



How to Organize a Spelling Contest



OREGON SPELLERS

www.oregonspellers.org

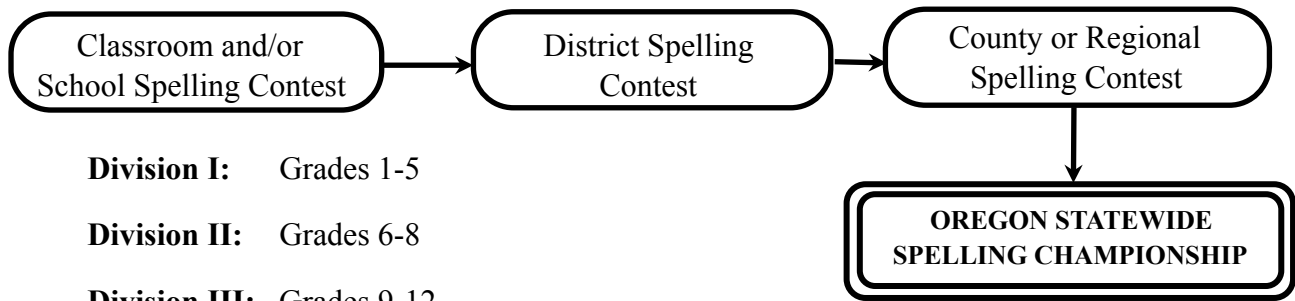
OVERVIEW:

OREGON STATEWIDE SPELLING CHAMPIONSHIP: Oregon Spellers, an all volunteer, non-ODE-sponsored entity, accepts ONE top speller (except in case of a first-place tie) from each Division in each County that participates in a County or Regional Spelling Competition. (e.g., If more than one County participates in a Regional contest instead of a County contest, ONE top speller* in each Division for EACH of the Counties may advance to the Championship). Oregon Spellers is sponsored by the Oregon Association for Talented and Gifted (OATAG).

The OREGON STATEWIDE SPELLING CHAMPIONSHIP is held at the Oregon State Fair in Salem on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. For more information about the Championship go to: www.oregonspellers.org

The Oregon Statewide Spelling Championship and all contests leading up to it are written spelling contests, unlike spelling “bees”, which are oral. The words are pronounced and used in a sentence. The winners of the state contest will receive a cash prize, plus an award certificate. For local contest prizes and volunteers, consider approaching service organizations (e.g. Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.).

The Road to the Spelling Championship



Classroom Contest: Each Classroom holds a spelling contest to determine that classroom’s top speller.

School Contest: The top one or two spellers* from each Classroom competes in their Division (see above) of the School level spelling competition. Very small schools might eliminate the classroom contest and just hold a school-wide contest.

District Contest: The top one or two spellers* in each Division from each school in the district compete in their Division at the District competition.

County/Regional Contest: The top one or two spellers* in each Division of the District competition compete in the County or Regional Spelling Competition.

*Schools and Districts may determine, according to their own population distribution, whether to send one or two top spellers from each Division to the next level of competition. If they send two spellers, they should be the 1st and 2nd place spellers or two tied 1st place spellers. **Each County** can only send ONE top speller to the OREGON STATEWIDE SPELLING CHAMPIONSHIP, except in the case of a first-place tie.

Home School/non-affiliated Students: Home schooled or otherwise “non-affiliated” students compete in the District competition in their appropriate Division.

SCHEDULING:

The County/Regional Contest Coordinator sets the timetable for their contest. The school district and individual schools **must** schedule their contests so they are able to meet the County/Regional deadline. Oregon Spellers needs to have names of the 1st and 2nd place spellers of the County/Regional contests by **May 31st**.

For District and County contests, after the first year, the Contest Coordinator should schedule the contest a year ahead to ensure that adequate facilities are available. The Contest Coordinator should consider scheduling a small room for those who are judging, so they are not distracted during the judging process. It is recommended that at least two judges check each spelling sheet.

If there is a way to let home-schooled students know about this opportunity, make sure they know that they must participate in their resident District Contest to qualify for the County Level contest.

If a student who is eligible to advance is unavailable on Contest day due to a scheduling conflict that is known about in advance, the Contest Manager may choose to give that student a spelling test privately.

SPELLING LISTS:

In January or early February, the Oregon Spellers will provide contest words for the District and County Level Contests. (Schools will need to construct their own spelling lists.) The lists will contain 25 words plus 2 lists of 5 words for Tie Breakers (with appropriate sentences) per Division. Word lists for the OREGON STATEWIDE SPELLING CHAMPIONSHIP and the District and County contests leading up to it, are created by the Oregon Spellers’ Word Editing teams (one team per Division). The lists are then given to another team and they are the only people to see all the words until the emcee receives them on the day of the contest.

