

# 2024

## Rules for Regional Spelling Bee

### Preface

The *Rules for Regional and Local Spelling Bees* have been revised. Please note, in particular, changes in requirements for eligibility. We encourage spellers, parents, teachers, and spelling bee officials to read these rules prior to any spelling bee.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee has no authority over the conduct of local spelling bees (namely, spelling bees other than the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.). Consequently, the national office will not render judgments relating to the conduct of local spelling bees. Individuals bearing complaints about the conduct of local spelling bees should register their concerns with local spelling bee officials. DECISIONS OF LOCAL SPELLING BEE OFFICIALS ARE FINAL.

These *Suggested Rules for Spelling Bees* are not the rules in effect at the National Competition. The National Competition operates under a different set of rules called the *Contest Rules of the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee*, which contain provisions specific to unique conditions at the National Competition. The implementation of National Competition rules at any other level is not recommended.

### Rules

1. **Eligibility:** A speller qualifying for the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., must meet these requirements:

(A) The speller must not have won a Scripps National Spelling Bee championship in Washington, D.C.

(B) The speller must attend a school that is officially enrolled with the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

(C) The speller must be enrolled in grades 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 and must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before February 1, 2024.

(D) The speller must not have repeated fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade for the purpose of extending spelling bee eligibility. If the speller has repeated fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade, the speller must notify the Scripps National Spelling Bee of the circumstances of grade repetition by March 31, 2024; and the Scripps National Spelling Bee will, at its sole discretion, determine the speller's eligibility status on or before April 30, 2024.

(E) The speller—or the speller's parent, legal guardian, or school official acting on the speller's behalf—must not have declared to another entity an academic classification higher than eighth grade for any purpose, including high school graduation equivalency or proficiency examinations and/or examinations such as the PSAT, SAT, or ACT.

(F) The speller must not have earned the legal equivalent of a high school diploma.

(G) The speller must not bypass or circumvent normal school activity to study for spelling bees. The Scripps National Spelling Bee defines normal school activity as adherence to at least four courses of study other than language arts, spelling, Latin, Greek, vocabulary, and etymology for at least four hours per weekday for 34 of the 38 weeks between August 22, 2024 and May 15, 2024.

(H) The speller must not have reached his/her 16th birthday on or before August 31, 2024.

(I) The speller must have won a final local spelling bee on or before January 19, 2024, unless extenuating circumstances exist and the extension is granted by CVES. The speller must have won the regional spelling bee on or before March 10, 2024.

(J) Once having been disqualified at any level of a sponsor's spelling bee program between June 2023 and April 2024, the speller remains disqualified for the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee and may not seek advancement in the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee program through another sponsor and/or enrollment in another school.

(K) The speller, upon qualifying for the 2024 SNSB National Competition, must submit to the SNSB a completed Champion Registration, a completed Prerequisite Assessment, an Appearance Consent and Release Agreement signed by speller and speller's parent/legal guardian, a signed Certification of Eligibility Form, a liability waiver signed by speller and speller's parent/legal guardian, and a photo. The speller will notify the SNSB, at least 24 hours prior to the first day of the SNSB National Competition, if any of the statements made on the Certification of Eligibility Form are no longer true or require updating. The speller's regional partner will provide access to all necessary items.

(L) Each building of a participating district may send one representative and one alternate per grade level (4-8) to the Regional Spelling Bee.

(M) Students residing in school districts that do not register for the Regional Spelling Bee and are registered for the Scripps National Spelling Bee, may still take part in the Regional Spelling Bee. Such students must contact Amy Campbell at Champlain Valley Educational Services (CVES) at 518-561-0100. Arrangements appropriate to the students involved will be developed.

The SNSB may disqualify any speller prior to or during the National Competition who is not in compliance with any of the above eligibility requirements. Further, the SNSB may, at any time between the conclusion of the 2024 SNSB National Competition and April 30, 2025, require any

speller who is found to have not been in compliance with any of the above eligibility requirements to forfeit and/ or return any prizes, rank and other benefits accorded to the speller as a result of participation in the 2024 SNSB National Competition.

**2. Format:** The spelling bee is conducted in rounds. Each speller remaining in the spelling bee at the start of a round spells one word in each round—except in the case of a written test. The spelling bee may be conducted orally or in writing or in a manner that is a combination of the two; however, if the spelling bee officials specify an oral format, the speller may not demand a written format except under the conditions of Rule 4.

