



# 100 years of champions

## about this study guide

Do you dream of winning a school spelling bee, or even attending the Scripps National Spelling Bee? If so, you are raising your hand to be part of history, and a “bee-loved” experience since 1925. You’ve found the perfect place to start, because *Words of the Champions* is the official study resource of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Prepare for a 2024-2025 classroom, grade-level, school, district, county, regional or state spelling bee with this list of 4,000 words.

All words in this book have been selected by the Scripps National Spelling Bee from our official dictionary, Merriam-Webster Unabridged (<http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com>). Each year, we release a new version of *Words of the Champions* featuring 800 new words, including an all-new *School Spelling Bee Study List*.

*Words of the Champions* is divided into three difficulty levels, ranked One Bee, Two Bee and Three Bee. At the beginning of each level, you’ll find the *School Spelling Bee Study List* words. For any classroom, grade-level or school spelling bee, study the 150-word *One Bee School Spelling Bee Study List*, the 150-word *Two Bee School Spelling Bee Study List* and the 150-word *Three Bee School Spelling Bee Study List*: a total of 450 words.

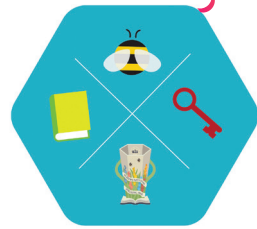
Following the *School Spelling Bee Study List* in each level, you’ll find pages marked “Words of the Champions.” Are you competing beyond the school level? Study these pages to make sure you’re prepared for the early rounds of competition. And remember, although spelling bees will usually start with words from this guide, they often end with words you haven’t studied.

To help you engage with the words, you’ll find word stories and themed lists at the end of this guide.

One speller studying this guide will become the Bee’s centennial Champion. But every student competing in this 100th year is part of keeping a great American tradition buzzing, one word at a time. And that makes you a champion, too

## about the Scripps National Spelling Bee

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation’s largest and longest-running educational program. 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](http://spellingbee.com) for more information about the Bee and to check if your school is enrolled. The Scripps National Spelling Bee is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.



**words of the  
champions**

YOUR KEY TO THE BEE

Official Dictionary  
of the  
Scripps National  
Spelling Bee  
[merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com)

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# recognition

We are enormously proud to share that the bonus content (themed lists and word stories) in this year's edition of *Words of the Champions* was submitted by former spellers, and we would like to use this space to recognize and thank them.

## contributors:

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Sreethan participated in the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee (tied for 7th place).



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Ananya participated in the 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee (tied for 51st place) and the 2021 SNSB (tied for 12th place).



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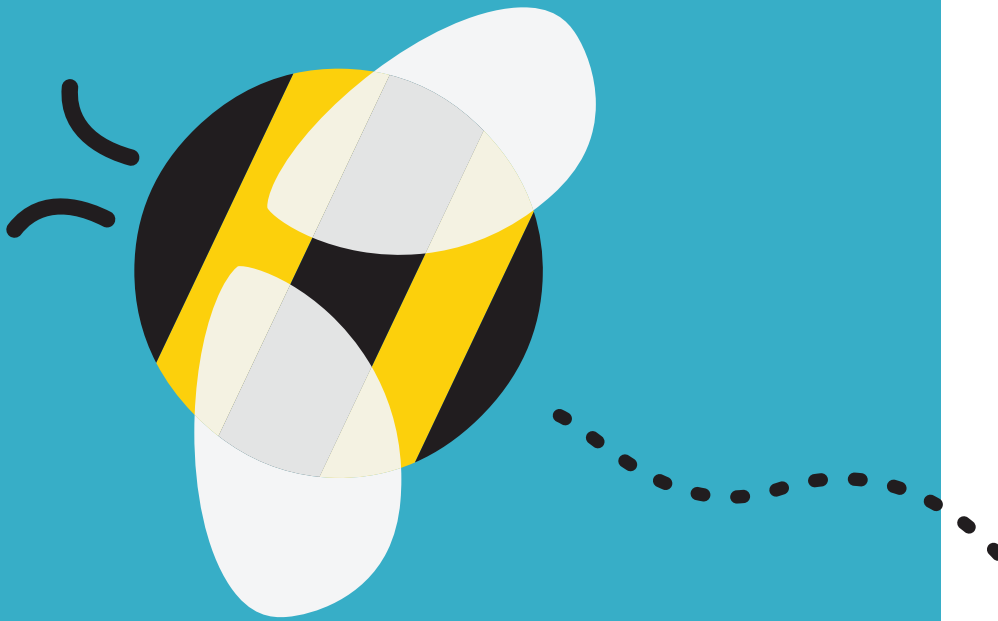


### **Saketh Sundar**

Saketh participated in the 2016 Scripps National Spelling Bee (tied for 46th place), the 2017 SNSB (tied for 12th place), the 2018 SNSB (tied for 19th place), and was part of the historic Octochamps of the 2019 SNSB.



let's  
get  
started



# difficulty level: one bee



## school spelling bee study list

The first, second and third-grade words from the 2025 School Spelling Bee Study List. Words with a single asterisk (\*) indicate a primarily British spelling. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates the preferred spelling.

deep	math	quick
happy	pick	cotton
bump	soap	seats
bear	tools	baseball
count	green	great
dunk	muddy	playground
feet	ripe	monster
cold	sign	enjoy
alone	soup	jazzy
click	warm	jeans
miss	fresh	partner
shirt	learn	raindrop
roof	frosty	office
here	crisp	young
lamp	shape	outside
lost	splash	poem
lunch	mushy	pillow
drift	group	steady
please	spine	Saturday
spill	straps	needle
tired	feast	above
large	eagle	honking
lake	berries	strange
grab	caves	noisy
juice	blanket	video
nook	catch	timer
shops	updo	topics
spot	mule	layer
world	glow	token



### in good company

When it comes to spelling bee participants, the more the merrier! In fact, more than 11 million spellers participate each year in qualifying spelling bees throughout the country and around the world.

control  
summer  
across  
stiff  
running  
field  
behind  
trace  
below  
loose  
spare  
cling  
grins  
giraffe  
groceries  
huddling  
jigsaw  
neighbors  
gasped  
mansion  
midday  
powwow  
bazaar\*\*  
    OR bazar  
astray

liquid  
fuel  
massive  
women\*\*  
    OR womyn  
chuckle  
handstand  
machine  
leaking  
snazzy  
whee  
welcome  
pretend  
should  
sideways  
muster  
include  
sandwich  
Saturn  
violet  
mighty  
solution  
spiral  
thread  
velvet

breathe  
taxicab  
report  
cobweb  
rodent  
spying  
showed  
scribbly  
recess  
highway  
reeds  
bolts  
squeeze  
softly  
wiggle



## Great Words, Great Works reading program

Each year, the Scripps National Spelling Bee publishes the School Spelling Bee Study List to help students prepare for classroom and school-level spelling bees. These words come from Great Words, Great Works, a list of books carefully selected by the Bee's editorial team. Find it at [spellingbee.com/book-list](https://spellingbee.com/book-list).

# difficulty level: one bee



## Words of the Champions

Organized alphabetically, these are a great place to start your journey to mastering *Words of the Champions!* Words with a single asterisk (\*) indicate a primarily British spelling. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates the preferred spelling. A complete list of the words that were newly added to this year's study list can be found on page 46.

### a

abaft  
abashed  
abject  
abolish  
aboriginal  
acceptance  
acclaim  
accolade  
accomplice  
acquit  
acrostic  
adage  
addendum  
addition  
addle

verb – to throw into confusion or disorder.

adhesion  
adjudicate  
admonition  
adnate  
adsum  
advection  
adversaria  
affront  
aforesaid  
afroth  
agility  
agitation  
algae  
alienate  
alms  
aloof  
alpaca  
altercation  
amass  
Americana

amiably  
Amish  
amnesty  
amulet  
amusement  
ancho  
anime  
anklet  
anniversary  
annotate  
anoint  
ante  
anthropology  
apology  
apparel  
apparently  
applicable  
appraisal  
apprehensive  
arithmetic  
Arthurian  
astonish  
astounding  
astronaut  
atomic  
atonement  
atrophy  
attempt  
attendee  
attitude  
auction  
auditorium  
avalanche  
avatar  
avenue  
aviation  
awry

### b

bachelorette  
backgammon  
badger  
bailiff  
ballad  
banquet  
baptismal  
barbie  
bask  
become  
Bengal  
bespoke  
bias  
bigotry  
birdie  
biscuit  
blandish  
blarney

noun – smooth wheedling talk.

bleary  
bleat  
blink  
blizzard  
blooper  
blurb  
boarders  
bonanza  
boogie-woogie  
bootless  
botany  
bowie  
breathtaking  
brick  
brigand  
bristle  
brochure



broil  
buffet  
buffoonery  
bumblebee  
bungee  
burial  
buzzworthy

**c**

cabbage  
cactus  
cadence  
calendar  
camcorder  
candid  
canoe  
canteen  
cantor  
capacity  
capitalist  
captivated  
capture  
caramel  
carnation  
carnival  
carriage  
carrot  
cashier  
casserole  
casualty  
caterpillar  
cathedral  
catnap  
celebratory  
celestial  
cello  
census  
centipede  
charitable  
chastise

chief  
chortle  
chowder  
churlish  
chute\*\*  
    OR shute  
cidery  
cinderella  
citation  
clarinet  
classical  
classified  
clearance  
cleave  
clickbait  
closure  
clover  
clowder

noun – a group of cats.

coach  
coalition  
coastal  
cockles  
collaboration  
collar  
collie  
collision  
combustible  
commandeer  
commercial  
comparison  
compass  
compatriots  
compelling  
complementary  
composite  
conch  
concrete  
condiments

conference  
considerable  
consideration  
contemporary  
contested  
context  
contraction  
contradictory  
contribute  
contusion  
conundrum  
convention  
convocation  
convoy  
cookie-cutter  
cooperate  
copperhead  
corgi  
corkscrew  
cornily  
cranium  
criminal  
criteria  
crocodile  
crucial  
crux  
curator  
curfew  
curtail  
cushion  
cyclone  
cymbals

**d**

daft  
daisy  
dawdle  
debris  
debunk  
decor



## cruising the airwaves

The first broadcast of the Bee wasn't on television – it was on radio! It wasn't until 1946 that it was first televised.

definitely  
delta  
derby  
descent  
designer  
detail  
dialect  
dicey  
difficult  
digression  
dillydally  
disaster  
disposition

noun – the usual mood or attitude of a person or animal.

distinctive  
distinguish  
diva  
diverge  
diversion  
diversity  
divine  
divvy  
docket  
domino  
donatee  
doomed  
downcast  
dramatization  
dreadlocks  
dribbles  
drivel  
Dudley  
duress  
dynamite

## e

eagerly  
earmark  
earnestly  
eclectic  
eclipse  
editorial  
eerily  
effortless

eighth  
Einstein  
elaborative  
elasticity  
elegant  
element  
elevator  
elicitation  
eligibility  
ellipse  
elocution  
elusive  
emancipatory  
embassy  
embezzlement  
emblazoned  
emerald  
empire  
empty  
endearing  
endure  
enervate  
engineer  
entreat  
entrée  
entrepreneur  
enviable  
epoxy  
erode  
eruption  
escalator  
escapade  
essential  
establishment  
evaluate  
ewe  
exaggerate  
excursion  
exercise  
existence  
expansion  
expedition  
explode  
extensive  
extinct

extinguish  
extracurricular  
extradition  
extraordinaire  
exude

## f

facade  
factorial  
fadeaway  
fallacy  
fanatic  
feeble  
fellowship  
felonious  
ferret  
fervently  
fez  
fiction  
fie  
fiendishly  
filar  
filbert  
financier  
fission  
flabbergast  
flashback  
fleeciness  
fleetness  
flexitarian  
flight  
flipperling  
floridly  
flounder  
flourish  
flout  
fluctuation  
fluid  
flummery  
foible  
folate  
folly  
fomentation  
foosball  
foozle

verb – to manage awkwardly.

foppery  
forensics  
forfeit  
forgeable  
formalize  
OR formalise\*  
fortification  
fractions  
frailty  
freegan  
freight  
fribble  
frisket  
frock  
frontier  
fundamental  
funnel  
furnace  
futility

## g

gab  
gaffer  
gaggle  
gallant  
galley  
gardenesque  
gargle  
garniture  
gateway  
gaucho  
gazette  
generalization  
OR generalisation\*  
genteel  
ghastly  
giggle  
gist

gizzard  
glacier  
glint

verb - to shine usually by reflection : to sparkle.

glossary  
gnarled  
gnome  
Godspeed  
goober  
googly  
gossip  
gotcha  
graham  
grandeur  
grapple  
gridiron  
griefful  
groom  
grotto  
grout  
gruel  
gymnastics

## h

habitual  
haggle  
handle  
handyman  
hangar  
haphazard  
hardtack  
harrowing  
hatchet  
hazardous  
hazelnut  
headlong  
heavenly

heiress  
heist  
heraldic  
hermitage  
Highlands  
hijab  
hoagies  
hoarse  
hoax

noun - a piece of trickery.

hobble  
homesteader  
horseradish  
hostile  
howler  
humdrum  
husk  
hydra  
hydrant

## i

iceberg  
Icelandic  
illustrator  
imposing  
inclusion  
income  
individual  
infiltrate  
infirm  
influential  
inglorious  
injunction  
insight

noun - clear and immediate understanding.

insomnia  
installation



## why is it so hard to spell English words?

English consists of originally English words, but it also collected words from other languages and made them part of the English lexicon. With 26 letters and about 44 letter sounds, English is a hodgepodge of letters and sounds that don't always line up. Take the letter 'x,' for example, found in the words "extra," "mix," and "example," or the vowel sound in "weigh" and "way!"

intellectual  
intertidal  
intricate  
invasive  
iris  
irrigation  
island  
isms  
isolation

## j

jammer  
jankers  
jersey  
jitterbug  
joinery  
junior

adjective - designed for young people.

