

A quick guide to the Premier's Spelling Bee

Who is eligible to compete?

The Premier's Spelling Bee is open to all NSW government primary, central and community schools. The competition comprises two divisions – junior for Years 3 and 4 (Stage 1 welcome!) and senior for Years 5 and 6. At regional finals, each school can enter one student per division to a maximum of two students per school.

How do schools enter the Premier's Spelling Bee?

Schools previously entered in 2023 will be sent an invitation to enrol. [Other schools use the enrolment link on the website.](#)

An online entry form for the competition is available in March 2024, here on the Premier's Spelling Bee website. School entries should be submitted before close of business on the final day of registration, 21 June 2024, Term 2 Week 8. Please ensure that you include contact details for the teacher who will be looking after the entry. All teachers must provide a direct departmental email address (or the school's email if appropriate) to assist with our organisation. Entries can be submitted before schools know the names of the students they will be entering.

There will be a web form available from May for school coordinators to register their students' names. Your regional finalist names need to be submitted by Friday 5 July, Term 2 Week 10.

How much does entry cost?

There is no cost associated with the Premier's Spelling Bee.

What are the competition stages?

Schools either follow official competition procedures or devise their own spelling activities to select students (a maximum of two per school, one per level) to represent the school at regional finals. These will take place Monday 12 to Friday 23 August, Term 3 Weeks 4 and 5 and will all be conducted on-line in 2024. The Premier's Spelling Bee Coordinator will advise schools of the dates of regional finals early in Term 3. The winner of each division of each regional final goes on to the state finals: please note, the runner-up does not. State finals will be held on a Friday in early November (TBC), 2024.

What does the school spelling bee coordinator do?

School Spelling Bee Coordinators should submit the online entry form for their school and download the 2024 word lists once they receive the confirmation and password information. Wordlists, either printed copies or the link and password should be supplied to interested students and families as early as possible.

Coordinators then need to select the school's representatives, by running class then in-school heats, preferably in a similar format as regional and state finals, and submit those names no later than Friday 5 July. Once all the details are finalised, coordinators will receive an email with details of the date of the final their school will be "attending". There are links to frequently asked questions and guidelines and procedure documents to help first-time coordinators and the Spelling Bee Support Officer is always happy to help.

[This short film \(8 mins\)](#) was designed to demonstrate how the Zoom Regional Finals competition is run.

What word lists are used?

Words for the competition are provided by Macquarie Dictionary and are divided into several categories. Junior and senior students study different word lists. Regional and state finals also include unseen words in later rounds. Word lists will be available for download from The Arts Unit website Arts Community in March 2023 (exact date TBC). School spelling bee coordinators who entered in 2022 will be notified of their availability via email, but all state primary, central and community schools are welcome to enter.

What are the competition procedures?

At each final, there is a demonstration round using simple words to help familiarise contestants with the

competition format. No one is eliminated in this round. This is followed by elimination rounds of increasing difficulty. The announcer reads the word, then 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, and then say the word again to indicate they have finished spelling. Up until this point, contestants may self-correct if they clearly indicate that they are starting again. Students have 45 seconds in which to spell the word. A warning bell is rung at 30 seconds with two bells at 45 seconds to indicate the contestant's time has expired. Contestants may ask the announcer to repeat the word – this is included in their 45 second time limit. Any self-corrections must also be made within the time limit. At the second bell, any incomplete spelling will be taken as the contestant's final answer. When a student has finished spelling a word, the announcer will either state 'That is correct' or 'that is incorrect. The correct spelling is...'

How is a winner determined?

At the regional and state finals, the elimination process continues round by round. To win the competition a contestant must spell more words correctly than all the other contestants. A contestant will only be eliminated if at least one other contestant in the same round spells their word correctly. If all contestants in a particular round misspell their words then no one is eliminated.

What are the prizes?

All regional finalists receive a certificate of participation. Regional winners and runners up receive a Dictionary and Thesaurus from Macquarie Dictionary and some stationary gifts from the sponsors. Macquarie Dictionary will also provide each regional final winner's school with a free school-wide, one year subscription access to the Dictionary & Thesaurus online. This will provide the whole school with the ongoing opportunity to practice their spelling and help their fellow students in the lead up to the 2025 State Final.

State finalists receive silver medallions, a Macquarie Dictionary, and other book prizes. State Champions receive gold medallions and are acknowledged along with their school on a perpetual trophy. State winners and runners-up also receive a free Macquarie Student App download.

Organisation and sponsorship

The competition is organised by The Arts Unit of the NSW Department of Education. The official media partner is ABC Radio Sydney. The official word list supplier is Macquarie Dictionary.