



Scripps National Spelling Bee®

a guide for
educators
and schools

The spelling
bee stage is
a stage for
growth.

Enroll your school today!

enroll starting
August 19, 2025

spellingbee.com/enroll

Included!

Sample classroom
activity from



meet the
Bee's Educator
of the Year
presented by



Teach For
America

Nikki Montana

"The spelling bee was
a way to get the kids
excited about learning"



why join the hive?



Strengthen study skills, sportsmanship, goal setting and other life skills

Encourage a school culture of camaraderie and academic excellence

Take students' vocabulary and language skills to the next level

Inspire a love of learning in your students

Boost students' confidence and public speaking skills

Helping students bee-come lifelong learners for 100 years

For more than a century, the Bee has been an iconic cultural touchstone for students across the U.S. and beyond. Gift your students the opportunity to compete in the spelling bee program, from the classroom level all the way to the national stage. Enroll your school in the Scripps National Spelling Bee program and start your students on a journey to deeper word knowledge!

Visit spellingbee.com/enroll today.

For \$199 per school, receive everything you need to bring a school spelling bee program to life!

“Competing in the Bee has fostered my curiosity for the world, helped me discover a passion for language and etymology and given me a platform to express myself”

-Vanya Shivashankar, Pronouncer & 2015 Champion



A to Z of the Bee



enroll your school

Beginning August 19, 2025, complete the short online enrollment process for your elementary or middle school at spellingbee.com/enroll.

host the school bee that works best for your school community

The spelling bee program can be tailored to fit what's best for your students and faculty, whether that's hosting classroom- and grade-level competitions that feed into a school spelling bee, or giving students the opportunity to opt into a school-wide competition.

cheer on students at the regional competitions

School champions compete in regional qualifier and regional spelling bees sponsored by regional partners across the country. Which organization partners with the Bee to bring the spelling bee program to your area? [Check here!](#)

watch students compete on the national stage

In May, spellers arrive in Washington, D.C., to take part in the Bee Week experience, and a national Champion is declared during a nationally televised, live broadcast.

enrollment includes:

eligibility for every student to participate in your school's program

training resources, competition materials and program support

all materials to organize classroom, grade and school spelling bees

special prizes and certificates for your champion and participants

classroom activities and study materials to make word study fun!

important dates:

School enrollment opens for the 2026 season: August 19, 2025

School enrollment closes for the 2026 season: January 30, 2026*

Regional Competition Season: February & March 2026

National Competition and Bee Week: May 24-29, 2026

*Some restrictions may apply. Visit spellingbee.com/enroll for specific enrollment dates in your area.

hosting your school bee



choose your own spelling bee adventure!

There are several ways to run a bee program at your school. Pick the option that works best for your students and faculty! No matter what path their spelling bee journey follows, your students will gain knowledge in spelling and vocabulary that will help them shine their light on the world.

school-wide competition

Students advance from classroom- or grade-level spelling bees to the school spelling bee.

The traditional spelling bee program is a great option to engage your entire school in a spelling bee tradition.

written test

When you enroll, you gain access to written testing materials that allow you to assess students' spelling and vocabulary knowledge. Students with the best test scores advance to your school spelling bee.

The written test option is great for school-wide participation but allows teachers to qualify students for their school spelling bee via a written test instead of a traditional spelldown method.

opt-in

Students are nominated by teachers or volunteer to participate in the school spelling bee.

Schools may host a school spelling bee with a smaller cohort of students who have a curiosity or aptitude for language, reading and spelling.

what you'll need

1

a school bee coordinator

to plan and coordinate the school spelling bee program

2

bee officials

a 3-person panel of officials who serve as the pronouncer, judge and record keeper for your school spelling bee

3

location

for your school spelling bee (cafeteria, gym or auditorium)

4

a passion for helping your students have fun while learning!

bringing your bee to life!

