

2017 Regional Office of Education #47 Spelling Bee Rules

1. Eligibility: A speller qualifying for the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., must meet these requirements:

- (1) The speller must not have won a Scripps National Spelling Bee championship near Washington, D.C.
- (2) The speller must attend a school that is officially enrolled with the Scripps National Spelling Bee.
- (3) The speller must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before February 1, 2017.
- (4) Only fifth – eighth grade students are eligible.
- (5) The speller must not have repeated any grade for the purpose of extending spelling bee eligibility. If the speller has repeated any grade, the speller must notify the Scripps National Spelling Bee of the circumstances of grade repetition by March 31, 2017; and the Scripps National Spelling Bee will, at its sole discretion, determine the speller's eligibility status on or before April 30, 2017.
- (6) 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.
- (7) The speller must not have earned the legal equivalent of a high school diploma.
- (8) The speller must not have completed or have been enrolled in more than six school-level courses or two college-level courses on or before April 30, 2017.
- (9) 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 29, 2016, and May 22, 2017.
- (10) The speller must not have reached his/her 15th birthday on or before August 31, 2016.
- (11) The speller must have won a final local spelling bee on or after February 1, 2017.
- (12) Once having been disqualified at any level of a sponsor's spelling bee program between June 2016 and April 2017, the speller remains disqualified for the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee and may not seek advancement in the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee program through another sponsor and/or enrollment in another school.
- (13) The speller, upon qualifying for the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee near Washington, D.C., must submit a completed Champion Bio Form, a Certification of Eligibility Form, a signed Appearance Consent and Release Form, and a photo to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. The speller will notify the Bee — at least 24 hours prior to the first day of competition in the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. — if any of the statements made on the Certification of Eligibility Form are no longer true or require updating. The speller's sponsor will provide access to the necessary forms.

(14) The speller must not have any first-, second- or third-degree relatives (i.e. sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, half-sibling, first cousin or great grandparent) who are current employees of The E.W. Scripps Company.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee may disqualify prior to or during competition any speller who is not in compliance with any of its eligibility requirements; and it may — at any time between the conclusion of the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee and April 30, 2018 — require any speller who is found to have not been in compliance with any of the eligibility requirements to forfeit the prizes, rank, and other benefits accorded to the speller as a result of participation in the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee.

1A. Eligibility:

(1) Each public, private, and parochial school in the counties of Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside that has officially enrolled with the Scripps National Spelling Bee may send the first place winner of their school spelling bee to the Regional Office of Education #47 Spelling Bee.

(2) No student will be denied participation in any school bee leading to the Regional Office of Education #47 Spelling Bee due to race, religion, creed, gender, type of school attended, membership in an organization, or subscription to a publication.

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. 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. Word list: Local spelling bee officials are responsible for selecting the word lists for use at each local spelling bee. Many local spelling bee officials use word lists generated by the Scripps National Spelling Bee. These lists include many words that appear in the current edition of *Spell It!* as well as some “end-of-bee” words. All words on Scripps National Spelling Bee word lists are entries in ***Merriam-Webster Unabridged***, the official dictionary of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, available at <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/>.

(1) The speller, his/her parents, educators, relatives, or acquaintances must not have obtained a copy of the *2017 District Pronouncer Guide* if it is to be used in the spelling bee in which they may qualify to participate.

4. Special needs: Spelling bee officials will strive to provide accommodations for spellers who have physical challenges. All requests for spelling bee officials to accommodate special needs involving sight, hearing, speech, or movement should be directed to the Regional Office of Education by February 15, 2017. The judges have discretionary power to amend oral and/or written spelling requirements on a case-by-case basis for spellers with diagnosed medical conditions involving sight, hearing, speech, or movement.

5. Pronouncer’s role: The pronouncer strives to pronounce words according to the diacritical markings in Scripps National Spelling Bee word lists and ***Merriam-Webster Unabridged***.

Homonyms: If a word has one or more homonyms, the pronouncer indicates which word is to be spelled by defining the word.

Speller’s requests: The pronouncer must respond one to two times to the speller’s requests for a pronunciation, definition, sentence, part of speech, language(s) of origin, and alternate pronunciation(s) as indicated in an official 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee pronouncer

guide. The pronouncer is not required to entertain requests for root word information, alternate definitions, markedly slower pronunciation, word information from a source other than an official 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee pronouncer guide, or affirmation of the speller's correctness of pronunciation: any such response that the pronouncer gives to these requests, shall not be considered grounds for reinstatement.

Pronouncer's sense of helpfulness: The pronouncer may offer word information — without the speller having requested the information — if the pronouncer senses that the information is helpful and the information is presented in the entry for the word in a 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee word list.

6. Judges' role: The judges uphold the rules and determine whether or not words are spelled correctly. They also render final decisions on appeals in accordance with Rule 11. 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 judges encourage spellers to face them when pronouncing and spelling 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 engages in unsportsmanlike conduct; (5) who, in the process of retracing a spelling, alters the letters or sequence of letters from those first uttered; or (6) who, in the process of spelling, utters unintelligible or nonsense sounds.

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 or punctuation of a word or spacing within a word

7. Speller's role: 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 utter 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.

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.

8. 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.

9. Misspelling: Upon incorrectly spelling a word, the speller immediately drops out of the competition, except as provided in Rule 10.

10. 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 spelled (correctly and incorrectly) in the previous round. These spellers spell in the 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.

Tip: Spelling bee officials may find it helpful to designate a record keeper or judge to track the progress of spellers throughout the rounds. The record keeper's information will be helpful in preventing end-of-bee confusion.

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