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.