

NJSFWC JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

Official Spelling Bee Rules- UPDATED October 2010

All rules must be made available to Spelling Bee contestants *prior* to the competition and also read out loud to the contestants and audience members on the day of the Spelling Bee *before* competition begins.

1. **Grade/Enrollment:** Participants must be enrolled in the fourth or fifth grade.
2. **Pronouncing Words:** In competition, the pronouncer gives the contestant a word. The contestant must pronounce the word, spell the word, and pronounce the word again.
3. **Re-pronouncing and Definitions:** The contestant may ask the pronouncer to re-pronounce the word, define it, or use it in a sentence. The pronouncer may grant all the requests until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear. Judges may disqualify any contestant who ignores a request to start spelling.
4. **Pauses or Re-starts to Spelling:** Having started to spell a word, a contestant may stop and start over, retracing the spelling from the beginning, but in retracing, there can be ***no change*** of letters and their sequence from those first pronounced. If letters or their sequence are changed in the respelling, the contestant will be eliminated.
5. **Questions Related to Word Spellings:** Any question relating to the spelling of a word should be referred to the judges ***immediately***, before the correct spelling is given.
6. **Talking Among Contestants:** Once the Spelling Bee begins, there shall be no talking between the contestants. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in the contestant being disqualified from the remainder of the competition.
7. **Misspelled Words:** Upon missing the spelling of a word, the contestant will be informed by the pronouncer or judge that the word is incorrect and must immediately drop out of the contest and exit the spelling area to join the audience as a spectator. Competition continues with the next word being given to the next contestant.
8. **Final Two Contestants Scenario #1:** When the contestants are reduced to the final two, the elimination procedure ***changes***. At that point, when one contestant (A) misspells a word, the other contestant (B) shall be given an opportunity to spell that same word. If the second contestant (B) spells that word ***correctly***, ***plus*** spells the next word on the list correctly, then the second contestant (B) shall be declared the champion. The first contestant (A) becomes the second-place winner.
9. **Final Two Contestants Scenario #2:** When the contestants are reduced to the final two, the elimination procedure ***changes***. At that point, when one contestant (A) misspells a word, the other contestant (B) shall be given an opportunity to spell that same word. If the second contestant (B) spells that word ***correctly***, but then misspells the next word given to him or her, the first contestant (A) is given the opportunity to spell that same word. If the first contestant (A) then succeeds in correcting the error and correctly spells the next word given, then he or she shall be declared the champion and the second contestant (B) becomes the second-place winner.
10. **Final Two Contestants Scenario #3:** When the contestants are reduced to the final two, the elimination procedure ***changes***. At that point, when one contestant (A) misspells a word, the other contestant (B) shall be given an opportunity to spell that same word. If the second contestant (B) ***also*** misspells that word, then both contestants shall continue in the contest. The contestant who ***first*** misspelled the word (A) shall be given a new word to spell. The contestants then continue under rules 8 and 9.
11. **Official Dictionary: Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary: 11th Edition** shall serve as the final authority for the spelling of the words. If more than one spelling is listed for a word, any of these spellings will be accepted as correct if the alternate spelling appears in boldface type.
12. **Practice Word Lists:** Every contestant will receive a practice word list. Some words for the Bee may be chosen from the practice word list. Additional words will be added. No contestant at the Club, District, or State levels will receive any official competition word lists.
13. **Homonyms:** During competition, a contestant may receive a word that is a homonym, meaning a word could have two *different* and *correct* spellings with two distinct meanings. Example: "plane" vs. "plain." In any case where a contestant is unsure of the word intended to be spelled, it is the responsibility of the **contestant** to ask for a definition. It is not the responsibility of the pronouncer or any other Bee official to inform the contestant that the word is a homonym in advance of giving the word.
14. **Proper Nouns:** During competition, contestants may receive a word or words that are proper nouns, meaning that the word or words must include capital letters. All capital letters must be indicated during the spelling of the word. For example: if the word "Rhode Island" is given, then the contestant must spell as follows: "Rhode Island (pause) capital R-h-o-d-e capital I-s-l-a-n-d (pause) Rhode Island."
15. **Final Decisions:** The decisions of the judges shall be final on all questions.