



Orange County Department of Education
Educational Services Division



2026 Orange County Spelling Bee

Program Overview

The Orange County Spelling Bee is coordinated by the Orange County Department of Education in partnership with the Orange County Register. Winners from school or district spelling bees participate in the county's preliminary written round. The top spellers from the written round advance to the final round where they compete to become the top speller in the county.

The winner of the Orange County Spelling Bee advances to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. The winner's participation in the national finals is sponsored by the Orange County Register.

The Orange County Spelling Bee supports California State Standards by encouraging students to improve their spelling and expand their vocabularies, which positively affects reading and writing skills. In addition, spelling bees help strengthen communication and character development, which helps students to be successful in school and beyond.

Student Eligibility

1. Students must be the winners of their school or district spelling bee program.
2. Students **must attend an Orange County school**.
3. Students must be in **grades six, seven, or eight**, and may not be older than 14 years of age.
4. Students must meet all Scripps National Spelling Bee eligibility requirements.
5. Students must attend a school that is officially enrolled with the **Scripps National Spelling Bee**.

District/School Eligibility

1. Districts and schools must host their spelling bee by **January 30, 2026**.
2. Districts that host their own spelling bee may send up to ten (10) students designated as winners.
3. For districts that **do not** host their own spelling bee, individual schools may host their own competition.
 - Elementary schools serving grades K-6 may send up to three (3) students designated as winners.
 - Middle, intermediate, junior high, and K-8 schools may send up to six (6) students designated as winners.

All schools (including homeschool associations) must register with Scripps National Spelling Bee. To be eligible to participate in the Orange County Spelling Bee, a district or school employee must register through the Scripps website.

Steps to Participation

1. Enroll with the Scripps National Spelling Bee at <http://www.spellingbee.com/>. Once enrolled, coordinators will have access to grade-specific word lists, pronouncer guides, certificates, rules for local spelling bees, fundraising ideas, and more.
2. Submit [Intent to Participate form](#) to the Orange County Department of Education.
3. Direct students to visit the Orange County Spelling Bee website at <https://ocde.us/SpellingBee/> for study resources. Students may also visit the Scripps website for study resources.
4. Host district and/or school spelling bees.
5. Submit [Orange County Spelling Bee enrollment paperwork](#) and fees for each student eligible to move forward in the county level competition.
6. Provide all student winners with the Scripps National Spelling Bee “Words of the Champions” booklet (district/school coordinators can download booklets from the Scripps National Spelling Bee website).

Fees

There are **two separate fees** required in order to participate in the Orange County Spelling Bee.

1. Scripps National Spelling Bee:
 - Enrollment fee: \$199 per school
 - Scripps enrollment fee includes: grade-specific word lists, pronouncer guides, certificates, rules for local spelling bees, fundraising ideas, and additional information to support local events
2. Orange County Department of Education:
 - Orange County Spelling Bee Registration fee: \$130 per student
 - Purchase orders or checks are accepted from the school, district, or PTA.

Important Dates

October 31, 2025	Deadline to submit Orange County Spelling Bee Intent to Participate
January 30, 2026	Deadline to host district or school spelling bee
February 5, 2026	Deadline to register winners and submit Orange County Spelling Bee enrollment paperwork and fees
February 23, 2026	Orange County Spelling Bee Written Round
February 24, 2026	Top spellers advancing to the final round will be announced on the Orange County Spelling Bee website
February 28, 2026	Orange County Spelling Bee Final Round Winner represents the county at the Scripps National Spelling Bee
May 25 - 29, 2026	2026 Scripps National Spelling Bee Visit Scripps website beginning May 1, 2026 for a full competition schedule

For more information, please contact Theresa Bernard, Project Liaison, Academic Events at (714) 966-4316 or spellingbee@ocde.us.