Practice Lists may be found on the Oregon Spellers website: www.oregonspellers.org

CONTEST MANAGER / JUDGES / DAY OF CONTEST HELP:

The Contest Manager is the person responsible for running the spelling contest. The Contest Manager will provide prepared lists of contest words and corresponding sentences to the proctors and judges on the day of the contest. Parents of spellers **cannot** participate as judges or have contact with the spelling lists. **Pronouncers must be able to pronounce spelling words correctly and enunciate clearly.**

For all contests (except in the classroom where the teacher is the “judge” and pronouncer), you MAY need:

1. Pronouncers: 1 to 3 word pronouncers. If you have multiple Divisions in your contest (e.g., a K-8 school or District Contest), it’s often easiest to have one pronouncer per Division and have the Divisions compete in separate rooms.
2. Judges: 2 to 8 (or more) judges, depending on the number of spellers. The more help you have, the faster it goes. They should be good spellers themselves.
3. Scoring chairperson/Head judge: Helps move papers through the scoring process and determines first, second and third place spellers.
4. One person to put names on certificates, using computer printer or by hand.
5. Refreshments for contestants and families, if desired.
6. Organizing paperwork for the Day of the Contest (not necessarily needed for the classroom):
 - a. **Pronouncers need:** envelope labeled with pronouncer’s name and Division which contains an outline of contest procedures, Word Lists and sentences for the contest and Tie Breakers;
 - b. **Judges need:** Word List & Tie Breaker keys (can be color-coded per Division to speed up scoring); red pencils, and a dictionary;
 - c. **Assistant/Room Proctor needs:** extra pencils, paper; (enough for parents if they are attending the contest to “try their hand at the test” often for District or County contests);
 - d. **Students need:** a Spelling Contest Answer Sheet or lined paper (can be color coded per Division if desired), pencil, name tag (optional), scratch paper.

AFTER THE CONTEST:

At each level, the name(s) of the winner(s) need to be sent on to the next level contest; i.e., Schools send information to their District Contest Coordinator; Districts to their County/Regional Contest Coordinator.

****County/Regional Contests see County Coordinator Specific Information “After the Contest” information below. ******

1. Reprint and mail any certificates that need corrections.
2. Reassemble and file unused parts of the contest (e.g. unused speller answer sheets, paper, etc.).
3. Make notes of anything that didn’t run smoothly and ideas to avoid those problems for next year.
4. File samples of the Word Lists in an archive file so words aren’t repeated in subsequent years.

CONTEST GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Each Spelling Contest should have the following (per Division if applicable):

1. Spelling Contest Answer Sheet or writing paper for the contestants & possibly parents
2. Pencils with working erasers for the contestants & possibly parents (so they can spell along)
3. Dictionary
4. A copy of the Written Spelling Contest Rules (see below)
5. An envelope for each pronouncer with 1 copy of 25 words with sentences and two lists of 5 words with sentences each for Tie Breakers (see Spelling Lists from the “How to” information sheet)
6. Spelling Contest Results Sheet
7. Before starting, pass out Spelling Contest Answer Sheets and sharpened pencils to each contestant. Have students fill out the Spelling Contest Answer Sheet (Name, Date, School/District/County and Division).
8. Remind the students of the following:

WRITTEN SPELLING CONTEST RULES

1. Put your first and last name on your paper.
2. Please PRINT words clearly.
3. No capitals required.
4. Students must do their own work – any student caught cheating (as determined by the proctor, pronouncer, or other contest official) will be expelled from the contest.
5. *Optional: After the 25 words are pronounced, students will be able to ask for any word and sentence to be repeated. A word may only be repeated once.*

Administer the set of twenty-five (25) words, by pronouncing the word, reading it in the sentence containing the word, and pronouncing it again.

At least two judges (if it isn't a classroom contest) should score EACH paper **separately** to ensure accuracy. Each judge should initial each contestant's paper and write the total number of words correctly spelled and total number of words missed in the appropriate blanks. There is no partial credit. There are no negative points for incorrect answers. The contestant will be awarded one point for each correct answer.

If there is a disagreement about the spelling of a word, the dictionary should be consulted by the judges before they make their final ruling. The decisions of the judges are final.

If there is a tie for first or second place, pass out the Tie Breaker forms, pronounce an additional set of five words for ALL contestants to maintain suspense and fairness. Put the names of the spellers involved in the tie on the Tie Breaker Resolution Sheet. Record the number of words correctly spelled in the Tie Breaker column. If the Tie is not resolved, repeat the Tie-Breaker process with another set of five words. If the Tie is not resolved after 2 Tie Breakers, that position (1st or 2nd) is declared a Tie and both spellers share that placement. If the tie is for 1st place, then both spellers will advance to the next level.

The student with the greatest number of words correct is 1st place speller; the second greatest number correct is second place. Clearly record 1st and 2nd place spellers at the top of the Spelling Contest Results Sheet.

INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO COUNTY COORDINATORS

SCHEDULING:

The County/Regional Coordinator sets the date and time for the County/Regional Contest. Try to schedule rooms from 3:00pm to 5:00pm so students don't miss (too much) school to participate. **Give Districts a deadline for winners' information**, but allow time to contact winners and parents about the County contest. (Try for at least 2 weeks.)

DISTRICT CONTACTS:

Create a list of District contacts and update it annually about the first of December so it is ready for use when the Word Lists arrive from Oregon Spellers. Using the ODE School Directory the first year, contact the districts and private schools with appropriate grade levels in your county to invite participation and establish a contact. District and private school coordinator's name, phone number, and email address are essential. Be sure they know when the County level contest is, because they will have to schedule their contests before that.

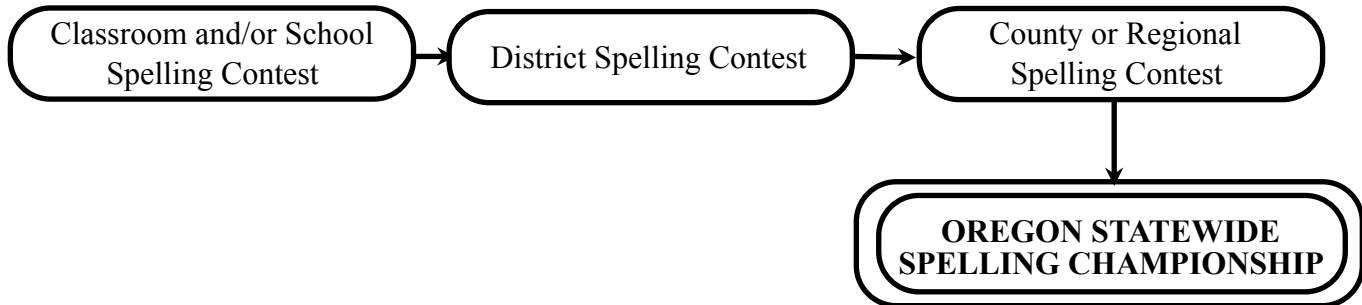
If a school or district has never participated in the spelling contests or would like additional help, Oregon Spellers provides a **"How to Organize a Spelling Contest"** (available at www.oregonspellers.org) to help schools and districts put on the contests that must occur prior to the County spelling contest and ultimately, the OREGON STATEWIDE SPELLING CHAMPIONSHIP. If a district opts not to participate, ask them to let you know in advance. Oregon Spellers needs to have the names of the winners of the County/Regional contests by **May 31st**.

AFTER THE COUNTY/REGIONAL CONTEST:

1. Give each **First Place Speller** (one per Division except in case of a tie) in the County Contest an Oregon Spellers' **"Individual County Winner Registration Form"** and direct them to fill out the form and mail to Oregon Spellers **immediately. Individual Speller's Registrations are due by July 15th**. These forms will be sent out to County Coordinators by Oregon Spellers with the Word Lists.
2. Complete Oregon Spellers' **"County Coordinator's List of Winner Form"** for first *and* second place spellers and submit one for **EACH** County (if a Regional Contest) to Oregon Spellers. (Second place spellers are alternates in case first place speller cannot attend.) **County winner information is due by May 31st**.
3. Compile a list of first, second, and third place spellers for dissemination to local print media.
4. Follow the regular "After the Contest" procedures above.



The Road to the Spelling Championship



COUNTY COORDINATOR

January/February:

1. Contact District Coordinators (or recruit as necessary) for districts in your County and ask them to set up their District Contests in **March/April**. (If you are trying to recruit new District Coordinators, consider contacting the District Superintendent, TAG Coordinator, English Teachers, Librarians, even community service organizations.)
2. Distribute Oregon Spellers' created Word Lists to districts.
3. Instruct School Districts that they need to contact their schools and ask them to hold their Classroom and School Contests in **Feb./March**.

April/May:

4. Set up a County Contest (Oregon Spellers needs results by the end of May).
5. Forward results to Oregon Spellers immediately after County/Regional Contest.

DISTRICT COORDINATORS

January/February:

1. Contact schools (include Home Schoolers and Charter Schools if possible) and ask them to hold their Classroom and School Contests in **Feb./March**. Schools and classrooms create their own contest word lists.

March/April:

2. Set up District Contest.
3. Use Oregon Spellers' created Word Lists distributed by your County Coordinator.
4. Forward results to the County Coordinator *immediately* after the District Contests.

GENERAL PARAMETERS

Division I – Grades 1-5; Division II – Grades 6-8; Division III – Grades 9-12

Classroom Contest: Each classroom holds a spelling contest to determine that classroom's top speller.

School Contest: The top one or two spellers* from each classroom competes in their Division (see above) of the School level spelling competition. Very small schools might eliminate the classroom contest and just hold a school-wide contest.

District Contest: The top one or two spellers* in each Division from each school in the district compete in their Division at the District Competition.

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**For more detailed instructions, go to <http://www.oregonspellers.org/> and go to the "Coordinators' Corner" page.