Spelling Better for Teachers

Spelling Bee Planning Checklist

Teachers, school spelling bee organizers and homeschool groups

Six weeks before

- [ ] Choose the date, time and place, and check them with your school calendar.
- [ ] Decide who can take part (one class, one grade, or the whole school).
- [ ] Decide how spellers qualify, for example a written class round followed by an oral final.
- [ ] Choose or build the word list and decide the levels you need.
- [ ] Ask for helpers: a pronouncer, one to three judges, a timekeeper and a scorekeeper.
- [ ] Write your rules and decide how ties will be broken.

Four weeks before

- [ ] Share the study word list with students and families.
- [ ] Send the invitation letter home, including the date, time and place.
- [ ] Plan class practice sessions (short daily practice works well).
- [ ] Check whether any speller needs support, such as seating, extra time to think or a printed copy of the rules.
- [ ] Book any equipment: microphone, speakers, chairs, a table for the judges.

Two weeks before

- [ ] Hold class or qualifying rounds and confirm the list of finalists.
- [ ] Prepare the pronouncer's word list in order, with definitions and example sentences.
- [ ] Prepare extra words for tie-breaks and keep them separate.
- [ ] Print score sheets, judging sheets and certificates.
- [ ] Read the rules aloud to the spellers and answer their questions.

One week before

- [ ] Hold a rehearsal with the pronouncer, judges and spellers.
- [ ] Check pronunciations of any words you are unsure about in a reliable dictionary.
- [ ] Make number cards or name tags for the spellers.
- [ ] Plan the seating: spellers, audience, judges' table and the microphone spot.
- [ ] Send a reminder to families.

The day before

- [ ] Set up the room and test the microphone and speakers.
- [ ] Put the word lists, score sheets, pens and a dictionary on the judges' table.
- [ ] Fill in the names on the certificates (or bring pens to fill them in on the day).
- [ ] Confirm that every helper knows their role and arrival time.

On the day

- [ ] Welcome spellers and give them their numbers.
- [ ] Explain the rules again and run a practice round that does not count.
- [ ] Keep the score sheet up to date after every word.
- [ ] Offer short breaks if the bee runs long.
- [ ] Present certificates to every speller, not only the winners.

The day after

- [ ] Thank the helpers, judges and families.
- [ ] Share the results with your school community in a kind, positive way.
- [ ] Ask spellers what they enjoyed and what could be better next time.
- [ ] Store the word lists and notes for next year.

Notes

For practice, students can use the free word lists and online spelling test at spellingbetter.com.

My notes

Free printable from Spelling Better for Teachers · spellingbetter.com/for-teachers/resources/spelling-bee-planning-checklist/ · You may print and copy this sheet for classroom use.