



2026 Connecticut Spelling Bee Rules Synopsis

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 speller may not request a written format.

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

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

Speller's Role: The speller must face the judges, speak clearly, and with sufficient volume. To ensure a proper understanding of the given word, spellers are encouraged to repeat their given word prior to their spelling attempt. The pronouncer responds to the speller's requests for a **definition, sentence, part of speech, language(s) of origin, and alternate pronunciation(s)**. When presented with requests for alternate pronunciations, the pronouncer or an aide to the pronouncer checks for alternate pronunciations in the Scripps National Spelling Bee word list. A speller is permitted to ask root word questions once we reach the *Words Selected From Merriam-Webster Unabridged* portion of the competition. When asking a root word question, a speller must say the root word, provide its language of origin, and give the meaning of the root. The pronouncer does **not** entertain requests for alternate definitions, or requests for markedly slower pronunciation. If a word has one or more homonyms or near-homonyms, the pronouncer indicates which word is to be spelled by defining the word. **The ultimate responsibility for understanding the word to be spelled rests with the speller.**

Time limit: Spellers have **2 minutes** from the time the pronouncer pronounces the word to complete spelling of the word. Judges will attempt to give the speller 1 minute notice (via raised placard) to encourage the speller to begin spelling.

DECISIONS OF STATE SPELLING BEE OFFICIALS ARE FINAL.

**THIS DOCUMENT IS PROPERTY OF
THE NOAH WEBSTER HOUSE & WEST HARTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY.**

Judges' role: The judges uphold the rules and determine whether words are spelled correctly. **They are in complete control of the competition, and their decision is final on all questions.** 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.

Disqualifications for reasons other than clear misspelling: The judges will disqualify a speller:

- who arrives after the competition begins
- who refuses a request to start spelling
- who does not approach the microphone when it is time to receive the word
- who engages in unsportsmanlike conduct
- who in the process of retracing a spelling, alters the letters or sequence of letters from those first spoken
- who in the process of spelling, utters unintelligible or nonsense sounds; or
- who fails to spell the word within the time limit

Misspelling: Upon misspelling a word, the speller drops out of the competition at the end of that round, except as provided in the "End-of-Bee Procedure."

Appeals: If a speller, a speller's parent, or speller's guardian wishes to seek the reinstatement of a speller into the competition, they may do so by filing a written appeal. Appeal forms are located with the Appeals Official in the back of the auditorium. Appeals must be submitted to the Appeals Official in writing before the start of the round following the incident in question. Requests to disqualify another speller are not permitted.

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.

- 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. •

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 their original order.

DECISIONS OF STATE SPELLING BEE OFFICIALS ARE FINAL.