



Scripps National Spelling Bee welcomes 209 spellers to its 2021 national finals

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CINCINNATI – As the Scripps National Spelling Bee prepares to make its return to TV screens across the country beginning June 12, more than 200 spellers are preparing to showcase their skills in the competition’s first-ever hybrid virtual and in-person competition.

This year’s 209 spellers earned their spots as national competitors by advancing through local and regional bees, competing against contestants representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Department of Defense Schools in Europe.

The final rounds of this year’s Bee will be hosted in person at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort near Orlando, Florida, on July 8. The finals, featuring 10-12 accomplished spellers, will be broadcast live in primetime on ESPN2.

Other highlights of this year’s program:

- Four countries are participating in addition to the U.S.: the Bahamas, Canada, Ghana and Japan.
- The national finalists range in age from 9 to 15.
- A total of 47 national finalists have previous experience competing in the national finals, and 16 have siblings who are former national competitors.
- The champion will receive a \$50,000 cash prize.
- For the first time, the Bee will invite audiences to view special events for finalists including the opening ceremony, a presentation from dictionary partner Merriam-Webster, pre-shows for the semifinals and finals, the awards ceremony and more. These speller engagement elements will be livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube, and more information will be available at spellingbee.com.
- Other speller engagement elements this year include a digital experience hub, which features videos, gaming elements and virtual social events for spellers to connect and celebrate key achievements throughout their journeys within this year’s virtual environment.

Local sponsoring organizations enrolled in the Bee’s year-round educational program held regional competitions in February and March to identify national competitors. This year, due to the global pandemic, programs were allowed to conduct their local and regional bees virtually or through the Bee’s proprietary online testing platform. The platform, developed to provide educators and other program sponsors with an alternate and easily accessible mechanism to administer testing, has allowed local and regional bees greater flexibility to participate while complying with local pandemic response requirements.

“The Scripps National Spelling Bee is back, and with it, the tradition of watching a tremendous group of spellers take on the dictionary,” said Dr. J. Michael Durnil, executive director of the Bee. “We look forward to celebrating our 209 national finalists and all they’ve accomplished over the last year. To our audiences watching at home: tune in – on your mobile devices, laptops or televisions – and help us cheer on these truly exceptional young scholars.”

The official 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee live broadcast follows this schedule (all times Eastern):

Preliminaries: Saturday, June 12, 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m. on ESPN3

Quarterfinals: Tuesday, June 15, noon-6 p.m. on ESPN3

Semifinals: Sunday, June 27, 7-11 p.m. on ESPN2 (Play Along version on ESPNU)

Finals: Thursday, July 8, 8-10 p.m. on ESPN2 (Play Along version on ESPNU)

As the country continues to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person portion of the competition at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort will follow protocols while considering guidance from health authorities. Scripps also is reviewing its COVID-19-related health and safety protocol with medical experts at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center to help facilitate a responsible experience for all.

Media interested in following the action of the 2021 competition should contact media@spellingbee.com to receive regular updates as the competition progresses.

Find more information and meet the 209 spellers competing for this year’s title at spellingbee.com. Follow all the action leading up to and during the competition on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee:

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation’s largest and longest-running educational program, having launched in 1925. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives. Visit spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.

About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](http://www.ewscs.com) (NASDAQ: SSP) is a diversified media company focused on creating a better-informed world. As the nation’s fourth-largest local TV broadcaster, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of 61 stations in 41 markets. The Scripps Networks reach nearly every American through the national news outlets Court TV and Newsy and popular entertainment brands ION, Bounce, Grit, Laff and Court TV Mystery. Scripps is the nation’s largest holder of broadcast spectrum. Scripps runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and is the longtime steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, “Give light and the people will find their own way.”

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