

# **SPELLING BEE TIPS FOR SPELLERS**

We want to make our Spelling Bee experience the very best possible so students all have an equal opportunity, and also so the students have the experience of a well run Spelling Bee as they advance in competition – or return to competition next year.

## **1. Arrival**

A. Arrive at designated time for spellers. This is generally earlier than the audience to allow instructions to be given, questions to be answered, and time for you to get used to the physical arrangements.

## **2. Consideration**

- A. Talking or signaling to anyone in the audience or another contestant is inconsiderate of others who are spelling.
- B. Please wear nametags if provided so judges and pronouncers can identify you as a participant.

## **3. Procedure for Spelling**

When it is your turn, step directly in front of the microphone. If the microphone has a tilting mechanism, slightly move the microphone to direct it to your mouth. Use good judgment on this so there is not unnecessary, random movement.

- A. Do not spell until you have understood the pronouncer's pronunciation of your word. Remember, the pronouncer will be pleased to repronounce your word, use it in a sentence or define it to help you understand.
- B. Do not be shy about asking questions before you start to spell. If you have questions about a word you must spell, do not take any chances, ask the questions. You will find that in most cases the judges can answer your questions.
- C. Always pronounce your word before spelling. **Pronounce the word loudly and clearly.**
  - 1. This allows the pronouncer and judge to be sure you heard the word correctly pronounced.
  - 2. You may ask that the word be repeated.

3. You may ask that the word be defined.
4. You may ask that the word be used in another sentence.
5. Judges will rule if too much time is used, but within reason, ask for whatever you need to clarify a word.
6. Be sure of the form of your word. Once the pronouncer has correctly pronounced the word, it is up to the speller to hear and be sure of the form requested. Is it past tense or present? Does the pronouncer want you to spell the singular or plural form? Sometimes the judge will add an explanation to indicate the form requested, but even when the judge gives only the word, it is up to you to ask questions about the form before you spell.
7. **Think carefully – speak slowly.** Remember, even accidental errors may disqualify you. Often spellers have the correct letter in mind, but accidentally speak a different letter. Be sure you say the letter your mind wants you to say.
8. Be careful on the “easy” words. It is good news when you get a word that is “easy” for you to spell – and sometimes it is “bad news.” Why? Because many spellers try to spell the “easy” words too rapidly and get tripped up – accidentally, of course, but the accidental mistake still counts as a misspelling.
9. Retracing is repeating exactly what you have already spelled. Retrace to be sure. If you get hung up in the middle of your word and want to be sure, remember that you are permitted to retrace as long as you have not already made an error and do not misspell when you retrace.
10. Do not rush at the end of your word. When a speller gets near the end of the word, some spell too rapidly, rushing the end of the word. That can cause a misspelling. Take it easy. **Spell slowly and carefully, right down to the last letter.**

#### **4. Following the spelling of your word**

- A. After you spell the word, the judge and/or pronouncer will acknowledge whether or not it is correct.
  1. If it is not correct, the pronouncer will spell it correctly.
  2. Follow the seating directions of the Spelling Bee coordinator, if you have misspelled a word.

## 5. Challenging misspelled words

- A. If you have any questions about your word or the judges' decisions, you must ask about it either right after you spell the word or at the end of that round – before another round is started.
  - 1. The pronouncer and judge will explain their rulings.
  - 2. Each round is like its own little Spelling Bee. If indeed the ruling is incorrect and a contestant is “put back” into the Bee, it must be before others are eliminated in the next round with more difficult words.
  - 3. This step is crucial. It is part of every Spelling Bee. It is called a challenge. But mistakes cannot be corrected later; they must be clarified in the round in which they occur.

**Everyone is nervous at a Spelling Bee. If we can all follow clear guidelines and know when and how to respond and ask clarifying questions or challenges, the Spelling Bee should be a less uncomfortable time for all of us.**

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\*\*\* **GOOD LUCK!!! HAVE FUN!!!** \*\*\*  
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