



SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

DISTRICT OPTIMIST

SPELLING BEE

PLANNING GUIDE



WHY DO A SPELLING BEE

PURPOSE:

To demonstrate to the youth and community the concern and appreciation of good spellers.
To encourage youth to learn to spell in an exciting environment.

BENEFITS:

To recognize academic efforts and success of young people.
To give class room teachers a very positive motivational tool to use for spelling improvement.
To encourage interaction between the schools in the community and the Optimist Club.
Heightens community awareness of Optimist Clubs and their work with the youth in the community.

BENEFITS TO CLUB:

Promotes a youth activity which is fun and educational.
Utilizes the special interest and abilities for some members of your club.
Provides the club an opportunity to meet, work with and solicit membership with many new prospects from the community, parents, teachers, principals and business persons.
It increases community visibility and creditability of Optimist clubs.
To gain recognition as a service club whose membership demonstrates a concern for the youth in the community.
Foster's personal satisfaction for Optimist club members in achieving recognition, as well as involvement in Optimist activities.

PUBLICITY:

Local newspapers
Local TV station
Local cable channel
School newsletters
Youth clubs and organizations

ORGANIZATION OF A SPELLING BEE COMPETITION

1. The Optimist Club's Chairman visits the school(s) in the community to encourage the grade five to eight teachers to conduct a spelling bee within their curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to use the official Optimist Spelling Bee rules so that the students will become familiar with them enabling the winners to be more competitive as they advance through each level of the competition within the district. This gives all students a more competitive advantage to participate in this exciting project. The teachers may use their own word lists for the class competition. The winners from the official Class Competition will advance to the Club level.

The number of winners advancing to the Club Level from each grade will depend on how many schools the Club services. There should not be any more than six to eight contestants in any level of competition beyond the Class Level.

2. Form a committee of Optimist Club members and have a meeting to organize your Club's Spelling Bee.

Review the official Spelling Bee rules and make changes to accommodate your project. Keeping in mind that the official rules will be used at the Zone and District levels. Arrange for two to three Judges, good sources would be the Board of Education and Toastmaster.

Select awards for first, second and third place winners for each grade; dictionary medallions or plaques.

Select thank you gifts for the Judges; Optimist pen sets.

Develop a word list for each grade and have a significant number for each category.

Resources: teachers, school word list

Avoid words with double meanings

Decide whether or not to use Canadian or American spelling or both and inform contestants in advance.

Contact the School and arrange for a Spelling Bee in the School and follow up periodically to see how it is progressing.

Arrange refreshments and snacks.

Arrange to get names of contestants in advance.

Arrange the location for the Spelling Bee. An ideal location would be the Optimist Club meeting hall, school gymnasium, auditorium or similar locations.

Arrange desks or tables and chairs for each contestant using a number or letter on each desk to identify each contestant. The contestants should be facing the judges and the judges should be facing the audience, therefore the contestants should have their backs to the audience.

Arrange the Judges table(s) so that they are facing the contestants to facilitate an environment that permits both the contestants and Judges to be able to hear one another clearly.

Arrange to have a glass of water on the table in front of each contestant and judge.

Each Judge should have access to Canadian Dictionaries.

Supply Judges with word lists, pencils, paper, tally/score sheets for each grade.

3. Suggested Judges Role:
 - one judge gives the word for the contestants
 - one judge says correct or incorrect
 - one judge keeps track of rounds and order of elimination and announce the next contestant.
 - Give word list to the Judges in advance especially if the judge will be forming sentences for each word.
4. Hold a brief meeting with the Judges prior to the contest to; familiarize them with the contest rules, review contest organization and schedule. Explain score keeping guaranteeing consistency with all Judges. Address any questions and concerns at this time.
5. Do one grade at a time starting with grade five.
6. Have each contestant draw a number or letter and have him or her sit at the appropriate desk/table.
7. Review contest rules with the participant and audience. Remind the audience that it is an **ORAL** spelling bee, therefore, a quiet and distracting environment is appreciated. Assure that no one enters or leaves the room while the actual competition is taking place to avoid distracting the participants. Arrange for one Optimist member to serve as a Sargent-at-Arms for each entrance or exit to the room.
8. Judges may be introduced at the beginning or end of the competition. Any complaints or concerns must be addressed to the Chairperson, who will deal with the issue appropriately. Under no circumstances should a parent or member of the audience approach the judge for any discussion.
9. Have the contestants introduce themselves by their number or letter and their school. This will assist in making them feel more comfortable and relaxed as well as identify any difficulty the judges may have in hearing the children.
10. Have two or three practice rounds to relax the contestants and familiarize them with the rules. Then proceed with the actual spelling bee competition. Refer to official rules.
11. When the competition has been completed, announce the winners to the audience and present the awards to the first, second and third place winners. Present each participant with a certificate of participation. Present the judges with a Thank You gift.
12. Take a break to allow the audience and Judges an opportunity to stretch and relax while arranging for each contestant participating in the next level of the competition to select their number/letter and to sit in their appropriate place at the desk/table. Before each level of the competition begins make the announcement to the audience and review rules once again for the benefit of new participants and new individuals in the audience.

