

A Quick Summary of Class Spelling Bee Procedures

For more details – see the detailed rules from Scripps

The spelling bee is conducted in rounds where each student spells one word per round. It begins with the whole class. Word lists for the Bee are selected from the lists generated by Scripps. Each spelling will be run by two adults: a judge and a pronouncer.

The pronouncer is familiar with the list chosen by Scripps for the spelling bee and will say the words as clearly as possible. Pronouncers should make clear which word is being spelled if it has a homonym by defining the word. The responsibility for any misunderstanding is on the speller. He or she should ask for more information if they are not sure which word the pronouncer is saying. Spellers can ask the pronouncer for: definition, sentence, part of speech, language(s) of origin, and alternate pronunciation(s).

A judge's job is to decide if the speller spelled the word correctly. The judge should sit where he or she can easily see the speller's mouth. Judges take an active role in the information exchanged between the pronouncer and speller – if something looks like it may be confusing to the speller or mispronounced by the pronouncer, the judge can step in and clarify. If the judge decided that a speller has misspelled a word – the speller is disqualified or “out” and will not participate in future rounds. Other items that a judge can consider disqualifying a speller are: refusing to spell a word or come to the front, beginning to spell a word and then changing the order of the letters, or saying nonsense or unintelligible sounds. Spellers cannot be disqualified for pronouncing words incorrectly, for failing to note capitalization, for failing to note hyphens or other punctuation, or for failing to note spacing on compound words.

Rounds in the bee continue until there is only one champion speller. If all spellers are eliminated in a round, all the spellers in that round continue to the next round.