## k

kazoo  
kennel  
kenning  
kernel  
kilt  
kindred

adjective - related.

labradoodle  
lactose  
languish  
lateral  
latter  
lawyer  
league  
leaven  
legacy  
legitimately  
leisure

leotard  
lexicon  
liege  
ligament  
likelier  
limelight  
linguistics  
literally  
liturgy  
livid  
logical  
luau

noun - a feast with Hawaiian food and usually Hawaiian entertainment.

lucky  
lumbar  
lupine  
lyricist

## m

macaw  
madrigal  
magician  
mahogany  
maidenhair  
maize  
mambo  
manacle  
manifests  
manta  
mantra  
manure  
manuscript  
marathon  
maritime  
marooned  
martial  
maternity  
matrimony  
mauve  
maximum  
mayhem  
medallion  
melody  
melted

membership  
memes  
memorandum  
mentor  
merchandise  
mercury  
Merlin  
meteor  
metrical  
Michigander  
migratory  
millionaire  
mince  
ministry  
minutia  
miraculous  
mischief  
missile  
missive

noun - a written communication.

mister  
mockery  
modality  
modem  
modify  
modular  
molasses  
monastery  
monopolize  
OR monopolise\*  
montage  
moped  
morose  
mummified  
munchkin  
musings  
mythical

## n

naysayers  
neaten  
necessity  
nerfing  
nervily  
newbie

nirvana  
nocturnal  
nominee  
nonconformist  
nosh

verb - to eat a snack.

notable  
nozzles  
nuggets

**o**

oatmeal  
obliterate  
oblong  
obscure  
octopus  
olympiad  
omega

noun - the 24th and last letter of the Greek alphabet.

omission  
onion  
optician  
opulent  
oracle  
orchestra  
oregano  
organelle  
ourselves  
oyster  
overtures  
overweening  
ozone

**p**

packet  
pageantry  
paginate  
paisley  
palatial

pallor  
parkour  
parley  
partridge  
passage  
pastime  
patches  
pathogen  
patience  
pauper

noun - a very poor person.

pear  
peat  
peddle  
pedigree  
pending  
penguin  
peninsular  
peony  
performance  
peruse  
pervasive  
photogenic  
physical  
physicists  
pitiful  
placards  
placate  
platinum  
pliant  
plover  
plummet  
polarized  
policy  
portal  
portrait  
praise  
predator  
predicament  
premonition

previous  
primitive  
principality  
prism  
privy  
procedure  
procrastinate  
profiteer  
prone  
proposal  
propulsion  
prosperous  
proxy  
publish  
puckish  
pulpit  
punctuation  
punily  
puniness  
purification  
puritan  
putrid  
puzzles  
pyramid

**q**

quantify  
quart  
quirky  
quota

noun - a proportional part.

**r**

rabid  
radius  
railroad  
raisin  
rebound  
rebuff  
recanted



## our mission:

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

reckless  
reconsider  
recovery  
redemption  
reflect  
regiment  
regional  
registrar  
reign

noun – royal authority.

reiterate  
rejuvenate  
remain  
remnants  
remorseful  
renewable  
resemble  
residue  
respite  
restive  
retorts  
retriever  
revelation  
revulsive  
riddance  
riffraff  
righteous  
rigorous  
OR rigorous\*  
riviera  
rocket  
rotary  
row  
rubric  
rugby  
rumor  
OR rumour\*

## S

sacrifice  
salivate  
satchel  
scalp  
scandal  
scanty  
scent

scholarship  
sci-fi  
sconce  
scooter  
scornfully  
scrape  
scrapple  
screeno  
scripture  
scrooge  
scrounge  
scrutiny  
sculpture  
seclusion  
seize  
selfie  
seller  
semester  
sensory  
September  
sequel  
serenade  
service  
servitude  
sewage  
shaggy  
shamrock  
sheaves  
shindig  
shipping  
shore  
shrapnel  
simmer  
sister  
situation  
skimmed  
skirmish  
skydiving  
slab  
slender  
sloop  
slurry  
snitch  
snowy  
sodden  
solicit

solidity  
solitude  
solstice  
solvency  
sorbet

noun – a frozen dessert made with a mixture of fruits.

spangled  
spatula  
specificity  
spectral  
spindle  
spiteful  
splurge  
spreadsheet  
sprite  
spry  
squabble  
squeamish  
squirm  
stagestruck  
stamina  
stampede  
stance  
standee  
steampunk  
stencil  
stereotypical  
sterling  
sternum  
stewardship  
stomach  
storm  
stowaway  
strong  
stubble  
stupefy  
subdued  
substance  
substitute  
suffix  
suitable  
sunflower  
sunseeker  
surly

sustain  
swannery  
sweltering  
sword  
sympathy

**t**

talent  
tango  
tariff  
tase  
tawny

read the story behind the word on page 61!

adjective – of a brownish orange to a light brown color.

teamwork  
teenagers  
tendency  
terrier  
thawed  
thespian  
thicket  
thorn  
thrift  
throughout  
tickled  
timber  
toastmaster  
toilsome  
touted  
transference  
traverse  
treasury  
treatise  
trendy  
trespass  
trifle  
trinkets  
troll  
troop  
trounce  
trove  
truffle  
truly  
truncate

tubers  
tunnel  
tutorial

**u**

unabridged  
unbeknownst  
uncle  
undercroft  
undertake  
unfazed

adjective – not disturbed or worried : undaunted.

unfurl  
universal  
university  
uppercut  
urgency  
useful  
usher

**v**

various  
varnish  
varsity  
vascular  
vault  
veered  
vendetta  
vendors  
venue  
versatile  
version  
vindictive  
vinegar  
vineyard  
violate  
virtually  
visibility  
vlogging  
volcano  
votive

adjective – undertaken or performed in fulfillment of a vow.

**w**

waiver  
wamble  
wand  
warning  
wasp  
wattage  
weald  
wealthy  
weaponry  
welding  
welterweight  
western  
wharf  
wheedle  
whelp  
whereas  
why  
whimsical  
whirlybird  
whisk  
wield  
wimple  
wince

verb – to flinch.

windbaggy  
wordmonger  
wring

**y**

yammer  
yawl  
yeanling  
yippee

interjection – used to express exuberant delight or triumph.

yonder  
yoo-hoo  
yore

**z**

zither

noun – a musical instrument consisting of a shallow soundboard and overlaid with 30 to 40 strings.

# difficulty level: two bee

## school spelling bee study list



The fourth, fifth and sixth-grade words from the 2025 School Spelling Bee Study List. Words with a single asterisk (\*) indicate a primarily British spelling. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates the preferred spelling.

motion  
terror  
murky  
harvest  
quill  
patio  
braids  
castle  
costume  
wagon  
wrench  
indeed  
gerbils\*\*  
    OR gerbilles  
village  
critters\*\*  
    OR critturs  
stifle  
dimple  
brother  
mistake  
harbor  
    OR harbour\*  
reunion  
balloon  
promise  
uproar  
Wednesday  
exactly  
severe  
twinkle

snicker  
stumble  
smock  
natural  
childhood  
nonsense  
bandits  
champion  
superb  
tinge  
outcome  
groves  
ghostly  
convince  
biology  
captive  
streamers  
speckled  
hopscotch  
jumbled  
naughty  
dodgy  
ballerina  
cubism  
interact  
jerky  
diablo  
ablaze  
pivot  
karate  
bowler

phantom  
locust  
council  
ointment  
Gothic  
midair  
hurricane  
laurel  
lollygag\*\*  
    OR lallygag  
vermin  
argument  
wreckage  
dolphin  
infinite  
bittersweet  
fend  
disguise  
membrane  
magnolia  
sensation  
daredevil  
bypass  
oysters  
military  
gasket  
biceps  
voyage  
advantage  
applause  
nostrils



### from around the world

Most spellers at the Scripps National Spelling Bee are from the United States, but spellers also come from Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Canada, Ghana, Nigeria, Kuwait, and Department of Defense Schools in Europe.



television  
mattress  
soldier  
trousers\*\*  
    OR trowsers  
albums  
muscles  
diploma  
harpoons  
rampage  
levitate  
spritzed  
clientele  
anecdotes  
haberdasher  
filigree\*\*  
    OR filagree  
catapults  
embroiled  
burro  
guava  
crescendo  
ocelot

onyx  
demigod  
trek  
teriyaki  
contribute  
hocus-pocus\*\*  
    OR hokus-pokus  
narwhal\*\*  
    OR narwal  
melancholy  
merfolk  
gargoyles  
pavilions  
skeptical  
    OR sceptical  
palette  
ogres  
goatee  
grotesque  
threshold  
flamboyant  
famine

linoleum  
pesos  
rogue  
amnesia  
fruition  
bygone  
committee  
mirage  
newfangled  
surcharge  
marksmanship  
column  
plaque\*\*  
    OR placque  
rebuke  
adversity  
symphony  
aquamarine  
altar  
stylistic  
flailed  
errands



## the Bee's birthday!

This year, 2025, the Scripps National Spelling Bee is celebrating its 100th birthday! The SNSB is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program.

# difficulty level: two bee



## Words of the Champions

Organized alphabetically, these words are a great place to continue your journey to mastering *Words of the Champions!* Words with a single asterisk (\*) indicate a primarily British spelling. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates the preferred spelling. A complete list of the words that were added to this year's study list can be found on page 46.