Once you've enrolled your school, access everything you need to run a successful spelling bee program in the online School Portal at spellingbee.com.

tools for running classroom and school spelling bees

classroom
and school
competition
lists

Guides for running
classroom and
school spelling
bees

written
test
forms

Materials for
conducting
a spelling
bee via a
written test

study
materials

Study Materials for your
spellers including word
lists that are grouped
by level of difficulty to
match grade levels

classroom activities to spark your students' curiosity and knowledge of words



words of the
champions

The regional spelling bee
study list to support your
school champion's next step
in their spelling bee journey



The official book
club of the Scripps
National Spelling
Bee



A collection of leveled
books that features all
the words from this
year's *School Spelling
Bee Study List*



the beehive

A biweekly newsletter for
educators with spelling bee
tips and tricks plus educational
content from partners like
Merriam-Webster and the
News Literacy Project

partner offers



A one-year subscription to **Britannica Online for Kids** (a \$74.95 value) to provide to a spelling bee participant – plus a second subscription if you enroll before September 30!



A 30-day free trial to **News-O-Matic** plus a 35% discount on an annual subscription (over a \$500 value)!

who's who of your school bee



The spelling bee is a great way to
bring your school community together!
Here's who should be on your bee team.

school enroller

Whether it's your School Bee Coordinator, a school administrator or a member of your school's support staff, identify one person to complete your school's online enrollment at spellingbee.com/enroll.

school bee coordinator

The School Bee Coordinator determines the details and logistics of your school's spelling bee and is responsible for communicating those details to the spellers who will be competing. At the classroom and school levels, this involves selecting the date of those bees and sharing that information with faculty, the spellers who will participate and their parents.

pronouncer

The pronouncer is the speller's key resource during the spelling bee. They pronounce words and provide word information to the speller using prepared and approved competition materials included as part of your school's enrollment with the Bee.

judges

Judges rule on spellings and answers to vocabulary questions provided by spellers during the competition. They maintain a thorough knowledge of the competition rules and swiftly weigh in on questions regarding the competition.

record keeper(s)

The record keepers are responsible for documenting and reporting on the spelling bee competition as it happens and recording spellers' answers in real time during the school competition.

Enroll now at
spellingbee.com/enroll



Scripps National Spelling Bee® educator of the year



presented by  **Teach For America**

The 2025 Scripps National Spelling Bee Educator of the Year is described by her principal as “a testament to the power of one individual to make a significant difference in the lives of students.”

Nikki Montana has worked in education for 26 years, but her journey with the Bee began a decade ago, when she ran the sixth-grade spelling bee at Edwin Forrest Elementary in Philadelphia.

“The spelling bee was a way to get the kids excited about learning,” Montana says.

When she transitioned to a new role as the school’s teacher leader, she recognized the potential for engaging more students in the bee. Her initiative led to the gradual inclusion of students from grades 1 to 5, transforming it into a full-fledged school-wide event that now includes over 800 students.

Not only does Montana coordinate the bee, but she also organizes events that build anticipation and involvement, such as themed days like “dress like a bee” day and creative competitions for the best-decorated classroom doors. And it’s not just for students. She gets the whole staff to participate. “It gets the kids excited. When they start hearing about the Bee earlier, they study words earlier,” Montana says. “The kids get really into it.”

Montana celebrates the spellers with personalized awards, water bottles, t-shirts and a “spell-ebration” with their families. She says she believes these special touches not only recognize the students’ dedication but also help instill a sense of pride and accomplishment within the school community.

“Ms. Montana’s mission to nurture a generation of learners who find the fun in language and literacy embodies the spirit of the Bee,” says Corrie Loeffler, executive director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. “Her dedication showcases the vital role educators play in shaping their students’ futures.”

Inclusivity and accessibility are key principles for Montana, who ensures that every student at her Title I school participates in the competition. She makes it a community event, involving parents through newsletters and invitations, which motivates kids for learning both at school and at home. “Our parents don’t have a ton of money, but this is an easy way for them to get involved—make a few flashcards and create an environment where education is important.”

“Nikki’s work directly addresses the academic barriers these students often face,” says Vance McNear, principal at Edwin Forrest Elementary. “By making the spelling bee accessible to all students, regardless of their background or abilities, she created a level playing field and fostered a sense of belonging. What a powerful example of how one person’s vision can transform an entire school community.”

Montana’s goal is to have one of her students advance further in the competition next year, and she said a parent already reached out about how to help their child prepare for next year’s competition.

