

2017 Bee Rules: What has changed?

1. **The spelling portion of the Preliminaries Test will be handwritten.**

For the spelling portion of the Preliminaries Test, spellers will handwrite their spellings on Bee-formatted test forms, which will be hand-graded. This format was most recently implemented in the 2011 Bee, and was also used in several Bees in the early 2000s. For the spelling portion of the Preliminaries Test in 2015 and 2016 Bees, spellers recorded on Scantron test forms their responses to multiple choice spelling items. For the spelling portion of the 2012 through 2014 Bees, spellers typed their spellings in a computer-based test interface. Each Preliminaries Test format has been used successfully, and served the competition well. Event logistics, which vary from year-to-year, drive the Bee's decision-making regarding Preliminaries Test format.

2. **The official source of words is Merriam-Webster Unabridged.**

Merriam-Webster Unabridged (<http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com>) is the most up-to-date dictionary reference from Merriam-Webster. The previous official source of words, *Merriam-Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, is out of print.

3. **A Tiebreaker Test will make declaration of co-champions less likely, but still possible.**

There will be no more than 25 consecutive rounds involving three or fewer spellers. At the end of a round when it is mathematically impossible for a single champion to emerge victorious in subsequent rounds, officials will disclose only the Tiebreaker Test scores of the spellers remaining in the competition. The speller with the highest Tiebreaker Test score will be declared champion. If, however, there is a tie on the Tiebreaker Test for the highest score, the spellers tying for the highest score will be declared co-champions.

How does this differ from last year's Bee?

At the end of a round when it was mathematically impossible for a single champion to emerge victorious in the administration of no more than 25 rounds involving three or fewer spellers, Bee rules specified the declaration of co-champions.

Explain the "mathematically impossible" element.

As an example, let's say that two spellers remain in the competition at the end of 24 consecutive rounds involving three or fewer spellers. Proceeding to a 25th consecutive round will not produce a single champion: this is because all possible scenarios would necessitate a 26th consecutive round, which is not allowed under the rules.

When is the Tiebreaker Test administered? To whom, by whom and where?

The Tiebreaker Test will be administered by Bee officials to all spellers remaining in the competition at 6:00pm on Thursday, June 1, in a function room TBD at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center. Because of limited space, the only individuals permitted in the room will be Bee officials and staff, spellers taking the test and a media outlet providing pool coverage.

What is the makeup of the Tiebreaker Test?

The test will consist of 12 spelling words, which will be hand written, and 12 multiple choice vocabulary items.

If the tiebreaker is used, which word will be considered the winning word?

The winning word will be the word the speller last spelled correctly in oral competition.

When will test results be released?

The Bee will publicly disclose the scores for spellers involved in a tiebreaker as specified in the rules. The scores and test forms of spellers not involved in a tiebreaker will remain undisclosed.