

Scripps National Spelling Bee®

eligibility requirements for the 2027 national competition



A speller qualifying for the 2027 Scripps National Spelling Bee (SNSB) National Competition must meet these requirements. SNSB does not control eligibility for competitions other than the National Competition.



Who they are:

1. The speller is eligible to participate in a regional partner's program only if they have not completed the eighth grade (or international equivalent) and have not reached their 15th birthday on or before August 31st of the year prior to the applicable National Competition (by way of example, August 31, 2026, for the 2027 National Competition).
2. The speller must not have any first-, second- or third-degree relatives (i.e., sibling, parent, step-parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, half-sibling, step-sibling or first cousin) who are current employees of The E.W. Scripps Company as of February 1, 2027.

What they do:

3. The speller must not previously have won an SNSB National Competition.
4. The speller must represent a school that is enrolled in an SNSB program for the applicable year.
5. The speller must not have repeated any grade for the purpose of extending spelling bee eligibility. If the speller has repeated any grade, the speller must notify the SNSB of the circumstances of grade repetition by March 31, 2027, and the SNSB will, in its sole discretion, determine the speller's eligibility status on or before April 30, 2027.
6. The speller — or the speller's parent, legal guardian or school official acting on the speller's behalf — must not have declared to another entity an academic classification higher than eighth grade for any purpose including high school graduation equivalency or proficiency examinations and/or examinations such as the PSAT, SAT or ACT.
7. The speller must not have earned the legal equivalent of a high school diploma.
8. The speller must not bypass or circumvent normal school activity to study for spelling bees. The SNSB defines normal school activity as adherence to at least four courses of study other than language arts, spelling, Latin, Greek, vocabulary and etymology for at least four hours per weekday for 34 weeks between August 17, 2026, and May 28, 2027.
9. Single Program Participation: A speller may participate in only one SNSB-affiliated competition pathway during the 2026-2027 program year. Once a speller competes in and is eliminated from any SNSB-affiliated program, they may not seek advancement to the 2027 National Competition through another regional partner, school, or competition pathway.
10. The speller must have been declared a champion of an SNSB-sanctioned regional spelling bee on or after February 1, 2027, or be named by a regional partner as a national competitor by competing in an official SNSB program or by an SNSB regional partner.
11. Additionally, the speller may not be a first-, second- or third-degree relative of any person directly involved in administering the regional partner's program.

The speller, upon qualifying for the 2027 SNSB National Competition, must submit to the SNSB a completed Champion Registration, an Appearance Consent and Release Agreement signed by speller and speller's parent/legal guardian, a signed Certification of Eligibility Form, a liability waiver signed by speller and speller's parent/legal guardian, and a photo meeting requirements laid out by the SNSB. The speller will notify the SNSB, at least 24 hours prior to the first day of the SNSB National Competition, if any of the statements made on the Certification of Eligibility Form are no longer true or require updating. The speller's regional partner will provide access to all necessary items.

The SNSB may disqualify any speller prior to or during the National Competition who is not in compliance with any of the above eligibility requirements. Further, the SNSB may, at any time between the conclusion of the 2027 SNSB National Competition and April 30, 2028, require any speller who is found to have not been in compliance with any of the above eligibility requirements to forfeit and/or return any prizes, rank and other benefits accorded to the speller as a result of participation in the 2027 SNSB National Competition. All eligibility decisions are in the sole discretion of SNSB. Eligibility decisions are not subject to appeal.

