

California State Spelling Bee

Eligibility Rules

Updated March 2024 and subject to change

These rules are guidelines designed to assist spelling bee officials and spellers at the local level. Spellers should check with their local spelling bee officials for the rules in effect in their area. Spelling bee officials include the pronouncer (spell master/moderator), judges, coordinator, or sponsor.

Preface:

The California State Spelling Bee has no authority over the conduct of local spelling bees. Consequently, the San Joaquin 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 county in California in grades 4-6 and 7-9 who have been certified as county champions by their county school superintendent or authorized designee.

Once having been disqualified at any level of a qualifying spelling bee program between **June 1, 2023** and **April 27, 2024**, the speller remains disqualified for the **2024** California State Elementary and Junior High Spelling Bee Championship programs and may not seek advancement in the 2023 California State Spelling Bee Championship through another sponsor and/or enrollment in another school or county.



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Competition Rules

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1. This is a written competition in which students will be eliminated after their second misspelling. Students will be given test booklets to write their words in.
2. Competitors must remove all electronics from their person. This includes airpods, watches, bracelets, etc. Accommodations will be made as needed and determined by the State Spelling Bee Coordinator.
3. 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.
4. In competition, it is the responsibility of the student to understand the word from the pronunciation, definition and sentence.
5. Once you begin to spell a word, cross it out if you feel you are incorrect and write again on the same line. Students will have 20 seconds to finalize their spelling.
6. At any time, in Rounds 1-9, a speller may request that a word be re-pronounced, defined, or used in a sentence. The Spell Master shall grant the request(s) until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the speller or the 20 second time limit is up.
7. No language of origin will be provided.
8. Judges may disqualify any speller who ignores a request to start spelling the word within a reasonable time period.
9. 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.
10. Students will be given a number which determines their seat assignment. Once a round is started, all students still remaining in the competition **MUST** write/spell a word. The next rounds will proceed in the same manner until only one student remains. This student will be named the state champion.
11. Protests will need to be addressed immediately after there is a question on one of the words. Students will need to advocate for themselves and raise their hand if concerned about the spelling of a word. The judge from their row will immediately come to the student and ask what their concern is. If a protest is requested, the judge will escort the student to the protest table and their concern will be addressed before the next word is given.

11. Once the competition begins, spellers must remain in the competition area. Family and friends are permitted in the testing room.
12. Restroom breaks will be given after each two rounds
13. To minimize disruptions during this competition we ask audience members to turn off cell phones and other electrical devices.

For competitors who make it to Round 10, this round will be a speed round. Competitors will be given the word, definition, will use it in a sentence, and the word will be repeated again. Students will then have to write the word as quickly as possible. Once finished writing the word, students will hit a buzzer, spellers will earn points based on their standing. This will depend upon the amount of spellers still left in Round 10. After 15 words, the speller with the lowest score will win the competition. Further instructions will be given the day of the competition.