Spelling Bee Primer™

Introduction

The spelling bee is about to begin. You’re excited to compete. You’re eager to know if you’ve studied all the right words. You’re a little nervous about being on stage. You may even have a few butterflies! Mostly you’re wondering…Can I win?

If this sounds like you or your child, The Spelling Bee Primer was written just for you! This book contains a wide variety of tools to help you succeed. You’ll learn the importance of keeping your own spelling word journal. You’ll find out how to learn new words, and you’ll learn some tricks for remembering really difficult words.

This book also contains 45 word lists, some fun worksheets and a lot of quick quizzes. You’ll also find spelling bee rules and tips on preparing for your big performance.

The Goals of This Book

Every portion of this book has been written to meet one or more of these goals:

- Build spelling and vocabulary skills in students
- Help parents and students work together on common spelling goals
- Build confidence in spelling bee participants

Attention: Families

We want you! As students prepare for spelling bees, they will need the full support of their families. Family members can help students learn new words to expand their vocabularies and drill students on the spellings of difficult words.

Perhaps most importantly, family members can give the support and encouragement that every speller needs. Everyone can get on board as you prepare together for success! Please note that young spellers may require A LOT of help from an older family member.

Whether you’re the parent of a timid young speller about to compete for the very first time in a spelling bee, or the parent of a confident, experienced student, your family will benefit from the information packed into this book.

Please read the instructions that follow before using this book to gain maximum benefit from its pages.
You’ll be ready to study troublesome spelling bee words anytime, and anywhere, when you make your own spelling journal! **This is very important, and you should start one right away.**

### How to Make Your Own Spelling Journal

Start with a thick spiral-bound notebook, like the one shown here. Or, use a loose-leaf notebook, as shown below, so that you can add more blank pages as needed.

Divide your notebook into 27 sections. Mark your sections with tabs or sticky notes placed at the edges of the pages.

Label the first 26 tabs for each letter of the alphabet. Label the last section “Notes.”

### How to Use Your Spelling Journal

When you find a word that is difficult to spell, write it in your journal. For example, write the word *abacus* in the A section. Write *zephyr* in the Z section and so on.

In the “Notes” section, record questions you have about specific words. Perhaps you heard a new word and you want to learn what it means.

Also write down new words that you heard but don’t know how to spell. For instance, suppose you heard someone say a word that sounded like *kookibura*. In your “notes” section, write the way you think it might be spelled.

Later, when you have time, find the correct spelling of this word by using an online dictionary or reference book, or by asking an adult. Once you know the correct spelling, *kookaburra*, copy the word correctly into the K section of your journal. Cross it off your “notes” section.

Anytime you read a book, blog, newspaper or magazine, keep your journal handy so that you can record new words that you want to study.

### The Big Benefit of Keeping a Spelling Journal

The best part of your new journal is that you always have a list of words to study! Even if you only have a few spare minutes, you can flip to any page in your journal and review new words.

The more you use your journal -- by adding more and more words to it, and by studying the words in it -- the more it will help you prepare for your next spelling bee!
If you’ve ever attended a spelling bee, or watched one on television, you’ve probably seen students doing all sorts of interesting things as they decide how to spell a word. These actions are what I mean by “style.”

As you know, no two students are exactly the same. Just as you speak and write differently from your classmates, you also think and act differently, especially when you’re in a challenging situation.

Long before you compete in a big spelling bee, it helps to discover your spelling bee style. What actions help you concentrate? Which ones only distract you and make thinking more difficult?

A Few Examples

Here are just a few examples of things you might try:

1) Spell the word in the air with your finger. This may help you to “see” the word before you spell it aloud. You can see if it “looks” right before you speak into the microphone.

2) Similarly, you can spell the word with your finger on the back of your other hand, or the back of your name tag.

3) Look at the floor. You might find you can think better when you’re not looking at the microphone, the judges, or the audience. You can think through the spelling very carefully. When you know the word, look up and spell it into the microphone.

4) Close your eyes. This filters out even more distractions than looking at the floor.

5) Whisper the spelling to yourself. You can decide if it sounds right. Be careful, however, not to spell loud enough for the judges to hear it until you’re ready.

TIP: Don’t wait too long before spelling your word for the judges. There are usually limits on how much time you have. Try to find out in advance what your limit is so that you can practice spelling words within that amount of time.

How do I find my style?

Enlist the help of a family member. Stand up in the front of the room. Ask your helper to give you several words of varying difficult to spell aloud. Try some of the styles listed above. Which ones seem to help? Which ones do not? Repeat this exercise several times to learn which method works best for you.

Plan now to use your most comfortable spelling bee style. This will give you confidence to do your best!
IE Words

Write the words from the list into this blank crossword. Hint: Count the number of spaces in the puzzle and the number of letters in the words.

B. On the back of this page, write sentences for any four of the IE words in the box.

Important Tip: Identify 1 or 2 “anchor words” that you already know how to spell, such as pie or tried.

