



### Competition Rules

1. **Legal information.** All rights reserved, Canada Super Spelling Bee, Inc. No video recording, voice recording, or photos will be allowed. All spellers and their family members must accept the media and photo consent permission form to participate in any CSSB competition.
2. **Competition format.** The Canada Super Spelling Bee spelling competitions are oral spelling competitions only. Spellers are not allowed to use pens, pencils, or paper. The bee follows the traditional American spelling bee format, with eliminations on a “miss-and-out” basis.
3. **Word sources.** Words used in CSSB spelling competitions are selected from the Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online Dictionary (<https://unabridged.merriam-webster.com>). Definitions may be taken from *Merriam-Webster’s Online Learner’s Dictionary* (<https://learnersdictionary.com>) for the sake of simplicity. Only spellings that are listed in the Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online Dictionary will be accepted as correct. No other spellings from other dictionaries will be accepted as correct.
4. **English alphabet.** Spellers will only be judged by the 26 letters in the English alphabet. No speller will be eliminated for failing to note the capitalization of a word, a hyphen, a space, or any other form of punctuation.
5. **Word variants.** Variant spellings listed in Merriam Webster Unabridged Online Dictionary, including those listed as British, will be accepted as correct. For example, for the word *color*, the spelling *colour* is accepted if given.
6. **Spelling format.** In competition, after the pronouncer gives the speller a word, the speller is encouraged to pronounce the word both before and after spelling it. For example, if the speller is given the word *apple*, the speller is encouraged to say, “Apple. A-P-P-L-E. Apple.” Judges may wait for a speller to pronounce their word at the end of spelling before continuing. However, no contestant will be eliminated for failing to pronounce a word.
7. **Retracing letters.** A speller may stop spelling in the middle of a word and start over, but there can be no change of letters or their sequence from those first given. If



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letters or their sequence are changed in the respelling, the speller will be eliminated. Spellers are encouraged to notify the judges that they will start over before doing so.

8. **Misunderstood sounds.** Every speller is encouraged to pronounce each letter as clearly as possible. Any letter that is slurred, too quiet, or otherwise misunderstood by the judges will be construed as a misspelling, and the speller will be eliminated.

9. **Word information.** A speller may ask the following information from the pronouncer as many times until 30 seconds are left (notified by the timekeeper):

- repetition of pronunciation
- definition
- part of speech
- sentence
- etymology
- alternate pronunciations

If the pronouncer believes certain information may be especially helpful, the pronouncer may offer that information without being asked. The pronouncer will answer all questions until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the speller. *The judges may disqualify any speller who ignores a request to start spelling.*

10. **Root word questions.** If the speller believes the word may contain a root word, they may ask a root word question as long as it contains three pieces of information: 1) the root word, 2) the meaning of the root word, and 3) the root word's original language. Without all three pieces of information, the pronouncer will have to decline the question. Not every bee will allow root word questions; this decision will be announced to spellers prior to the beginning of the bee.

11. **Time limit.** There is a time limit of two minutes from the time a speller is given a word. The speller will be notified once one minute has passed. When thirty seconds remain, the speller will be notified again, and no further questions will be entertained. If a speller fails to finish spelling a word correctly within the time limit, he/she will be eliminated.

12. **Homophones.** If a word has one or more homophone(s) (words with similar pronunciations but different spellings – for example, *meet* and *meat*), the pronouncer will indicate which word is to be spelled by providing information. If the listed word is not identified, either by defining it or by distinguishing the homophones, any correct spelling of any homophone of the word will be accepted as correct.



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13. **Elimination.** Upon missing the spelling of a word, the speller is eliminated from the bee immediately, except as in rules 14 and 15. The next word on the pronouncer's list is given to the next speller.
14. **Championship rounds, 1.** If only one speller at the end of a round has spelled a word correctly, that speller will be given one more word to spell. If the word is spelled correctly, that speller will be declared the champion. However, if that speller misspells the word, all spellers in the previous round will be reinstated.
15. **Championship rounds, 2.** If all spellers in a round misspell their word, all will be reinstated, and spelling will proceed in their original order.
16. **Championship rounds, 3.** Historically, the competition ends when a speller spells correctly in a one-person, one-word round and is declared champion. However, officials can choose to begin a spell-off instead when declaring a champion. Each speller remaining in the competition would have 90 seconds to spell as many words as they can from a predetermined spell-off list of words. After all spellers remaining in the competition had competed in the spell-off, the speller who spelled the most words correctly would be declared champion.
17. **Ranking.** All spellers who are eliminated in the same round shall tie for the same place.
18. **Protests.** Any question relating to the spelling of a word should be referred to the judges ideally within that round. The official deadline for filing a protest is before the speller affected would have received their next word if they had stayed in the contest. No protest will be entertained after that word has been given to another speller. When only two or three spellers remain, a protest must be made immediately. The judges are in complete control of the bee. Their decision shall be final.
19. **Audience assistance.** Members of the audience should not give any clues to the speller about the spelling of the word. If an audience member is identified as trying to give clues to a speller, that member may be asked to leave the audience, and the speller may be disqualified.
20. **Speller concerns while on stage.** Spellers who need to use the restroom or have other concerns can notify a staff member, who will escort them off stage. It is recommended that spellers use the bathroom only shortly after the spell. If a speller is not on stage when it is time to spell, they may be disqualified.
21. **Behavior issues.** Any speller on stage behaving in a disruptive manner may be eliminated, regardless of whether they have spelled or not.



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22. Dress code. Recommended attire for CSSB competitions is business casual.
23. Speller IDs. Each speller should use their speller number, followed by their first and last name as their meeting room ID (e.g., 12 John Doe).
24. Microphones (online bees only). Individual speller microphones must be muted unless it is the speller's turn to spell.
25. Camera and speller placement (online bees only). The speller's entire face should be visible during the competition, and the speller should be no further than one arm's length from the camera. No virtual backgrounds are allowed. Spellers under the age of 8 may be accompanied by one adult to help with technical issues; otherwise, no other person is allowed in the room with a speller.  
In the final round, Spellers should have a mirror or a second device (Laptop or desktop computer with a camera) which will be located behind the speller to monitor the room, and the mirror or camera will point to the speller at all times during the finals. Your second device will enter a Zoom breakout room with one judge/staff that will monitor, please mute your second device during the competition. The speller ID for 2<sup>nd</sup> device should be the speller number, followed by their first, and last name and 2<sup>nd</sup> Device (e.g., 12 John Doe - 2).
26. "Onstage" etiquette (online bees only). During a speller's turn, the speller should look directly at the camera, and their hands should be visible at all times. If a speller looks away from the camera during their turn, they will be given one warning. Failure to adhere to this rule after this warning may result in elimination.
27. Chat board discussion (online bees only). Chat board discussion is prohibited during the bee.

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