13. **Repeat steps 5 through 12 for each grade participating in the competition.**
14. When the competition has been completed in its entirety introduce and thank the Judges if this has not been done at the end of each separate competition. Congratulate and thank all participants and their parents. Thank the committee members for their assistance in the planning and implementation of the Spelling Bee.
15. Send a letter to the Principle of the school from which the first and second place winner of the competition attended requesting that he/she send a letter home with those students (second is alternate). Important information to be included in this letter should be; confirmation of the child's success, next level of competition, date, time, location, transportation arrangements, club contact name and phone number. **The second place winner will go to the District level if the first place winner is unable to attend.** The Spelling Bee chair may choose to have the School Principle notify the parents of the above or do so himself/herself, which ever would be more beneficial. The Chairman should follow up with the parents of the first place winner to assure that they are aware of the next level of competition and that if the student is able to attend. **If the first place participant is unable to attend, arrangement will then have to be made to have the second place winner attend as the alternate for the first place winner.**

SPELLING BEE COMPETITION

OFFICIAL RULES

NOTE: These rules will be used at all levels of competition by all grades.

1. The competition is open to students from grade five to eight. A separate competition must be conducted for each grade.
2. At the Club level, the finalists should be chosen from the school(s) in the area that the Club services. If the club serves only one school, the Club may wish to ask for six to eight contestants from each grade to enter a Club competition or the first and second place winners in each grade may advance to the Zone Level. Optimist Clubs that has the advantage of serving more than one school may have each school send two to three contestants from each grade to the Club competition. At the Club Level, you may have up to 24 participants for each grade. The first and second place winners from the Club competition may have the opportunity to move on to the Zone competition.
3. Depending on how many Optimist Clubs are participating in the Zone Competition, each Optimist Club may be able to have the opportunity to enter two contestants in each grade. There should not be any more than six to eight contestants in each grade competition. For example, if there are three Optimist Clubs participating in the Zone competition, then each Optimist Club may send two to three contestants. If there are five Optimist Clubs participating, then each Club may send only one contestant. If your Zone is not conducting a Zone competition, ask a neighbouring Zone if you may send contestants to their competition. If there are two or more Optimist Clubs in your Zone conducting a competition and your Zone is not conducting a competition you may address your concern to the Lt. Governor or call your District Spelling Bee Chair. **EACH ZONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY OF SENDING ONLY CONTESTANT FOR EACH GRADE TO THE DISTRICT SPELLING BEE COMPETITION.**
4. Each contestant will spell each word assigned orally.
5. It is a good idea to have a practice round or two. This enables the contestant to become more relaxed and comfortable for the actual competition. This also enables them to become more familiar with the rules and to assure that their speech is clear and loud enough for the judges to hear.
6. Select one judge for each round to read the word, use the word in a sentence and read the word for a second time before the contestant attempts the correct spelling.
7. When spelling the word assigned, the contestant will stand, repeat the word, spell the word and repeat the word for a second time, which will indicate that the contestant is finished.
8. The contestants will be given the opportunity to correct themselves if they stumble or otherwise make a mistake that they are aware of prior to saying the word the second time.

