

# COLORADO State Spanish Spelling Bee Guide



Grades K-8th



**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. Contact Dr. Cynthia Trinidad-Sheahan at [csheahan@cocabe.org](mailto:csheahan@cocabe.org) with questions.*

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**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.
- Colorado State Concurso is usually held in April of each year
- Each school can send 2 spellers to the Colorado State Concurso 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 will be used at the State level and should be used at all levels of the competition.
- This booklet is 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 document and make as many copies as you need for your students.
- Keep in mind that the sponsoring organization (school) will be responsible for paying the registration fee. • State Spanish Spelling Bee registration fee **(\$250)** per school
- Each school may **send 2** contestants to the State Spanish Spelling Bee

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### 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.

### How to organize your school-based bee

- Keep it simple (see options below)
- Organize what works for you & your setting
- This is your first time so 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 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.
- Recruit a pronouncer – This individual should have native 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 any judges should be provided with a list of words and the rules/instructions from the national level (they are somewhat different from the Scripps English) ahead of time to familiarize themselves with all aspects of the bee.
- You will find a contest ready list of words, definitions, sentences on the CO-CABE website.

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- 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 (ideal world has a microphone but I have never had that luxury);
- 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.)
- 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)

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- Have classroom and/or grade level bees (if teachers/schedule allow)
- At Escuela Bilingüe Pioneer, 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 Albuquerque 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 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.

### Recommendations

- Here are some recommendations for holding a virtual spelling bee. These will be used by the

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Concurso de deletreo Colorado State Spanish Spelling Bee and are included here as possibilities for your consideration. These recommendations should be used in conjunction with the recommendations for the traditional in-person spelling bee.

### Platform

- We recommend using whichever video conferencing platform your school district recommends. If there is no preferred platform, we recommend using Zoom as this will be the platform used in the state and national Spanish spelling bees. Get to know the platform that you will use and the limitations with time and number of users. **Planning**
- Create a background (real or virtual) for pronouncers, judges and other officials so they are clearly identifiable.
- Rehearse with a mock spelling bee a few days before your actual competition with real officials and judges, but stand-ins for spellers.
- Arrange in advance how officials will communicate with each other (Ex. group text or a private chat feature in the video conferencing platform).
- Encourage officials/judges to print the word list ahead of your rehearsal date. Make sure to keep all word lists out of camera view.
- If available, have a backup device (tablet or smartphone) connected to a cellular connection that is different from your computer internet. This is in case of internet signal problems.
- Ask officials to use headphones to clearly hear the spellers and block out ambient noise.
- Record the entire competition through the video conferencing platform.
- Communicate with parents/guardians about the date/time of your competition, what students can expect, spelling bee rules and the integrity pledge.
- Decide whether you will allow parent or student spectators during the competition.
- Ask spellers to change their on-screen name to include their full name and speller number.
- Request spellers use headphones to clearly hear the pronunciation of words.
- Suggest students use an ethernet cable plugged directly into their computer instead of using Wifi, if possible.

### Roles & Responsibilities

- You could combine some of these roles, especially for classroom-level spelling bees.
- **Pronouncer** – For a virtual spelling bee you will need a pronouncer to pronounce words for students.
- **Judge(s)** – Focus on the accuracy of participants' spellings. Determine beforehand how the judge(s) will indicate a misspelling, whether using a bell or sound effect or informing the speller verbally of the misspelling.
- **Record Keeper** – Keep a written record of how each speller spells their word.
- **Adult witness** – The witness is in the room to provide silent moral support for the speller and to ensure that there are no unauthorized aids available to the speller during the competition and to handle any unexpected interruptions or disruptions for the speller during the competition.

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### Additional roles to consider:

- **Audio Record Keeper** – Record just the audio of the competition with a separate device (phone, tablet or digital recorder) and use it for immediate playback to verify spelling, when necessary.
- **Alternate Official** – Person who monitors the competition and can jump into any of the official roles if someone has connection issues.
- **Platform Monitor** – Someone to mute and manage participants' video and begin the recording of the competition. This person should be the “host” of the videoconference.

### Competition

- Perform a sound check for all officials and spellers before the competition begins. • Have each speller identify the adult witness who will be visible during the competition and explain the role of the witness.
- Request spellers say the word first before spelling to ensure they heard the pronouncer correctly and ensure their audio is still working properly.
- When spellers misspell, they should remain on the platform until the end of the round. If you want to reduce the number of faces on the screen, you can ask participants to leave at the end of each round or “mute” their camera when they misspell. • Thank the spellers for their participation.
- To protect one’s privacy, many people choose to use an alternate background for Zoom versus their real-time background. This is acceptable; however, please keep in mind not all computers have this feature and both the speller and adult witness must be visible at all times during the competition. Please have spellers who choose this option select an innocuous and non-offensive background if they choose this option. Illicit, exploitive, or otherwise inappropriate content is prohibited.

### Integrity

- Integrity: Use an integrity pledge and require all students to agree to it. The Concurso Honor Code Sample is included below for your information.
- Suggest/require an adult witness in the room who can be seen on-camera. • Spellers should position themselves on camera to also show their hands while spelling.
- Disable the platform’s chat functionality or set it to allow chat to and from the meeting host only.

### Integrity Pledge Sample

I pledge to abide by the Concurso de deletreo Colorado State Spanish Spelling Bee Honor Code. I pledge to participate in this competition with Integrity, Respect, and Responsibility. During preparation and participation in this event I will act with **Integrity**, in an honest and ethical manner; I will act with **Respect** to honor differences

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in people, ideas, experiences, and opinions, engaging with others in ways that demonstrate an appreciation of their rights and humanity; and with **Responsibility**, accepting ownership for my actions and choices.

### Promesa de Integridad

“Me comprometo a cumplir con el Código de Honor del Concurso de deletreo Colorado State Spanish Spelling Bee. Prometo participar en este concurso con integridad, respeto y responsabilidad. Durante la preparación y participación en este evento actuaré con Integridad, de manera honesta y ética; Actuaré con Respeto para honrar las diferencias en las personas, ideas, experiencias y opiniones al relacionarme con los demás de manera que demuestren un aprecio por sus derechos y su humanidad; y con Responsabilidad, aceptando la propiedad de mis acciones y decisiones.”