

# Capital Conference 2024



GOING “OLD SCHOOL”  
WITH  
DICTIONARY SKILLS  
IN TODAY’S  
“JUST GOOGLE IT”  
WORLD

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# DICTIONARY SKILLS 101

20 Minute Speed Test

40 Questions:

32 Multiple Choice, 8 Matching

Designed to see how efficiently and accurately a student can find information in the dictionary

It is not a vocabulary test of prior knowledge

The student must be proficient with use of the alphabet, know the different sections of the dictionary and be able to FIND AND interpret information, all extremely relevant skills.

**DICTIONARY**  
**SKILLS**  
**Scoring:**

Each correct  
answer is  
worth 3 points

Each incorrect  
answer is  
worth (-2)

Each skipped  
question is  
worth zero.

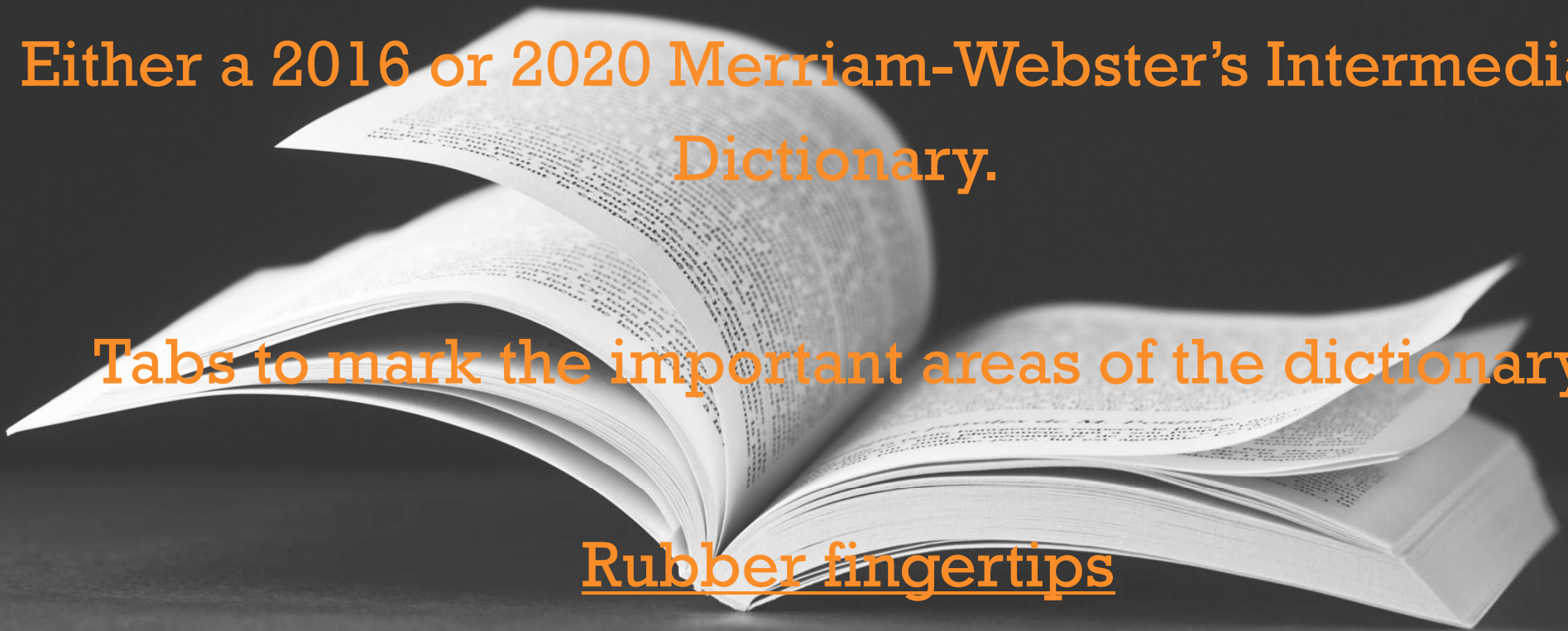
Maximum  
score is 120.

# The Dictionary Skills Gear:

Either a 2016 or 2020 Merriam-Webster's Intermediate Dictionary.