She hopes to inspire more schools in the area to sign up, as she’s seen firsthand the impact it has on students. “It’s an academic challenge,” she says. “Spelling is their sport. It’s something that makes them stand out.”

See Nikki’s Story 

“Teach For America (TFA) is thrilled to team up with the Scripps National Spelling Bee to celebrate the 2025 Educator of the Year and the teachers across the country who go above and beyond to ensure all kids have what they need to learn, lead, and thrive in the 21st century. As a network of more than 70,000 teachers, tutors and alumni, we are committed to working with partners that are illuminating the brilliance of every child and the teachers that support them.”

—Steve Majors, EVP, Chief External Affairs Officer at Teach For America

Nikki Montana swarms with enthusiasm

—MOLLY MIOSSI



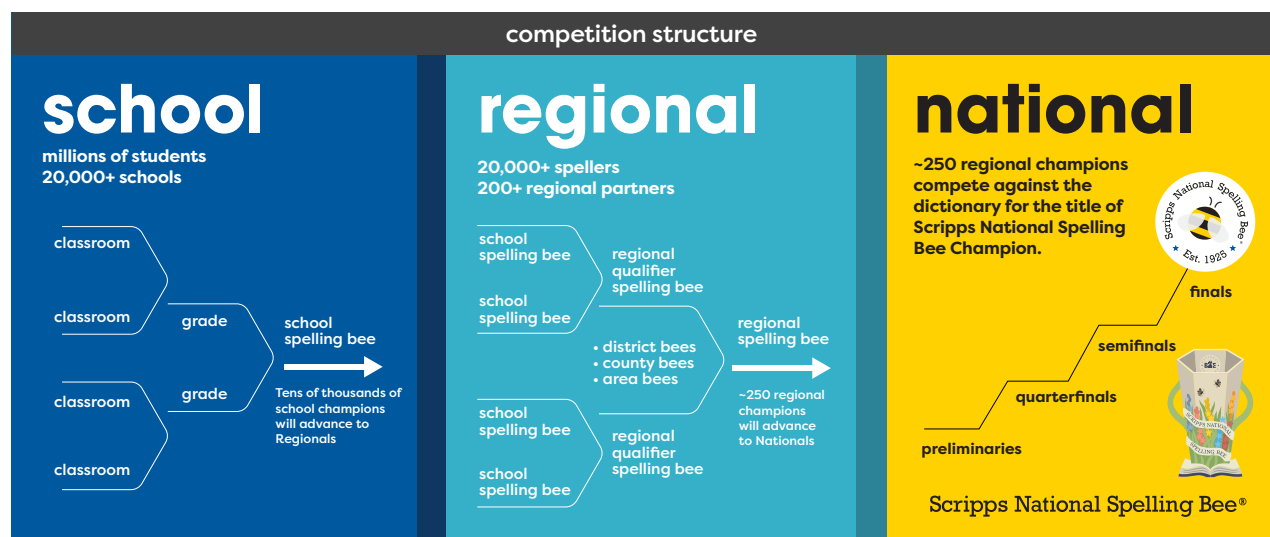
The Educator of the Year was recognized with:

- A trip to experience Bee Week and the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.
- Award recognition in the official opening ceremony of the Scripps National Spelling Bee
- A \$500 Visa Gift Card
- Featured article in our Bee Week magazine
- Recognition online in social media and The Beehive educator newsletter

speller's journey



A student's spelling bee journey begins with your school's enrollment in the Scripps National Spelling Bee program. Enrolling gives every student at your school eligibility to compete in the spelling bee program, from the classroom and school levels to regionals and even the National Competition!



[Click here to learn more about how the bee works!](#)

Study lists, organized by grade level

For a classroom- or grade-level spelling bee, your student can study from a list of words for their grade level, from first through eighth grade.

School Spelling Bee Study List

Once a student masters their grade-level words, they can study the 450 words on the *School Spelling Bee Study List*, which encompasses words for all grade levels from first through eighth grade. Will vocabulary be included in your competition? Provide the study list with definitions, featuring parts of speech and definitions for each word.



words of the
champions

Words of the Champions

For any competition after your school spelling bee, a student should study *Words of the Champions*, the regional spelling bee study list with 4,000 words divided by difficulty level.

