

2024 Spelling Bee Rules



General

1. All contestants must fill out an entry form including the signature of a parent or guardian. Any student in grades 4-7 may participate, whether public, private, parochial, or home schooled, as long as they attend or reside in the area covered by the Knights of Columbus council or hosting parochial school.
2. To prepare for the competition, participants may view and print the word lists for all four grade levels at <http://iowakofc.org/page/spelling-bee>. These lists will be released **no later than December 16, 2023**. The same lists are used at the local, regional, and state levels. Each grade will start with their grade's list. Whenever the pronouncer feels the current list is insufficient to produce a winner, they may change to the next level word list. An undisclosed "challenge" list will be used after the seventh-grade list. If the spelling list used at the next grade level is insufficient to eliminate any speller after twenty minutes of competition, the spelling bee may change to the list which is TWO grade levels up. (i.e., 4th grade uses the 6th grade word list, 5th grade uses the 7th grade word list, and 6th and 7th graders use the "challenge list).
3. The first, second, and third place contestants in each grade at each local competition will advance to one of four regional competitions. The first, second, and third place contestants in each grade at each regional competition will advance to the state competition. If any of the finalists is unable to attend the next competition the fourth place contestant may go in place.

Contest Procedures

4. Contestants should check in with the pronouncer in their room. The pronouncer is responsible for keeping the contest fair and organized and may consult with judges or the event director at any time. The pronouncer will seat the contestants in the front of the room in random order, facing the pronouncer with their backs to the audience. Audiences are welcome, but must not distract the contestants. If there are many contestants in one grade, the contestants may be split into separate rooms for initial rounds and later combined--before either room drops below three contestants.
5. A practice round will be used where no one is eliminated. If possible, the contestant should stand for their turn. The pronouncer will say the word, use it in a sentence, and then repeat the word. If the contestant is unsure of the word, he or she may ask the pronouncer to repeat it or define it. Although only judged on the spelling, contestants are encouraged to pronounce the word, spell the word, and then repeat the pronunciation.
6. When available, a recording device may be used so the pronouncer and judges can review a spelling if needed. Video cameras are allowed but shall not be used for judging. If the pronouncer determines that a word is incorrectly spelled by the contestant that contestant is eliminated with two exceptions:
 - a. Anyone present may ask the pronouncer if the word has another spelling. After hearing the protest, the judge will check the available dictionary, review the recording if necessary, and render a decision. The protest may be made at any time until the eliminated contestant's next turn has passed, after that it is too late to protest.
 - b. If all remaining contestants are eliminated in the same round, all contestants in that round will return to the competition. If all contestants except one are eliminated in the same round, that contestant will be declared the winner and the remaining contestants will continue for second place.

Final Two Contestants

7. When the contestants are reduced to two, the elimination procedure changes. When one contestant misspells a word, the other contestant shall be given the opportunity to spell the same word. If the second contestant spells the word correctly, plus the next word on the pronouncer's list, then he/she shall be declared the champion.
8. If contestant A misspells a word and contestant B spells that word correctly, but misspells the next word, then the newly misspelled word shall be referred to contestant A. If contestant A then succeeds in correctly spelling the word and correctly spells the next word on the pronouncer's list, then contestant A shall be declared the champion.
9. If both contestants misspell the same word, both shall continue in the contest and the one who first misspelled the word shall be given the next word.