Tabs to mark the important areas of the dictionary.

Rubber fingertips







Search



ACADEMICS + ATHLETICS + MUSIC + SPIRIT + UNIFIED + MEDIA + POLICY +

UIL Home > Academics > A+ Academics > Events > A+ Dictionary Skills

### A+ ACADEMICS

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#### Events

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## A+ Dictionary Skills

MATERIALS ARE CREATED FOR TWO DIVISIONS: GRADES 5/6 AND 7/8.

### General Contest Information

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. Each Dictionary Skills test consists of 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, variant spellings, plurals, alphabetizing and other such elements. Test questions are also taken from charts, tables and lists contained in the dictionary.

The subject matter of all tests is taken from the Merriam Webster's Intermediate Dictionary [↗](#) copyrights 2016 and 2020. Contestants may use other dictionaries in the contest, but the contest subject matter will be found in Webster's Intermediate.

The Intermediate Dictionary is available for purchase at a discounted price through Texas Educational Paperbacks.

Practice tests are included in the A+ Elementary and Junior High Study Materials booklets, which are available for purchase through the UIL Online Store. Other practice materials are available from [independent vendors](#).

### Scoring

- +3 for each correct answer
- -2 for each incorrect answer
- No deduction is taken for skipped or unanswered items

GRADES 5-8

#### UIL A+ DICTIONARY SKILLS PRACTICE MATERIALS

[Previous years' Dictionary Skills tests](#)

#### SAMPLE TEST & KEY

[A+ Dictionary Sample](#)

The background of the slide is a repeating pattern of speech bubbles. Each bubble is a light gray color with a darker gray question mark inside. The bubbles are arranged in a grid-like fashion, overlapping slightly. The text is centered over this pattern.

# UNDERSTANDING THE DS TEST

## QUESTION/TRUTH #1





HOW MANY DIFFERENT  
TYPES OF QUESTIONS  
ARE ON THE DS TEST?