### a

aberration	aerobics	alma mater
ablation	affable	alpestrine
ablaut	affeer	althorn
abnegation	affianced	amalgam
abominable	affiliate	ambiguous
abrogate	affluent	ambrosial
abscess	affogato	ammonite
abscond	afghan	ammunition
absolution	aficionado**	amygdala
abstemious	OR aficionado	anabolic
Acadians	agalma	anachronism
accentuate	agate	anaglyphy
accrual	agave	analects
acerbity	agelicism	analepsis
achromatic	aggrandizement	analgesia
acoustic	aglossal	anatomical
acquiesce	agnail	anchorage
acral	agonistic	ancillary
acuity	agoraphobia	anemic**
acumen	aikido	OR anaemic
acupuncture	noun – a Japanese martial art.	anent
Adirondack	aioli	anglophile
adjugate	albeit	anhinga
adjure	alembroth	anicca
adolescence	Alexandria	anionic
adulation	alimentation	anise
advertisement**	allergenic	Anjou
OR	allocable	ankh
advertizement	allonym	anneal
advocatory	alluvial	annuity
		annulment



### did you know?

Vocabulary questions were first introduced as part of the Bee on the written test in 2013. Oral vocabulary questions were given at the National Competition for the first time in 2021.

anodyne  
anole\*\*  
OR anoli  
anonymity  
anorak  
anserine  
antacid  
antagonistic  
anthropomorphic  
antipathy  
antiquarian  
antithesis  
anxiety  
aperture  
apiary  
aporia  
apothecary  
apotheosis  
apparatus  
approbatory  
aqueduct  
aqueous  
aquiclude  
arbitrary  
arboretum  
archetype  
arduous  
argot  
arietta  
armaments  
armature  
armistice  
arpeggio  
arraign  
arrearage  
arrieros  
art brut  
artesian  
artifice  
asado  
ascension  
ascertain  
ascetic  
Asgard  
Asiago

aspish  
assailant  
assiduous  
assumption  
assure  
asthmatic  
astigmatism  
astral  
astringent  
astrobleme  
Astur  
asylum  
ataxia  
Aten  
atlatl  
atrabilious  
atresia  
attaché  
attributive  
attrition  
aubergine  
auburn  
aughts  
augment  
auklet  
aureole  
auricular  
aurora  
auspices  
austere  
avarice  
avifauna  
avuncular  
  
**b**  
bacteriolytic  
ballyhooed  
balsamic  
bandicoot  
bango  
bannock  
baronetcy  
basilica  
Bavarian cream  
beatific

beguile  
Belgravia  
Bellatrix  
bellwether  
benison  
Berber  
bereavement  
beret  
bermudas  
beseech  
besieged  
besmirch  
bethesda  
bibliopegist  
bicameral  
bifurcate  
bilateral  
bilbo  
billabong  
billingsgate  
biltong  
binomial  
biomimicry  
birria  
bittern  
blastema  
blastogenesis  
blatant  
bloviate  
bodega  
bodkin  
boffin  
boiserie  
boisterous  
bona fide  
bonobo  
boomslang  
boondoggle  
borough  
bouffant  
bowsprit  
braille  
Brandywine  
bravado  
breveiloquence

read the story behind the word on page 63!

Brigadoon  
Broccolini  
brockage  
brogue

noun – an Irish accent.

bromide  
brontophobia  
bruja  
bruxism  
bubonic  
buffa  
bulgogi  
bulgur\*\*  
OR bulghur  
bulwark  
Bundt  
buoyancy  
bureau  
burglarious  
burgoo  
busby

## C

cabaret  
cacao  
cacophonous  
cadge  
caduceus  
caducity  
caftan  
OR kaftan  
calcify  
calendula  
callow  
calumet  
calypso  
cambio  
cameist  
campanology  
cancion  
candelabrum  
cannoli  
cantankerous  
capillary

capnometer  
capricious  
capstan  
capsule  
carbohydrates  
carcass  
cardoon  
caricature  
carnage  
carnassial  
carnitas  
carnitine  
cartilage  
Cassandra  
cassock  
castellated  
castigate  
Castilian  
castor  
catadromous  
catalepsy  
catalina  
catalyst  
cathect  
cathode  
cattalo  
OR catalo  
caudex  
causal  
caustic  
cauterize  
cavalcade  
cayenne  
cellophane  
Celsius  
cenotaph  
centennial  
cerebellum  
cetology  
chamberlain  
chancellor  
chaperonage  
charcuterie  
charismatic

château  
chemise  
Cheshire cat  
chevalier  
chide  
Chihuahua  
chimera  
OR chimaera\*  
chinook  
chintzy  
cholera  
cholesterol  
chrysalis  
chrysolite  
chupacabra  
churchianity  
cicada  
Cincinnati  
circadian  
circuitous  
circumflex  
civet  
cladistics  
cladogram  
clairvoyance  
clandestine  
clarion  
clavichord  
clemency  
cloture  
coalescence  
coaxation  
cochin  
cochlear  
codswallop  
coercive  
coeval  
adjective – of the same  
or equal age or antiquity.  
cogently  
cogitation  
cognizant  
OR cognisant\*  
cohesive

cohosh  
coiffure  
colic  
collectanea  
collegiality  
collimate  
collude  
colocate  
comminatory  
commiserative  
commissioner  
commodious  
commove  
compendium  
con forza  
concision  
conclave  
concordance  
condign  
conduit  
Conestoga  
confabulation  
congeniality  
conglutinant  
connivery  
consecrate  
consecutive  
consequent  
constabulary  
consternation  
constituent  
consul  
conticent  
contiguous  
continuous  
continuum  
contrariwise  
contrivance

contumelious  
Coptic  
coqui  
cordillera  
corduroy  
coriander  
Corinthian  
corn  
cornea  
cornel  
cornucopia  
corollary  
coroner  
corral  
corroborate  
corrosive  
corsage  
cortex  
cotyledon  
cozen  
credence  
credulity  
creel  
crepuscular  
crescive  
Cretaceous  
cribbage  
cribble  
cribo  
crinoline  
crith  
cruciferous  
cryogenic  
cudgel  
cum laude  
cumbersome  
cumulus  
curie

curmudgeon  
cutis  
cyanosis  
cybernetics  
cygnet  
cynicism

**d**  
dactylic  
Dalmatian  
damascened  
dandle  
danseur  
danta  
darnel  
dashiki  
daubster  
davenport  
deathin  
debilitate  
debutante  
deceitful  
deceleron  
decennial  
deciduous  
decimation  
declamatory  
declension  
declination  
decurion  
defiant  
deglaciation  
déjà vu  
delectable  
deleterious  
deliquesce  
deltoidal  
dementia

---

## adjectives vs. nouns

*"My word ends with an /us/ sound! How do I know which letters to use?!"*

Here's a hint: Ask for the part of speech. If it's a noun, try *-us*; if it's an adjective, *-ous* is a safe bet.



demerits  
demographics  
demonstrative  
demulcent  
denominator  
depose  
depreciate  
depredation  
deprivation  
derelict  
derisive  
derivative  
deserter  
desertification  
desolate  
desuetude  
detritus  
diacritic  
diadem  
dialysis  
Dianthus  
diaspora  
diathermy  
diatonic  
diatribe  
diaulos  
dietetic  
dihedral  
dilapidated  
diligence  
diluent  
dimorphism  
diocese  
diptych

noun – a picture or series of pictures painted on two hinged tablets.

dirigible  
discombobulate  
discouragement  
discreetly  
discretionary  
disembogue  
disjunct  
Disneyfication  
disparate  
disproportionate  
dissemble  
dissonance  
distraught  
dodecahedron  
dogana  
doldrums  
dolma  
dolmen  
domesticity  
domiciled  
domineering  
dopamine  
Doppler  
Dorking  
dowager  
dowdy  
dromic  
druid  
drumlin  
drupiferous  
du jour  
duplicious  
durango  
dysgraphia  
dyspeptic  
dystopia

**e**  
ebullience  
eburnean  
echidna  
ectoplasm  
Ecuador  
educand  
Edwardian  
efface  
effervescent  
efflux  
effraction  
effusive  
eggcorn  
egress  
embolus  
embryo  
emeritus  
eminent  
emissary  
emulsify  
en masse  
encomium  
ensconced  
ensued  
entente  
environs  
epenthesis  
epidermis  
epidural  
episcopal  
epithet  
epoch  
equinox  
equivalent  
equivocate



## the first bee

In 1925, the first national spelling bee was organized by the *Louisville Courier-Journal* with a total of nine spellers. Frank Neuhauser won the championship title after correctly spelling “gladiolus.”

eradicate

ergo

adverb – therefore.

ermine

errata

erroneous

erstwhile

erubescence

eructation

escarpment

eschew

espousal

étude

eucalyptus

eucrasia

euphonious

europium

eustress

Evactor

evacuees

evanescent

evo-devo

evzone

ex libris

exaugural

excelsior

excision

execrable

exeunt

exiguous

existential

exodus

exogenous

exorbitant

expatiate

expectorant

exposé

exposition

expostulate

expugnable

expunge

extant

extemporaneous

extravasate

extrorse

## f

facetious

facile

factitious

facundity

fajitas

farical

fardel

farkleberry

Farsi

noun – the modern language of Iran and western Afghanistan.

farthingale

fastuous

fatuously

fealty

feckless

fecund

feign

fenestrated

fenster

fervorous

festooned

feudalism

fiat

fibula

fictile

Ficus

fiduciary

finial

fipple

firkin

fjeld

flagon

flambé

flaneur

flauta

flavedo

flèche

flittern

Florentine

floribunda

floruit

FLOTUS

fluoride

focaccia

follicle

fontina

forbivorous

fortissimo

Franciscan

frass

fratority

fraudulent

frazil

Freudian

frison

fritillary

frittata

froufrou

froward

fructiferous

frugivore

fucoid

fugue

fulminate

funambulist

fungible

furcula

fusiform

fussbudget

## g

galapago

Gallic

gambit

ganache

gasiform

gastronome

gaudery

gaur

gelatinous

Gemini

genealogical

geniture

genome

geocaching

geriatric

germane

gibbous  
gingivitis  
gladiatorial  
glazier  
glissando  
glossolalia  
gluttonous  
gnathic

adjective – of or relating to the jaw.

gnocchi  
goji berry  
golem  
Goliath  
gossamer  
Gothamite  
grande dame  
grandiloquent  
grandrelle  
graticule  
gravimetry  
gravitas  
grazioso  
greaves  
Gregorian  
gressorial  
grissino  
groats  
grobian  
grotesqueness  
grouse  
gubernatorial  
gudgeon  
gules  
gullibility  
gumption

## h

habeas corpus  
habiliments  
hackneyed  
hadith  
hagiographer  
Halifax

hallucinate  
haplography  
harangue  
harbinger  
harrier  
Hathor  
hauberk  
hauteur  
Hawaiian  
hawok  
hegemony  
heleoplankton  
heliacal  
hennery  
heptad  
hermeneutics  
hermetically  
heterochromia  
heterophony  
hetman  
heuristic  
hibernaculum  
hierurgical  
hinoki  
hipsterism  
histrionics  
Hitchcockian  
hoity-toity  
holmium  
Holocaust  
hologram  
holotype  
Holstein  
homeostasis  
homester  
homiletics  
Honolulu  
humerus  
humidstat  
hummock

noun – a rounded or conical knoll or hillock.

Hungary  
hydriotaphia

hydrocortisone  
hydrophobia  
hypochondria  
hypogeous  
hypotenuse  
hyrax

## i

ibex  
ibuprofen  
Icarian  
idiosyncratic  
illative  
illicitly  
illustrious  
immolate  
immortality  
impasse  
impasto  
impecunious  
impediment  
imperious  
impetus  
implacable  
implicative  
imponderabilia  
impoverish  
imprecatory  
impresario  
impromptu  
incessant  
incinerate  
incisiform  
incitive  
inclement  
incompetent  
incubate  
indemnity  
indicia  
indict  
indigent  
indistinguishable  
indolent  
inducement



ineffable  
ineluctable  
ineptitude  
inerrancy  
ingenuous  
ingratiating  
inimical  
inoculate  
insignia

noun – a distinguishing mark or authority, office, or honor.

instigate  
insufflator  
interred  
interrogative  
intersperse  
inveterate  
inviolable  
iridescent  
Iroquois  
irrevocable  
Isle Royale

## J

jackal  
jactance  
jadeite  
jalapeño  
jambalaya  
jarl  
jaundiced  
jeepney  
jettison  
jicama  
jiggery-pokery  
jimberjawed  
jingoism

jitney  
jocularity  
joie de vivre  
judicious  
julienne  
Jurassic  
juvenilia  
juxtapose

## K

kaiser  
kanban  
kanji  
karst  
kerchief  
Kildare  
kinesiology  
kiskadee  
klippe  
koto  
krausen  
krypton  
kufi

noun – a close-fitting brimless cylindrical or round hat.

kugel  
kung pao

## L

labroid  
labyrinthine  
laconic  
lacustrine  
laity  
lambently  
lambkin  
languorous

lanolated  
lantana  
larceny  
largesses  
larnax  
lassitude  
latigo  
laudatory  
lavender  
legalese  
legato  
legerity  
lemniscus  
leviathan  
liaise  
lidocaine  
limned

verb – outlined in clear sharp detail.

