

Spelling Bee Rules

1. The Oakland Unified School District competition is open to school site winners from elementary and middle schools.
2. This is an oral competition. A scratch pad and pencil will be available on the table for the speller to write the word, but the speller must spell the word out loud for competition. Paper and pencil are not allowed except as provided on the table.
3. **A study word list was compiled to aid students in preparing for the competition. However, actual words used throughout the competition will not be limited to this list or any other list. Rather, words may be chosen from any source deemed appropriate by the judges and the Spell Master.**
4. In competition, spellers may pronounce words before spelling, after spelling, or not at all. **However, spellers are encouraged to pronounce the word BEFORE spelling to ensure that they heard the word correctly.** For example, if a speller is given the word *baseball* and spells *baseballs*, the spelling will be considered incorrect. Or, if a speller is given *absence* and spells *absent*, the spelling will be considered incorrect.
5. Once a speller begins to spell a word, he/she 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. The speller must indicate words with apostrophes, capitals, other punctuation marks, and any accent marks either over the letter or at the end of the word.
6. At any time, 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.
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. There is an element of chance in this competition. Spellers will be eliminated in the order in which they misspell words. That is, when a speller fails to spell a word correctly, he/she must drop out of the competition. The Spell Master will announce the correct spelling of the word and a greeter will escort the student back to the audience at the appropriate time. Another word shall be given to the next speller in line.

10. When only two spellers remain, the elimination procedure changes. At that point, when a speller misspells a word, the other speller will be given the opportunity to spell the same word.
 - If the second speller spells that word and the next word correctly, the second speller will be declared the champion.
 - If one of the last two spellers misses a word and the other, after correcting the error, misspells the new word, both will continue in the contest with a new word.
 - If both spellers misspell the same word, both will continue in the contest and a new word will be given.

11. The decision of the judges and Spell Master will be final in all cases. Any problem relating to the spelling of a word must be referred to the judges immediately (before the beginning of the next round). No protest will be entertained after the contest has ended.

12. In the event of a protest or dispute, decisions will be based on *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, the official contest dictionary. No other source will be allowed.

13. Once the competition begins, spellers must remain in the competition area. A stage assistant will be available to escort spellers to restrooms.

14. To minimize disruptions during this competition, observers need to turn off phones and pagers and keep young children as quiet as possible.

Note: These rules apply to the Alameda County competition and perhaps the State as well. Oakland will be able to send several students to the County bee. That means that both winners and runners up may be able to participate in the spelling bee at the county level.