



2026 rules for the Nevada State Spelling Bee

eligibility

A speller qualifying for 2026 Nevada State Spelling Bee (“NSSB”) must meet these eligibility criteria:

1. Must not have completed the eighth grade and have not reached their 15th birthday on or before August 31, 2025.
2. Must currently be enrolled in the first through eighth grade.
3. Must not have any first-, second-, or third- degree relatives (ie sibling, parent, step-parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, half-sibling or first cousin) who are current employees of The E.W. Scripps Company as of February 1, 2025.
4. Must represent a school that is enrolled in the Scripps National Spelling Bee program for the current year.

rules

- 1. Format:** A spelling bee is conducted in rounds. Each speller remaining in the spelling bee at the start of a round spells one word or answers one vocabulary question in each round. Furthermore, a spelling bee will be divided into three levels:
 - a. Beginning (at least 2 rounds of spelling and 1 round of vocabulary questions and will end when 30 or fewer spellers remain at the end of a round);
 - b. Intermediate (multiple rounds of spelling and a possible round of vocabulary questions and will end when 10 or fewer spellers remain)
 - c. Advanced (spelling rounds only) that might include words directly from Merriam-Webster.
- 2. Competition list:** NSSB utilizes lists provided by Scripps National Spelling Bee, including *School Spelling Bee list* (for school and district bees), *Words of Champions* (for district and regional bees), and words directly from Merriam-Webster Unabridged, the official dictionary of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, found at <https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com>.
- 3. Speller Accommodations:** NSSB will strive to provide accommodations for spellers who have diagnosed and documented conditions. All requests for accommodations must be submitted in writing by the speller registration deadline. NSSB has the discretion to amend oral or written spelling bee requirements on a case-by-case basis.
- 4. Pronouncer’s Role:** The pronouncer pronounces words according to pronunciations given in Merriam-Webster Unabridged as provided by SNSB. He also reads vocabulary questions and answer choices, and provides word information as listed in competition lists.
 - a. **In Oral Spelling Rounds:** The pronouncer will make every effort to identify **homonyms** and provide a definition of the word to be spelled. **It is the speller’s responsibility to understand the word to be spelled.** The pronouncer will respond to **speller requests** for a definition, example sentence part of speech, language(s) of origin, and alternative pronunciation(s) as provided in the competition list. He does not entertain root word questions, requests for alternative definitions, or requests for slower pronunciations.



2026 rules for the Nevada State Spelling Bees

- b. In Oral Vocabulary Rounds: The pronouncer reads the vocabulary question aloud and provides options (A) and (B) but does not indicate which is correct. He will make every effort to identify **homonyms** and provide the spelling of such words. It is the speller's responsibility to understand the word in the question. The pronouncer answers **speller requests** to have the question or options repeated and may also provide the spelling of the word in question.

5. Judges' Role: The judges uphold the rules and determine whether words are spelled correctly, or vocabulary questions are answered correctly. They also render **final decisions on appeals** in accordance with Rule 9. They are in complete control of the competition and their decision is final on all questions.

- a. Interaction with the speller: Because seeing the speller's lip movements is critical in detecting misunderstandings or misspellings, spellers will face the judges when at the microphone.
- b. Misunderstandings: The judges participate in the exchange of information between the speller and the pronouncer if they feel that clarification is needed. Also, the judges listen carefully to the speller's pronunciation of the word in spelling rounds. 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. **Although the judges make every effort 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.**
- c. Pronouncer errors: If the judges feel that the pronouncer's pronunciation is incorrect (according to provided diacritical markings) they direct the pronouncer to correct the error as soon as possible.
- d. Disqualification for reasons other than error: The judges will disqualify a speller (1) a speller who does not approach the microphone when it is their turn or who upon request refuses to spell the word or answer a vocabulary word question; (2) who, or whose family, engages in conduct that does not promote fair honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of competition results; (4) who, in the process of retracing a spelling, alters the letters or sequence of letters from those first uttered; (5) who, in the process of providing an answer in a vocabulary round, provides a blend of correct and incorrect information.
- e. 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 noting or failing to note the capitalization of the word, the presence of a diacritical mark, the presence of a hyphen or other form of punctuation, or spacing between words in an open compound.
- f. At any time during the bee the pronouncer or judges may determine an error or unforeseen issue has occurred and give the speller a new word to spell within the same round.



