

# Spanish Spelling Bee



## How-to Guide

Have fun...

Promoting

...language

...spelling

...vocabulary

...bilingualism

...and, biliteracy

*This guide was put together to assist you in preparing to organize a Spanish spelling bee in your classroom, school, or district. Special thanks to David Smith, the Librarian at Escuela Bilingüe Pioneer who prepared much of this guide after having conducted a Spanish Spelling Bee there for a number of years. Other suggestions were taken from David Briseño, the Director of the National Spanish Spelling Bee.*

**Rule #1** There are no hard and fast rules and you are not required to follow any of these suggestions. We intend them only as suggestions and encourage you to provide us with more suggestions that we can pass along to others.

## **Things to consider before you begin**

Please consider sending your top speller(s) to compete in the state Spanish spelling bee.

- After you have selected your school winners, be sure to go to [www.cocabe.org](http://www.cocabe.org) to register two students to participate in the CO-CABE Concurso de deletreo Colorado State Spanish Spelling Bee, usually held in April of each year.
- Each school can send 2 spellers to the Concurso de deletreo Colorado State Spanish Spelling Bee to compete for state honors and to possibly qualify for the National Spanish Spelling Bee that is usually held in July of each year.
- Three State winners will be sent to the National Spanish Spelling Bee in July and their entry fees will be paid for by CO-CABE.

## **First Thoughts**

- Regardless of the level of the competition you are organizing, here are a few things that you need to be aware of if your intent is to send your winner to the Colorado state competition.
- Kindergarten through Eighth Grade students are eligible to compete at the state however only fourth through eighth graders are allowed at the national level.
- The National Spanish Spelling Bee Booklet and the Student Study Guide can be used to prepare.
- These resources are available online and free of charge at [www.cocabe.org](http://www.cocabe.org) and at [www.nationalspanishspellingbee.com](http://www.nationalspanishspellingbee.com) Please download the documents and make as many copies as you need for your students.
- Keep in mind that someone must be responsible for paying the:
  - State Spanish Spelling Bee registration fee (\$250) per school
- Each school may send 2 contestants to the Concurso de Deletreo Colorado State Spanish Spelling Bee

## Let's get started

- You will already have downloaded the study guide that includes the list of words and the rules for the state and national Spanish spelling bees and other resources on the CO-CABE website.

## How to organize your school-based bee

- Keep it simple (see options below)
- Organize what works for you & your setting
- If this is your first time, be flexible, don't be too hard on yourself, ask for help
- Get buy-in from the principal, teachers and parents at your school and ask them to promote the bee with the students and families.
- Recruit volunteers (staff, family, community members) to help you run the bee at your school.

## Getting Specific

- Set the date for your school spelling bee.
- Download the Spanish Spelling Bee Booklet, study guide, etc. and make as many copies as you need for distribution to your students.
- Establish a registration procedure to participate in the event.
- Recruit as many spellers as possible for your event.
- Establish a procedure to determine the order of spelling. For a random process you can determine the number of students who have registered and then make up the same number of cards with the numbers printed on them. The cards are placed face down on a table and each student must select a card as they sign in at the registration table. This becomes their "place" in the spelling bee competition. Any random process will work.
- Recruit a pronouncer – This individual should have native Spanish fluency, a pleasing voice and superior enunciation skills in Spanish.
- Recruit Judge(s) – At least one and up to four adults who will determine whether or not the word is spelled correctly and will make a final ruling on all protests. Their judgment is final.
- The pronouncer and all judges should be provided with a list of words and the rules/instructions from the state level (the rules are somewhat different from the Scripps English) ahead of time to familiarize themselves with all aspects of the bee. To minimize confusion, we recommend that you use the Concurso de Deletreo Colorado State Spanish Spelling Bee Rules and Procedures for your local event.
- You will find that the study guide is a contest-ready list of words, definitions, and sentences. You may randomize this list and use it to create your own local list. These words may or may not appear in the Colorado or national competitions.

## **For your “stand up and spell out loud” traditional bee...**

- This might be your only round (or 2nd or 3rd overall round) but you will probably need...
- a good competition space without a lot of noise or interruption potential;
- equal number of seats as contestants, in row(s) with corresponding numbers for a drawing for random seating, with a judges’ table directly in front of them;
- there should be an official dictionary available for judges and, a dry erase board, marker and eraser for contestants and, ideally, a microphone for contestants to speak into;
- if possible, there should be as large of an audience as possible for the space to support the competition and the spellers, as long as they understand their job is LISTEN SILENTLY, applauding as instructed (You might ask for “silent” applause with a variety of gestures after each speller and word, regardless of correctness, then a loud round of applause after each round.) The contestants should face the judge(s), not the audience.
- Recognize your winners in your school and district communities.
- Be sure to have one or two alternates. Sometimes the winners are not able to compete at the state level. Having your alternates selected and prepared to go will help ensure that you can send two contestants to the state bee.
- Remember to create certificates of participation for all of your participants to recognize and honor their participation and you may also create certificates or other awards for the students who will move on to the next (state) level.
- Seek support to get the school winners registered for the State Spanish Spelling Bee. You might want to ask your Parent-Teacher Organization to provide the registration fees. You might get your school to pay the registration for your school’s contestants. You can also seek donations from local businesses both for prizes for your school’s winners as well as for registration fees. (The winners of the State competition will have registration paid for the National Spanish Spelling Bee by CO-CABE.)

## **Other/extra steps you may consider: Establish a more formal process.**

- Registration – This is where your participants sign in for the event. This will help students prepare for the state and national competition.
- Enroll in National English Spelling Bee for resources, ideas and experience
  - <http://spellingbee.com/>
  - Practicing for one language will support the other

- Hold more than one “Round”, which could include....
  - A “written” qualifier (at classroom, grade level or school level depending on how many participants are interested)
  - Have classroom and/or grade level bees (if teachers/schedule allow)
  - At Escuela Bilingüe Pioneer in Boulder Valley School District, the Librarian gives everyone a written test. The top 3-5 per class qualify for a grade level bee. From there the top 3 qualify for the Pioneer Final, with the top 2 advancing to State.
- Recruit a Master or Mistress of Ceremonies – This individual introduces everyone, reviews the rules of the competition with the audience, and at the end of the competition presents the winners to those in attendance. This gives formality and structure that makes the event more special for other students and families that may attend the bee plus helps prepare for the next level.
- Audio Visual Staff – These individuals will monitor all audio visual and recording equipment. The contest can be recorded and this recording can be used by the judges should a protest be lodged.\* The judges will review the recording and will make a ruling as to whether or not the word was spelled correctly or incorrectly.
  - \*It is our recommendation that no protests be allowed at the school level.
  - The recording can be used to help students become comfortable with the process and perhaps to have them observe themselves and prepare for other competitions.
- <http://spellingbee.com/> sends a weekly email with spelling tips, most of which can be easily adapted to Spanish
  - they also provide “Language of Origin Roots” in their study materials of which the Spanish and Latin pages could prove helpful
- Study Latin roots
- You might be able to set up study groups or clubs during school, recess, lunch or after school
- Watch “Akeela and the Bee” or video clips from the previous National Spanish Spelling Bee finals on YouTube.
- Take a group of students, parents, and teachers to the Concurso de deletreo Colorado Spanish Spelling Bee in April to support your school’s winners and to observe the experience. This will help build momentum and excitement for next year.
- The State and National Spanish Spelling Bees are educational events and they are competitions however they are intended to be fun and memorable events for the participants and their families. The events are family friendly and both feature complimentary meals for parents and contestants as part of the Spanish Spelling Bee experience.