

Peterborough Rotary Club Spelling Bee Rules 2025

Preface

The Scripps National Spelling Bee (“SNSB”) provides the following rules as guidance for local spelling bees.

Eligibility

A speller qualifying for the 2025 Rotary Club Spelling Bee must meet these requirements:

Who they are:

1. The speller is eligible to participate in the Rotary Club Spelling Bee only if they have not completed the eighth grade and have not reached their 15th birthday on or before August 2024.
2. The speller must submit to Rotary Spelling Bee a completed Registration, Consent and Waiver forms signed by speller’s parent/legal guardian for photos (used for Rotary spelling bee promotional purposes). Consent will include to be videotaped by YourTV and that video will be broadcast on Cogeco cable channel.

Rules

1. **Format:** A spelling bee is conducted in rounds. Each speller remaining in the spelling bee at the start of a round spells one word. The spelling bee will be conducted orally.
2. **Competition List:** Spelling bee officials are responsible for selecting the competition lists for use in their spelling bees. These competition lists include words that appear in the current edition of Canadian Spelling Word Lists. All words appearing on Bookmark and Spelling Bee lists are entries in **Oxford Dictionary, Second Edition, Oxford Dictionary, Second Edition** is the final authority and sole source for the spelling of words; the primary source used to craft the pronunciations, the only authority to be consulted by spelling bee officials.
3. **Speller Accommodations:** Spelling bee officials will strive to provide accommodation for spellers who have diagnosed and documented conditions. All requests for spelling bee officials to provide accommodation should be directed to spelling bee officials well in advance of the spelling bee date. Spelling bee officials may amend oral spelling requirements on a case-by-case basis.
4. **Pronouncer’s Role:**
The pronouncer (Judge) pronounces words as he/she states the word to each speller.

In Spelling Rounds:

Homonyms: If a word has one or more homonyms, the pronouncer indicates which word is to be spelled by defining the word. We do not intend to use homonyms in the spelling bee. The ultimate responsibility for understanding the word to be spelled rests with the speller.

Speller’s requests: The pronouncer responds to the speller’s requests for a definition, may use word in a sentence. The pronouncer does not entertain requests for slower pronunciation.

Pronouncer’s sense of helpfulness: The pronouncer may offer word information from the competition list without the speller having requested the information.

- 4. Judges' Role:** The judge(s) uphold the rules and determine whether words are spelled correctly. The Judge renders final decisions on appeals. They are in control of the competition and their decision is final on all questions.

Interaction with the speller: Because seeing the speller's lip movements may be critical in detecting misunderstandings, the judge(s) encourages spellers to face them when pronouncing and spelling a word.

Notice of rules: Spelling bee officials ensure that audience members are given an opportunity to receive a copy of the rules prior to the start of the spelling bee. (QR. code on the program)

Misunderstandings: Judge(s) participate in the exchange of information between the speller and pronouncer if clarification is needed. Also, the judges listen carefully to the speller's pronunciation of the word in spelling rounds. If they sense that the speller has misunderstood the word, the judge(s) work with the speller until they believe that reasonable attempts have been made to assist the speller in understanding the word. Although the judges are responsible for attempting to detect a speller's misunderstanding, it is challenging to detect a misunderstanding until a spelling error has been made. The judges are not responsible for the speller's misunderstanding.

Disqualifications for reasons other than error: The judge(s) will disqualify a speller:

- (1) who does not start spelling (within one minute of receiving his/her word to spell).
- (2) who does not approach the microphone when it is time to receive the word.
- (3) who does not comply with the eligibility requirements.
- (4) who, in the process of retracing a spelling, alters the letters or sequence of letters from those first stated.
- (5) who, in the process of spelling, utters nonsense sounds.

Speller activities that do not merit disqualification: The judges may not disqualify a speller:

- (1) for failing to pronounce the word either before or after spelling it.
- (2) for asking a question; or (3) for noting or failing to note the capitalization of a word

6.Arbitrator's Role: The Arbitrator will track the progress of spellers throughout the rounds. The Arbitrator's information will be helpful in responding to concerns regarding correct spelling of a word and preventing end-of-bee confusion.