limpa  
limpet  
limpid  
limpkin  
lingua franca  
linnet  
linstock  
literatim  
lithium  
lithophone  
litmus  
lobectomy  
lobotomy  
locavore  
loch  
logographic  
lollid  
longitude  
lorikeet



## did you know?

The Scripps National Spelling Bee has been featured in two documentaries: the 2002 Academy Award-nominated *Spellbound* and the 2018 Netflix documentary *Spelling the Dream*.

lossy  
lousicide  
lovage  
luculent  
ludicrous  
lumen  
luthier  
lutrine  
luxuriate

**m**

macadam  
machicolation  
machination  
macular  
malady  
malapropism  
malevolent  
malfeasance  
malinger  
mano a mano  
manumit  
marginalia  
marimba  
marring  
marsupial  
mastodon  
matriculation  
mawkish  
mea culpa  
mecca  
medusa  
megalomaniac  
melamine  
melee  
melismatic  
mendacious  
mendicity  
meningitis

mephitic  
merganser  
meridian  
merino

noun – a fine wool and cotton yarn used for knitwear.

mesial  
Mesopotamian

metaplasia  
metastasize  
metatarsal  
Michaelmas  
MIDI  
millennial  
millet  
millisecond  
minacious  
ministra  
minette  
minuscule

OR miniscule

Miranda  
misnomer  
mitigative  
mochi  
moissanite  
mollify  
monitory  
monochrome  
monture  
moratorium  
mordant  
morphological  
mortician  
Motrin  
movimento  
muchacha  
mulligan

Munich  
municipal  
muskeg  
musketeers  
Mylar  
myocarditis  
myoglobin  
myopic

**n**

Namibian  
narcoleptic  
nautilus  
Neapolitan  
nectarine  
neonatology  
neoterism  
nepotism  
netiquette  
neuropathy  
neuroticism  
Newfoundland  
nitrate  
nocive

adjective – harmful.

noctambulist  
no-goodnik  
nomancy  
nomenclature  
nomophobia  
nonage  
nonchalance  
nonvolatile  
Norovirus  
Nostradamus  
notoriety  
novemdecillion  
noxious  
nubuck

read the story behind the word on page 64!



**there's a first time for everything**

Hugh Tosteson was the first winner from outside of the 50 U.S. states. He lived in Puerto Rico and won in 1975.

nuciform  
nucleated  
numerology  
nutiation  
nutria  
nuzzer

## O

oblast  
oblique  
obloquy  
obnebulate  
obsecration  
obsolete

adjective - no longer acceptable or usable.

obstetrician  
obstreperous  
occultation  
Oceanian  
octonocular  
octuplicate  
odometer  
Odysseus  
official  
okapi  
olfactory  
olingo  
omnilegent  
omniscient  
onus  
oompah  
operose  
ophthalmologist  
opprobrious  
oppugn  
Orion  
orthogonal  
oscitation  
osculatory  
Osloite  
osprey  
ossicle  
ossuary  
ostensibly

osteopath  
ottoman  
oxalis

## P

pabulum  
pagoda  
Paleozoic  
palmate  
palpebral  
palpitant  
Panama  
panary  
pancetta  
panchreston  
pancreas  
pantomime  
papyrus  
par excellence  
parabola  
parameters  
paraplegic  
parasol  
pariah  
parochial  
parodic  
parr  
parsec  
parsimony  
partiality  
particulate  
parturient  
parvo  
pashmina  
pastrami  
patella

noun - kneecap.

pathos  
patronymic  
paucity  
peacenic  
peculate  
pecuniary  
pedantry  
pelagial

pelerine  
pelf  
pendentive  
pendragon  
pendulous  
penitentiary  
penultimate  
pepita  
per se  
peradventure  
perceptible  
periodontist  
peripheral  
periwinkle  
permutation  
pernicious  
perpetrator  
perquisite  
perseverance  
perspicacious  
persuasible  
pertinacity  
pestilence  
petroleum  
phenotype  
philosophize  
philtrum  
phishing  
phlebotomy  
phoenix  
phonetician  
phosphorescent  
phraseology  
phycology  
phylum  
Pierre  
piety  
pilaster  
pileus  
pilferer  
pilosity  
pilotage  
pinnacle  
pinnate  
pious

Pisces  
pituitary  
placoderm  
plagiarism  
plaintiff  
planetesimal  
plangency  
planisphere  
planogram  
plantain  
plantigrade  
plaudits  
plenitude  
plentiful  
plumbago  
Plumeria  
plutonomy  
poblano  
podsnappery  
Podunk  
pointelle  
politick  
pollutant  
polonium  
polyester  
polygenous  
polypeptide  
polysemy  
polysyllabic  
pomato  
pomegranate  
Pomeranian  
pomology  
pomposity  
pongee  
pontiff  
populace  
porcelain  
porosity  
portico  
posada  
posse  
possessive  
posterity

posthumous  
postural  
potassium  
potentate  
potoroo  
prehensile  
prelapsarian  
preponderance  
preposterous  
preprandial  
prerogative  
presentient  
prespinous  
prevenient  
prima donna  
primeval\*\*  
    OR primaeval  
primogeniture  
princeps  
privatim  
privet  
probative  
procrustean  
procurement  
prodigious  
profligacy  
profundity  
proletarian  
proliferate  
prolix  
prolutory  
promontory  
proprietary  
proprioceptive  
prorogue  
prosody  
protectorate  
protuberant  
provenance  
proviant  
provincial  
proviso  
puchero  
pugilist

pugnacious  
pulchritude  
purvey  
pyrite  
pyrotechnics

## q

quadriceps  
quadrilateral  
quadrillion  
qualms  
questionnaire\*\*  
    OR questionnaire  
quid pro quo  
quiddity  
quinary  
quince  
quirt  
quittance  
quixotic  
quotidian  
QWERTY

noun – a standard typewriter or computer keyboard.

## r

rabato  
rabbinic  
rambla  
rambunctious  
ramson  
rankles  
rapscallion  
raptatorial  
rasorial  
raucous  
reagent  
realgar  
realm  
Realtor  
rebarbative  
reboation  
reciprocity

reconcilable  
reconnoiter\*\*  
OR reconnoitre  
recreant  
recriminatory  
recrudescent  
recumbent  
recusancy  
redolent  
refrigerant  
refugium  
regalia  
reggae  
regnal  
regurgitate  
reimbursable  
reminiscent  
remonstrance  
remuda  
remuneration  
renegotiate  
renitency  
reparations  
repentant  
repercussion  
repository  
reprieve  
reprisal  
Requiem  
requisition  
resilience  
restitutory  
résumé  
resuscitate

retina  
retinol  
retinoscopy  
retrocedence  
retrodict  
retrograde  
revenant  
reverberant  
rhapsody  
rhizome  
ricochet  
rictus  
rigatoni  
ritziness  
rollicking  
Romano  
rosin  
rostrum  
rotulet

noun – a small scroll  
or register.

roustabout  
Rubicon  
rudiments  
rugose  
ruminare  
rustication

**S**  
sabbatical  
sabermetrics  
sacrament  
sacrosanct  
sailage

salience  
saltatory  
saltern  
sapphire  
sardonic  
sarmentum  
sartorial  
sashay  
saturnine  
sauerkraut\*\*  
OR sourcrout  
OR sourkrout  
scarab  
scarlatina  
scenographer  
scherzo  
schism  
schnell  
schooner  
sclerosis  
scrivener  
scrumptiously  
scumble  
scuppers  
scythe  
secant  
secession  
sedentary  
sedge  
sedum  
seethe  
senecio  
seneschal  
senna

read the  
story  
behind the  
word on  
page 58!

## archaic or obsolete? not here.

The Bee doesn't include words labeled obsolete or archaic in competition lists, and you won't find any in *2025 Words of the Champions* either. Why? Because they're just not used that often. Words labeled obsolete are found in literature but have not been part of standard English since 1755; words labeled archaic are only used rarely or in special contexts such as prayers or poetry since 1755. Why 1755? That was the year that the first really large and comprehensive dictionary was published in London by Samuel Johnson.



sensei  
septennial  
septum  
sepulchral  
seraphic  
serrated  
sesame  
settee  
severance  
shaman  
shazam  
shebang  
sheldrake  
Shenandoah  
shenanigans  
Shetland  
shirk  
shoji  
sieve  
simpatico  
simultaneity  
singultus  
sirenian  
Sirius  
slalom  
slumgullion  
smellfungus  
smithereens  
snell

read the  
story  
behind the  
word on  
page 60!

adjective - having a  
keen edge : piercing,  
biting.

sobersides  
solon  
somatotype  
somniaquy  
soothsayer  
sophomoric  
soppiness

sousaphone  
Spaniel  
spathe  
speciation  
spectrometer  
spinosity  
spiracle  
spirulina  
splenetic  
sponsalia  
spontaneity  
sprightliness  
sprue  
spurious  
stagflation  
staid  
stalwart  
statistician  
statuesque  
statusy  
steeve  
stegosaur  
steinkirk  
OR steenkirk  
stellar  
stentorian  
steppe  
stevia  
stimuli  
stipulate  
stratification  
stratocracy  
stratosphere  
striation  
stricture  
stridency  
Styrofoam  
subjugate  
subliminal

subluxated  
submersible  
subrident  
subsequent  
subsistence  
substrate  
subterranean  
subtlety  
subversive  
successive  
succumb  
suet  
suffrage  
Sumatran  
summoned  
superficiality  
superstitious  
supine  
supplicate  
supremacy  
surcease  
surety  
surmountable  
surrealist  
swale  
sycophant  
syllabus  
sylph  
symmetrical  
symposium  
syndactylism  
syndicate  
syntonize  
syntrophism  
syringe

**t**  
tabernacle  
tableau



## older than sliced bread

The first national spelling bee was held in 1925. That makes us older than sliced bread, bubble gum and even trampolines.

tabulate  
taciturn  
tae kwon do  
tai chi  
talisman  
tambourine  
tamworth  
tangerine  
tantrum  
tapioca  
tappet  
tarlatan\*\*  
OR tarleton  
Tasmanian  
taverna  
taxidermy  
taxonomic  
tectonic  
teemed  
Tejano  
telepathic  
telmatology  
temblor  
tempestuous  
tempura  
tenaciously  
tenement  
tensile  
tentacled  
tepidity  
tercentenary  
terminus  
terra-cotta  
terrarium  
tertiary  
Thailand  
theomachy  
theorem  
theosophy  
theriatrics  
thoroughbred  
thrasonical  
thwartwise  
thyme  
tiffany

tiffin  
Tinseltown  
titian  
titration  
tomfoolery  
tommyrot  
tomography  
toorie  
topgallant  
topiary  
toploftical  
toponymic  
torsion  
tosh  
toties quoties  
toxicosis  
tractability  
traiteur  
transcend  
transducer  
transhumance  
transience  
transmissibility  
transmontane  
transpiration  
transposable  
trapezoid  
travails  
treadle  
trefoil  
trellis  
trepanation  
trepidation  
triage  
tributary  
trice  
tricenary  
triceratops  
triforium  
trigeminal  
triglycerides  
trillium  
triste

trituration  
trophic  
Truckee  
tsk-tsked  
tubular  
tumpline  
tungsten  
turbinado  
turducken  
turgor  
turken  
turophile  
turpentine  
tussock  
tutelage  
tutti-frutti  
twain  
twang  
tympanum  
typhology

## U

ubiquity  
ufology  
Ukrainian  
ulna  
ultradian  
umbelliferous  
umbilical  
umbrage  
una corda  
unchristened  
unctuous  
unilaterally  
univocal  
unmoored  
unremitting  
untenable  
upbraid  
upsilon  
ursine  
usurper

noun - the act of turning or twisting.

adjective - being or characterized by periods of less than 24 hours.

utilitarian  
uveal  
uvula

## V

vaccination  
vagabonds  
vague  
vainglorious  
valerian  
valiant  
valuator  
vandalize  
vanguard  
vanquish  
vaporetto  
varicose  
variegated  
Vatican  
vaudeville  
veganism  
vegetarian  
vehemence  
vehicular  
vendage  
vener  
vengeance  
venial  
venomous  
ventail  
ventricle  
ventriloquy  
veracity  
verbena  
verism  
veritable

vermicide  
vernal

adjective – of, relating to, or characteristic of the spring.

vespertine  
vestibule  
vetiver  
vetoed  
vicarious  
vice versa  
vicenary  
viceroys  
victimology  
vigil  
vincible  
virga  
virulence  
vis-à-vis  
viscosity  
vitriolic  
vituline  
volary  
OR volery  
volatile  
volition  
volumetric  
Vulcan

## W

wallaby  
Walter Mitty  
werf

noun – a farmyard (used in southern Africa).

widdershins  
wilco  
wobbulator  
woebegone  
wolfsbane  
wootz

## Y

yabbies  
yardang  
yawmeter  
Yorkshire  
Yoruba

noun – a Niger-Congo language of a people of southwestern Nigeria and parts of Benin and Togo.

