



Spellers Converge for 2015 Scripps National Spelling Bee

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CINCINNATI—285 spellers from eight countries will compete this year for the coveted title of champion at the 88th annual Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The Bee will take place May 26 - 28 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland.

Once again, the competition began with more than 11 million students participating in spelling bees held in classrooms, schools, and locally sponsored events around the country. For the 285 spellers, the journey that began in their hometowns will find them competing in the main event—making each contestant one of the top .000026 percent of spellers nationwide.

“This is an unparalleled journey in word exploration,” said Paige Kimble, executive director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. “From school bees where millions of students learned words they’ll use throughout their lives, to the national stage where champion spellers will take on the most challenging words in the English language, the Scripps National Spelling Bee is proud to have partnered with tens of thousands of schools to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives.”

This year, the spellers gathering at the Gaylord will bring a diverse cultural background to the Bee, with spellers converging from eight countries: the Bahamas, Canada, China, Ghana, Jamaica, Japan, South Korea and the United States. Competitors hail from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Department of Defense Schools in Europe.

This year, 11 semifinalists are returning to the competition. Returning semifinalists include Vanya Shivashankar, the Olathe, Kansas, eighth grader – and younger sister of the Bee’s 2009 champion, Kavya Shivashankar – who is returning for her fifth time after previously placing as high as fifth; St. Louis eighth grader Gokul Venkatachalam, who returns for his fourth appearance after placing third last year; sixth grader Tejas Muthusamy of Richmond, Virginia, who tied for eighth place in his first appearance in 2014; and Sam Pereles, a Charlottesville, Virginia, eighth grader who placed 12th last year.

New testing format for 2015

In a change to the format of the Bee this year, the Preliminaries and Semifinals Tests will be in multiple-choice format with responses recorded on bubble test forms. In each test, spellers will be quizzed on 12 spelling words and 14 vocabulary questions, and performance on the test will be combined with onstage spelling performance to determine who advances to the Semifinals and Championship Finals of the competition.

New for 2015: The Buzzworthy mobile app

For the first time ever, Bee fans can get in on the action of the 2015 Scripps National Spelling Bee by downloading the new Buzzworthy app for iOS, Android and Windows phones.

The Buzzworthy app provides friendly competition with friends, family and co-workers for Bee fans who download the official app of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. With Buzzworthy, fans can follow a group of spellers, earn points when spellers correctly spell words, connect with friends to create hives of spellers, and compete against other hives for bragging rights.

Fans also can stay up to date on the buzz around the Bee with alerts through the final rounds. With the new Buzzworthy app, watching the Bee offers an entirely new level of engagement and entertainment for Bee fans.

The Bee on ESPN:

For the 22nd consecutive year, ESPN and its family of channels will provide coverage of the Bee with hosts Chris McKendry, Paul Loeffler and Kaylee Hartung. The broadcast includes a play-along version on ESPN3 where viewers can test their spelling mettle along with the competitors.

The first day of competition is Tuesday, May 26, but spellers will take to the stage for the first time the following day. ESPN will broadcast the Championship Finals from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. EDT on Thursday, May 28 ([watch live on ESPN](#); [play along on ESPN3](#)). Other highlights are as follows:

- Preliminaries on Wednesday, May 27, from 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. EDT ([watch live on ESPN3](#) or [play along](#))
- Preliminaries and announcement of semifinalists on Wednesday, May 27, from 1:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. EDT ([watch live on ESPN3](#) or [play along](#)).
- Semifinals and announcement of Championship Finalists on Thursday, May 28, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. EDT ([watch live on ESPN2](#) or [play along](#)).

Bee Informed:

A wealth of information about the spellers and the Bee is available at spellingbee.com. This includes profiles about each speller, past winners and their winning words, a sample test, fun facts and, during Bee Week, round results and regular competition updates.

Bee Buzz:

There are many ways to connect with the Scripps National Spelling Bee, including Facebook and YouTube. Using the Twitter handle [@ScrippsBee](#), the Bee will live tweet every word spelled on stage again this year, which is likely to be more than 700 words. And thousands of professional photos will be available to view and download on [Flickr](#).

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee:

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program. The National Spelling Bee started in 1925 with nine contestants. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all of their lives.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company. Scripps took ownership of the Bee in 1941 and, after not holding the competition for three years during World War II, has managed the Bee continuously since 1946. 2015 marks the 71st year that Scripps has operated the National Spelling Bee. In that span, the terms "Scripps" and "spelling bee" have become synonymous with one another.

About Scripps:

The E.W. Scripps Company serves audiences and businesses through a growing portfolio of television, radio and digital media brands. Scripps is one of the nation's largest independent TV station owners, with 33 television stations in 24 markets that reach nearly one in five U.S. television households. It also owns 34 radio stations in eight markets. Scripps also runs an expanding collection of local and national digital journalism and information businesses, including mobile video news service Newsy and weather app developer Weathersphere. Scripps also produces television shows including The List and The Now, runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and serves as the long-time steward of the nation's largest, most successful and longest-running educational program, the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps holds to the long-time motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

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