



Spelling Bee

A traditional Spelling Bee



Contest Support provided by American Association of University Women.

Contest Rules

(Revised August 2018)

1. Grades 2 and 3 of all East Texas area schools are eligible. No more than 4 students (plus 2 alternates) per grade level per school can be designated to represent each group. **Each school or group must have a teacher/sponsor present at the event.** The teacher/sponsor will certify contestants and alternates present at the event. All necessary grievances with the judges MUST be filed by the teacher/sponsor. The judges will retain the right to disqualify any child whose parents or other representatives interfere with the flow of the competition.
2. Contests at the campus level may be conducted in writing or orally, or a combination of the two to determine contestants for the Academic Rodeo Spelling Bee. However, **we encourage an oral competition** for the student to gain experience in spelling before an audience. The Academic Rodeo Spelling Bee is an oral competition, with elimination on a "miss-and-out" basis in the traditional Spelling Bee manner.
3. Words used in the Spelling Bee are selected from word lists (**2nd Grade Word List** and **3rd Grade Word List**) presented and designated for this contest. Words on the list may be arranged in levels of difficulty.
4. **After the pronouncer has given the word, the speller will have ten (10) seconds to begin to spell the word. THE JUDGES MAY DISQUALIFY ANY CONTESTANT WHO IGNORES A REQUEST TO START SPELLING.** Words will be pronounced according to the diacritical markings on the word list furnished. With the approval of the judges, fuller explanation of the meaning of the word to supplement the dictionary definition or definitions quoted will be given.
5. In competition, after the pronouncer gives the speller a word, the speller **should pronounce the word before spelling it and after spelling it.** This helps pronouncer and judges know that the student understands the word given and know when the student has finished spelling the word. However, no speller will be eliminated for failing to pronounce a word.
6. The speller may request the pronouncer to repeat the word, define it, or use it in a sentence. No other information about the etymology or history of a word will be given. The pronouncer shall grant all such requests until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the speller.
7. The student may pause and begin respelling a word. **However, and this is important to note,** the letters cannot be changed in the respelling.
8. The contest word list is set for a selection of words to be used for a specific round. Level of difficulty of words typically changes every round as the contest progresses, but in some instances, levels may be skipped entirely to move the contest along. **The change in word lists will only occur at the beginning of a round. Each round is announced to the contestants and audience.** Upon missing the spelling of a word, the speller immediately drops out of the contest. The next word on the pronouncer's list is given to the next speller.
9. Words on the contest list are randomly arranged according to level of difficulty in which they are placed.
10. When the number of spellers who have correctly spelled a word is reduced to three in a round, the elimination procedure changes. (As the number approaches three, students who miss words may be held on stage until 3 emerge without missing a word. The three remaining students will draw numbers to determine the order in which each will spell. To prevent the speller's position in line from determining winning placements, the competition will continue as follows:

Scenario 1: Each student will be given the opportunity to spell one (1) word. If each student spells his or her word correctly, or, if all three miss, they move on to the next round.

Scenario 2: If one student misspells their word in a round, and the other two spell correctly in the same round, the student that missed is declared third place winner and the other two compete for first and second place in the play-off round.

Scenario 3: If one student spells correctly and two spellers miss in the same round, the student who spells his/her word correctly, will be declared first place winner. The two spellers, who miss, will compete for second and third place in the play-off round.

11. **PLAY-OFF ROUND:** When the spellers are reduced to two, the play-off round commences. Both students must spell their word correctly or both students must misspell their word in the same round to move on to the next round.
12. When one of the last two spellers misses, and the other spells correctly in the same round, the one who spells their word correctly will be declared the winner of the play-off round.
13. The lists, indicating grade level for competition as 2nd or 3rd Grade, are available on the Spelling Bee page and serve as the final authority for the spelling of words in the Spelling Bee. If more than one spelling is listed for a word, any of these spellings will be accepted as correct if the word either matches the pronunciation and definition provided by the pronouncer, or if it is clearly identified as being a standard variant of the word that the contestant has been asked to spell.
14. If a word has one or more homonyms, the pronouncer will indicate which of them is to be spelled. If the listed word is not properly identified either by defining it or by explaining the homonym, any correct spelling of any homonym will be accepted or the student will be given a different word.
15. Any question relating to the spelling of a word should be referred to the designated official immediately before the next contestant is given the next word to spell. No grievance will be entertained after the word has been given to another speller. **Grievances must be submitted to the designated official(s) by the teacher/sponsor, and no one else.** When only two spellers remain, the grievance must be made immediately before the second speller has started to spell the word given.
16. The judges and Academic Rodeo Coordinator are in complete control of the Academic Rodeo Spelling Bee. All decisions made by the judges shall be final on all questions.