2025 rules for the Nevada State Spelling Bees

- 6. Speller's role:** Spellers will have read and understood these rules prior to the beginning of the bee. No other source of spelling bee rules will be considered. In a spelling round, the speller makes an effort to (1) face the judges and pronounce the word for the judges before spelling and after spelling it; (2) pronounce each letter distinctly and with sufficient volume to be understood by the judges. The speller may ask the pronouncer to repeat the word, define it, use it in a sentence, provide the part of speech, provide the language(s) of origin, and/or provide an alternate pronunciation(s) as listed in the pronouncer's competition list. The speller does not need to note capitalization of a word, presence of diacritical marks, presence of hyphens or other forms of punctuation, or spacing between words in an open compound. To be judged as correct and move on to the next round, the speller must provide the correct letters in the correct order.
- 7. Errors:** Upon providing an incorrect spelling of a word or an incorrect answer to a vocabulary question, the speller is immediately disqualified from competition, except as provided in Rule 8. Upon checking out from stage, the speller will have both his spelling or answer and the correct spelling or answer provided to him before exiting the stage.
- 8. End-of-Bee Procedure:**
- If all spellers in a round misspell or answer vocabulary questions incorrectly: all spellers who started the round will remain in the competition and a new round begins.
 - If only one speller in a round spells correctly or answers a vocabulary question correctly: a new spelling round begins and the speller is given an opportunity to spell a word (anticipated championship word). If the speller succeeds in correctly spelling the anticipated championship word in this round, the speller is declared the champion. If the speller misspells the word, a new spelling round begins with ALL the spellers who participated in the previous round. These spellers spell in their original order.
- 9. Appeals:** Provided that the appellant adheres to the Time and Manner Requirements specified herein, the judges will review appeals and render decisions on the following grounds:
- The speller correctly spelled the word but was eliminated for misspelling it.
 - The speller correctly spelled the homonym of the word and was not given the definition of the word.
 - In an oral vocabulary round, the speller correctly identified an answer matching the definition of a homonym of the word and was not given the spelling of the word.
 - The speller correctly spelled an alternate spelling of the word as listed in official dictionary (1) whose pronunciation is identical to *all* pronunciations of the word in question, (2) whose definition is identical to the definition provided for the word in question, and (3) that is clearly identified as a standard variant of the word in question.
 - Invalid grounds for reinstatement: The judges will not entertain appeals on any of the following grounds:
 - The pronouncer allegedly mispronounced the word.
 - The pronouncer offered pronunciations and/or word information that the speller did not request, and the unrequested information contributed to the misspelling.



2025 rules for the Nevada State Spelling Bees

- iii. 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 wasn't pronouncing it correctly.
 - iv. One or all Bee officials did not inform the speller before spelling that the speller's pronunciation was incorrect and/or the speller was misunderstanding the word, and this inaction contributed to the misspelling.
 - v. The speller offered a correct spelling as indicated in a dictionary other than Merriam-Webster Unabridged, or other online or print sources.
- f. **Time and Manner Requirements for Appeals:** The speller, a parent or guardian, or teacher or principal of the speller, must approach the Spelling Bee Director between the round in question and the beginning of the next round providing (1) the speller's name and spelling number; (2) the word in question; (3) their name and relationship to the speller; and (4) which of the 4 grounds listed in **9.e** above (a-d) apply, at which time the Spelling Bee director will confer with the judges and render a decision. If the appeal is for a reason not listed in **9.e (a-d)** above, the appeal will not be considered. **All decisions by the judges are final.** The judges are under no obligation to stop the bee to further discuss a denied appeal. **These are the official rules and no other source of spelling bee rules will be considered.**

I have read and understand the above listed rules and understand that all decisions made by bee officials are final.

Speller's printed name, grade, and school district:

Speller's signature

Parent or guardian signature