9. After the contestant has completed repeating the word for the second time, the assigned judge will answer “correct” or “incorrect”. If the word is incorrect, the judge will spell the word correctly, and then move on to the next word and next contestant.
10. Capital letters must be spelled as capitals where applicable, (for example, spell Ottawa, the contestant will repeat the word, “Ottawa”, and then commence spelling by starting with capital O etc.). The judge must make it known when a specific word is a noun.
11. DETERMINING WINNERS:
When there are only three contestants remaining in the competition, in determining the winners have one contestant remain in the room while the other contestant(s) leave with a chaperone. This promotes fairness in the contest and allows each student an equal opportunity to attempt the correct spelling of the same word disallowing the advantage of knowing the word before his/her turn arrives. Have the contestant remaining in the room take his/her turn to attempt the correct spelling of the chosen word and then recall each contestant outside the room until all contestants have had their turn. Thereby having each contestant spell the SAME word in his or her turn. If the word is spelled correctly by all contestants, then repeat this procedure until all but one contestant remains, eliminating each contestant that has spelled the chosen words incorrectly. This procedure guarantees an equal calibre of words for each contestant.
12. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER: when declaring winners, you measure by the number of rounds each contestant successfully completes. Each contestant remaining in the contest must complete a full round. Thus the decision of first, second and third place winners are not determined by who makes the first mistake, but who has successfully completed the most rounds. This eliminates bias caused through “luck of the draw” contestant numbers. When the contestant misspells a word, they will take his/her seat and remain seated until there has been a winner declared, then they will be allowed to go and sit with their family,
13. Awards should be presented to the first, second and third place winners from each grade.
14. During the contest, no smoking is allowed and there should be no noise or photographs taken which will distract the contestants and the judges.

To enable French speaking contestants an equal opportunity to take part in the competition, the Chair will select one judge that is bilingual. Preferably a French teacher from a different school who may select the French word list and sentences for the competition.

RUNNING A SPELLING BEE

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Optimist Club of _____, I would like to welcome everyone here this morning. My name is _____ and I will be your master of ceremonies for this today's competition. We have here today, volunteers that are performing other duties

judge: _____

judge: _____

timekeeper: _____

Spelling Master: _____

Today, we welcome the winning grade _____ students' from _____ area

The students here today have already won competitions within their _____ area and are now going on to compete against these other competitors to represent our (Club/Zone) in the next level of competition at the (Zone/District) Spelling Bee to be held at _____ on _____ Only the top finalist from today's competition will proceed on against competitors at the next level.

Congratulations to these students for getting this far and I wish them the best in this morning's competition.

RULES FOR THE AUDIENCE

I have to go over a few rules for the audience here today before we get started.

- 1) We ask all the audience to please remain seated and quiet during the competition, so the judges can hear the students spell their words. No one is allowed to enter or leave during each grade competition. There will be a really short break between rounds for people to talk and also for the competitors to be reseated.
- 2) All cell phones and pagers should be turned off. If you need to use these devices, please go outside at the end of the round only.
- 3) We ask that no photographs be taken during the competition, just so the students don't get more nervous than what they likely already are. There will be time at the end of the competition for picture taking.
- 4) We also need to stress to the audience that there will be no coaching allowed. If we see any coaching from the audience, that contestant will be **automatically disqualified**.
Option:
- 5) _____ has graciously donated the use of their facility here today so I ask that you please pick up any garbage that you see laying around. We want you to leave it the way it was when you came. We would also like to be able to use these facilities again.

COMPETITORS RULES

Now for the competitors. This is how today's competition will proceed

- 1) The students have already been assigned an order of spelling by luck of the draw from a hat that was just done. The students are now seated in that order in front of you.
- 2) Spelling Master _____ will ask the first competitor to stand and come to the microphone. The Spelling Master will then proceed to say the word for the competitor to spell, put that word into a sentence and then say the word again. The student will then need to **"and I stress this to all the competitors"**
 - 1) Speak loud and clear for the judges to hear

- 2) If you don't understand the word, ask for the definition
- 3) State the word to be spelled
- 4) Spell the word

If, during the spelling of that word the student thinks he/she has misspelled it he/she **must**