Contest Procedures:

1. Each school or group should have a designated representative at the contest.
2. At the contest, all students, including alternates, check-in at the time and to the location designated in the Spelling Bee Timeline.
3. Spellers receive a pre-assigned number (determined by random sort) for the contest which indicates the order of spelling. Students wait with volunteers until time for the contest to begin.
4. Parents and teachers are asked to go to the building where the Spelling Bee will be held as the holding area is not large enough to accommodate so many people. Please do this without having to be reminded! Volunteers use the time before the contest to go over rules and need students' undivided attention.
5. As time for the contest approaches, any designated Spellers who have not checked in will be replaced with any alternates from the group who are present. The alternate will receive the number designated for the student being replaced.
6. Alternates are led on stage by volunteers to be recognized by the audience and then join teachers or family in the audience.
7. Students who will spell in the Bee are led on stage by volunteers to take their seats for the contest to begin.
8. The rules will be reviewed again for the benefit of the students and the audience.

9. Audience members are reminded that the contest takes place on the stage, and the appearance of an audience member assisting to help a student on stage with the spelling of a word, could result in the student being disqualified.
10. Contests proceed according to the rules of Spelling Bee.
11. Parents may not disrupt the contest in any way. If there is a question or protest, it must come from the Sponsor or designated group representative.
12. Students will be escorted off stage by an AAUW volunteer when they misspell their words. Parents should meet the students at the back of the building or to the right side. This minimizes the level of upset or distress for the child.
13. It is important that parents remain calm and supportive. We find that the children take their disappointment well and remain composed unless parents are overly upset when they greet them off stage.
14. Encourage everyone in your group to stay until the grade level contest is finished. This minimizes disruptions which could affect how well students spell future words given to them and also allows the student who has missed a word to see the conclusion of the contest and how the difficulty of the words rises as the contest continues.
15. When winners have been determined, each student will receive the Spelling Bee Award letter. It outlines plans for the Awards Celebration and the type of award your students will receive.

Awards

1st, 2nd, and 3rd places are awarded in each grade level. These students receive a cash award. Students who do not place, including alternates present at the contest, receive a Participation Ribbon.

Tips for Coaching

REMEMBER . . .

Primary communication with Coaches and Sponsors is done through e-mail provided with the School/Group Registration done online. If a coach or sponsor is not receiving e-mail information about the contest, he or she should check Spam/Junk folders on the computer and contact Academic Rodeo for assistance with getting the current information.

Deadlines exist for a reason. Please be aware of them and follow them. The **Academic Rodeo Calendar** in a true calendar format is on the Getting Started and General Info pages. The **Spelling Bee Timeline & Checklist** is on the Spelling Bee page and gives more details about dates and deadlines. If you have a problem with a deadline, please contact Academic Rodeo, realizing that usually it is not possible to make a change or give “grace” for deadlines. Often judging or other timings are scheduled close to the due date. To be sure your students get to participate, follow the deadlines.

Please read the General Info for All Coaches/Sponsors.

The following tips and suggestions may be helpful to you in working with your students.

- Provide Spelling Bee lists early.
- Prepare students for an on-stage Spelling Bee. Spelling before an audience can be intimidating to students. Be sure they understand how the Spelling Bee is conducted and that they will be on stage before an audience with all other students participating in the grade level contest. Note that the stage is set up for the students to face the announcer and not look directly at the audience. This helps minimize fear.

- Work with students on questions to ask if they do not understand the word presented.
 - a. They may ask for the word to be repeated. Advise them to say the word to the pronouncer to allow the pronouncer to see if they understand the word pronounced.
 - b. They may ask that the word be used in a sentence.
 - c. They may ask that a definition be given.
 - d. We do not designate origin of the word in the Spelling Bee lists and judges will NOT provide this information.
- Discuss special rules related to words, such as homophones, capital letters and punctuation.
- Discuss the best procedure for spelling the word. We recommend the student repeat the word, begin spelling, and repeat the word when finished spelling.
- Be sure students understand they may NOT begin spelling the word over in a different way.
- Work with parents on what to expect at the contest and how they should react in various situations.