## Z

zeitgeist  
zeppelin  
zirconium  
zoetic  
zoolatry  
zowie

interjection – used to express astonishment, admiration, or delight.

zurna  
zygote



## on a global scale

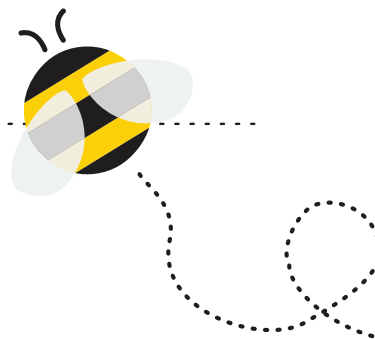
At just 12 years old, Jody-Anne Maxwell from Kingston, Jamaica was our first international champion. She won the Bee in 1998.





## a big-time spellebrity

If you've watched the Bee before, you've probably seen his face. You've definitely heard his voice. We're talking about the head pronouncer of the Bee, Dr. Jacques Bailly. He won the Scripps National Spelling Bee in 1980 and took up the role of head pronouncer in 2003.



# difficulty level: three bee



## school spelling bee study list

The seventh and eighth-grade words from the 2025 School Spelling Bee Study List. Words with a single asterisk (\*) indicate a primarily British spelling. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates the preferred spelling.

spree	hurly-burly	detainees
steeped	monotone	delinquent
smattering	parroting	grudgingly
bibliophile	techie	smoldering
graphite	gruesome**	OR smouldering
halo	OR grewsome	karma
feisty	tsunami	Cyclops
transfixed	anomaly	translucent
aluminum	banishment	glabrous
residential	magenta	gondolas
deposition	conveyance	pentameter
veterinarian	cohort	chlorofluorocarbon
skiff	kindling	impeccable
totem	treachery	inimitable
inferno	mañana	euphoria
buzzard	squeal	Euphrates
eliminate	tersely	artificial
writhes	autism	villainous
mourners	foyer	ruffian
respiratory	straightforward	buccaneer
perpetrate	vial	lubbers
intestines	foist	louis d'or
sanitation	Samhain	ambiguity
barren	crystalline	cache
lavishly	sentient	Madagascar
suffice	technicalities	catechism
giddily	crannies	lieutenant
tiff	incorporeal	cavalier
leeward	Tlingit	circumspectly



### find the bee on social media

Connect with us! If you're 13 or older, follow the Scripps National Spelling Bee on social media. You can find us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Use #spellingbee to join the conversation.

Chernobyl  
algebraic  
hydraulics  
klystron  
fuselage  
grosgrain  
Byzantine  
objet d'art  
séance  
reticule  
defibrillator  
rookery  
vociferous  
Carmelite  
cascabel  
San Joaquin  
cabeza  
imperator  
physician  
symbolizes  
OR symbolizes\*  
camouflaged  
piñon  
OR pinyon

dysfunctional  
creosote  
gravelly  
keening  
probation  
aesthetic\*\*  
OR esthetic  
suffocate  
endowed  
violence  
immunization  
assizes  
stockade  
gallipot  
Olympics  
miscreant  
Aquitaine  
muttonchops  
charade  
relegated  
conspiratorial  
puppeteer

gullet  
rancid  
consensus  
accommodations  
emblem  
recoil  
upholstery  
effectual  
acquaintance  
fandango  
puncheon  
operant  
infrastructure  
alighted  
Canterbury  
barista  
Choctaws  
prosecutor  
noncommittal  
eulogy  
regales  
psychometry



### our namesake

Although the first national spelling bee occurred in 1925, it wasn't until 1941 that Scripps-Howard Newspapers, now known as The E.W. Scripps Company, assumed leadership of the program.

# difficulty level: three bee



## Words of the Champions

Organized alphabetically, these words are a great place to complete your journey of mastering *Words of the Champions!* Words with a single asterisk (\*) indicate a primarily British spelling. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates the preferred spelling. A complete list of the words that were added to this year's study list can be found on page 46.

### a

à fond	affiche	amphistylar
à la grecque	ageusia	amuse-gueule
ab aeterno	agitprop	anabathmoi
abaculus	Aglaia	anaphylaxis
abomasum	agrypnia	anathema
abraum	ahimsa	ancien régime
acacia	ahuatle	andouille
accordatura	Ahuehuate	anemone
aceituna	Ahura Mazda	angiitis
acerola	ailanthus	aniseikonia
acetaminophen	aileron	Anno Hegirae
acetone	ailette	anomaliped
acharya	aistopod	anosognosia
Achernar	Aitutakian	antenatus
acicula	ajimez	Antigua
acidophilus	akaryote	Apabhramsa
acoel	akkum	ape-ape
acrogeria	alate	aperçu
acropachy	adjective – having wings.	aphasia
ad nauseam	alcarraza	Apistogramma
adieu	Alfvén	apocryphal
adscititious	alleluiatic	apophyge
Aegilops	allochroous	Apostolici
aegrotat	almuerzo	Appaloosa
aerocele	alouatte	appetitost
aerophilatelic	alpargata	après
aes rude	altazimuth	Aramaic
Aesir	amaryllis	Ardhamagadhi
aethalium	amertoy	Ardipithecus
	amour propre	ardoise



## home sweet home

While many people think the Bee is headquartered in Washington, D.C., our hive is actually located in Cincinnati, Ohio.

arenaceous  
aretalogy  
as nas  
ascites  
aspidistra  
astaxanthin  
astilbe  
Asura  
asylee  
attacca  
au bleu  
au courant  
au jus  
avgolemono  
azotea  
azulejo

## b

baccate  
bagwyn  
bahr  
bailiwick  
balata  
balbriggan  
baleen  
banh mi  
Barnumesque  
Bartókian  
Barylambda  
bas-relief  
batamote  
battue  
Baucis  
bauxite  
bavardage  
Beauceron  
beaumontage  
Beaux arts  
beccafico  
Bêche-de-Mer  
becquerel

noun – a unit of radioactivity equal to one disintegration per second.

ben trovato

Beowulf  
berceuse  
bergère  
Bernoulli effect  
Bessemer  
bêtise  
betony  
Bezier curve  
bhangra  
bhikshuni  
bibelot  
bibimbap  
bisbigliando  
bismillah  
blatherskite  
blottesque  
bobolink  
Boise  
Bolognese  
boniface  
bordereaux  
Bosc  
bouclé  
boudin  
bouillon  
boulevardier  
boutade  
bozzetto  
Braeburn  
brouhaha  
brume  
bruschetta  
buccal  
buñuelo  
Bunyanesque  
burelage  
burgee  
Burkinabe

## c

cabochon  
cabotage  
ca'canny  
cacaxte  
cachexia

cacoëthes  
Caerphilly  
caesious  
cahiers  
caique  
cairn  
caisson  
calabash  
calamondin  
calenture  
caló  
calusar  
calvities  
camarilla  
Camembert  
canaille  
cantatrice  
caprifiq  
Caracas  
carcajou  
carnifices  
carrageenan\*\*  
OR carrageenin  
OR carrageenin  
Carrickmacross  
cartouches  
caryatid  
Casimir effect  
Castalia  
catachresis  
cataphora  
catarrh  
catjang  
cavalletti  
caveola  
cecidium  
cephalopod  
cermet  
certiorari  
chalaza  
champignon  
Charon  
chastushka  
chasuble  
chauve-souris

cheongsam  
chèvre  
chevrotain  
chopine  
chorten  
choucroute  
ciénaga\*\*  
OR cienega  
ciliopathy  
cioppino  
cire perdue  
cirri  
clerihew  
cobalamin  
coccygeal  
cochineal  
colcannon

noun – potatoes and cabbage or other greens boiled and mashed together.

colloque  
colluctation  
colporteur\*\*  
OR colporter  
colubrine  
concatenate  
concours  
connoisseur  
consanguine  
consigliere  
conteur  
contrapposto  
contretemps  
copernicium  
corrigenda  
corybantic  
coterie  
cotoneaster  
coulibiac  
coulisse  
courophobia  
coup de grace  
courgette  
couverture

creances  
crokinole  
croquemouche  
croquignole  
croustade  
cryptozoa  
cushag  
cynocephali

**d**  
daguerreotype  
Darjeeling  
darmstadtium  
de rigueur  
decastich  
degauss  
Deimos  
Delmarva Peninsula  
demitasse  
démodé  
demurrage  
Déné  
dentifrice  
derring-do  
Deseret  
desiccate  
Devanagari  
dghaisa  
dhole  
dhurrie  
diapason  
diaphanous  
Djibouti  
doxycycline  
dragée  
drahthaar  
Dubhe  
Dubuque  
duello

noun - the rules of combat between two persons.

duxelles  
dvandva  
Dvorak  
dysphasia

**e**  
ecchymosis  
echelon  
echinoderm  
edamame  
effete  
effleurage  
Egeria  
eisteddfod  
élan  
eleemosynary  
eluete  
embouchure  
emollient  
emolument  
emphysema  
en arrière  
Enoch Arden  
enoki  
epideictic  
epinicion  
epistemology  
epixylous  
Equatoguinean  
Erewhonian  
ergatogyne  
Eris  
erythroblast  
Esau  
escarole

noun – an annual or biennial herb widely cultivated as a salad plant.

escheator  
esclandre  
espadrille  
espalier  
espial  
estancia  
estovers  
estrepe  
ethylene  
étouffée  
eudiometer  
Euroclydon  
exchequer

## f

faipule

farfalle

noun – butterfly-shaped pasta.

farouche

farrago

Fatimid

fatshedera

fauchard

Feldenkrais

fellahin

OR fellaheen

ferruginous

fête champêtre

fetticus

fibromyalgia

Firbolg

flehmen

force majeure

Formica

frabjous

fracas

funori

furan

Furneaux

furuncle

## g

gabarit

gabbro

gaffe

OR gaff

Gaia

gaillardia

Galahad

galatea

galena

gallivat

gambol

verb – to skip about.

Gaspesian

gasthaus

gattine

Geatish

gegenschein

gelilah

gendarme

genet

gesellschaft

giallolino

ginglymus

Gippsland

glabella

glacis

glengarry

gliriform

glyceraldehyde

Gondwana

goondie

graywacke

griot

Groenendael

Gruyère

guan

guapena

Guarnerius

guayabera

guerite

guichet

Guidonian

Gurmukhi

gyascutus

gyokuro

gypsophila

## h

halala\*\*

OR halalah

halcyon

Hamtramck

hangul

haupia

hebdomadal

hei-tiki

hellebore

hemorrhage

hennin

henotheism

hepatectomy

Herodotean

Hessian

Hippolyta

hirsute

hoi polloi

holobenthic

hominin

homoscedasticity

hordeolum

houppelande

Hsia

noun – the first dynasty of China, said to have been founded by the legendary emperor Yu.

Huallaga

huerta

Humboldt



## the history of silent letters

What's up with all those silent letters?! The word "debt," for example, comes from a Latin word *debita*, which comes from *debitum*, meaning "debt." French borrowed the word and dropped the "b," but a few hundred years after the word passed to English, we put the "b" back in to make it closer to the original Latin. Why? Probably just to make it look more "classical," but it sure does make it harder to spell!

hutia\*\*  
OR jutia  
hypaethral  
hyssop  
hysteresis  
hysteron proteron

## i

lteni  
ichthyology  
icosahedron  
ikebana  
immie  
in medias res  
in nuce  
in silico

adverb – in or on a computer.

incunabula  
inglenook  
insouciance  
integument  
internecine  
interregnum  
Inugsuk  
Inuk  
isagoge  
Ishihara test  
ivermectin

## j

Jahiliya  
jai alai  
janthina  
jasmone  
je ne sais quoi

jerboa  
jocote  
joropo

noun – the national ballroom dance of Venezuela.