**3. Competition list:** Spelling bee officials are responsible for selecting the competition lists for use in their spelling bees and are encouraged to use the appropriate level of competition list generated annually by the SNSB. These competition lists include words that appear in the current edition of two study resources - the School Spelling Bee Study List and Words of the Champions. Also, these competition lists end with a section of words that do not appear in the aforementioned study resources and are for use near the end of a spelling bee, if spelling bee officials determine that their use in the spelling bee is warranted. All words appearing on annual SNSB competition lists are entries in Merriam-Webster Unabridged, the official dictionary of the SNSB, available at <https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com>. Merriam-Webster Unabridged is the final authority and sole source for the spelling of words; the primary source used to craft the pronunciations, definitions and language origins for the SNSB competition lists; and the only authority to be consulted by spelling bee officials. Some word information appearing in the annual SNSB competition lists may have been drawn from the most recent copyrights of Merriam-Webster publications because the SNSB deemed the information helpful to the speller; however, the SNSB is not obligated to draw supplemental material from other publications.

**4. Speller accommodations:** Spelling bee officials will strive to provide accommodation for spellers who have diagnosed and documented conditions. All requests for spelling bee officials to provide accommodations should be directed to spelling bee officials well in advance of the spelling bee date. Spelling bee officials have discretionary power to amend oral and/or written spelling requirements on a case-by-case basis.

**5. Pronouncer's role:** The pronouncer pronounces words and provides word information as listed in SNSB competition lists. The pronouncer strives to pronounce words according to the diacritical markings in SNSB competition lists.

Interaction with the speller: Because seeing the pronouncer's lip movements may be critical in preventing misunderstandings or misspellings, the pronouncer will face the speller when pronouncing the word.

Homonyms: If a word has one or more homonyms, the pronouncer indicates which word is to be spelled by defining the word. The SNSB makes every effort to identify words with homonyms within the competition list; however, there is no guarantee that all homonyms have been identified. The ultimate responsibility for understanding the word to be spelled rests with the speller.

Speller's requests: The pronouncer responds to the speller's requests for a definition, sentence, part of speech, language(s) of origin and alternate pronunciation(s) as listed in the competition list. The pronouncer does not entertain root word questions, requests for alternate definitions or requests for slower pronunciation.

Pronouncer's sense of helpfulness: The pronouncer may offer word information from the competition list without the speller having requested the information.

**6. Spelling Judges' role:** The judges uphold the rules and determine whether or not words are spelled correctly. They are in complete control of the competition, and their decision is final on all questions.

Interaction with the speller: Because seeing the speller's lip movements may be critical in detecting misunderstandings or misspellings, the speller will face the spelling judges when pronouncing and saying the word. If worn, a mask should be removed during the spelling of the word.

Notice of rules: The judges ensure that all spellers and audience members are given an opportunity to receive a complete copy of the rules prior to the start of the spelling bee.

Misunderstandings: The judges participate in the exchange of information between the speller and pronouncer if they feel that clarification is needed. Also, the judges listen carefully to the speller's pronunciation of the word; and, if they sense that the speller has misunderstood the word, the judges work with the speller and pronouncer until they are satisfied that reasonable attempts have been made to assist the speller in understanding the word. While the judges are responsible for attempting to detect a speller's misunderstanding, it is sometimes impossible to detect a misunderstanding until a spelling error has been made. The judges are not responsible for the speller's misunderstanding.

Pronouncer errors: The judges compare the pronouncer's pronunciation with the diacritical markings in the word list. If the judges feel that the pronouncer's pronunciation does not match the pronunciation specified in the diacritical markings, the judges direct the pronouncer to correct the error as soon as it is detected.

Disqualifications for reasons other than clear misspelling: The judges will disqualify a speller (1) who refuses a request to start spelling; (2) who does not approach the microphone when it is time to receive the word; (3) who does not comply with the eligibility requirements; (4) who, or whose family, engages in conduct that does not promote fair honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of competition results; (5) who, in the process of retracing a spelling, alters the letters or sequence of letters from those first uttered without first saying "correction;" (6) who, in the process of spelling, utters unintelligible or nonsense sounds; or (7) who fails to spell his/her word completely within two and a half minutes.

