

This is a guide for running **in-school** Spelling Bees, according to the format used at Regional & State Finals. It is recommended but not compulsory for selecting students to represent your school at regional level. Individual classes will have run a class competition, preferably oral, to determine their class representatives.

Organisation before the School Final day:

- Compile competition word lists from the posted lists. These can be tailored to particular curriculum areas or class relevance. [Contact me](#) for a WORD version of the PDF lists to make that job much easier – happy to explain.
- Arrange a suitable venue – your school hall or other large space is ideal. You may wish to provide some of your students and families as an audience.
- Set up space with chairs and tables according to instructions below.
- Arrange two students to help out - one as chairperson, one as timekeeper.
- Provide a stopwatch and bell for the timekeeper.
- If possible provide 3 microphones for contestant, chairperson and announcer. Announcer and chairperson can share if necessary.

Venue:

Page 4 of this document shows a suggested layout. The venue should be arranged so that the contestants are angled towards the Announcer, rather than directly towards the audience. This is to avoid contestants being distracted by audience members and to limit audience members inadvertently prompting the contestants.

Chairs should be arranged in rows and contestants seated in spelling order as indicated on the draw. As each student takes their turn they come up to the microphone to spell. At the end of each round, eliminated students should join the audience and remaining contestants move up to take vacated seats.

We recommend a table and chairs for the chairperson, scorer and timekeeper to sit at during the final. Depending on the shape of your hall, this could be on one side either on the stage or in front of the audience.

Chairperson:

The chairperson's role during the competition is to announce contestants to the audience each time they spell. It is important to keep track of which contestants have been eliminated and announce only students still remaining in the competition. The best way to do this is by using the elimination sheets with space to write each contestant's name. Place a tick or a cross next to each contestant's name after each spelling attempt. As contestants are eliminated, a line should be drawn through their name.

Timekeeper:





The timekeeper times the length of each contestant's spelling attempt. Timing begins once the announcer has finished speaking. A warning bell is rung at 30 seconds, with two bells at 45 seconds to indicate that the contestant's time has expired. If a contestant has not finished spelling the word by the second bell, their answer is judged incorrect.

Announcers & Scorers:

It is the announcer's role to read the words and the sentences which indicate the meaning of the word. It is important that announcers guard their facial expressions. Announcers should carefully read through the lists of words to be used in each round, and follow the pronunciation guides provided. Scorers record the students' spelling and (with the announcer) determine if a word is correct.

In short: each student is given a different word, but of the same difficulty level, each round. Those who misspell are eliminated and the rest go on to the next round. This continues round by round until one student spells correctly in a round where all others misspell.

Finals Procedures:

