

# Spelling Bee Procedures and Rules

1. **Words shall be pronounced according to the diacritical markings in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition**, from which the definition or definitions are provided. The spelling master may not give the part of speech or the root word; however, if asked, "Is the word a \_\_\_\_\_?" or "Is the root word \_\_\_\_\_?" the spelling master may answer yes or no.
2. **Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition 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 also, at the beginning of the descriptive matter, will be accepted as correct. Spellings labeled as archaic, obsolete (abbreviated obs), and regional (such as North, Midland, South, British, Irish) that are different from those in boldface type will not be accepted as correct.
3. **The spelling master will initiate the spelling bee with one practice round.** Only during the practice round(s) may students misspell a word and continue in the contest.
4. The procedure the spelling master will use for each word is to **pronounce the word, automatically give a sentence for clarification, and repeat the word.**
5. The contestant must do the following:
  - a. Say the word before spelling. This is to ensure that the student heard the word correctly.
  - b. Spell the word orally. Students will not be permitted to write their words.
  - c. Say the word again after it is spelled, to indicate spelling is complete. **This is the say-spell-say procedure that must be followed** to ensure that
    - i. The speller understands the correct pronunciation of the word
    - ii. The judges know when the spelling is complete and that no letters will be added. The head judge may stop the student if he or she fails to pronounce the word before spelling or if it is pronounced incorrectly.
      1. Failure to say-spell-say will not, in itself, eliminate the speller from competition, but it will reduce the chances of correct spelling and/or the ability to arbitrate, and may cause the speller to exceed 60 seconds.
    - iii. **Contestants must speak clearly and loudly.** The judges' decision is final in determining the correctness of the spelling, which may be misunderstood if not spoken clearly. Before beginning to spell, the contestant may ask for a definition of the word for clarification or ask for the definition, sentence, and/or pronunciation to be repeated. Requests will be granted until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the speller. If a student takes advantage of the rule, he or she will be advised by the spelling master to say the word and begin spelling.

6. **After clarification (if requested) and after the student pronounces (or is advised to pronounce) the word**, he or she shall have 30 seconds to begin spelling. If the student does not begin spelling at the end of the 30-second period, he or she shall be reminded by the judges to begin spelling. The student shall have 30 seconds from the time the judges remind the student to begin spelling until he or she must finish spelling the word. The judges will then disqualify the student who has not spelled the word by the end of the 30-second period.
7. **A contestant may stop and start over**, retracing the spelling from the beginning, after having started to spell a word. However, in the retracing, letters and their sequence must be the same as those first pronounced. If a contestant changes letters or their sequence during the retracing, he or she will be disqualified. For clarity, and to avoid misunderstanding, the student must indicate verbally when he or she is starting over.
8. After the student spells the word
  - a. **If it is spelled correctly**, he or she will be informed and the student remains a part of the competition
  - b. **If it is spelled incorrectly (or eliminated by rules infraction)**, he or she will be informed. The spelling master will say, "I'm sorry. That is incorrect," then correctly spell the word for the contestant and give the next word to the next speller.
    - i. The family may leave the competition or remain as an observer. In either case, the student and the student's environment must remain silent.
9. **No talking will be allowed among contestants or between contestants and parents/observers**. If a contestant receives assistance from anyone in the audience, he or she will be disqualified. Contestants found talking may be disqualified from the bee.
10. **Any questions related to the spelling of a word should be referred to the arbitrator immediately**. The deadline for making a protest is before the affected contestant would have received his or her next word, had he or she stayed in the contest. No protest will be entertained after that word has been given to another speller. When only two spellers remain, a protest must be made immediately, that is, before the second speller has started to spell the word given him or her. After making a protest, the family must allow the judges up to 15 minutes to make a decision. The head judge will communicate to the family the final decision. The speller, parent, and other observers do not participate in the decision-making process. If a speller is placed back in the spelling bee, the speller will be given a new word to spell for the round and assume his or her original place if the new word is spelled correctly.
11. **The arbitrator shall have access to the word list**, its pronunciations, definitions, and sentences; and the rules. If the challenge cannot be resolved from one of the above resources, the arbitrator shall call for a brief time-out to confer with the judges. The judges' decision shall be final.
12. **If only one of the contestants remaining in the contest at the start of a round spells a word correctly during that round**, the contestant shall be given an opportunity to spell the next word on the list. If the contestant succeeds in correctly spelling the new word, the contestant shall be declared the champion. Otherwise, all the contestants remaining at the start of the round shall remain in the competition. A new round will

begin, with all of the contestants spelling in their original order. After the champion is declared, a tiebreaker will take place if there is a tie for second, or third place.

## **Explanation**

If all spellers in a round misspell a word, all remain in the competition and a new round begins.

If only one speller in a round spells correctly, a new 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 round, the speller is declared the champion.

Example 1: In Round 14 there are four spellers. Spellers 5 and 20 misspell. Speller 32 spells correctly. Speller 40 misspells. So, Speller 32 is the only speller in the round to spell correctly. Speller 32 begins Round 15 and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 32 correctly spells the anticipated championship word and is declared champion.

Example 2: In Round 14 there are two spellers. Speller 20 misspells. Speller 32 spells correctly. Speller 32 begins Round 15 and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 32 correctly spells the anticipated championship word and is declared champion.

Example 3: In Round 14 there are two spellers. Speller 20 spells correctly. Speller 32 misspells. Speller 20 begins Round 15 and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 20 correctly spells the anticipated championship word and is declared champion.

If a speller misspells the anticipated championship word, a new round begins with all the spellers who spelled (correctly and incorrectly) in the previous round. These spellers spell in their original order.

Example 1: In Round 14 there are four spellers. Spellers 5 and 20 misspell. Speller 32 spells correctly. Speller 40 misspells. So, Speller 32 is the only speller in the round to spell correctly. Speller 32 begins Round 15 and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 32 incorrectly spells the anticipated championship word. Round 16 begins a new round with Spellers 5, 20, 32, 40 each given a new word.

Example 2: In Round 14 there are two spellers. Speller 20 spells correctly. Speller 32 misspells. Speller 20 begins Round 15 and is offered the anticipated championship word. Speller 20 incorrectly spells the anticipated championship word. Round 16 begins a new round with Spellers 20 and 32 each given a new word. Spelling Bee Coordinator 2017/18 12 © 2017, Association of Christian Schools International

Tiebreaker: All spellers eliminated in the same round are tied for the same place. After the champion has been determined, spelling bee officials will conduct tiebreakers if there is a tie for

second, third, or four place. Tiebreakers are necessary for the awarding of prizes or/and the determination of qualifying spellers for the next level of competition. The judges will give each student two words to spell consecutively. The speller will spell two words before the next speller is given an opportunity to spell two words. The speller who spells the most words correctly is given the higher place. If the students spell the same number of words correctly, the judges will give each student two additional words to spell consecutively.

13. **The Spelling Bee panel of judges will be in complete control of the spelling bee; their decisions will be final.**
14. **All word lists, writing tablets, laptops, smart phones, recording devices, pens or pencils, etc. are to be put away during the spelling bee.**