

County Superintendent's Spelling Bee Cheat Sheet

Matthew Henry, Gallatin County Superintendent of Schools
matthew.henry@gallatin.mt.gov, (406) 582-3090



- The spelling bee is a yearly statewide contest that determines the one contestant from Montana who will compete at the Scripps National Spelling Bee.
- There are three levels of spelling competition: School, County, and State. School bees are used to qualify contestants for the county bee, and county bees are used to qualify contestants for the state bee. One winner at the state advances to the national bee.
- Deadlines for schools and counties to hold bees are set by Scripps. In general, school bees must be held by the end of January and county bees must be held by the end of February.
- Each school determines its finalists for the county bee at school bees using words of its choice or a pronouncer's guide available through Scripps. Competition is open to students in grades 4-8 in public and private/home schools.
- The county superintendent serves as the coordinator for his/her county's spelling bee and determines the number of participants for his/her county bee. Some counties allow up to 50 to 60 participants. A tip for determining the number of contestants by school is to calculate the school's percentage of the total enrollment in grades 4-8 in the county and multiplying it by the desired number of contestants in the county bee.
- County coordinators must communicate the date of their bee and details to schools and arrange a venue, pronouncer, judge(s), prizes, and arrangements (i.e., table, chairs, microphone, etc.) Scripps provides a pronouncer guide that includes contest rules and words.
- **Important:** Only students from schools that are enrolled with Scripps (i.e., paid the Scripps annual enrollment fee) may compete at the Treasure State Spelling Bee. Students from schools that are not enrolled in Scripps may compete at county bees; however, if student from a school that is not registered with Scripps wins a county bee, he/she cannot compete at the state bee or national bee.
- Scripps contacts schools directly to solicit for enrollment. The 2021-2022 enrollment fee is \$175 per school and schools must enroll by December 31, 2021. Schools that enroll receive study words, pronouncer's guides, and classroom resources.
- The number of contestants that each county may enter in the state bee is based on the county's percentage of the state population multiplied by 70 contestants. All but a few of the more populous counties are limited to one contestant.
- The Treasure State Spelling Bee is typically held in mid-March and was formerly held in Billings when it was sponsored by Lee Newspapers. The state bee is currently sponsored by the Montana Television Network, which underwrites the expenses of holding the state bee, including prizes and travel expenses for the winner to attend the national bee.
- The 2022 Treasure State Spelling Bee will be held in person, if possible, in Bozeman.
- The Scripps National Spelling Bee is held annually in the Washington, D.C. area in May. The top prize is \$50,000 in college scholarships and other prizes.