Category	Objective Test
Event Elements	50-minute test, 100-multiple choice questions

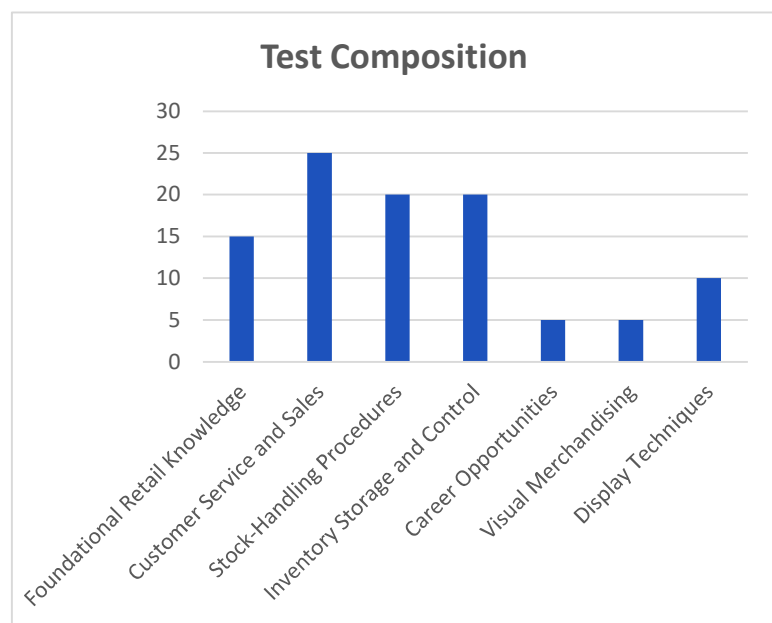
Educational Alignments

<u>Career Cluster Framework Connection</u>	Marketing & Sales
<u>NACE Competency Alignment</u>	Career & Self-Development, Communication, Technology

Knowledge Areas

- Foundational Retail Knowledge
- Customer Service and Sales
- Stock-Handling Procedures
- Inventory Storage and Control
- Career Opportunities
- Visual Merchandising
- Display Techniques

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.



Region

Each chapter may enter two students in this event. Testing is school-site and proctored with careful monitoring to ensure the integrity of the test.

State

Top three (3) qualifiers of each region are eligible to compete at the State Leadership Conference.

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National

Required Competition Items

<u>Items Competitor Must Provide</u>	<u>Items FBLA Provides On-site</u>
- Sharpened pencil - Fully powered device for online testing - Conference-provided nametag Photo identification - 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., *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.
 - All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.

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- 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

- 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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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.

Foundational Retail Knowledge (15 test items)

1. Explain the evolution of retailing (PD:148) (CS)
2. Describe the role of merchandisers in retailing (PD:148) (CS)
3. Distinguish between retailing and marketing (MK:003) (CS)
4. Explain the importance of merchandising to retailers (MK:020) (CS)

Customer Service and Sales (25 test items)

1. Establish relationship with customer/client (SE:110) (CS)
2. Determine customer/client needs (SE:111) (CS)
3. Recommend specific products (SE:114, LAP-SE-114) (CS)
4. Prepare cash drawers/banks (OP:194) (CS)
5. Open/Close register/terminal (OP:195) (CS)
6. Operate register/terminal (SE:153) (CS)
7. Process sales transactions (e.g., cash, credit, check) (SE:329) (CS)
8. Process returns/exchanges (SE:162) (CS)

Stock-Handling Procedures (20 test items)

1. Explain the receiving process (OP:384) (CS)
2. Explain stock-handling techniques used in receiving deliveries (OP:385) (CS)
3. Process incoming merchandise (OP:386) (CS)
4. Price mark merchandise (OP:390) (CS)
5. Route stock to sales floor (OP:394) (CS)
6. Rotate stock (OP:395) (CS)
7. Explain policies/procedures for handling shoplifters (OP:122) (CS)

Inventory Storage and Control (20 test items)

1. Explain storing considerations (OP:400) (CS)
2. Explain the nature of warehousing (OP:401) (CS)
3. Store inventory (OP:402) (CS)
4. Maintain inventory levels (OP:407) (CS)
5. Report out-of-stocks (OP:408) (CS)
6. Complete inventory counts (OP:409) (CS)
7. Describe inventory control systems (OP:413) (CS)

Career Opportunities (5 test items)

1. Identify career opportunities in retailing (PD:038) (CS)
2. Explain career opportunities in merchandising (PD:134) (CS)

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Visual Merchandising (5 test items)

1. Explain the use of visual merchandising in retailing (PR:023) (CS)
2. Distinguish between visual merchandising and display (PR:302) (CS)

Display Techniques (10 test items)

1. Explain types of display arrangements (PR:026) (CS)
2. Maintain displays (PR:052) (CS)
3. Dismantle/Store displays/display fixtures/forms (PR:054) (CS)

References for Knowledge Areas & Objectives

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

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

Brightpearl. *What is retail merchandising: A complete guide*. <https://www.brightpearl.com/blog/what-is-retail-merchandising-a-complete-guide>

CGS. *Comprehensive guide to retail merchandising*. <https://www.cgsinc.com/blog/comprehensive-guide-retail-merchandising>

Indeed. *What is merchandise retailing? (With best practices and tips)*. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/merchandise-retailing>