Jumada  
Jungian

## k

kakapo  
kaleidoscope  
kalimba  
kalopanax  
kangri  
Kannada  
kapparrah  
katakana  
katana  
kathakali  
kentledge  
Keplerian  
kerril  
kichel  
kipuka

noun – an area of older land surrounded by later lava flows.

Kitksan  
kiva  
Kjeldahl  
koh-i-noor  
Koine  
kaji  
korrigan  
krewe

kriegspiel  
Kuiper Belt  
Kutani  
kwashiorkor  
kyphoplasty

## l

La Tène  
laccolith  
lanceolate  
langrage  
Latinxua  
lebensraum  
leberwurst  
lebkuchen  
lecithin  
lefse  
lierre  
ligas  
lilliputian  
limaçon  
Lullaillico  
lobscouse

noun – a sailor's dish made of meat, vegetables, hardtack, and other ingredients.

loggia  
logodaedaly  
logothete  
lokelani  
louche  
loupe  
luftmensch  
lunulae  
Lupercalia



## it's all Greek to me

We often get questions about why we use words that may not appear to be English. Most words in the English language are words that we borrowed from other languages. We borrowed them, used them, and now call them our own.



## m

macchiato  
macigno  
mackinaw  
macushla  
mademoiselle  
maillot  
majuscule  
Makgadikgadi Pans  
malaise  
Mandelbrot set  
mandorla  
mandragora  
mange-tout  
mangonel  
Manu  
Marathi  
marcel  
marcescent  
maringouin  
martinoe  
mascarpone  
mässig  
mediobrome  
medulla  
megrims  
meiosis  
mele  
Menaia  
Merak  
meringue  
Metonic cycle  
micellar  
microfiche  
millegrain  
miombo  
Mirach  
miscible  
mittimus  
moiety  
moline  
mondegreen  
MOOC  
moraine  
morion  
mortadella

motherbung

mozo

noun – a waiter in a restaurant (used in the American Southwest).

muesli

mufti

muktuk

muliebrity

Muzak

myeloma

## n

Nabal

nacelle

nahcolite

noun – a mineral consisting of natural sodium bicarbonate.

naricorn

Naugahyde

naumachia

neem

neophyte

Ner Tamid

nescience

Nethinim

Nicoise

nidicolous

nimiety

niminy-piminy

nisi

nisus

nival

ni-Vanuatu

niveau

nodosity

notturmo

noumenon

nouveau

Novanglian

nyctinasty

## o

Oaxaca

obeisant

oeuvre

ogival

olecranon

onomatopoeia

onychorrhaxis

oolite

oopuhue

Oort cloud

oppidan

Orinoco

ormolu

orogeny

noun – the process of mountain formation especially by folding of the earth's crust.

orphéon

oryx

ostium

Ouagadougou

oud

outré

oviparous

oxyacetylene

## p

paella

pahoehoe

palaver

palooka

pampootie

panacea

Panathenaea

Panchen Lama

noun – the priest of monk who is the chief spiritual adviser of the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism.

panettone

panjandrum

pannose

pappardelle

parallax

pareidolia

Parmentier

parquet

parterre  
parti pris  
pas seul  
pasilla  
pastitsio  
patois  
Patripassianism  
pejorate  
pekoe  
perciatelli  
perianth  
petechia  
Philistine  
philopatry  
phloem  
phlox  
Phobos  
photovoltaic  
piatti  
piccata  
pierrot  
piloncillo  
pinniped  
pisto  
pitanga  
Plantagenet  
pneumatocyst  
pochoir  
podagra  
podotheca  
point d'appui  
polyandry  
Ponzi  
portugais  
porwige  
pot-au-feu  
pothos  
potpourri  
pou sto  
poudre B  
prajna  
pralltriller  
pratique  
presidio

prêt-à-porter  
prion  
Promethean  
promyshlennik  
pruritus  
psalmody  
pschent  
psoriasis  
ptyxis  
pudibund  
pulvillus  
pylorus  
Pythagorean  
Pyxis

## q

qiyas  
Quaoar  
quasar  
quattrocento  
Quito

geographical entry  
– city and capital of  
Ecuador.

quokka  
quonk  
Quonset

## r

raclette  
rafflesia  
railleur  
rajpramukh  
rapparee  
rapprochement  
Rastafarian  
Rayleigh wave  
realpolitik  
recamier  
redingote  
rembrandt  
rennet  
renvoi  
rescissible

reveille

noun – a signal usually sounded by bugle at about sunrise summoning soldiers or sailors to the day's duties.

rhododendron  
rhyton  
rinceau  
risorgimento  
risposta  
rissole  
Robigalia  
rocaille  
roi fainéant  
rond de jambe  
rondeau  
rooseveltite  
rosemaling  
roseola  
rouille  
rubaiyat  
rubefacient  
ruelle  
runcible spoon  
rupicolous  
ruscus  
rutabaga  
ryas  
Ryeland  
Ryukyu

## s

saccharide  
saeta  
Sagittarius  
sakura  
salmagundi\*\*  
OR salmagundy  
samsara  
Sangamon  
sangfroid  
sanglier  
sannyasi  
Saashyant

read the  
story  
behind the  
word on  
page 59!

Sapporo  
savoir faire  
Sawan  
Sbrinz  
scaberulous  
scagliola  
Schedar  
schefflera  
schnecken  
schwegel  
sciatica  
sciolistic  
sclaff  
scobiform  
scrofula  
seine  
selah  
semaphore  
seraya  
serin

noun – a small European finch related to the canary.

serval  
sesquipedalian  
sessile  
seton  
Sfax  
sforzando  
Shawwal  
Shiba Inu  
silique  
Sir Roger de Coverley  
skaamoogs  
Skeltonic  
skerrick

smriti  
soirée  
sororal  
sorrel  
sostenuto  
sous vide  
spiedini  
spodumene  
sprechstimme  
sravaka  
steddore  
Strelitzia  
stretto  
Strigolniki  
stroganoff  
struthious  
stupa  
sturnine  
stygian  
styptic  
succès fou  
succorance

OR succourance\*

Sufi  
supercilious  
surreptitious  
svarabhakti  
Svengali  
swainsona  
sybaritic  
synanthrope  
syncope

## t

taal  
tachycardia

tachyon  
taedium vitae  
tamari  
tambour  
tam-o'-shanter  
tanager  
tandoori  
tanned  
taoiseach  
tapetum  
tarpaulin  
taurine  
Tchefuncte  
Tegucigalpa  
telamon  
teledu  
telegnosis  
temalacatl  
tempéh  
teneramente  
terai  
teraphim  
teratism  
terra nullius  
Terre Haute  
tessitura  
Teutonic  
thalassic  
theca  
Theravada  
thesmothete  
thimerosal  
Thomism  
thuluth  
tic douloureux  
tichodrome



## did you know?

The Scripps National Spelling Bee has declared co-champions in 1950, 1957, 1962, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019. In fact, in 2019 we had octo-champs! One of the famed Octochamps, Saketh Sundar, helped contribute to this year's themed word lists and word stories at the end of this book!

tikka  
tikkun  
Tillamook  
tilleul  
tinamou  
tinnient

adjective – having a clear or ringing quality.

tintinnabulary  
tiramisu  
tmesis  
toccata  
toey  
toggenburg  
toile  
Tok Pisin  
tomahawk  
tomalley  
tonsillitis  
topazolite  
toque  
toreutics  
torii  
toril  
tourelle  
tournedos  
towhee  
trichinosis  
tridium  
trillado  
triskelion  
tristeza  
trochee  
trompe l'oeil  
trotteur  
trous-de-loup  
trouvaile  
tryptophan  
tsukupin  
tullibee  
tusche  
Typhoean

**U**  
ubi sunt  
ubiquinone  
ullage  
ululate  
unakite  
unguiculate

adjective – having nails or claws.

uraeus  
urushiol  
Ushuaia  
usufruct

**V**  
valvata  
varicella  
velouté  
verisimilitude  
vermeil  
vexillologist  
viaticum  
vicissitudes  
vigneron

noun – a winegrower.

vignette  
vilipend  
villanelle  
villi  
vinaceous  
vitiare  
vituperative  
vizierial

**W**  
wabeno  
noun – an Ojibwa shaman.

Waf  
wahine  
Wampanoag  
wapiti

weka  
weltschmerz  
Wensleydale  
wentletrap  
whippoorwill  
whydah\*\*  
OR whidah  
wigan  
witch of Agnesi  
wushu

read the story behind the word on page 62!

**X**  
xerogel  
xiphophyllous

adjective – having sword-shaped leaves.

xyloglyphy

**Y**  
yakitori  
yosenabe  
yttriferous  
yuga  
yuloh

noun – a Chinese sculling oar with a fixed fulcrum.

**Z**  
zacate  
zaibatsu  
Zamboni  
Zanni  
zapateado

noun – a rhythmic stamping or tapping step characteristic of Spanish dancing.

Zdarsky tent  
zemi  
zimocca  
zortzico  
zugzwang  
Zyzomys



## The Bee's Bookshelf

The Bee's Bookshelf is the official online book club of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. It's a place to explore the connection between stories and spelling. Each month, we read a new book together and share insights, so sign up to receive our monthly emails to find out which book is next. Visit [spellingbee.com/book-club](https://spellingbee.com/book-club) to learn more.

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# words that are new this year!

With each edition of *Words of the Champions*, 20% of the words are replaced with brand new words! This includes each year's new School Spelling Bee Study List, but it also includes words at the One, Two, and Three Bee levels of *Words of the Champions*. Below is the complete list of this year's newly added words that are not also on the School Spelling Bee Study List. Words with a single asterisk (\*) indicate a primarily British spelling. A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates the preferred spelling.

Please note: These words are included in the full list in the previous pages. We've compiled them here for you for ease of studying.

abolish	attempt	certiorari
abomasum		chauve-souris
abscess	<b>b</b>	chevrotain
abscond	bannock	chief
aceituna	Berber	cladogram
Adirondack	bespoke	clarion
advertisement**	Bessemer	classified
OR advertizement	bigotry	clickbait
aerocele	birria	closure
aethalium	boiserie	coastal
aikido	boisterous	cochin
ailanthus	bonanza	cochineal
aileron	brigand	cochlear
alembroth	burelage	collaboration
Alexandria	burgee	collar
alms		collimate
aloof	<b>c</b>	colluctation
ambiguous	cabotage	collude
amertoy	cacao	commercial
anachronism	cacophonous	commove
anatomical	caduceus	concourse
Anjou	caesious	condign
anole**	calendula	consecutive
OR anoli	calenture	considerable
anthropomorphic	calypso	contemporary
apparently	capricious	contested
arrieros	capture	conteur
Arthurian	carcass	context
ascertain	carnassial	conticent
aspidistra	carnifices	contiguous
astigmatism	catadromous	continuous
astilbe	cecidium	cookie-cutter
atrophy	centennial	coqui

corroborate  
cotyledon  
Cretaceous  
crucial  
curie  
curtail

## d

damascened  
dashiki  
daubster  
derivative  
descent  
desuetude  
detail  
diatribe  
diaulos  
diocese  
diptych  
distinguish  
doomed  
Doppler  
doxycycline

## e

eburnean  
echidna  
eclectic  
Ecuador  
Edwardian  
empire  
en arrière  
encomium  
epinicion  
ergatogyne  
ergo

existential  
expansion  
expedition  
exposé  
exposition

## f

facetious  
faipule  
fastuous  
Fatimid  
fiction  
fiendishly  
flauta  
fractions  
frass  
fritillary

## g

gateway  
gelilah  
generalization  
OR generalisation\*  
glacier  
glint  
gliriform  
glossary  
glossolalia  
gnathic  
gnome  
googly  
goondie  
grazioso  
gressorial  
grotto  
grout

## h

hadith  
hazardous  
hegemony  
hennin  
heraldic  
Hessian  
hoarse  
holotype  
Honolulu  
houppelande  
humdrum  
hydriotaphia

## i

Icelandic  
Iceni  
illustrator  
impasse  
imponderabilia  
imposing  
imprecatory  
in nuce  
incessant  
individual  
injunction  
insight  
invasive  
iris  
Iroquois

## j

jackal  
Jahiliya  
jocote  
joie de vivre



## one dictionary to rule them all

The only source for the spelling of words given in the Scripps National Spelling Bee is Merriam-Webster Unabridged (<http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com>).