**ANSWER:**

**ONLY TWO, AND I AM NOT TALKING  
ABOUT MC AND MATCHING.**

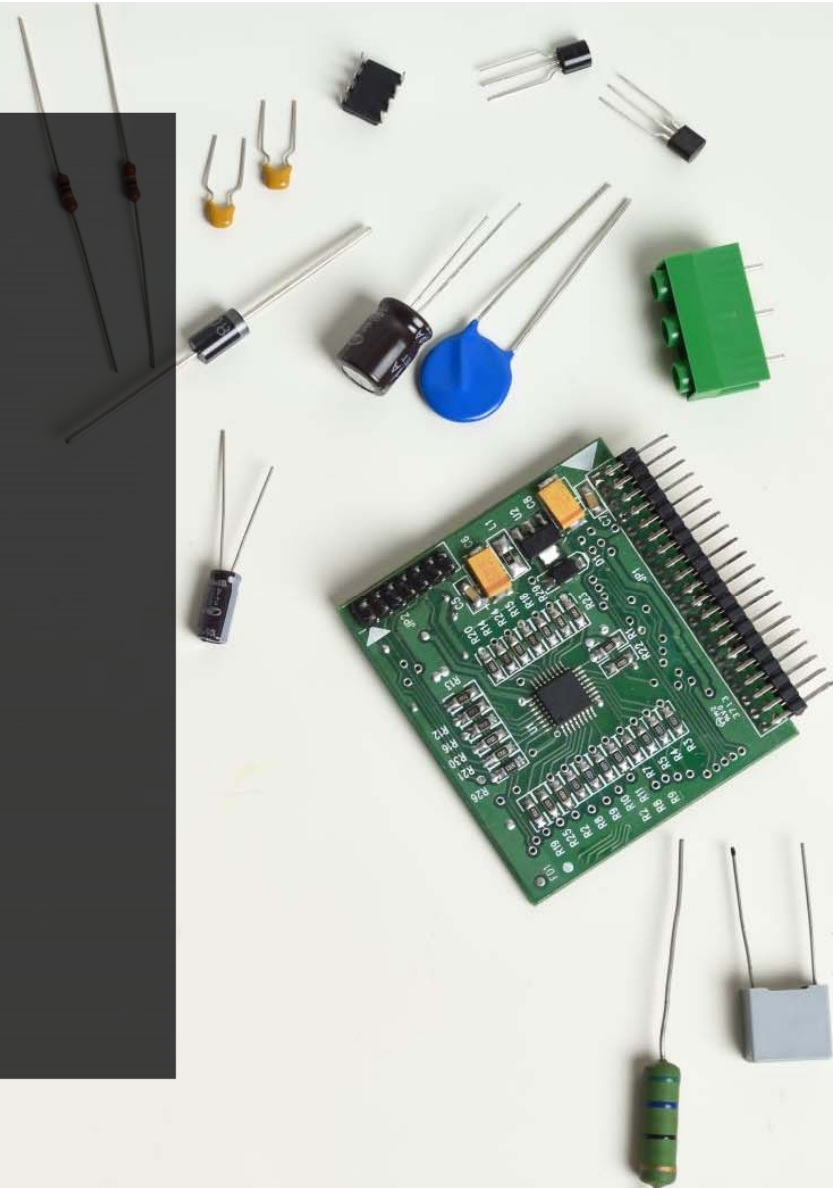


I call them very  
technical names:

*1*-Steppers

and

NOT *1*-Steppers  
(Multi-Steppers)



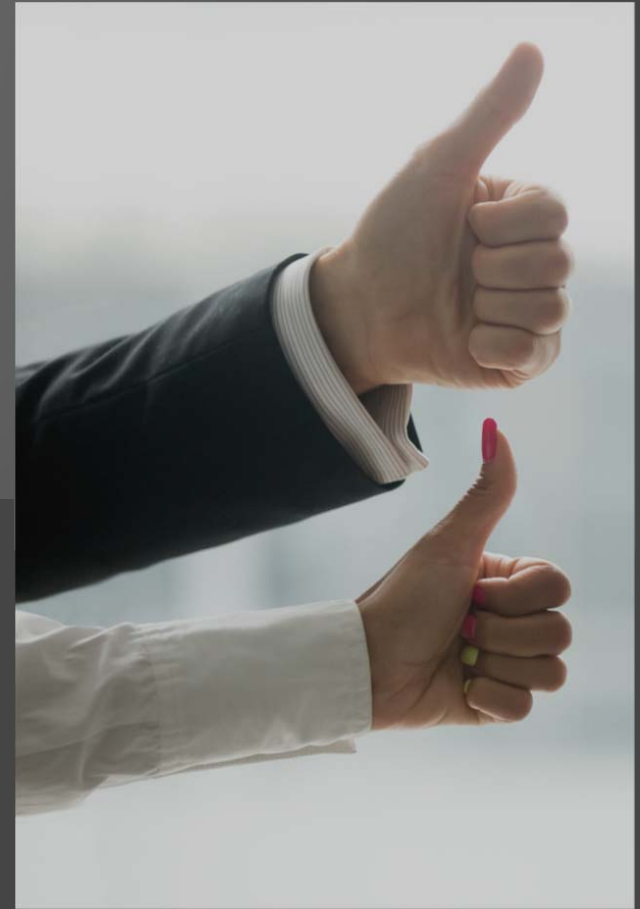
# The Classic 1-Stepper :

A Pomeranian is a \_\_\_\_\_ .

- dog
- cat
- horse
- cow

Simply look up the “key word” Pomeranian, read the definition: “any of a breed of very small compact **dogs**...”

Winner, Winner, Chicken Dinner!!!



