



The Premier's Spelling Bee

School Activity Ideas & Suggestions

Finalist Selection procedures:

- Start with class competitions before moving to grade/stage/school spelling bees.
- Run in-school competitions according to Regional and State Final procedures to familiarise students with the format and give them practice in front of an audience.
- Use written spelling activities with students before moving to oral activities eg. give students written tests on a selection of words from the list to determine class representatives before moving to further stages of competition. Implement the oral nature of the competition slowly, week by week.
- Orally test students individually on the same list of words. Highest scores become school representatives.
- Use visual aids (e.g. PowerPoint presentation/whiteboards behind student spellers) so that audience can follow along as contestants spell words.

Spelling activities:

- Use fun game-show style activities (perhaps using buzzers etc).
- Spelling Baseball – students must spell a word correctly to progress through bases and make a home run for their team.
- Split word lists into more manageable weekly sections. Practice with 10 words each morning.
- Make booklets for students with selected words. Class heats and school heats may use only a restricted number of words. Full lists should be given to Regional Finalists.
- Use of mnemonics, homophones, exceptions in spelling patterns.
- Use of self-evaluation and self-correction techniques like the Cover-Copy-Compare (CCC) method. This strategy involves a student looking at a word, covering it, writing it once from memory, and then uncovering the word to see whether their attempt matches the written form (repeated until a correct response is achieved).
- Teach strategies for sounding out words in syllables.
- Use meanings and synonyms for vocabulary and language development.
- Research different word category areas (e.g. Environment) to complement spelling activities. Integrate category words into separate learning areas (e.g. Maths/Science).
- Wordlists can be used to implement Dictionary and Thesaurus work in the classroom.
- Implement buddy system - older students helping younger students for encouragement and testing.
- Get the whole class involved – during spelling competitions, have all students write down the word while the competitor is spelling out loud.
- Use spelling words in find-a-words, crosswords and dictations.

Other suggestions:

- Emphasise the comprehension of words and the acquisition of vocabulary: place words in sentences.
- Look at the most commonly misspelled words from previous years and analyse with top spellers why these words cause trouble.
- Show final rounds of high profile spelling bees like the *Scripps National Spelling Bee* (USA) to motivate students (clips usually available on YouTube).
- Show excerpts from Spelling Bee documentaries and films, for example *Spellbound* (2002) and *Akeelah and the Bee* (2006).
- Raise awareness with school bulletins and signboards to encourage participation.
- Involvement of Stage 1 motivates students to enter Stage 2 and 3 competitions when older. Use Level 1 and 2 words from Junior lists for K-2 students.
- Reward winners with trophies and prizes such as books/dictionaries.
- Use the Spelling Bee as a fundraising activity. Spellers seek sponsors and raise funds for the school.
- Use guest judges (eg editor of the local newspaper) to raise school competition profile.
- Hold inter-school competitions with other schools in the area (particularly for small, regional schools).
- Involve parents through homework and as the audience at school finals.
- One-on-one practice with Regional/State finalists in the lead-up to finals.