**k**

kangri  
 kentledge  
 Kildare  
 kiskadee  
 klippe  
 Kutani

**l**

latter  
 leotard  
 literatim  
 liturgy  
 lobectomy  
 loggia  
 logical  
 logodaedaly  
 luau  
 Lupercalia  
 lyricist

**m**

macadam  
 machicolation  
 malady  
 manifests  
 manure  
 manuscript  
 marginalia  
 mea culpa  
 mentor  
 Merak  
 mercury  
 micellar  
 Michaelmas  
 migratory  
 ministry  
 miombo  
 moline  
 monastery  
 muskeg  
 mythical

**n**

naysayers  
 nirvana  
 nisus  
 nosh  
 notable

**o**

oatmeal  
 Oaxaca  
 oblast  
 octopus  
 Odysseus  
 ophthalmologist  
 oregano  
 ossuary

**p**

pabulum  
 packet  
 palmate  
 Panama  
 panchreston  
 parsec  
 parti pris  
 partiality  
 pastrami  
 patches  
 pendentive  
 penultimate  
 pernicious  
 philtrum  
 Pisces  
 pitanga  
 plover  
 plumbago  
 podotheca  
 polarized  
 policy  
 polyandry  
 portal  
 potentate

potoroo  
 predator  
 prerogative  
 presidio  
 previous  
 privy  
 procrustean  
 pulvillus

**q**

questionnaire\*\*  
 OR questionnaire  
 quixotic

**r**

radius  
 ragwort  
 railleur  
 railroad  
 rebound  
 reckless  
 recrudescent  
 regional  
 remain  
 remnants  
 resemble  
 retina  
 righteous  
 rigorous  
 OR rigorous\*  
 rostrum  
 rotary  
 rotulet

**s**

saltern  
 sanglier  
 sauerkraut\*\*  
 OR sourcrout  
 OR sourkrout  
 Sawan  
 scherzo



schnecken  
schwegel  
sconce  
scrape  
septum  
serval  
service  
sheaves  
Shenandoah  
shrapnel  
skaamoogs  
slender  
snowy  
squabble  
steeve  
stentorian  
subdued  
subjugate  
substance  
substrate  
successive  
sustain  
swainsona  
swale  
syndactylism

**t**  
tambourine  
tariff  
taxidermy  
teamwork  
Tejano  
tertiary  
thesmothete  
tichodrome  
Tillamook  
toggenburg  
touted  
troop  
trotteur

**u**  
ubiquity  
ultradian  
umbelliferous  
unabridged  
unbeknownst  
undertake  
universal

**v**  
valvata  
vaporetto  
vendetta  
vendors  
villanelle  
violate  
vituline

**w**  
werf  
western

**x**  
xiphophyllous

**y**  
Yoruba

**z**  
Zyzomys



## Word Club

Want a new way to study? The Word Club app, available for free in the App Store and the Google Play Store, will make mastering *Words of the Champions* fun! Choose from multiple different quiz and study options for both spelling and vocabulary, all with expert audio pronunciations from the Bee's head pronouncer, Dr. Jacques Bailly.

## vocabulary: one bee, a-z



We've selected 26 of our favorite words from the One Bee section of *Words of Champions* (one for each letter of the alphabet) and included their definitions throughout this study guide. Below, you can find all of those definitions in one helpful place.

Want more vocabulary? Download the FREE Word Club app today to find definitions like these for all 4,000 *Words of the Champions* words. The definitions will help ease your studying and expand your vocabulary, and they're a whole lot of fun to learn!

**addle** – *verb* – to throw into confusion or disorder.

**blarney** – *noun* – smooth wheedling talk.

**clowder** – *noun* – a group of cats.

**disposition** – *noun* – the usual mood or attitude of a person or animal.

**entreat** – *verb* – to ask earnestly.

**foozle** – *verb* – to manage awkwardly.

**glint** – *verb* – to shine usually by reflection : to sparkle.

**hoax** – *noun* – a piece of trickery.

**insight** – *noun* – clear and immediate understanding.

**junior** – *adjective* – designed for young people.

**kindred** – *adjective* – related.

**luau** – *noun* – a feast with Hawaiian food and usually Hawaiian entertainment.

**missive** – *noun* – a written communication.

**nosh** – *verb* – to eat a snack.

**omega** – *noun* – the 24th and last letter of the Greek alphabet.

**pauper** – *noun* – a very poor person.

**quota** – *noun* – a proportional part.

**reign** – *noun* – royal authority.

**sorbet** – *noun* – a frozen dessert made with a mixture of fruits.

**tawny** – *adjective* – of a brownish orange to a light brown color.

**unfazed** – *adjective* – not disturbed or worried : undaunted.

**votive** – *adjective* – undertaken or performed in fulfillment of a vow.

**wince** – *verb* – to flinch.

**yippee** – *interjection* – used to express exuberant delight or triumph.

**zither** – *noun* – an instrument that has a shallow horizontal soundboard topped with 30 to 40 strings that are typically plucked by a performer.



## piecing it together

A root can be a simple stand-alone word all by itself (like Greek *para* meaning “alongside”) or a root can also be a word’s core piece having a clearly identifiable meaning that, with the help of a suffix or prefix, makes a stand-alone word. Think about Dev Shah’s 2023 winning word: “psammophile”. The first part of this word contains the Greek root *psamm-* meaning “sand.” The second part of Dev’s word contains the Greek root *-phil* from the Greek word *philos* meaning “beloved, dear, loving.” Put that together and... can you guess what the word means?

## vocabulary: two bee, a-z



We've selected 26 of our favorite words from the Two Bee section of *Words of Champions* (one for each letter of the alphabet) and included their definitions throughout this study guide. Below, you can find all of those definitions in one helpful place.

**aikido** – *noun* – a Japanese martial art.

**brogue** – *noun* – an Irish accent.

**coeval** – *adjective* – of the same or equal age or antiquity.

**diptych** – *noun* – a picture or series of pictures painted on two hinged tablets.

**ergo** – *adverb* – therefore.

**Farsi** – *noun* – the modern language of Iran and western Afghanistan.

**gnathic** – *adjective* – of or relating to the jaw.

**hummock** – *noun* – a rounded or conical knoll or hillock.

**insignia** – *noun* – a distinguishing mark or authority, office, or honor.

**kufi** – *noun* – a close-fitting brimless cylindrical or round hat.

**limned** – *verb* – outlined in clear sharp detail.

**merino** – *noun* – a fine wool and cotton yarn used for knitwear.

**nocive** – *adjective* – harmful.

**obsolete** – *adjective* – no longer acceptable or usable.

**patella** – *noun* – kneecap.

**QWERTY** – *noun* – a standard typewriter or computer keyboard.

**rotulet** – *noun* – a small scroll or register.

**snell** – *adjective* – having a keen edge : piercing, biting.

**torsion** – *noun* – the act of turning or twisting.

**ultradian** – *adjective* – being or characterized by periods of less than 24 hours.

**vernal** – *adjective* – of, relating to, or characteristic of the spring.

**werf** – *noun* – a farmyard (used in southern Africa).

**Yoruba** – *noun* – a Niger-Congo language of a people of southwestern Nigeria and parts of Benin and Togo.

**zowie** – *interjection* – used to express astonishment, admiration, or delight.



## all about the schwa

Be like a schwa – never stressed! Except that when you’re a speller, a schwa can really stress you out! Why? A schwa is pronounced “uh” and in spelling can be any vowel: a, e, i, o, u or y. That can make a word pretty tough to spell. If you ask for the word’s language of origin, you can try using that to help you out. If your word is from Greek, you might want to try an ‘o’ for that schwa, like in “bacteriolytic”!

# vocabulary: three bee, a-z

We've selected 26 of our favorite words from the Three Bee section of *Words of Champions* (one for each letter of the alphabet) and included their definitions throughout this study guide. Below, you can find all of those definitions in one helpful place.

**alate** – *adjective* – having wings.

**becquerel** – *noun* – a unit of radioactivity equal to one disintegration per second.

**colcannon** – *noun* – potatoes and cabbage or other greens boiled and mashed together.

**duello** – *noun* – the rules of combat between two persons.

**escarole** – *noun* – an annual or biennial herb widely cultivated as a salad plant.

**farfalle** – *noun* – butterfly-shaped pasta.

**gambol** – *verb* – to skip about.

**Hsia** – *noun* – the first dynasty of China, said to have been founded by the legendary emperor Yu.

**in silico** – *adverb* – in or on a computer.

**joropo** – *noun* – the national ballroom dance of Venezuela.

**kipuka** – *noun* – an area of older land surrounded by later lava flows.

**lobscouse** – *noun* – a sailor's dish made of meat, vegetables, hardtack, and other ingredients.

**mozo** – *noun* – a waiter in a restaurant (used in the American Southwest).

**nahcolite** – *noun* – a mineral consisting of natural sodium bicarbonate.

**orogeny** – *noun* – the process of mountain formation especially by folding of the earth's crust.

**Panchen Lama** – *noun* – the priest or monk who is the chief spiritual adviser of the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism.

**Quito** – *geographical entry* – city and capital of Ecuador.

**reveille** – *noun* – a signal usually sounded by bugle at about sunrise summoning soldiers or sailors to the day's duties.

**serin** – *noun* – a small European finch related to the canary.

**tinnient** – *adjective* – having a clear or ringing quality.

**unguiculate** – *adjective* – having nails or claws.

**vigneron** – *noun* – a winegrower.

**wabeno** – *noun* – an Ojibwa shaman.

**xiphophyllous** – *adjective* – having sword-shaped leaves.

**yuloh** – *noun* – a Chinese sculling oar with a fixed fulcrum.

**zapateado** – *noun* – a rhythmic stamping or tapping step characteristic of Spanish dancing.



## consonants 101

Not sure whether the word has one consonant or two? Check to see if the word has a suffix, such as a verb that has been conjugated. These words often – but not always! – have a doubled consonant before that suffix. “The speckled frog *hopped* off the log while the horse *plodded* down the lane and the train *chugged* down the tracks.” In each of these cases, the vowel before the doubled letter is a short sound. Can you spot others like this, and some that have long vowel sounds and do not double that consonant?

# word stories and themed lists





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Every word has a story, and the order of its letters often tells us something about the road that it traveled to get to us. Some words go back thousands of years to ancient languages like Greek and Latin and Sanskrit; others have their roots in literature and historical events; and others might only have been invented recently – as a trademark, online slang, or to refer to some new bit of technology. And all of these words are still growing and changing as our language evolves. A new word in your friend’s text message today might end up catching on and becoming a part of English! And years down the road, lexicographers will be hunting for the story of exactly how those letters came together to form a new word.

We asked some former spellers (featured on page 4) to tell us which words in this year’s edition of *Words of the Champions* had interesting stories. Here are some of the words they told us about.



# Rubicon

found in the two bee list



## Definition:

a bounding or limiting line; especially : one that when crossed commits a person to an irrevocable change or decision.

## Origin:

This word is from a Latin name for an Italian river.

---

The word “Rubicon” has been defined as a line that one crosses when making irrevocable decisions. The word “Rubicon” originates from the Latin word “rubeus,” meaning “red.” This name was used for the Rubicon River in Italy, whose waters were reddish because of iron deposits. The connection between this river and irrevocable decisions requires us to go back more than 2,000 years.

The Rubicon River became famous in 49 B.C.E. At that time, there were increasing political tensions between the Senate and Julius Caesar, who was leading an army in Gaul. Following many successful conquests, the Senate ordered Caesar to disband his army and return to Rome not as a military leader but as a private citizen. As he faced the possibility of losing all of his power, Caesar decided to cross the Rubicon, violating a Roman law that forbid generals from bringing armies into a part of Italy not directly controlled by the Roman Empire. As he crossed the river, Caesar said, “The die is cast,” highlighting the point of no return – as everyone knows, even in board games, once you roll a die or a set of dice, you have to accept the consequences.

