

SPELLING BEE RULES

(Updated August 2014)

1. The regional finals shall be an oral competition, with elimination on a “miss – and – out” basis in the traditional Spelling Bee manner.
2. The contestant may request the pronouncer to re---pronounce the word, define it, or use it in a sentence. The pronouncer shall grant the request until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the contestant. **JUDGES MAY DISQUALIFY ANY CONTESTANT WHO IGNORES A REQUEST TO START SPELLING.**
3. Having started to spell a word, a contestant may stop and start over, retracing the spelling from the beginning, but in the retracing there can be no change of letters and their sequence from those first pronounced. If letters and their sequences are changed in the respelling the speller will be disqualified.
4. Upon missing the spelling of a word, the contestant immediately drops out of the contest. The next word on the pronouncer’s list is given to the next contestant.
5. When the contestants are reduced to two, the elimination procedure changes. At that point, when one contestant misspells a word, the other contestant shall be given an opportunity to spell that same word. If the second contestant spells the word correctly, plus the next word on the pronouncer’s list, then she/he shall be declared the winner.
6. If one of the last two spellers misses the word and the other, after correcting the error, misspells the new word submitted to her/him then the misspelled new word shall be referred to the first speller. If the first speller then succeeds in correcting the error and correctly spells the next word on the pronouncer’s list, then she/he shall be declared the winner.
7. If both spellers misspell the same word, both shall continue in the contest.
8. Contestants can protest a decision until it is her/his turn again.



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9. The judges are in complete control of the Bee. Their decision is final on all questions.
10. Contestants are the only ones who can lodge a protest or raise an objection – members of the audience are not permitted to address the pronouncer or the judges during the contest.
11. Homonyms will be accepted unless the speller asks for and receives a definition from the pronouncer or the judges.
12. When spelling, the contestant must face the judges and say the word, spell the word, and say the word again during each round.

Official Dictionary and Source of Words

Webster's Third New International Dictionary and its copyright 2002 Addenda Section shall serve as the final authority for the spelling of words. If a word has two or more accepted spellings, only the spellings set in boldface type and separated by the word or, and in some cases the word is also, at the beginning of the descriptive manner will be accepted as correct. Words having temporal labels (such as archaic and obsolete) and regional labels (such as North, Midland, South, British, and Irish) will not be accepted as correct.

The spelling lists provided are only a ***sampling of words*** that the judges can use during the Bee. Official words will be taken from Scipps National Spelling Bee Words 1-375 yearly, Scipps additional words, Pathways and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*.

Time Constraints

The speller has a limit of 1 minute at the microphone. The time begins when the pronouncer first pronounces the word. The judges will disqualify a speller who does not complete spelling prior to time being up.



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Speller's Role

The speller is to:

1. Face the judges and pronounce the word for the judges before and after spelling the word.
2. Distinctly say each letter with volume to allow for understanding by the judge.

The speller may ask the pronouncer to:

1. Say the word again
2. Define the word
3. Use the word in a sentence
4. Provide the language(s) or origin
5. Provide an alternate pronunciation

Misunderstandings of a word are the responsibility of the speller unless:

1. The pronouncer failed to provide a correct pronunciation
2. The pronouncer provided incorrect information regarding the definition, part of speech, or language of origin.
3. The speller correctly spelled a homonym of the word and the pronouncer failed to either offer a definition or distinguish the homonyms.

Judges Role

The judges listen carefully, differentiate whether or not words are pronounced and spelled correctly according to the diacritical markings in *Webster's Third Dictionary* and uphold the rules of the spelling bee. The judges have the final decision.

Misunderstandings: While the judges will not respond to the questions of the speller, they will in turn direct the speller and pronouncer to interact until the judges are satisfied that reasonable attempts, within the time constraints, have been made to help the speller understand the misunderstood word, should they objectively decide that the speller has misunderstood a word.

Pronouncer errors: The judges will use the diacritical markings to compare the pronouncer's pronunciation of the word. If the judges feel the proper pronunciation was not used, they will direct the pronouncer to



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correct the error immediately.

Reason for disqualifications other than misspelling:

1. Speller who does not approach the microphone when it is time for the speller to receive a word. The only exceptions are extenuating circumstances that are in the sole discretion of the judges'.
2. Speller who does not demonstrate good sportsmanship.
3. Speller who alters the letters or sequence of letters from the first attempt, while in the process of retracing a spelling will be eliminated.
4. Speller who makes unintelligible or nonsense sounds.
5. Any display of misconduct as challenging judges by parents, or staff, addressing the pronouncer or contestants, protesting or raising objection to any proceeding but not limited to any other inappropriate behavior will lead to the school being disqualified.

The following spelling activities do not warrant disqualification:

1. Failing to pronounce the word before and/or after spelling it.
2. Asking a question.
3. Noting or failing to note the capitalization of a word, diacritical mark, or any form of punctuation.

Pronouncer's Role

The pronouncer carefully pronounces words according to the diacritical markings in *Webster's Third Dictionary*.

If there is more than one homonym for a word, the pronouncer specifies the word to be spelled by giving the definition.

Speller's requests: The pronouncer only responds to the speller's request for repetition of the word's pronunciation, a definition, sentence, part of speech, language of origin, and alternate pronunciations. The alternate pronunciations must come from *Webster's Third Dictionary*.