

Humboldt County Office of Education

Elementary Spelling Bee

Rules and Procedures

These rules are guidelines designed to assist spelling bee officials and spellers at the local level. County Spelling Bee guidelines are based on the State Spelling Bee guidelines. Spelling bee officials include the pronouncer (spell master/moderator), judges, coordinator, or sponsor.

Preface: The Humboldt County Elementary Spelling Bee has no authority over the conduct of local spelling bees. Consequently, the Humboldt County Office of Education will not render judgments relating to the conduct of local spelling bees. Individuals bearing complaints about the conduct of local spelling bees should register their concerns with local spelling bee officials. Decisions of local spelling bee officials are final.

Eligibility: This spelling championship is open to two students from each region in Humboldt County in grades 4-6 who have been certified as region champions.

Competition Rules

1. This is an oral competition in which students will be eliminated after their first misspelling. A scratch pad and pencil are available at the podium for the spellers to write the word, but the speller must then spell the word orally for competition. Paper, pencil, and other items are not allowed to be kept with students except as provided.
2. Words used in the competition are chosen randomly prior to the competition from any sources deemed appropriate by the Spell Master and Judges. During the competition, the words used in each successive round increase in difficulty.
3. In competition, spellers may pronounce words before spelling, after spelling, or not at all. However, you are encouraged to pronounce the word BEFORE spelling to ensure that you heard the word correctly. For example, if you are given the word baseball and you spell baseballs, your spelling will be considered incorrect. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the student to understand the word from the pronunciation, definition and sentence.
4. Once you begin to spell a word, you will not have a chance to change letters once pronounced. A speller may repeat the word orally, provided letters and their sequence are not changed.
5. At any time, a speller may request that a word be re-pronounced, defined, or used in a sentence. Spellers may also request the origin of the word. The Spell Master shall grant the request(s) until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the speller.
6. If the language of origin of the word is requested, the Spell Master will give the first language listed from the Merriam Webster Unabridged Online Website.
7. Judges may disqualify any speller who ignores a request to start spelling the word within a reasonable time period.

8. If, no definition of a homonym is given, the correct spelling of either word shall be accepted as correct. When a speller is given the definition of a homonym, he or she must spell the word defined.

9. Students will be given a number which determines their seat assignment and the order in which they spell. Once a round is started, all students still remaining in the competition MUST spell a word. If at the end of any round, there remain two or fewer competitors, those students will be named finalists and the top spellers of the competition.

10. Any problem relating to the spelling of a word must be referred to the Officials. If the protest is valid, the Judges will be informed immediately (before the beginning of the next round). No protest will be entertained after the round is over or the contest has ended. The decision of the Judges and Spell Master will be final in all questions.

9. In competition, words will be chosen from any source deemed appropriate by the judges, including the official Elementary Word List. Words will not be limited to any specific list; however, all words will be taken from the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary Unabridged Online Website. the official reference for the competition. If there are multiple pronunciations for any given word, we will use www.dictionary.com as a secondary pronunciation source.

10. The spelling master, proctors and judge will be in complete charge of the contest. Their decision will be final on all questions.

11. In the event of a protest or dispute, decisions will be based on Merriam Webster Unabridged Online Website. No other source will be allowed.

12. Once the competition begins, spellers must remain in the competition area. Family and friends are not permitted on stage.

13. Restroom breaks: Spellers may—one at a time—request to use the restroom. Spellers will be escorted. Upon returning to the competition, the next speller who needs to use the restroom may follow the same procedure.

14. To minimize disruptions during this competition we ask audience members to turn off cell phones and pagers.

For more information, please contact:

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