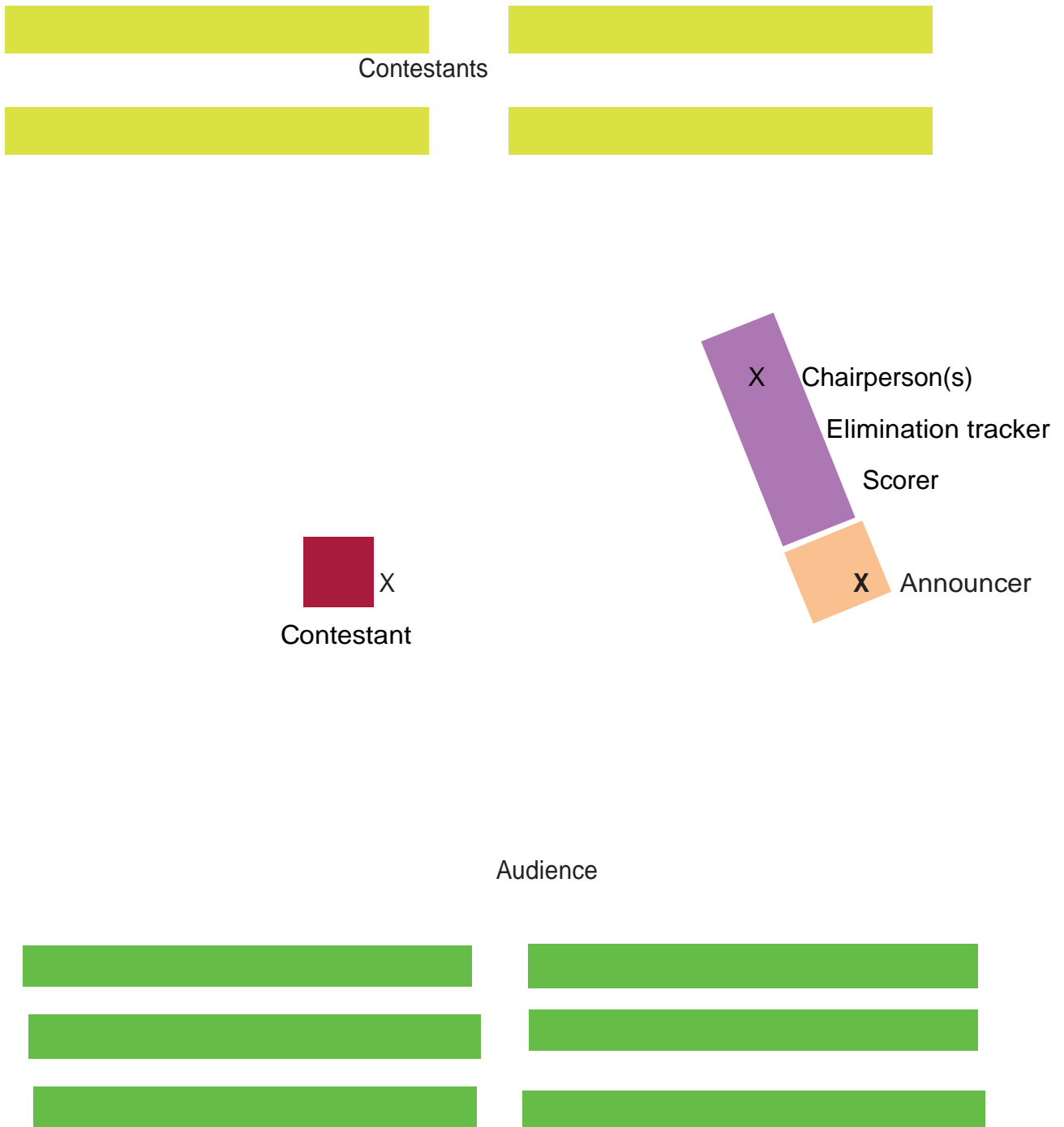
-  All students should begin seated. Students stand up and walk to a common microphone to spell and then return to their seat.
-  There is a demonstration round, in which five random students in each session get a practice word to demonstrate the competition format and procedures. **Note: this is not an elimination round.** At the State Finals, this practice round is extended to all competitors.
-  This is followed by elimination rounds of increasing difficulty.
-  The Announcer reads out each word, followed by a sentence including the word, and then repeats the word again.

- 🐞 Each contestant must repeat the word to the satisfaction of the Announcer before they spell, spell the word, then say the word again to indicate they have finished spelling.
- 🐞 Students have 45 seconds to spell the word. A warning bell is rung at 30 seconds and two bells at 45 seconds to indicate that the contestant's time has expired (mobile phones are good for this). At the second bell, any incomplete spelling is taken as the contestant's final answer.
- 🐞 Contestants may ask the announcer to repeat the word within their 45 second time limit.
- 🐞 Students may also self-correct within their time limit if they have not yet clearly finished by stating the word for the second time. To do this they need to indicate that they are starting again, and follow the same procedure; say the word, then spell it from the start, then say it again.
- 🐞 Students will NOT be judged incorrect for failing to indicate that the first letter of a proper noun is capitalised (e.g. Australia).
- 🐞 When a student has finished spelling a word, the Announcer states *'That is correct'* or *'That is incorrect. The correct spelling is...'*
- 🐞 Students who misspell a word should remain seated on stage until the end of the round. At this point the Announcer will instigate a round of applause and ask those who have been eliminated to join the audience. This makes it clear how many students are still spelling.
- 🐞 For each round of the competition a new round of words is used, even if there were unused words left over from the previous round. This ensures all students are given a word of an equivalent level. For example, if 20 students are competing, your rounds should contain 25 words (in case you have to miss any), but can be made several rounds from any given level.

Determining a winner:

- 🐝 To win the competition a contestant must spell more words correctly than all the other contestants.
- 🐝 In each round, each contestant is given a different word to all the other contestants.
- 🐝 A contestant is only eliminated if at least one other contestant in the same round spells a word correctly. If all contestants in a particular round misspell their given words no one is eliminated and the competition continues.
- 🐝 If **all but one** contestant misspells their given word, then the sole correct speller is deemed the winner. In this instance there will need to be a play off for runner-up between the remaining contestants, using the words from the existing round. The runner-up acts as a reserve should your winner be unable to attend a regional final.
- 🐝 At Regional Finals there is one junior and one senior winner. These winners compete in the State Final in Sydney in November. The runners-up do not.

Suggested Layout



Audience and spelling contestant should be set at as much perpendicular to each other as possible. This helps eliminate inadvertent coaching from audience and reduces distraction for the speller.

X = Microphone