



## 2020 AEF™ Arizona Spelling Bee Rules

**NOTE:** These rules pertain to the AEF™ Arizona Spelling Bee administered by the Arizona Educational Foundation; they may or may not be reflective of Scripps National Spelling Bee Suggested Rules. The **Scripps National Spelling Bee has no authority over the conduct of local spelling bees**, namely bees other than the National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C. Consequently, the national office will not render judgments relating to the conduct of local spelling bees. **The Arizona Educational Foundation (AEF) has no authority over the conduct of bees leading up to the Arizona Spelling Bee.** Consequently, AEF will not render judgments relating to the conduct of bees leading up to the Arizona Spelling Bee. Individuals bearing complaints about the conduct of local spelling bees should register their concerns with local spelling bee officials. ALL DECISIONS OF LOCAL SPELLING BEE OFFICIALS ARE FINAL.

Before beginning the spelling bee, ensure that everyone is aware of the rules AT THIS BEE. You may wish to read aloud those rules that are applicable to the running of the Bee itself although all rules apply to the bee and all its participants.

1. Spellers participating in the championship finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., must qualify under these basic requirements:

- (a) The speller must not have won a Scripps National Spelling Bee championship near Washington, D.C.
- (b) The speller must attend a school that is officially [enrolled](#) with the Scripps National Spelling Bee.
- (c) The speller must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before **February 1, 2020**.
- (d) The speller must not have repeated any grade for the purpose of extending spelling bee eligibility. If the speller has repeated any grade, the speller must notify the Scripps National Spelling Bee of the circumstances of grade repetition by **March 31, 2020**; and the Scripps National Spelling Bee will, in its sole discretion, determine the speller's eligibility status on or before **April 30, 2020**.
- (e) The speller—or the speller's parent, legal guardian, or school official acting on the speller's behalf—must not have declared to another entity an academic classification higher than eighth grade for any purpose, including high school graduation equivalency or proficiency examinations and/or examinations such as the PSAT, SAT, or ACT.
- (f) The speller must not have earned the legal equivalent of a high school diploma.
- (g) The speller must not avoid normal school activity to study for spelling bees. The Scripps National Spelling Bee defines normal school activity as adherence to at least four courses of study other than language arts, spelling, Latin, Greek, vocabulary, and etymology for at least four hours per weekday for 34 of the 38 weeks between August 2019, and May 2020.
- (h) The speller must not have reached his/her 15th birthday on or before August 31, 2019.
- (i) The speller must have been declared a champion of a Scripps-sanctioned final local spelling bee taking place on or after February 1, 2020, or be a spelling champion whose application for participation in the

Scripps National Spelling Bee's self-sponsorship program has received final approval by the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

- (j) The speller, upon qualifying for the 2020 Scripps National Spelling Bee in the Washington, D.C. area, must submit a completed Champion Bio Profile, a Certification of Eligibility Form, a signed Appearance Consent and Release Form and a photo to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. The speller will notify the Bee, at least 24 hours prior to the first day of competition in the 2020 Scripps National Spelling Bee, if any of the statements made on the Certification of Eligibility Form are no longer true or require updating. The speller's sponsor will provide access to the necessary forms.
- (k) The speller must not have any first-, second- or third-degree relatives (i.e. sibling, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, half-sibling, first cousin or great grandparents) who are current employees of The E.W. Scripps Company.

**NOTE:** With regard to requirements (c) and (h), spelling bee officials at the school, district, county, regional or state level may, at their discretion, set a minimum grade and/or age limit, though there are no minimum grade and/or age limits at the AEF Arizona Spelling Bee or Scripps National Spelling Bee.

2. Contests for classroom, school, charter, district, city, regional, or home-school championships may be conducted either in writing or orally, or a combination of the two. Introduction of a supplemental vocabulary component into a spelling bee competition at any level in Arizona is optional. The state finals will be an oral competition only (spellers will not be allowed to use writing instruments or paper during the competition) with eliminations on a "miss-and-out" basis, *except as provided in Rule 12.*

3. **Words used in the state and national finals shall be selected from the 2020 School Spelling Bee Study List** provided to schools following [enrollment](#) with and payment to Scripps National Spelling Bee and from [Merriam-Webster Unabridged](#). Merriam-Webster Unabridged is the final authority and sole source for the spelling of words; the primary source used to craft the pronunciations, definitions, and language origins for the Bee; and the only authority consulted by officials, as well as the sole source used during the Bee to verify the information in our prepared lists.

4. **Spelling bee officials will strive to provide accommodations for spellers who have physical challenges.** All requests for spelling bee officials to accommodate special needs involving sight, hearing, speech, or movement should be directed to spelling bee officials well in advance of the spelling bee date. The Arizona Educational Foundation must be notified of any special needs or accommodations at the Arizona State Spelling Bee before March 1, 2020. The judges have discretionary power to amend oral requirements on a case-by-case basis for spellers with diagnosed medical conditions involving sight, hearing, speech, or movement.