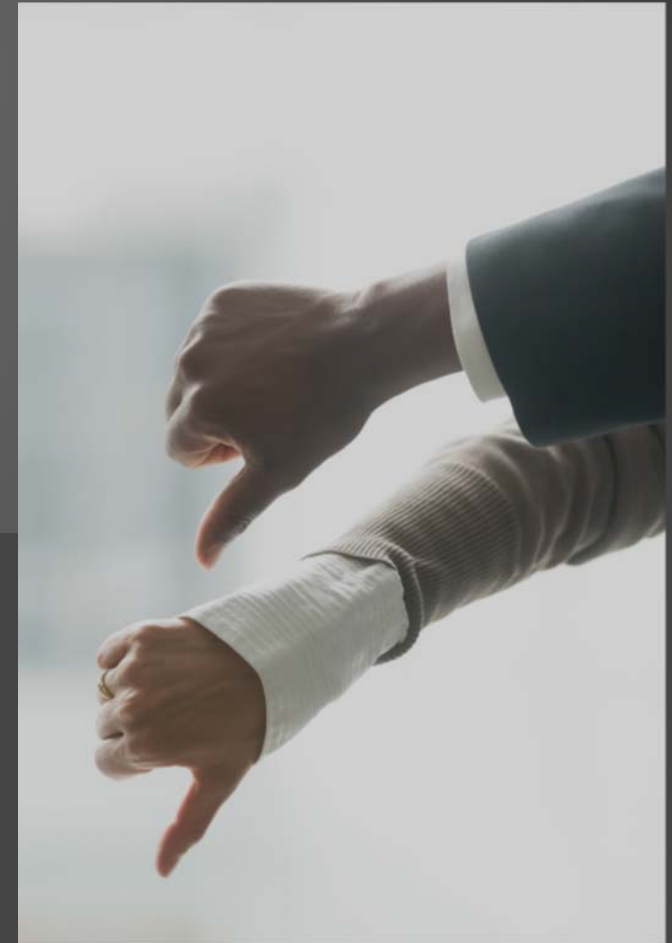


## The Classic NOT a 1-Stepper (Multi-Stepper) :

Which of these is a dog?

- Hereford
- Clydesdale
- Pomeranian
- Guernsey

We are looking for the same information as the previous question, the connection between dog and Pomeranian, but the “key word” in this question is too general, so this turns into potentially a 4-step question, requiring potentially 4 times as much time...on a speed test!!



**THAT'S IT...THAT'S THE  
LIST!!!**



Now, of course,  
that  
answers

**“the  
what”,**

but now  
we have  
to train  
them on

**“the  
where”?**

# UIL A+ DICTIONARY SKILLS

TABLE/CHART/LIST	PAGE	DESCRIPTION
ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS FOR CHEMICAL ELEMENTS	943	900'S GLOSSARY LISTS
BIOGRAPHICAL, BIBLICAL, AND MYTHOLOGICAL NAMES	949	900'S GLOSSARY LISTS
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES	965	900'S GLOSSARY LISTS
SIGNS AND SYMBOLS	999	900'S GLOSSARY LISTS
ASTRONOMY	999	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
BIOLOGY	999	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
BUSINESS AND FINANCE	999	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
CHEMISTRY	999	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
COMPUTERS	1000	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
MATHEMATICS	1000	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
MISCELLANEOUS	1001	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
PHYSICS	1001	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
REFERENCE MARKS	1001	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
WEATHER	1001	SUBLISTS UNDER SIGNS & SYMBOLS
AIRPLANE	18	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
AMOEBAS	27	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
BELLS, SHIP	68	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
BIBLE BOOKS	72	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
BRAILLE	91	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
BRIDGE	95	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
BRONCHUS	97	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
CELL	122	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
CLOUD	143	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
CONIC SECTION	162	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
DENTITION, TEETH	208	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
EAR	244	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
ELEMENTS AND PERIODIC INFO	253	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
ENAMEL, TOOTH	256	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
EYE	278	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
FLOWER	300	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
GEOLOGIC TIME	326	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
HAIR	349	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
HEART	360	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
HORSE	375	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
INDUCTION COIL	399	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
INSECT	405	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
KNOT	433	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
LEAF	442	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
LEVER	447	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
MEASURES AND WEIGHTS	487	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
METRIC SYSTEM	494	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
MORSE CODE	509	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
NEEDLE	523	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
NEURON	526	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
NON- WORDS	531	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
NOTE	535	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
NUCLEUS	537	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
NUMBERS	538	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
OVER- WORDS	559	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
PLANETS	600	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
PUNCTUATION MARKS	635	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
RE- WORDS	652	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
REFLECTOR	660	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
REFRACTOR	661	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
SEMAPHORE	720	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
TIME ZONES	841	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
TRIANGLES	857	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
UN- WORDS	870	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
WING	923	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS
ZODIAC SIGNS	938	CHART/TABLE IN WORDS