Speller activities that do not merit disqualification: The judges may not disqualify a speller (1) for failing to pronounce the word either before or after spelling it, (2) for asking a question, or (3) for noting or failing to note the capitalization of a word, the presence of a diacritical mark, the presence of a hyphen or other form of punctuation, or spacing between words in an open compound.

Judges decisions are final.

**7. Scoring Judges' role:** Track and document speller success by round.

**8. Speller's role and responsibility:** In order to participate in the Regional Spelling Bee, all student representatives, both winners and alternates, may not wear clothing or accessories of any kind that have words or letters printed on it. The speller makes an effort to face the judges and pronounce the word for the judges before spelling it and after spelling it. The speller *while facing the judges* makes an effort to pronounce each letter distinctly and with sufficient volume to be understood by the judges. The speller may ask the pronouncer to say the word again, define it, use it in a sentence, provide the part of speech, provide the language(s) of origin, and/or provide an alternate pronunciation or pronunciations as listed on the pronouncer's competition list. The speller does not need to note capitalization of a word, presence of diacritical marks, presence of hyphens or other forms of punctuation, or spacing between words in an open compound. To be judged as correct and move on to the next round, the speller must provide the correct letters in the correct order.

Misunderstandings: The speller is responsible for any misunderstanding of the word unless (1) the pronouncer never provided a correct pronunciation; (2) the pronouncer provided incorrect information regarding the definition, part of speech, or language of origin; or (3) the speller correctly spelled a homonym of the word and the pronouncer failed to either offer a definition or distinguish the homonyms.

**9. Correction of a misspelling:** The pronouncer and judges will not ask the speller to correct another speller's misspelling, even in end-of-bee circumstances.

**10. Misspelling:** Upon incorrectly spelling a word, the speller is immediately disqualified from the competition, except as provided in Rule 11.

**11. End-of-bee procedure:**

If all spellers in a round misspell: If none of the spellers remaining in the spelling bee at the start of a round spells a word correctly during that round, all remain in the competition and a new round begins.

Ties: All spellers eliminated in the same round are tied for the same place. After the champion has been determined, spelling bee officials may opt to conduct tiebreakers (of their own design) if tiebreakers are necessary for the awarding of prizes or the determination of qualifying spellers for the next level of competition.

If only one speller in a round spells correctly: If only one speller spells correctly in a round, a new one-word round begins and the speller is given an opportunity to spell the next word on the list (anticipated championship word). If the speller succeeds in correctly spelling the anticipated championship word in this one-word round, the speller is declared the champion.

Example: In Round 12 there are four spellers. Spellers 6 and 21 misspell. Speller 30 spells correctly. Speller 42 misspells. So, Speller 30 is the only speller in the round to spell correctly. Speller 30 begins Round 13—a one-word round—and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 30 correctly spells the anticipated championship word and is declared champion.

Example: Two spellers spell in Round 10. Speller 14 misspells. Speller 25 spells correctly. Speller 25 begins Round 11—a one-word round—and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 25 correctly spells the anticipated championship word and is declared champion.

Example: Two spellers spell in Round 16. Speller 3 spells correctly. Speller 9 misspells. Speller 3 begins Round 17—a one-word round—and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 3 correctly spells the anticipated championship word and is declared champion.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** If a speller misspells the anticipated championship word in a one-word round: A *new* round begins with ALL the spellers who participated in the previous round (whether words were spelled correctly *or incorrectly*). **These spellers spell in their original order.**

Example: In Round 8 there are three spellers. Speller 12 spells correctly and Spellers 23 and 37 misspell. Round 9—a one-word round—begins, and Speller 12 is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 12 misspells the anticipated championship word. Round 10 begins and includes Spellers 12, 23, and 37. The rules prescribe that spellers 12, 23, and 37 spell in their original order; so Speller 12 gets the next word on the list even though Speller 12 misspelled the previous word on the list. Round 10 is not complete until all three spellers have spelled.

## **12. Judges decisions are final.**

**13. The winner of the Regional Spelling Bee** will earn recognition as the regional winner, receive a trophy and the winner's school district will host the 2025 Regional Spelling Bee. The winner will also be eligible to participate in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C.