5. The pronouncer should make every effort to pronounce the words according to the diacritical markings in Scripps National Spelling Bee word list and [Merriam-Webster Unabridged](#).

6. In competition, after the pronouncer gives the contestant a word, the contestant will be encouraged to pronounce the word before spelling it and after spelling it. However, no contestant will be eliminated for failing to pronounce a word, but the **contestant must spell the word that is pronounced**. While the judges attempt 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.

7. **The contestant may request the pronouncer to pronounce the word again, define it, or use it in a sentence. The contestant may ask for the language origin of a word.** No other information about the

etymology or history of a word will be given. The pronouncer will not entertain root word questions, requests for alternate definitions, or requests for markedly slower pronunciation. The pronouncer shall grant all such requests until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the contestant. THE JUDGES MAY DISQUALIFY ANY CONTESTANT WHO IGNORES A REQUEST TO START SPELLING. The judges may also disqualify a speller

- (a) who does not approach the microphone when it is time to receive the word;
- (b) who does not comply with the eligibility requirements;
- (c) who engages in unsportsmanlike conduct; or
- (d) who, in the process of spelling, utters unintelligible or nonsense sounds.

**8. The role of the pronouncer is to correctly pronounce the word; the pronouncer will give a sentence, definition, and other information about the word at the speller's request.** If the contestant thinks the word may be pronounced differently, the contestant must provide the alternate pronunciation and ask if the dictionary lists the pronunciation provided by the contestant. The role of the judges is to determine whether the contestant has spelled the word correctly. The role of the speller is to gather as much information as possible to help spell the word correctly, and to spell the word correctly. It is the speller's responsibility to understand the word. **The judges may not disqualify a speller for asking a question.**

9. A contestant starting to spell a word 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 are changed or their sequence is changed in the respelling, the speller will be eliminated.

10. The spelling bee shall be conducted in rounds. Each contestant remaining in the bee at the start of a round shall spell one word in the round, *except as provided in Rule 12.*

11. Upon missing the spelling of a word, a contestant immediately drops out of the contest, *except as provided in Rule 12.* The next word on the pronouncer's list is given to the next contestant.

**12. When the number of spellers is reduced to two, the elimination procedure changes.** At that point, when one speller misspells a word, the other speller shall be given an opportunity to spell that same word. If the second speller spells that word correctly, plus the next word on the pronouncer's list, then the second speller shall be declared the champion.

If one of the last two spellers misspells a word and the other speller, after correcting the error, misspells the new word, then the misspelled new word shall be referred to the other speller. If this other speller then succeeds in correcting the error and spells the next word on the list, then (s)he shall be declared the champion.

If both spellers misspell the same word, both shall continue in the competition, and the one who first misspelled the word shall be given a new word to spell.

The champion is not determined until (s)he corrects the misspelling of the other speller and then correctly spells the next word on the list.

**13. [Merriam-Webster Unabridged](#) is the final authority and sole source for the spelling of words;** the primary source used to craft the pronunciations, definitions and language origins for the Bee; and the only authority consulted by officials, as well as the sole source used during the Bee to verify the information in our

prepared lists. If more than one spelling is listed for a word, any of these spellings will be accepted as correct if the word either matches the pronunciation and definition provided by the pronouncer, or if it is clearly identified as being a standard variant of the word that the contestant has been asked to spell. Spellings at other locations having *archaic*, *obsolete*, or *regional* labels (such as North, Midland, South Brit(ish), Irish) that are different from those at the main entry will not be accepted as correct.

14. **If a word has one or more homonyms, the pronouncer will indicate which of these is to be spelled.** If the listed word is not properly identified, either by defining it or by distinguishing the homonyms, any correct spelling of any homonym will be accepted.

15. Any question relating to the spelling of a word should be referred to the designated official immediately. Appeals may be filed by a parent, legal guardian, or teacher of the speller who is seeking reinstatement in the contest. The judges will not entertain appeals from individuals seeking to dislodge another speller from the competition. **The deadline for filing an appeal is before the speller affected would have received his/her next word had he/she stayed in the competition.** No appeal will be entertained after that word has been given to another speller. **When only two spellers remain, an appeal must be made immediately**, that is, before a misspelled word is given to the other contestant. A protest would state the word in question, the name of the speller, and the reason for the protest.

16. The speller shall not be disqualified for failing to note that a word is capitalized (noted as “cap,” “usu cap,” “often cap,” or “sometimes cap”).

17. **The judges are in complete control of the bee. Their decisions shall be final on all questions.** The Scripps National Spelling Bee has no authority over the conduct of any local spelling bees (namely, spelling bees other than the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.). State Spelling Bee judges’ decisions are final and are subject neither to review nor to reversal by the Scripps National Spelling Bee’s headquarters office.