

Spelling Bee Rules

1. In competition, after the pronouncer gives the speller a word, the speller will be encouraged to pronounce the word before spelling it and after spelling it. The judges may not disqualify a speller for failing to pronounce the word either before or after spelling it. But the judges will know that the speller is done if he or she pronounces the word after spelling it and the pronouncer will be assured that the speller has heard the word correctly if he or she pronounces it before beginning to spell it.
2. The speller may ask the pronouncer to say the word again, define it, and/or use it in a sentence. The pronouncer shall grant all such requests until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the contestant. Judges may disqualify any speller who ignores a request to start spelling.
3. Having started to spell a word, a speller may stop and start over, retracing the spelling from the beginning, but in retracing there can be no change of letters or their sequence from those first pronounced. If letters or their sequence is changed in the respelling, the speller will be eliminated.
4. The contest shall be conducted in rounds. Each speller remaining in the spelling bee at the start of a round shall spell one word in the round, except when there are two spellers remaining.
5. If a word has one or more homonyms and is not identified, either by defining it or using it in a sentence, any correct spelling of any homonym of the word will be accepted.
6. When the number of spellers is reduced to two, the elimination procedure changes. At that point, when one speller misspells a word, the other speller shall be given an opportunity to spell that same word. If the second speller spells that word correctly, plus the next word on the pronouncers list, then the second speller shall be declared the champion. If one of the last two spellers and the other, after correcting the error, misspells the new word submitted to him/her, then the misspelled new word shall be given to the first speller. If the first speller then succeeds in correcting the error and correctly spells the next word on the list, the he or she becomes the champion. If both spellers misspell the same word, both shall continue in the contest and the one who first misspelled the word shall be given a new word to spell.

7. No speller shall be disqualified for failing to include a capital letter or such punctuation marks as hyphens and apostrophies.
8. Upon missing the spelling of a word, a contestant is eliminated from the contest.
9. If none of the contestants remaining in the bee at the start of the round spells a word correctly during the round, all shall remain in the competition.
10. If only one of the contestants remaining in the bee at the start of a round spells a word correctly during that round, a new one-word round begins and the contestant shall be given an opportunity to spell a new word. If the contestant succeeds in correctly spelling the new word, the contestant shall be declared the champion. Otherwise, all the contestants remaining in the bee at the start of the round shall remain in the competition.
11. Any participant receiving verbal or nonverbal cues from the audience will be disqualified.
12. Judges are in complete control of the bee. Their decisions are final.
13. The pronouncer strives to pronounce words according to the diacritical markings.
14. The speller is responsible for any misunderstanding of the word.
15. If the judges determine that it is necessary to move to an alternate word list, the word list used will be a predetermined, unreleased list taken from the dictionary.

Official Dictionary of the Michigan State Charter School Spelling Bee:
Webster's Third New International Dictionary and its addenda section,
copyright 2002, Merriam-Webster,