



Spelling & Vocabulary

These directions expand upon but do not replace the information in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules. The contest director should read Section 960 of the Constitution, then read these guidelines for additional details.

Before the contest

ROOM

Secure a quiet, properly-equipped room of adequate size for the number of contestants expected.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

The contest director will provide the following.

- A copy of the rules from the *Constitution and Contest Rules*
- A stopwatch or watch with a second hand for use by the pronouncer
- *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Third Edition or Fourth Edition
- A copy of the most recent online *League* (The “Official Notices” section contains any corrections to the high school list, Word Power.)
- A copy of the contestant answer sheet (provided by the League office) for each contestant
- (DISTRICT) One 8 1/2 x 11 envelope per school (8-12)
- Two blank sheets of standard-size paper for each contestant to use for scratch work, one for Part I and another for Parts II and III

CONTEST PACKET

The League office will provide the following.

- Instructions
- Written tests (Part I), verifiers’ copies of test & tiebreaker and grader’s key (Do not open the sealed district test packet until just prior to the beginning of the contest. The district director may schedule a specific time and place for contest directors to pick up these packets on the day of the event.)
- Pronouncer’s copy of test(Part II) & tiebreaker, to be opened by pronouncer at least 48 hours prior to the contest, and 72 hours if possible, along with a CD for pronouncer with instruction sheet
- Contestant answer sheets (photocopy # needed)
- Word Power
- Instructions to the pronouncers
- Instructions to the monitors
- Instructions to the verifiers (2)
- Instructions to the graders
- Application for 100% certificate
- Contest Evaluation Form
- (REGION) State Meet information cards for state meet qualifiers (11)

INVENTORY ALL materials, except sealed district test packet, well in advance to make sure nothing is missing. If necessary, photocopy any needed UIL forms.

PERSONNEL

With the exception of the pronouncer, all personnel may be coaches of contestants entered in the contest.

- Contest director. A coach of a contestant may serve as contest director.
- Assistant to the contest director. (REGION) If requested, the UIL staff will select an assistant to the contest director from one of the high school campuses in the region. This person will serve as a support person for the contest director and may be on hand before, during and after the meet to answer questions which may arise concerning the contest. Coaches of competitors may serve as assistants to the director.
- Pronouncer. The pronouncer may not be a coach of a contestant entered in the contest. The pronouncer should open the contest package at least 72 hours before the contest to become familiar with the words, pronunciations and definitions on the pronouncer's list. A CD of words pronounced is included.
- Verifiers. Two verifiers should be appointed to check the pronunciations and definitions given by the pronouncer during the contest. Verifiers may be coaches of contestants entered in the contest.
- Monitors. Recruit at least one monitor to make certain that contestants work quietly and independently. Monitors may be coaches of contestants entered in the contest.
- Graders. Recruit at least five graders, and more if possible. Graders may be coaches of contestants entered in the contest.

TIME

- Allot 2 1/2 hours for the contest. Use no more than 20 minutes for the roll call and opening remarks, and no more than two hours for Parts I, II, and III. Limit Part I to 15 minutes. It is critical to stay on schedule as some contestants need to go to other events.
- Arrange for and announce, during the opening remarks and if possible in the program, the time and place of the verification period prior to the announcement of official results.

CONTEST ROSTER & RESULTS SHEET

(DISTRICT & REGION) Your meet director will provide to you a contest roster, generated from the UIL Spring Meet Online Entry System. It will list the contestants and alternates from each school. You will need to assign contestant numbers, using the numbers beside each contestant's name on the roster. You will also record scores and/or results on the contest roster to give to the meet director, who will then enter the results/scores into the online system.

SUBSTITUTIONS

(DISTRICT) Schools may replace contestants on the official district meet roster with substitutes so long as the substitutes present the contest directors with the appropriate documentation.

- *Students whose names were never entered into the online entry system* may substitute so long as they provide the contest director before the contest begins with a substitute eligibility form (found online and in the appendix) or a letter signed by a designated school official certifying the student's eligibility.
- *Students whose names were entered into the online entry system and hence certified as eligible* are eligible to substitute for a contestant so long as they provide the contest director with written notification (either the substitute form or a letter) signed by the event coach or representative from the contestant's school. Eligibility is already certified. Therefore, written notification is for the convenience of the contest director who may not have a copy of the other contest rosters.

At the conclusion of the meet, submit the substitution forms/letters to the spring meet district director to be filed with the school's original entry (see C&CR, Section 902 (g) (B)).

(REGION) If a member of a school's team cannot compete, only one substitution may be made. If a team needs more than one substitution, the alternate team will compete. The substitute must submit to the contest director a letter or form (such as the sample form found in the appendix) signed by a designated administrator to certify eligibility. Submit substitution forms to the regional director prior to the contest or to the contest director during roll call. Do not make a substitution for an individual contestant who is not a member of a team.