- a) Say "start over"
 - b) Repeat the word
 - c) Spell the word
 - 5) Repeat the word
- * Each contestant has up to one minute to spell the word. This order must be followed and it will be stressed even more at the next level of competition.
 - * Once the student repeats the word after spelling it, this indicates to the judges that he/she has finished and he/she cannot try to make a correction.
 - * When the student has repeated the word after spelling it, The Spelling Master and/or the judges will answer "correct" or "incorrect" If the student was incorrect, the Spelling Master will spell the word for the student correctly, so that they will know their mistake.
 - * Capital letters must be spelt as capitals when needed (ex. Ottawa is capital "O"ttawa)
 - * When the Spelling Master has stated whether or not the contestant has correctly spelled the word, the contestant is asked to return to his/her seat at the front until the end of that round of competition.
 - * If you or anyone else thinks that the decision was incorrect, it is **NOW** that a decision has to be challenged. We will be using the Canadian version of words only. We have with us the _____ dictionary which we will use as our master spell checker. **The challenge must be made prior to the next contestant stepping up to the microphone.**
 - * The next contestant will then be asked to step forward to the microphone and repeat the above process. This will continue on until all contestants have tried to spell a word. Option: (At the end of this round, all contestants that did not spell their word correctly are asked to return to the audience with their parents).
 - * This process will continue until we are down to our last three contestants. At that time we will have a "spell-off ", one contestant at a time with the other two contestants out in the hall. They will all spell the same word. This will continue until we are down to the last contestant, which will go onto our next level competition.
 - * At the end of this competition, we will ask all the contestants to return to their seats at the front for presentations of certificates. This will be a good time for anyone wanting to take a picture to do so.

There will also be juice and a snack out in the lobby afterwards for everyone.

Now enough of the rules, lets get on with this competition. We are going to start out with a practice round just to get everyone relaxed and used to the rules.

Good luck to everyone here this morning and remember this first round is just practice.

SPELLING BEE WORD LISTS

Determine how many contestants will be participating for each grade. Prepare a word list with sentences to accommodate twelve or fourteen rounds for each grade. If there are five contestants in Grade 5 participating, there should be five words in each round, one word for each contestant.

Grade 5 Word Lists:

Following the practice rounds, start with difficult words for grade 5 level. Rounds one to three should be Grade 5 words. Rounds four to six should be Grade 6 level words. Rounds seven to nine should be Grade 7 level words. Rounds ten to twelve should be Grade 8 level words.

Using this format ensures the words are gradually becoming more difficult and eliminates contestants to determine the first, second and third place winners. If there are no winners after round twelve, move on the Grade 6 Word List starting with round seven of that word list.

Grade 6 Word Lists:

Following a practice round, start rounds one to three with Grade 6 words. Rounds four to six with Grade 7 level words. Rounds seven to nine with Grade 8 level words and harder. If no winner has been determined after round nine, move on to Grade 7 Word List starting with round seven of that list.

Grade 7 Word Lists:

Following a practice round start rounds one to four with Grade 7 level words. Rounds five to twelve with Grade 8 level words and harder. If no winner has been determined after round twelve move on to Grade 8 Word List starting with round seven.

Grade 8 Word Lists:

Following a practice round start with words at the Grade 8 level and progressively have the words become harder.

LEVELS OF SPELLING BEE **COMPETITIONS**

SCHOOL

Encourage school and teachers to hold spelling bee

Winner from Grade 5 to 8 at each school advance to Club Spelling Bee

CLUB

Club Spelling Bee contestants are from schools in your area

Winners from each grade advance to Zone Spelling Bee

ZONE

Zone will hold the Zone Spelling Bee for each Grade

Each Contestant to receive a Certificate of Participation

Winner of each Grade will go to the District Spelling Bee

DISTRICT

All Contestants in District receive Certificate of Participation

Top three (3) constants of each grade receive a medallion

Cash prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place

SPELLING BEE CONTEST

Organization and Responsibilities

Club

- Select a Club Spelling Bee Chair
- Chairperson visits schools in the community to encourage the grade five to eight teachers to conduct a spelling bee within their curriculum.
- The winners from the Class Competition will advance to the Club level.
- Club Level competition should have six to eight contestants
- Club Spelling Bee Chair is responsible to notify the Zone Spelling Bee Chair of names or each Representative from each grade who will be participating at Zone Level.

Zone Spelling Bee Chair

- Arrange the date, time and location of the Zone Spelling Bee
- Responsible to prepare a certificate of participation for each participant at the Zone Level
- Certificates should be presented during the awards presentation at each level
- Inform winners of date, time and location of District Competition

Lt. Governor

- Arrange for a Chair for the Zone Spelling Bee Competition
- Notify the District Spelling Bee Chair of Date, Time and Location of the Competition
- Following each Zone Competition, the Lt. Governor notifies the District Spelling Bee Chair of the names, school, grade level and sponsoring Club of each participant who will be attending the District Spelling Bee Competition.

District Spelling Bee Chair

- Arrange a date, time and location for the District Spelling Bee
- Conduct the District Spelling bee contest
- Certificate of Participation should be presented to all participants during the awards presentation at each level
- Award prize money and medallions to winners.