

## **Spelling Bee Contest**

*Summary made by Karen Campbell, Peace Corp Volunteer*

### **The Spelling Bee Panel**

Every spelling bee should consist of at least three staff personnel - the pronouncer and two judges. Their individual roles are as follows:

#### **1. Pronouncer**

- The pronouncer can be any English-speaking adult other than the students' English teacher. (If possible, it's best to have a native English speaker for this role.)
- The pronouncer calls the student up to the stage.
- The pronouncer says the word in English, pauses, and then repeats the word in English again.
- The pronouncer says the words slowly, without distorting the standard pronunciation of the word.
- If a word has one or more homonyms, the pronouncer will indicate which word is to be spelled by providing the definition. (EXAMPLE: their, there, they're)
- The pronouncer can repeat a word, provide a definition, or use the word in a sentence at the student's request. (Each word, definition, and sentence may only be repeated a maximum of 3 times per student. In other words - the student can hear the word, definition, and sentence a total of three times during their two minutes.)

#### **2. Judges**

- The judges will each have 2 roles. One will also be the Time Keeper, and the other will also be the Scribe. (See below for more details.)
- The judges are responsible for evaluating the accuracy of the words spelled by the bee participants.
- They must agree on their opinions of the student's spelling, BEFORE announcing whether the student spelled the word correctly or not. If they do not agree, they can ask the Pronouncer to opine as well. As a last resort they can ask the student to repeat the spelling.
- Both judges must also work together to uphold the rules of the competition.
- The decisions of the judges are final. No other participants, teachers, or audience members may approach the judges' table during the competition.
- Judges are advised to follow the following protocol:
  - Encourage spellers to face them when pronouncing and spelling the words. (Watching lip movements may be critical in detecting misunderstandings or misspellings.)
  - The judges participate in an exchange of information between the speller and pronouncer if they feel that clarification is needed.
  - While judges are responsible for attempting to detect a speller's misunderstanding, it is sometimes impossible to notice until a spelling error has been made. The judges are not

responsible for the speller's misunderstanding. (Remember: The speller can always ask for clarification).

- Judges may not disqualify a speller for failing to pronounce the word correctly either before or after spelling it or asking questions.

**\*\*\*\*Judge number 1 will also be the Timekeeper.**

- The timekeeper starts a stopwatch after the pronouncer states the word for each student. Each student will receive 2 minutes to spell his or her given word.
- The timekeeper will inform the speller of his or her remaining time by showing the student signs indicating "1 minute" and "30 seconds."
- The timekeeper announces when two minutes are complete. If the student still has not spelled the word correctly after the allotted two minutes, the student is eliminated from the competition.

**\*\*\*\*Judge number 2 will also be the Scribe .**

- The scribe is responsible for writing a list of all students eliminated in each round and reading those names at the end of each round.
- The Scribe will record the spelling of each student's word on a tracker. (See the chart that we provided in the appendix.)
- The Scribe will track the number of times a student has asked for a word, definition, or sentence to be repeated. (Maximum of 3 times for each word, definition, or sentence)

**Reasons for disqualification:**

The judges will disqualify a speller who:

- Spells his or her word incorrectly or does not spell his or her word at all.
- Does not approach the stage or designated area when it is time to receive his or her word.
- Engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Mispronounces the letters or changes the sequence of letters from those first stated.
- While spelling, says unintelligible sounds.

**The Speller**

- The speller faces the judges, pronounces the word before spelling it, spells the word, and pronounces the word after spelling it.
- The speller says each letter distinctly and loudly so the judges can understand.
- The speller may ask the pronouncer to repeat the word again, define it, and/or use it in a sentence (no more than 3 times each).
- The speller is responsible for any misunderstandings of the word unless:
  - ✓ The pronouncer never provided a correct pronunciation.
  - ✓ The pronouncer provided incorrect information regarding the definition.
  - ✓ The speller correctly spelled a homonym of the word, and the pronouncer failed to offer a definition.

### **Teacher's Role**

•While teachers are not a part of the Spelling Bee panel (and may not approach the judges' table during the competition), they should keep a list of their participating students during the competition. This written record should include the words that their students spell correctly and incorrectly, and if the word was spelled incorrectly, teachers should have the incorrect spelling included in their record. This record will help resolve any discrepancies after the competition.