Caesar’s act has forever linked the river’s name with bold, irreversible decisions. His decision would begin a three-year civil war in which he would overthrow Pompey and become the sole leader of the Roman world.

# saccharide

found in the three bee list

## Definition:

a simple sugar, combination of sugars, or polymerized sugar.



## Origin:

This word is formed from an originally Sanskrit element that went from Pali to Greek to Latin plus a French-derived element.

---

The word saccharide has an unassuming etymology of the parts sacchar- and -ide, which Merriam-Webster says are drawn from “International Scientific Vocabulary.” You may have seen the root -ide in many chemical words before, but where does sacchar- come from? It is a story of linguistic and cultural evolution that begins with the ancient Sanskrit word “sarkara,” meaning pebble.

When crystallized sugar was first produced from sugarcane in India sometime around the third century A.D., it resembled small pebbles, leading “sarkara” to be the first word for what we know as sugar.

This word then began a fascinating journey, going through Persian as “shakar,” then into Arabic, moving through Italian, Latin, and French, and finally becoming “sugar” in English. This progression reflects both the linguistic changes that occur as a word travels through languages and the historical spread of sugar production methods from India through Persia and the Middle East to Europe.

For the word “saccharide,” the path was more direct. The Sanskrit “sarkara” passed into Greek as “sakcharon” and then into Latin as “saccharum.” People everywhere love sweet things, so this word has spread far and fast!

# shazam

found in the two bee list

## Definition:

used to indicate an instantaneous transformation or appearance.

## Origin:

This word is an acronym formed from several names and was originally used in a comic strip.



.....

This word's etymology describes it as an acronym – a word formed from the first letter of several other words. But unlike abbreviations like NATO and FBI (or BTW and TTYL), it's not instantly clear what words form the acronym of shazam! This word actually originates from a DC Comics strip on Captain Marvel that first appeared in late 1939. Young Billy Batson receives his powers from an old wizard named Shazam, who draws on the power of six gods and heroes, one drawn from the Old Testament of the Bible and the others from Greek mythology and epic poetry. S stands for the wisdom of Solomon; H, the strength of Hercules; A, the stamina of Atlas; Z, the power of Zeus; A, the courage of Achilles; and M, the speed of Mercury. So with the wizard's help, Billy Batson only needs to shout "shazam!" to turn into the superhero Captain Marvel.

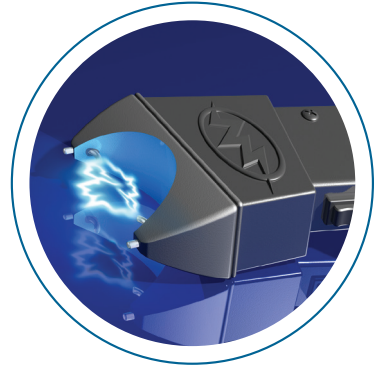
Today, this isn't just Captain Marvel's word anymore. We might say it after discovering the solution to a tricky chemistry problem, adding the perfect ingredient to a recipe, or witnessing an unexpectedly brilliant DIY project come to life - anytime we want to describe an awesome, almost superhuman transformation!

# tase

found in the one bee list

**Definition:**

to shoot (someone) with a gun that fires electrified darts to stun and immobilize a person.



**Origin:**

This word is formed from a word that is a trademark.

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This word's origin describes it as being formed from another trademark - specifically, it is the verb that describes the use of the noun "taser." We know tasers today largely due to their use by law enforcement. But how did their name come about? And why is it spelled in this particular way?

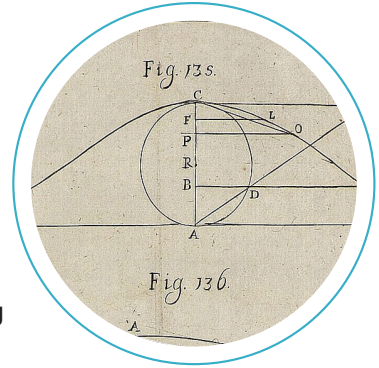
The taser was created by American inventor Jack Cover in the mid 1970s. Cover's favorite childhood books were the Tom Swift books about an inventor of amazing gadgets, and when he made his own invention, he named it after those books. (The language game known as the "Tom Swifty" also comes from the dialogue style of these books, by the way!) The word "taser" is an acronym that stands for "Tom A. Swift Electric Rifle." It was introduced to law enforcement in the 1990s, and became a commonly used trademark soon after that.

# witch of Agnesi

found in the three bee list

## Definition:

a plane cubic curve that is symmetric about the y-axis and approaches the x-axis as an asymptote, that is constructed by drawing lines from the origin intersecting an upright circle tangent to the x-axis at the origin and taking the locus of points of intersection of pairs of lines parallel to the x-axis and y-axis, and that has the equation  $x^2y = 4a^2(2a - y)$ .



## Origin:

This word entry consists of originally English words plus an Italian name.

.....

The witch of Agnesi looks like a historical or mythological word, but it's actually a type of mathematical curve – and its name in English is actually based on a mistake! The curve itself was studied as early as 1653 by Pierre de Fermat and later was studied by Guido Grandi and Isaac Newton in 1703. In 1748, female mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi published a calculus textbook including her study of the curve.

Agnesi named the curve “la versiera di Agnesi” (as versiera is Italian for “that-which-turns”, coming from Latin *vertere* meaning “to turn”). However, English math professor John Colson read the name of the curve as “l'avversiera di Agnesi.” “L'avversiera” translates roughly to “woman who is against God,” a term which, in that time period, was synonymous with the word “witch.” Thus, the curve's name in English became the witch of Agnesi.

Despite her accomplishments – and the mistaken association of her name with the dark arts – Maria Gaetana Agnesi abandoned her mathematical studies after the death of her father in 1752, and dedicated the last forty years of her life to prayer and charitable work.

# Bavarian cream

found in the two bee list

## Definition:

a dessert of a flavored whipped gelatine mixture into which whipped cream is folded.

## Origin:

The first part of this word entry is from a German place name plus an English element, and the second part went from Latin to French to English.



.....

Chances are, if you walk into your local donut shop, you'll be able to find a Bavarian cream donut. In fact, at Dunkin', you can find not one but three different varieties with different kinds of toppings and icing. The Bavarian cream you find in donuts is a little different from the original, often mixed with whipped cream for a smoother texture, since the original is a custard-like dessert.

To understand this name, you need to know a little history and a little geography. First, Bavaria is in the southern part of modern-day Germany, but for many centuries it was its own princely state. This state was ruled for many centuries by the House of Wittelsbach, a German noble family, but the people who cooked in their kitchens were often French. It was these French chefs who developed Bavarian cream in the 17th and 18th centuries by creating a dessert of milk thickened with eggs. Soon, this cream was spreading across the continent – the French call it “bavarois” and the Italians call it “bavarese,” and all of these cultures started experimenting with this delicious new element.

Today, Bavarian cream is typically stabilized with gelatin so it can hold its shape when refrigerated--which is the reason you can often find it in restaurants in elegant molds. Though it was traditionally served as a custard with a fruit puree or fruit sauce, you now often find it in other forms such as pastry fillings, like in a Boston cream pie or donut.

# Nostradamus

found in the two bee list

## Definition:

one professing to foretell future events.

## Origin:

This word is from a French name.

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The French astrologer, apothecary, physician, and seer Michel de Nostradamus, who claimed to be a prophet, has always had both detractors and true believers – he is usually referred to by the Latinized form of his name, Nostradamus.

First known for his unusual medical treatments of people suffering from the Plague, Nostradamus began to make prophecies in 1547. In 1555, he published the book with 942 four-line poems allegedly telling the future – a book that is sometimes called *Centuries* because the poems are grouped into sets of one hundred. An enlarged second edition of predictions appeared in 1558.

Some of Nostradamus' predictions were thought to have come true in his lifetime, and he became so famous that he was invited to the court of Catherine de' Medici, who was married to the King Henry II of France.

Even in his lifetime, though, his prophecies were the source of much controversy – as they still are. Because Nostradamus' predictions are vague, people have attached them to a number of historical events that have already occurred (this is called postdiction or retroactive clairvoyance) to try and justify his reputation as a seer. Some events attributed to Nostradamus include the French Revolution, the rise of Hitler, and even the COVID-19 pandemic!

Today, we use his name to describe anyone who professes to tell future events. Although, given that Nostradamus also believed the world would end on July 4th, 1999, perhaps we shouldn't give him too much credit!



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Interested in telling us about the stories behind some of your favorite words? Write to us at [contact@spellingbee.com](mailto:contact@spellingbee.com)! We love to hear about your discoveries in the dictionary and out in the world. Maybe your word story could be in a future edition of *Words of the Champions*!

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# themed lists

## music

1. accordatura
2. clarinet
3. clavichord
4. embouchure
5. glissando
6. kalimba
7. lithophone
8. luthier
9. orchestra
10. oud
11. rhapsody
12. rosin
13. scherzo
14. schwegel
15. syntonize
16. tambourine
17. zither
18. zurna



## dog breeds

1. Beauceron
2. collie
3. corgi
4. Dalmatian
5. drahthaar
6. Groenendael
7. labradoodle
8. Newfoundland
9. Pomeranian
10. Shiba Inu
11. spaniel

## words related to law

1. affeer
2. criminal
3. escheator
4. felonious
5. forensics
6. habeas corpus
7. illicitly
8. indict
9. lawyer
10. legalese
11. legitimately
12. Miranda
13. nisi
14. penitentiary
15. plaintiff
16. solon
17. stipulate
18. thesmothete

## boats and ships

1. bowsprit
2. burgee
3. canoe
4. dghaisa
5. galley
6. gallivat
7. sailage
8. schooner
9. scuppers
10. semaphore
11. sloop
12. steeve
13. stevedore
14. vaporetto
15. wharf
16. yawl

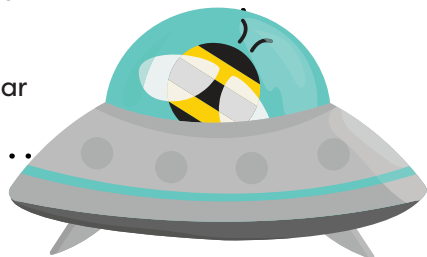


# trademarks

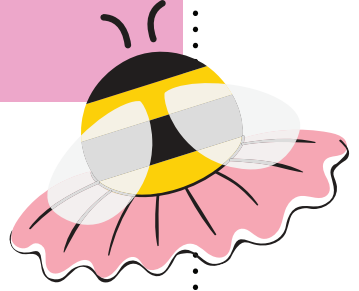
1. Broccolini
2. Bundt
3. escalator
4. Evactor
5. Feldenkrais
6. Formica
7. kodak
8. Motrin
9. Muzak
10. Mylar
11. Naugahyde
12. Quonset
13. Styrofoam
14. tase
15. Zamboni

# outer space

1. Achernar
2. astral
3. Bellatrix
4. cloud
5. Dubhe
6. Eris
7. Gemini
8. gibbous
9. heliacal
10. Keplerian
11. Merak
12. Mirach
13. Oort
14. Orion
15. planetesimal
16. planisphere
17. Pyxis
18. Quaoar
19. Sagittarius
20. Schedar
21. Sirius
22. Stellar



## dances



1. arrieros
2. ballad
3. cabaret
4. calusar
5. corybantic
6. danseur
7. gambol
8. jitterbug
9. joropo
10. kathakali
11. mambo
12. pas seul
13. saltatory
14. Sir Roger de Coverley
15. tango
16. vaudeville
17. zapateado

## “cheesy” words

1. appetitost
2. Asiago
3. Caerphilly
4. Camembert
5. carnitine
6. chèvre
7. fontina
8. gnocchi
9. Gruyère
10. Holstein
11. mascarpone
12. pastitsio
13. rennet
14. Romano
15. Sbrinz
16. Tillamook
17. turophile
18. Wensleydale
19. whey

# desserts



1. affogato
2. Bavarian cream
3. buñuelo
4. cannoli
5. dragée
6. flummery
7. ganache
8. kichel
9. kugel
10. sorbet
11. tiramisu
12. schnecken

**Use this space to create your own themed word lists and to take notes about words with interesting stories.**

Need help getting started? Here are some themes we spotted amongst the words in the previous pages: plant words, words from mythology, sports words, eponyms, and religious words.







**words of the  
champions**

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