

Scripps National Spelling Bee welcomes 243 spellers for historic 100th anniversary

May 8, 2025

CINCINNATI – A field of 243 top young spellers will converge on National Harbor, Maryland, from May 27-29 to compete in a historic Scripps National Spelling Bee. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the iconic American competition, which was first held on June 17, 1925, with just nine participants.

“Reaching 100 years is more than a milestone – it’s a testament to the enduring power of words, learning and the human spirit,” said Corrie Loeffler, executive director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. “For a century, this competition has brought people together through eras of profound change – from world wars to the digital age – and still, the Bee continues to inspire excellence, curiosity and connection. It’s a living piece of American history, and we’re honored to celebrate its legacy.”

This year’s 243 national qualifiers advanced through local and regional bees that took place through the end of March. All rounds of this year’s national competition – preliminaries, quarterfinals, semifinals and finals – will take place at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center.

Highlights of the 2025 Scripps National Spelling Bee field:

- The spellers range in age from 8 to 14.
- Only 53 spellers return from the 2024 field and 178 spellers – 73% – are competing in their first Scripps National Spelling Bee.
- Only one 2024 finalist advanced to the 2025 national competition: Faizan Zaki, who finished second last year behind Bruhat Soma following his record-breaking spell-off.
- Tarini Nandakumar is competing in her fifth consecutive Scripps National Spelling Bee. She was a finalist and finished ninth in 2023. Navtaj Singh, Micah Sterling and Avinav Prem Anand are competing in their fourth straight national competition. Harini Murali is in her fourth Bee overall, as is Zaki.
- There are spellers from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Texas has the largest representation with 22 national competitors. California is next with 20, followed by Ohio with 15 and Illinois with 13. Florida and New York have 12 each.
- There are 13 competitors from outside the 50 United States, representing the Bahamas, Canada, Germany, Ghana, Guam, Kuwait, Nigeria, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

[Here](#) is the 2025 Scripps National Spelling Bee Media Guide.
Find more information on the national competitors at spellingbee.com.

Celebrating a 100-year tradition

The Bee has launched several 100th anniversary initiatives for both spellers and the public:

- A **historical microsite**, capturing news, names and fun facts of the first 100 years of the Bee will launch in the coming weeks at history.spellingbee.com. Content will be added to the site, which will remain live after 2025.
- A special **limited-edition coffee-table book** capturing 100 years of the Bee’s history will be published in August and is available for preorder at Bee100Book.com.
- A **museum-quality exhibit** will be on display at the Gaylord during Bee Week, showcasing the Bee’s wealth of historical memorabilia, highlighting key milestones in the competition’s history and examining the Bee’s place in popular culture and the American experience.



NEWS RELEASE

The Bee on Scripps Networks (All times Eastern)

The 2025 broadcast/livestream of onstage competition follows this schedule (all times Eastern and end times approximate):

- The **preliminaries** will be streamed on Bounce XL, Grit Xtra, Laff More and spellingbee.com from 8 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27.
- The **quarterfinals** will be streamed on Bounce XL, Grit Xtra, Laff More and spellingbee.com from 8 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, May 28.

Two-night ION special event:

- The **semifinals** broadcast will air 8-10 p.m. on ION on Wednesday, May 28. (The live semifinals will be streamed on Bounce XL, Grit Xtra, Laff More and spellingbee.com from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. earlier that day.)
- The **finals** will air live in primetime on ION from 8-10 p.m. on Thursday, May 29.

In addition to ION, the semifinals and finals will also air on Scripps' other popular national entertainment networks, Bounce, Grit, ION Mystery and Laff, as well as its free, ad-supported streaming channels ION Plus, Scripps News, Bounce XL, Grit Xtra, Laff More and spellingbee.com. Scripps News will stream an encore of the semifinals on Thursday, May 29, from 1 a.m. to 3 a.m. and the finals on May 29 from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. The Scripps Networks can be found free over-the-air as well as on cable, satellite and streaming platforms.

If you are watching the Bee over the air with an antenna, check out [Tablo](#), which allows you to record over-the-air programs.

The 2025 Bee also will celebrate three special recognitions:

- **2025 Educator of the Year**, presented by Teach For America: Nikki Montana, teacher leader at Edwin Forrest Elementary School in Philadelphia. Montana, who serves as the school's bee coordinator, grew the school's bee program from a sixth grade-level bee to a school-wide event that today includes students from grades 1-5.
- **2025 Regional Partner of the Year**: Akron Beacon Journal, which has remained a steadfast regional partner of the National Spelling Bee since its inception in 1925.
- **2025 Regional Volunteer of the Year**: Tom Wadsworth, pronouncer for the Regional Office of Education No. 47's Spelling Bee in Sterling, Illinois, has helped prepare and inspire spellers for 43 years.

Introducing the "Beelieve" program

In partnership with the Scripps Howard Fund, the Scripps National Spelling Bee has created a new fund to help increase access to the Bee at every level. The first year of the Beelieve program will focus on funding the participation of Teach For America schools interested in enrolling in the 2025-26 Bee program. The Bee and Fund received a \$100,000 per year donation from the Adam R. Scripps Foundation for the next five years to support the Beelieve program and the Fund's "If You Give a Child a Book ..." campaign, which provides books to children at low-income schools across the U.S. This year, the Adam R. Scripps Foundation is also matching donations to both programs up to \$500,000. Visit spellingbee.com/give to learn more about the program or to donate.

For media covering the Bee:

- Media can submit a request for credentials to cover the national competition in person at the Gaylord [here](#).
- Media interested in following the action remotely should contact media@spellingbee.com to receive updates during the competition.

Media contact: Becca McCarter, 513-410-2425, Rebecca.mccarter@scripps.com



NEWS RELEASE

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. By inspiring the exploration of words, the Scripps National Spelling Bee illuminates pathways to lifelong curiosity, celebrates academic achievement and enriches communities.

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](https://www.scripps.com) (NASDAQ: SSP).

About Scripps

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