### **The Rules and Procedures for Circuit, Regional, and National Spelling Bees**

1. Students are ordered alphabetically based on their last name and sit in that order on the stage or allotted participant space.
2. The pronouncer calls the first student's name.
3. The student steps up to the indicated competition space. Only the pronouncer, judges, staff and participants are allowed in this space. Teachers and parents are not allowed to approach the table during the competition.
4. The pronouncer randomly chooses a word from the word list. \*Review "Word Selection During the Bee" section of the manual to understand how the pronouncer chooses a word\*
5. The student can ask for the word to be repeated, if necessary, up to three times. The student can also ask the pronouncer to read the definition of the word and/or the example sentence (up to three times each). Students may not ask for the word to be translated into Spanish.
6. Once the student is sure that he or she understands the word, he or she states the word, spells the word, and states the word again. EXAMPLE: Apple. A-p-p-l-e. Apple.
7. The student must say the word and its spelling loud enough for the judges to hear.
8. The judges decide if the word was spelled correctly or incorrectly.
  - ✓ If the word is spelled correctly, the student returns to his or her seat.
  - ✓ If the word is spelled incorrectly, the judge gives the correct spelling of the word. The student returns to his or her seat and waits for the round to end. At the end of the round, a judge reads a list of students who incorrectly spelled their word. All disqualified students leave the stage together to a round of applause.
9. The pronouncer calls the next student in alphabetical order, randomly choosing a new word for that student.

\*\* For the institutional, circuit, regional and national competitions, the bee ends when there is only one student left.

\*\* The entire Spelling Bee will be presented only in English.

### **Additional Guidelines**

- The student must spell the word correctly on the first try.
  - ✓ This is considered incorrect: Apple, a-p-l..... a-p-p-l-e, Apple

- However, students are allowed to stop spelling and begin spelling a word again, as long as the letters are the same as the first attempt.

- ✓ This is considered correct: Apple, a-p-p.....a-p-p-l-e, Apple

- Students are allowed to bring a whiteboard and marker with them to the stage or designated area. Students may write the word first on their whiteboard before spelling the word out loud. The whiteboard must not be visible to the audience, judges or other participants.

### **\*Word Selection During the Bee**

- There is one word list per group (Bumble Bee and Queen bee). Each group's word list is divided into different levels of difficulty. Another secret list should be created by each Regional English Advisor and will not be shared with the students or teachers before the competition. (The words on the secret list should be more difficult than those from the highest level.)

- Level 1 words are used for a practice round during the competition in order to prepare students, calm their nerves and review the procedure of the bee.

- After the practice round, the pronouncer chooses words from level 2 at random, and the competition begins in earnest. The national competition will begin with a practice round using the word from level 1 before beginning the competition officially with level 8.

- If there are more participants than remaining words in a given difficulty level, the pronouncer will continue by using words from the next difficulty level.

- The word selection proceeds in this manner until a winner is declared.

### **End of Bee Procedure**

- If all spellers in a round misspell their word, all students remain in the competition and a new word from that round will be given to each of them.

- If only one speller in a round spells his or her word correctly, he or she is the winner.

- If all of the words have been used and there are still spellers remaining, there will be a championship word list which will be secret to the teachers and spellers.

### **Word Lists**

- Institutional Competitions:** It is expected that the levels one through four will be enough for the institutional competition, although this is largely dependent upon the number of contestants and the enthusiasm with which they studied. A practice round beginning at Level 1 will allow students to warm-up. The competition will officially begin at Level 2.

•**Circuit Competitions:** Students competing in the circuit competition should study words through level 8. A practice round beginning at level 3 will allow students to warm-up. The competition will officially begin at level 4.

•**Regional Competitions:** For the regional competition, the competition will begin with a practice round at level 5 and regular play will continue with Level 6 up to level 9.

•**National Competition:** The national competition will begin with a warm-up round beginning at level 9. The competition will officially begin at level 10. A secret championship word list will also be created for the national bee; however this list will not be shown to any students before the competition. The championship word list will also be used if all words in the original list have been spelled but more than two students remain in the competition.

The word lists include words that students have learned or will learn in the I, II, III and IV Cycles. The lists are separated either by spelling pattern or by theme based on the topics in the curriculum. Teachers will have the opportunity to use the word list as a study tool with their students during the institutional phase of the competition, even if many students choose not to participate.