Did you know your students can learn their study words by playing word games and quizzes?

With the free Word Club app, students can have fun while mastering the words from the *School Spelling Bee Study List* and *Words of the Champions*!





Beyond the Word List: Unlocking Spelling Skills with Nonfiction



This year, the Scripps National Spelling Bee is partnering with *News-O-Matic*, a digital news platform for K–8 students. *News-O-Matic* offers daily, age-appropriate articles about current events across five reading levels and six languages. It features a library of over 16,000 nonfiction articles, enhanced with multimedia activities that boost literacy, spark curiosity, and build global awareness.

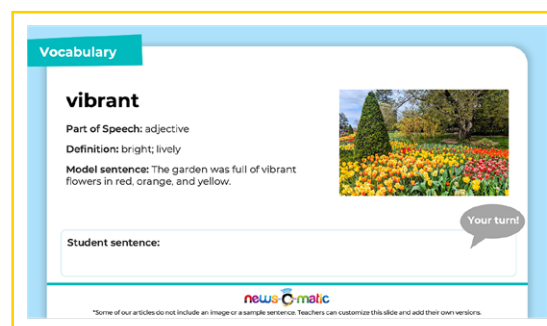
How can reading nonfiction articles improve students' ability to spell words correctly?

Reading, writing, and spelling are deeply interconnected, and each plays a role in supporting a student's language development. Reading nonfiction articles about current events introduces students to new vocabulary and allows them to see words in context.

When students explore words in meaningful, real-life contexts across a variety of subjects—and discover how those words connect to their own experiences and to the world—they begin to see language as more than just lists of words, sparking an appreciation for the purpose and structure of language.

1 Read Words in Context with Attention

Daily reading of current events articles through platforms like News-O-Matic offers repeated exposure to these words in meaningful ways. Take note of unfamiliar or complex words. Practicing tricky words in context—and spelling them to mastery—helps students remember them.



2 Build Vocabulary

Students spell best when they understand what words mean. Nonfiction content exposes students to new words that don't always appear in regular conversations.

News-O-Matic articles highlight rich vocabulary from a variety of subject areas with student-friendly definitions and visuals.

3 Explore Diverse Content

Spelling improves with variety! Have students read nonfiction articles from a range of subject areas like science and social studies to gain exposure to new and challenging words.

News-O-Matic lets students explore various categories, including popular content series such as “Real Jobs”, where students can experience words not regularly used in their daily lives.

4 Listen to Words

Hearing words spoken clearly helps students connect sounds to letters. Whenever possible, listen to audio versions of articles to expose students to accurate pronunciations of words that can then be aligned with spelling patterns.

All News-O-Matic articles are read aloud, at all five reading levels.

Fun & Easy Ways to Boost Spelling Skills

Try these engaging strategies
with your students:

Read news from around the world to
discover new words in context

Spot spelling patterns like *-able/-ible*,
-ence/-ance, and *-er/-or/-ar*

Explore diverse topics like sports, food, travel, and history

Break apart morphemes (prefixes, roots,
suffixes) to unlock word meanings

Create a mind map to visually organize
and connect related words



Strengthen Your Spelling Skills by Reading High-Quality, Engaging Nonfiction News Articles

News-O-Matic is here to help you prepare.