7.Speller's Role: In a spelling round, the speller tries to face the judges and pronounce the word for the judges before spelling it. The speller tries to pronounce each letter distinctly and loudly enough to be understood by the judges. The speller may ask the pronouncer to say the word again, define it, and use it in a sentence. The speller must provide the correct letters in the correct order.

8. Errors: Upon providing an incorrect spelling of a word the speller is disqualified and asked to take his/her seat.

9. End-of-Bee Procedure:

If all spellers in a round misspell: If none of the spellers remaining in the spelling bee at the start of a round spells a word correctly during that round, all remain in the competition and a new spelling round begins.

Ties: All spellers eliminated in the same round are tied for the same place. The spelling bee officials may opt to conduct tiebreakers (of their own design) if tiebreakers are necessary for the awarding of prizes.

If only one speller in a round spells correctly: If only one spells correctly in a round, a new spelling round begins, and the speller is given an opportunity to spell a word on the list (anticipated championship word). If the speller succeeds in correctly spelling the anticipated championship word in this round, the speller is declared the champion.

Playoffs for Championship, 2nd, and 3rd

Example – the only one that matters:

1. Play until only 3 spellers in competition.
2. Repeat rounds until 3rd speller misspells = this speller is 3rd place
3. Repeat rounds with the remaining 2 spellers until a word is misspelled.
4. Misspelled words go back to first speller, if they are correct, potential BEE Champion.
5. If they also misspell, the round continues with both spellers given a new word to spell.
6. Repeat rounds until 1 speller misspells and the other speller spells correctly, the correct speller is then given a championship word to spell.
7. If they misspell, the round begins again with spellers 1 and 2 and the rounds are repeated until 1 speller misspells and the other speller spells correctly twice (i.e., misspelled word and championship word).

9. Appeals: Provided that the appellant adheres to the Time and Manner Requirements noted, the judges will review appeals and render decisions only on the following five grounds:

A. The speller correctly spelled the word but was eliminated for misspelling it, failing to say the word before or after spelling it.

Judges: Do your records indicate that the speller offered the correct letters in the correct order and never changed the order of letters?

If Yes, reinstate the speller even if the speller failed to say the word before or after spelling it.

If No, deny the appeal.

B. The speller correctly spelled a homonym of the word in question and was not given the definition of the word.

Judges: Did the pronouncer provide a definition? See Rule 4.

If No, reinstate the speller. **If**

Yes, deny the appeal.

C. The speller correctly spelled an alternate spelling of the word as listed in official dictionary (1) whose pronunciation is identical to *all* pronunciations of the word in question, (2) whose definition is identical to definition provided for the word in question, and (3) that is clearly identified as a standard variant of the word in question.

Judges: Check **Oxford Dictionary, Second Edition**

If all three criteria are met, reinstate the speller.

If fewer than three criteria are met, deny the appeal.

Time and Manner Requirements:

An oral appeal must be stated to the Judge indicating the speller's name, the name and contact information of the person filing the appeal, the relationship of the person (parent/guardian) speller (must be a), the word in question, and the grounds for reinstatement. (See Grounds as noted)

The deadline for giving an appeal is before the speller affected would have received their next word had they stayed in the spelling bee.

To minimize disruptions, effort should be made to deliver an appeal by the end of the round in which the speller was eliminated. When five or fewer spellers remain, an oral appeal must be made before the speller would have received their next word had they stayed in the spelling bee.

While the competition is in session, individuals who filed appeals may not directly approach the judges unless permission has been given.

The judges will make an announcement if they decide to reinstate the speller.

To minimize disruption to the pace of the spelling bee and concentration of the spellers, the judges are not obliged to stop the spelling bee to discuss with the speller, speller's parent(s) a denied appeal.