- 40 QUESTIONS, 20 MINUTES
- THAT MEANS A MAX OF 30 SECONDS PER PROBLEM TO:
  - READ IT
  - FIND KEY WORD
  - IDENTIFY 1-STEPPER (**DO IT**) OR MULTI-STEPPER (**SKIP IT**)
  - FIND IT IN THE DICTIONARY
  - ANSWER IT ON ANSWER DOCUMENT

ALL COMPONENTS ABOVE MUST BE PRACTICED SEPARATELY,  
THEN COMBINED THROUGHOUT THE SEASON.

## • DICTIONARY SKILLS TRAINING:

- PART 1 – THE A-B-C'S: ALPHABETICAL ORDER
- PART 2 – THE AREAS OF THE DICTIONARY: SECTIONS, TABLES & DRAWINGS
- PART 3 – TABBING THEIR DICTIONARY
- PART 4 – THE 1-STEPPERS: THE NEED FOR SPEED AND ACCURACY
- PART 5 – THE MULTI-STEPPERS: ICING ON TOP!!!
- PART 6 – PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE...FASTER, FASTER, FASTER!!!
- PART 7 – COLLECT DISTRICT MEET HARDWARE



# **DICTIONARY SKILLS TRAINING:**

## **PART 1 – THE A-B-C’S: ALPHABETICAL ORDER**

- STEP 1 – RECRUITMENT: 10 EASY WORD FINDS – JUST PAGE #'S – PRIZES – ALL WIN
- STEP 2 – RECRUITMENT: 10 EASY WORD FINDS – JUST PAGE #'S – TIMED – ALL UNDER THE SET TIME WIN
- STEP 3 – RECRUITMENT: 10 EASY WORD FINDS – JUST PAGE #'S – TIMED – ONLY THOSE UNDER  
THE SET TIME AND ALL CORRECT WIN.

**EXPLAIN MERITOCRACY, REWARD WINS, MANUFACTURE SUCCESSFUL SITUATIONS!!!**

**DICTIONARY SKILLS**  
**TRAINING:**

**PART 2 – THE AREAS OF THE  
DICTIONARY: SECTIONS, TABLES &  
DRAWINGS**

**STEP 1 – THE HUNT:**  
10 DRAWING FINDS +  
10 EASY WORDS  
JUST PAGE #'S

**STEP 2 – THE HUNT:**  
10 TABLE FINDS +  
10 EASY WORDS  
JUST PAGE #'S

**STEP 3 – THE HUNT:**  
10 SECTION FINDS +  
10 EASY WORDS  
JUST PAGE #'S

**ALWAYS TIME THEM,  
LOG THEIR TIMES  
(LIKE GRADES IN  
GRADEBOOK), ADD 10  
SECONDS FOR  
INCORRECT PAGE #'S.**

**EVERYONE ALWAYS  
CORRECTS EVERY  
MISTAKE...EVERYONE  
ALWAYS LEAVES WITH  
PERFECT PAPERS.**



## **DICTIONARY SKILLS TRAINING:**

- **STEP 1 – ALPHABET – TAB SHOULD TAKE THEM TO THE BEGINNING OF THAT LETTER – ALL 26 - TABS ON SIDE**
- **STEP 2 – TABLES/CHARTS/DRAWINGS – TAB TAKES YOU TO THAT EXACT PAGE – JUST MAIN ONES – TABS ON BOTTOM**
- **STEP 3 – SECTIONS – TAB SHOULD TAKE YOU TO BEGINNING OF THE SECTION – ALL – TABS ON TOP**

## **PART 3 – TABBING THE DICTIONARY**

- **TABS NEED TO BE RIGID ENOUGH TO NOT CURL UP**
- **TABS SHOULD BE ACCESSED BY PLACING FINGER UNDER TAB, “FLOP” GROUP OF PAGES, REVEAL FIRST/EXACT PAGE OF THAT ITEM**
- **WRITING ON TAB MUST BE CLEAR AND BIG**
- **DON'T JUST TAB TO TAB...TAB WITH PURPOSE!!!**