Then try to remember the other IE words, along with your anchor words, in a group. For example, remember that pie, tried, friend, achieve, and cashier are all spelled with IE.

You can even make up sentences with your most troublesome words to help you. For instance, use a sentence such as I achieve more when I share pie with a friend.
Words that end in AL

A. Two of the words in the box have homophones. Write the meanings of each of these words:

1. real____________________
2. reel _________________________
3. pedal ________________________
4. peddle ________________________

B. Write sentences for words 2, 6 and 11 in the box.

2.   ____________________________________

6.   ____________________________________

11. ____________________________________

C. Unscramble and write these additional AL words:

a c a i n ____________________
t e a m l ____________________
g a i n l s ____________________
 d i m e l a c ____________________

TIP
It's easy to confuse AL words with EL and LE words. If the ending is added to a word, the spelling is likely to be AL. Examples include music/musical, sign/signal, and instrument/instrumental.
Commonly Confused Words

Use a dictionary to check the meanings of any words that are confusing to you. Then write the correct word in each sentence.

1. I am not _______________ to stay out late on school nights.
2. Let’s go ____________ to the park after school.
3. Many kinds of cacti grow only in the _________.
4. The flag broke ____________ from the flagpole in the windstorm.
5. I’m not sure _______________ or not I’ll be able to go to the game on Saturday.
6. The troops marched _____________ into battle.
7. Everyone _____________ Richard forgot about the class party.
8. I’m proud to ___________ this special honor!
9. This bad ____________ may hurt the attendance at the picnic.
10. How will the player’s injury ____________ her ability to play ball?
11. No one wants to _____________ the big game!
12. The author thanked his family in the ________________ of his new book.
13. I tried not to talk _____________ while I was in the library.
14. What is the ____________ of adding extra water to the soup?

There are many, many more sets of frequently confused words. You can find some of them at http://www.spelling-words-well.com/spelling-demons.html.
Review Page: Hidden Joke!

Read and follow each of the directions below to uncover a funny answer to a silly joke.

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<th>B</th>
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<th>D</th>
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<td>fly</td>
<td>delay</td>
<td>valley</td>
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<td>forgetable</td>
<td>apply</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>party</td>
<td>bee</td>
<td>measureable</td>
<td>duet</td>
<td>appearence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Cross out all words that are spelled incorrectly.
2. Cross out all words in columns A, B and C that keep the final Y when adding S.
3. Circle out all words in columns C and D that have prefixes for numbers less than six.
4. Cross out all words that form plurals by added ES.
5. Circle all words in rows 1 and 4 that rhyme with done.
6. Cross out all two-letter words.
7. Circle all words in columns A and B in which the Y is changed to I before adding ES.
8. Circle all words with prefixes for numbers for 10 or 100.

**Question:** What’s even more amazing than a talking parrot?

Write the words in the unmarked boxes to spell the answer:

**Answer:** __________ _________________ ____________!
Here’s an assortment of interesting, challenging words that are fun to learn. It may be very helpful to learn these words before your next spelling bee!

To help you learn these tricky words, I’ve included pronunciations, language of origin, parts of speech, definitions and sentences. Be sure to ask a family member to help you learn these difficult words.

Please note that I’ve included only one of the possible definitions for each word. Also, alternate pronunciations exist for some words.

Pronunciation Guide:

(a) - as in sad, tap, latch
(ā) - as in a in pay, late, cape
(e) - as in feel, deal, easy
(ə) - as in about, confuse
(i) - as in lip, fish

(g) – as in gum, gorilla

The main emphasis in each word belongs on the syllable in bold type.

Challenge Word List

1. ambidextrous (am-bi-dex-trus) Latin adj. – capable of using both hands equally well
   Because I’m ambidextrous, sometimes I eat with my right hand, and sometimes I use my left hand.

2. picnicker (pik-nik-er) German, French noun – a person holding a picnic, or sharing a meal outdoors
   The picnicker brought sandwiches to share with his friends.
Quick Quiz #19  ARY or ERY

Write ARY or ERY at the end of each word. Write the entire word again.

1. libr _____  __________________  6. secret ____  __________________
2. deliv ____  __________________  7. gall ____  __________________
3. bound ___  __________________   8. diction ___  __________________
4. myst___  __________________  9. element ___  __________________
5. discov__  __________________  10. necess___  __________________

Quick Quiz  #20  Geography

Write the missing letters in the blanks. Write the entire word again.

1. o c __ __ n  __________________  6. g l a c__ _r  _________________
2. c a n __ __ n  __________________  7. m o u n t__ __n _________________
3. i c e b __ __ g  __________________  8. c o n t i n __ __ t _________________
4. __ __ s i s  __________________  9. t r i b u t__ __y  _________________
5. p l a t __ __  _________________  10. p e n __ __ s _ l a _______________