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County Superintendent of Schools

Orange County Department of Education
Educational and Student Services Division

2027 Orange County Spelling Bee
CONTEST RULES AND FORMAT

Scripps National Spelling Bee

The following rules and format apply to the written round:

1. All Orange County Spelling Bee competition participants must be currently enrolled in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade.
2. Participants must attend school in Orange County, unless they are attending a school that is 100% virtual. Students enrolled in a completely virtual school must reside in Orange County in order to participate in the Orange County Spelling Bee.
3. The written round consists of twenty words and five multiple choice vocabulary words. The highest-ranking students will become finalists and proceed to the final (oral) round.
4. At least 50% of the written round spelling words will be taken from the 2027 Scripps National Spelling Bee *Words of the Champions* booklet. The remaining words will be taken from the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online Dictionary.*
5. The Pronouncer will pronounce the word, give the language of origin, define it, use it in a sentence that matches the definition given, and pronounce the word again. The time limit of 20 seconds will then begin, and students will write the given word. The five vocabulary questions will be shown on the screen, and students will answer within 30 seconds. No questions will be allowed once students start writing. The Pronouncer will engage in up to five inquiries from students per word.
6. The Orange County Spelling Bee uses word lists generated by the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Words shall be pronounced according to the diacritical markings in the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online Dictionary*. No other dictionary will be used to verify the spelling of a word.
7. All materials are the property of the Orange County Department of Education and may not be taken from the competition.
8. Finalists advancing to the oral round will be announced on the Orange County Spelling Bee website on Tuesday, February 23, 2027, between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.

The following rules and format apply to the oral/final round:

1. Finalists will draw numbers to determine the order in which they will spell in the oral/final round.
2. The final round consists of rounds of oral spelling. All spellers will spell one word in each round. Upon incorrectly spelling a word, the speller is immediately eliminated from the competition, except as described below under “End-of-Bee Procedure.” All spellers eliminated in the same round are tied for the same place.
3. The Pronouncer will pronounce the word, define it, use it in a sentence that matches the definition given, and pronounce the word again. Language of origin and alternate pronunciations may be requested following the Pronouncer’s description of the word. The student will say the given word, spell the word, and then pronounce the word again. **Members of the audience, coaches, or parents will not be allowed to ask questions about the words or pronunciations.**
4. Contestants will be allowed to use a pencil and paper during the first round. The pencil and paper will be removed after the first round.

5. After starting to spell a word, a contestant 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 sequences are changed in the respelling, the speller will be eliminated.
6. End-of-Bee Procedure: If none of the spellers remaining in the Spelling Bee at the start of a round spell a word correctly during that round, all remain in the competition and a new round begins. If only one speller spells correctly in a round, and every other speller in that round misspells, that sole remaining speller is immediately declared the champion.
7. The Orange County Spelling Bee uses word lists generated by the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Words shall be pronounced according to the diacritical markings in the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online Dictionary*. No other dictionary will be used to verify the spelling of a word.
8. Dictionaries and spelling word lists are not allowed in the oral round area.
9. Disqualifications for reasons other than error: 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, or whose family, engages in conduct that does not promote fair honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of competition results; or
    - (5) who, in the process of spelling, utters unintelligible or nonsense sounds.
10. Appeals**:** The speller's parent, legal guardian, or school representative may appeal to the judges for the speller's reinstatement provided that the appeal follows the appeal protocol described below. The judges will render a final decision on the appeal in accordance with the reinstatement protocol.

Judges will review appeals and render decisions during the oral round under the following four grounds:

1. The speller correctly spelled the word but was eliminated for: misspelling it; failing to say the word before or after spelling it; failing to indicate capitalization, hyphen, spaces, or diacritical marks; or incorrectly indicating capitalization, hyphen, spaces, or diacritical marks.
2. The speller correctly spelled a homonym of the word in question and was not provided with a definition of the word.
3. The speller correctly spelled an alternate spelling of the word as listed in Merriam-Webster Unabridged (1) whose pronunciation is identical to the word in question, (2) whose definition is identical to the word in question, and (3) that is clearly identified as a standard variant of the word in question.
4. The officials did not adhere to the End-of-Bee procedure.

Judges will not entertain appeals on the following invalid grounds for reinstatement in the oral round:

1. The pronouncer allegedly mispronounced the word.
2. The pronouncer offered pronunciations and/or word information that the speller did not request, and the unrequested information contributed to the misspelling.
3. One or all Bee officials indicated to the speller that the speller was pronouncing the word correctly, but the speller's spelling indicates that the speller was not pronouncing it correctly.
4. One or all Bee officials did not inform the speller before spelling that the speller's pronunciation was incorrect and/or that the speller was misunderstanding the word, and this inaction contributed to the misspelling.

5. The speller offered a correct spelling as indicated in a dictionary other than Merriam-Webster Unabridged or other online or print sources.
6. The pronouncer did not answer a root word question or provide the correct root word.
7. The pronouncer did not honor the speller's request to slow down the pronunciation of the word, break the word's pronunciation into syllables, or provide an alternate definition or sentence.

Appeal Protocol:

A written appeal must be hand-delivered to the challenge recorder before the end of the round in which the speller was eliminated using the Orange County Spelling Bee Appeals form. When five or fewer spellers remain, an oral appeal must be made before the speller would have received their next word had they remained in the Spelling Bee. Those with filed appeals cannot directly approach judges while the competition is in session. Officials will contact the speller with a response to the appeal. Judges are not obliged to stop the Spelling Bee to discuss denied appeals with parents, guardians, or school representatives. Judges' decisions are final and not subject to review or reversal by the Scripps National Spelling Bee headquarters. Challenges are not accepted after the competition ends. The Head Judge and Competition Managers are the final authorities on all contest questions.

_____	_____	_____
Spelling Bee Coordinator Signature	**Print Coordinator Name**	**Date**
_____	_____	_____
Parent or Guardian Signature	**Print Parent or Guardian Name**	**Date**
_____	_____	_____
Student Signature	**Print Student Name**	**Date**