## • DICTIONARY SKILLS TRAINING:

### • PART 4 – THE 1-STEPPERS: EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR SPEED AND ACCURACY

#### • STEP 1 – THE **MATCHING SECTION** ON THE TEST

- ALL 1-STEPPERS
  - NO READING THE QUESTION OR DETERMINING IF THEY ARE 1-STEPPERS, THEY ARE.
  - SO DO #'S 33-40 FIRST **ALWAYS**, THEN GO BACK TO #1...BANK AN EASY 24 POINTS.
- #### • EXPLAIN AGAIN TO THEM THE SPEED THAT IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS:
- 40 QUESTIONS, 20 MINUTES = SO AN AVERAGE OF 30 SECONDS PER PROBLEM TO:
    - READ IT
    - FIND KEY WORD
    - IDENTIFY 1-STEPPER (**DO IT**) OR MULTI-STEPPER (**SKIP IT**)
    - FIND IT IN THE DICTIONARY
    - ANSWER IT ON ANSWER DOCUMENT
  - ALL COMPONENTS MUST BE PRACTICED SEPARATELY TO GAIN SPEED AND ACCURACY IN THAT STEP,
  - THEN COMBINED THROUGHOUT THE SEASON.

## • DICTIONARY SKILLS TRAINING:

### • PART 5 – THE MULTI-STEPPERS: ICING ON TOP!!!

- STEP 1 – AS YOU SPOT THEM, UNDERLINE GENERAL KEY WORD, THEN SKIP UNTIL YOU DO ALL THE 1-STEPPERS
- STEP 2 – WHEN YOU FINISH 1-STEPPERS, CHOOSE MULTI-STEPPERS FIRST THAT ALL START WITH SAME LETTER
- STEP 3 – CROSS OUT AS YOU ELIMINATE
- STEP 4 – IF YOU CAN NARROW DOWN TO 2 CHOICES BY ELIMINATING, WORTH THE RISK (6, 1, -4)

## • DICTIONARY SKILLS TRAINING:

### PART 6 – PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

- ONCE YOU HAVE CHOSEN YOUR TEAM, THEY NEED TO BE ABLE TO PRACTICE REGULARLY WITH THEIR OWN TABBED DICTIONARY, EITHER AT HOME OR IN YOUR CLASSROOM.
- THEY DO NOT HAVE TO TAKE A FULL DS TEST TO PRACTICE, ALTHOUGH THEY SHOULD PERIODICALLY TO GAUGE IMPROVEMENT.
- THIS IS A VERY “COMPONENT-DRIVEN” CONTEST, SO THEY NEED TO MICRO-PRACTICE EACH COMPONENT TO MASTER IT.
- WRITING A FULL PRACTICE DS TEST IS VERY DIFFICULT AND TIME-CONSUMING.
- THE GOOD NEWS IS IT IS VERY EASY TO QUICKLY DEVELOP MULTIPLE PRACTICE SHEETS FOR EACH COMPONENT ONCE YOU HAVE DEVELOPED ONE VERSION IN WORD.
- 10 SPEED WORDS/PAGE #'S, 10 PEOPLE FROM THE BIOGRAPHICAL NAMES, 10 KEY WORDS AND WHETHER THEY ARE 1 OR MULTI-STEPPERS WITHOUT HAVING TO LOOK THEM UP TO SEE, ETC.
- ALWAYS PROVIDE A KEY AND ALWAYS REQUIRE YOUR STUDENTS TO REPORT THEIR “STAT LINE” TO YOU ON EACH PRACTICE PAGE.
- THEIR STAT LINE IS: # CORRECT/#MISSED/TIME (INCLUDING A 10 SECOND PENALTY FOR EACH ONE MISSED).
- THAT IS THE ONLY WAY FOR YOUR STUDENT AND FOR YOU TO GAUGE THEIR IMPROVEMENT.

# DICTIONARY SKILLS RESOURCES:

- The Middle School Virtual Challenge Meets – contact The Commish (me)
- UIL Dictionary Skills Tests (Previous years) – purchase from the UIL Online Store
- [rmglearningsolutions.com](http://rmglearningsolutions.com) – Rebecca Gillis – specializes in DS, LS & MS Spelling.