

2018 NATIONAL SENIOR SPELLING BEE RULES *

As of February 11, 2018

1. Spellers must be at least 50 years old on the date of the bee (July 21, 2018). Spellers need to bring proof of age. The registration fee is \$50. Most of this money goes toward the lunch and room rental. IF 15 PEOPLE SIGN UP BY MAY 21, WE WILL PLAN TO HAVE THE BEE. If there is not enough interest, the checks sent in will be destroyed (or returned if so requested). After May 21, assuming the bee is on, others may register by July 14 to guarantee a lunch. Same-day registrations will be accepted. FORMER CHAMPIONS MAY COMPETE WITH A SLIGHT HANDICAP (see rule 4).
2. All words used in this Bee will be taken from the A-Z main section (not the appendices in the back) of the printed version of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition. (Words will be in any copyright year, beginning in 2003. So, words added in 2007, for example, will not be used. This means that any 11th edition dictionary will work.) Hyphenated entries AND CAPITALIZED WORDS will not be used. Primary variants (e.g. likeable or likable) and secondary variants (e.g. cancellation also cancelation) may be used. Words with variant spelling must have the same or very similar pronunciations to be accepted (e.g., "ipecac" would not be accepted for "ipecacuanha", even though they are variants of each other). Words with diacritical marks may be used (e.g., malgré or doña). Spellers do not need to say the diacritical mark. Singular, plural, and inflected forms of words may also be used.
3. THIS YEAR THERE WILL BE NO WRITTEN PART.
4. A drawing will determine the order in which spellers are asked to spell. Each speller will be given a word to spell; he/she will be eliminated after misspelling FOUR (4) words, except for former champions, who will be eliminated after TWO (2) misses. When a speller misspells a word, the bell will sound and the correct spelling will be given. If there are too many spellers to fit comfortably on the stage at one time (probably more than 16), there will be two groups in the morning session. Group A will have about 6 rounds of words, then Group B will have the same number of rounds. The groups will be chosen by random draw. The first round will consist of words that are fairly common, such as "recommend", or "embarrass". The rest of the rounds in the morning will have words from Scott Firebaugh's master list of over 8000 words. Group A and Group B will have words with roughly the same difficulty level for each round. After lunch the remaining spellers will be combined into one group. Some of the words used in the afternoon session will not be on the "master list".
5. The Pronouncer will pronounce each word twice. He/she may also indicate its part of speech, number, language of origin, definition, usage in a sentence, and pronounce it a third time if requested to do so before the speller begins to spell.
6. Spellers must speak clearly and intelligibly enough to be understood by the judges. Spellers should pronounce the word before spelling so judges know they have heard the word correctly. Spellers should pronounce the word after spelling to indicate they have finished. Passing a cordless microphone to the next speller or stepping away from a fixed microphone will also indicate the speller is finished. There is no fixed time limit, but spellers may not stall. The head judge or pronouncer has the right to ask a speller to begin spelling immediately after a sufficient time has passed.
7. Spellers may change a spelling before indicating they have finished spelling.
8. Spellers who wish to challenge a word judged incorrectly spelled must do so before they would receive their next word in the next round.
9. A spell-off will be held if more than one speller ties for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th place. Spellers eliminated in the same round are tied in the final results.
10. The winner will receive a trophy. The top four will receive monetary prizes to be determined later.

*These rules are subject to change, with notice.