

## **SPELLING BEE RULES**

1. The official rules of the SCISA regional and state spelling bees are BELOW. NO other competition rules, newspaper bee rules, study guide, suggestions, notation, or practice book shall apply to the SCISA bees.
2. The South Carolina Independent School Association will sponsor regional spelling bees in January and the state final spelling bee in February. Competition in the regional bees is open to students in grades 3-8. Each school may send two students per grade (3-8) to the regional bee. Regional finalists in grades 3-8 become eligible to compete in the state final bee. Individual winners and the overall school champion is determined by points earned in both the regional and state final bees.

An explanation of the point accumulation is as follows:

During the Regional Spelling Bee, a finalist earns 6 points, a 3<sup>rd</sup> place earns 4 points, and 4<sup>th</sup> place earns 2 points. Also, each school earns 1 point for each contestant they bring. Total points won by contestants in all grades, 3-8, are added and these totals will serve as a departure point to determine school champions at the State Bee.

If for any reason one of the two finalists is unable to attend the State Bee, the third place finisher takes his or her place. However, the total point value earned by each school remains firm, and is not affected by a third place finisher who later becomes a finalist.

During the State Bee, the points earned are different. The first place contestant earns 10 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> place earns 8 points, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place earns 6 points. These points are then added to the Regional points to determine the overall State Spelling Bee Champion School. A first place champion and a runner-up trophy will be awarded.

### **Students competing in the SCISA Spelling Bee must qualify under two basic requirements:**

- A. A student must not have passed beyond the grade in which they are competing at the time of the regional finals in the respective regions.
  - B. A student may not compete in the same grade for two consecutive years.
3. Contests at region and state level will be conducted in ORAL spelling. Teachers may in preparation for the classroom elimination use a combination of written and oral spelling, but sometimes during practice, it is advisable to use oral spelling only, have contestants stand, enunciate SLOWLY, AUDIBLY, and practice good spelling bee manners that will be required at the finals. All contests should be held in an area that is conducive to concentration, with no-entry signs posted and other possible distractions monitored.
  4. At the regional and state finals, words to be spelled by contestants will be selected at random before the contest by the officials. Words selected will be pronounced in a pre-planned sequence, not in alphabetical order, and in increasing order of difficulty. Normally, easier words will be assigned for the first two or three rounds to establish the pattern of the spelloff and reduce contestant nervousness.
  5. The final authority on all words will be Webster's Third New International Dictionary, from which words will be pronounced according to the diacritical markings and definitions selected. If a word has two or more accepted spellings, only the spellings set in bold face type at the beginning of the descriptive matter will be accepted as correct. Spellings have archaic, obsolete, or regional labels (such as North Midland, South, British, Irish) that are different from those at the main entry will not be accepted as correct.

6. In competition, after the pronouncer gives the contestant a word, the contestant may pronounce the word before spelling, after spelling, or if he chooses, not at all. However, it is recommended that the contestant pronounce the word before spelling to give officials a chance to hear that the contestant has properly identified the word.
7. Before commencing spelling, a contestant may request the pronouncer to re-pronounce the word, define it, reveal the language of origin, or use it in a sentence. The pronouncer shall grant the request/s until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the contestant. **OFFICIALS MAY DISQUALIFY A CONTESTANT WHO IGNORES A REQUEST TO START SPELLING.**
8. If a contestant is given a homonym, it is the responsibility of the student contestant to determine the proper spelling of the word by asking for a definition, use in a sentence, or other help as allowed in the rules. (Refer to rule 7.) He or she must correctly spell the word defined.

#### **OFFICIALS**

9. Contests at the regional and state level will have three officials: one pronouncer, and three judges. They are in complete control of the contest, and their decision will be final on all questions.
10. Words spelled by contestants will be written by the judges as they are spelled, letter by letter, and compared with the master list. The judges must agree on the spelling or misspelling of an assigned word before decision is made to pass, eliminate, or disqualify a contestant. A ring of a bell will signal that the word has been misspelled and the contestant will be seated.
11. The pronouncer will ensure a noise free environment for the contestants and has the right to have anyone removed from the audience.

#### **COMPETITION**

12. Contestants in both the REGIONAL AND STATE FINAL competition must draw for order of competition during designated registration time and be aligned in numerical sequence. The student contestant must present him or herself at the registration table during the designated time and sign in and draw a number for competition. A teacher or parent may NOT do this for the student. **THE REGIONAL HOST SCHOOLS WILL INFORM THE SCHOOLS IN THEIR REGION OF THE REGISTRATION TIME.** Any school or individual student that does not arrive to register on time will be disqualified. Any student who does not register during the appointed time will not be allowed to compete. It is not required that grade contests be held in numerical order.
13. Having started to spell a word, a contestant may stop and start over, retracing the spelling from the beginning, but in the retracing there can be no change of letters and/or their sequence from those first pronounced. If letters and their sequence are changed in the respelling, the officials will rule that the speller has misspelled the word by the ring of the bell.
14. If there are more than two contestants, upon missing the spelling of a word, the contestant immediately drops out of the contest. In REGIONAL competition, when the contest has been reduced to the last two spellers, the speldown competition is over and the last two spellers are declared REGIONAL FINALISTS.
15. In the STATE FINAL competition, when the contestants have been reduced to two spellers, the elimination procedure changes. At that point, when one of the contestants misspells a word, the other contestant shall be given opportunity to spell that same word. If the second contestant spells that word correctly, plus the next word on the pronouncer's list, then the second contestant shall be declared the champion.

16. In the STATE FINAL competition, if one of the last two spellers misses, and the other, after correcting the error, misspells the next word submitted to him, then the misspelled new word shall be referred to the first speller. If the first speller succeeds in correcting the error and correctly spells the next word on the pronouncer's list, then he shall be declared the champion.
17. In the STATE FINAL competition, if both spellers misspell the same word, both shall continue in the contest, and the one who first misspelled the word shall be given a new word to spell. The contest shall continue under rules 16 and 17.

### **SPORTSMANSHIP**

18. It is expected that everyone who attends a regional or state spelling bee shall display courteous behavior and sportsmanship at all times. The SCISA Student Activities Committee approves the rules and format and host schools who conduct the regional and state spelling bees are following an exact script from which they may not vary. Any person who wishes to make comments regarding any aspect of the spelling been must address them in writing to the SCISA State Office in Orangeburg. School heads should make all spelling bee observers aware of the rules, format, instructions, sportsmanship expectations, and protest procedures. An individual or a school may be disqualified for any display of unsportsmanlike conduct.

**\*\*\* The judges have sole responsibility for disqualifications \*\*\***

## **REMINDERS FOR:**

### **Spellers, Sponsors, Coaches and Parents**

- Word list is included and may be duplicated as needed. Make sure each child receives all 21 pages.
- There are NO graded lists.
- Every speller is to study all words including "Challenge Words."
- Encourage your spellers to study the "Spelling Tips" (when supplied.) They are valuable tools in teaching spelling as opposed to memorizing words on a given list.
- Any and all words on the list may be used at any point during any grade level spelldown.
- Rule #4 states: "Words at random from Webster's Third New International Dictionary may be called during any grade level spelldown."

- Remember, we are seeking the best spellers, not the student who can memorize the most words!
- You will be asked by your Host School for the names and grade level of each of your regional spellers.
- Regional assignments will be made after the December 12 deadline.