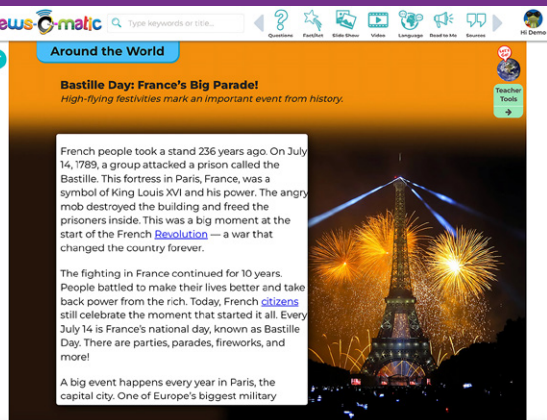
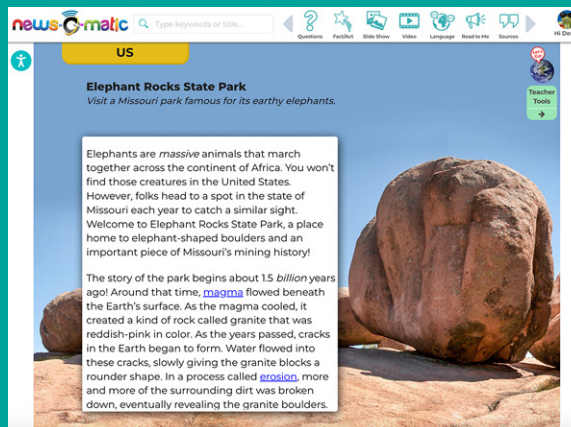
Begin each day in your classroom with a dynamic routine to connect your students with the world: read global news articles together with News-O-Matic! Exposing students to words in real-world context expands vocabularies in a meaningful way and helps build more confident, knowledgeable spellers.

Schools enrolled with the Bee receive a **30-day free trial of News-O-Matic and a 35% discount on an annual subscription** (a more than \$500 value)



Student Task: Be a Word Scientist

Students can practice deconstructing words, identifying spelling patterns, and sorting them into categories. For example, students may look for words with double consonants in the middle or at the end of a word. Or students may use a T-Chart to sort different spelling variations of “shun” words (i.e. -tion vs. -sion).



Student Task: Mapping the World

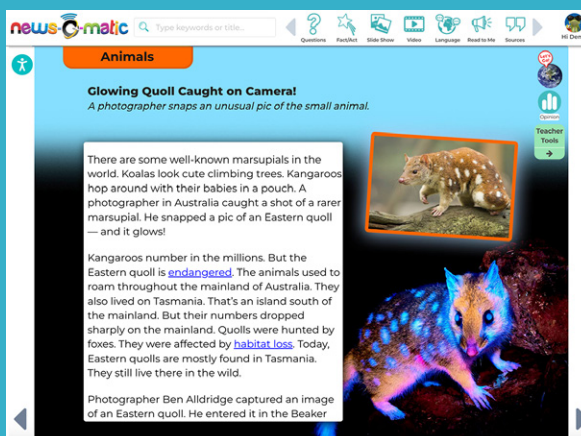
Students can select an article that focuses on a foreign country, highlighting words that are native to that region, and digging into their linguistic DNA. What patterns emerge when a word carries this origin? How can understanding the country of origin help me become a better speller?

Student Task: Headline Scramble

Students are presented with a scrambled headline from a recent News-O-Matic article. They must use their knowledge of spelling patterns to unscramble each word, reconstructing the original title.

Scrambled Example: “Liwongg Qolul Tugcha on Amacer”

Solution: “Glowing Quoll Caught on Camera”



buzz from the



1925

the bee that started it all

Nine spellers competed in the first Bee, held in Washington, D.C., in 1925. Frank Neuhauser from Louisville, Kentucky, won by correctly spelling the word gladiolus.

2017 the youngest spellebrity

At just six years old, Edith Fuller became the youngest speller to secure a spot in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. To qualify, she out-spelled 52 other children at the regional competition, spelling such challenging words as... jnana, sarsaparilla and Baedeker.



2019 octochamps!

The Bee has had co-champions in a few instances, beginning back in 1950 when two champions were named. The record for the most champions of a Scripps National Spelling Bee was broken in 2019 when eight spellers went on to share the trophy. They even received a Guinness World Record nod for their win!

2025 the bee turns 100

We celebrated 100 Years of the Bee in style with special events and activities that emphasized the **Bee's history**. Faizan Zaki made history himself by becoming only the fifth speller to win the Bee after previously placing second!



Bee a part of history and enroll your school today
Enroll now at spellingbee.com/enroll.

mission

By inspiring the exploration of words, the Scripps National Spelling Bee illuminates pathways to lifelong curiosity, celebrates academic achievement and enriches communities.

vision

To give students the words they need to shine their light on the world.



**There's a champion at
every school in your district!**

Enroll today at spellingbee.com/enroll