TEAM COMPETITION

(DISTRICT) Schools have the option of entering either three or four competitors at the district level. While all four competitors may compete for individual honors, only the top three scores for each school will count in team competition. A team must have at least three contestants compete in order to qualify for the team competition. Team members who qualify to regional will compete for both team and individual honors at

WILD CARD

Each region's highest scoring second place team may advance to the regional academic meet. In the event of a tie, all teams involved in the tie will advance.

IN ORDER to be eligible as a wild card representative, district results must be received by the regional director no later than 5 p.m. on the Monday following the final district academic week. Failure to meet the deadline disqualifies the district from advancing teams as wild card representatives. The highest-scoring second place team from the regional meets may advance to the Academic State Meet.

NOTE: the team competition will not affect nor change any part of the contest procedure until the grading period when team winners are determined.

that level. All four members of the winning team will advance to the next higher meet, and the top second place overall team (wild card) in the region will advance to regional competition.

(REGION) A team must have at least three contestants to qualify for the team competition. A person who advances to this level of competition does qualify for individual ranking and medals. Do not exclude them.

ALTERNATES (REGION)

Alternates may compete only in the absence of an individual who won first, second or third place in the same district competition. Contest directors should delay calling for alternates until immediately prior to the beginning of the contest.

SORTING ENVELOPES (DISTRICT)

Provide and label a large (8 1/2 x 11) envelope for each school entered in the district meet. Write the name of the school and contest on the top of the envelopes. Save the sorting envelopes to use after the verification period.

During the contest

1. Separate contestants from each other as far as space in the room permits. Do not seat contestants from the same school together.
2. Read aloud the following statement: “Coaches, contest directors and contestants are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of contest material. Transfer of information relative to the test shall be considered a violation of the academic spring meet code and subject to penalties as outlined in Section 700 of the C&CR.”
3. Before the test is given, exclude all people from the room except contestants, the spelling director, the pronouncer, verifiers and monitors. Check all tests to ensure that all pages are printed clearly and completely.
4. Call roll and assign each student a number. Instruct contestants to list their assigned number on each page of their answer sheets.
5. The contest director will read the following announcements and rule reminders before the test begins:
 - a. “Contestants must take all three parts of the test or be disqualified. Part I consists of a written section and a total of 15 minutes is allotted. Answers *must* be written in the blanks provided to be graded. Parts II and III will consist of words pronounced for the contestants. Only Parts I and II will be graded. Part III will only be graded in the event of a tie.”
 - b. “Plain-writing rules do not apply to UIL spelling, though the writing must be legible. Contestants may print; however, the all-caps handwriting style is discouraged. Contestants should make sure that non-alphabetic components of words, such as accent marks, are clearly and unambiguously placed.”
 - c. “Make sure that you make a clear distinction in the non-alphabetic marks which are parts of words, such as dots on i’s and accent marks; place your accents and other marks carefully to show their appropriate relationships to letters – ambiguity of marks may cause a word to be counted as misspelled.”
 - d. “Verifiers and monitors will move about the room during the contest.”
 - e. “There are to be no interruptions of the pronouncer. After all the words have been pronounced, the pronouncer and verifiers will confer and determine if words need to be re-pronounced or defined. All ‘outside’ words will be defined, as well as any words that may be ambiguous. A contestant may request, in writing, a repeat or clarification of up to three words after all words have been pronounced.”
 - f. “After the papers are graded, there will be a 15-minute verification period. The use of pens and pencils is not permitted during the verification period. Contestants and coaches may see their papers to verify grading and scoring. If errors are found, report them to the director. When the verification period is over, we will post or announce final results. Contestants and coaches not present at the verification period forfeit their opportunity to raise questions.”
 - g. “All 100% correct papers will be recognized by the League office with a 100% certificate.”
6. Distribute Part I and the scratch sheet for Part I. Read Part I instructions and start Part I.
7. When Part I has been completed, collect Part I with the scratch sheet. While the pronouncer administers Parts II and III, the director and graders can begin grading Part I.
8. Distribute answer sheets and scratch sheets for Parts II and III. Guidelines for pronouncing, defining and timing the delivery of the spelling contest words are explained in instructions to spelling contest pronouncer.
9. During the pronouncing of the words, the verifiers should sit or stand in strategic spots around the room with the verifier’s copy of the test list. They should mark any word which is unclear, inaudible or confusing.

10. The monitors should move about the room to discourage and to note any incident of cheating. If an infraction occurs, the contest director may disqualify the contestant.
11. Because Part II consists of only 70 pronounced words, no break will be given between Part II and Part III. Begin Part III (the tiebreaker) immediately following Part II.
12. After the test is given, the verifiers and pronouncer shall meet outside the contest room to note any unclear words or definitions. The pronouncer shall then re-pronounce those words, and any collected from contestants by monitors.
13. While the pronouncer and verifiers consult, the monitors will provide contestants with an index card or paper of similar size on which the student may request a repeat or clarification of up to three words. The monitors will collect and combine these into a single list which the pronouncer will add to the words noted for repronounce by the verifiers. The pronouncer will then make the clarifications in the same order the words appear on the test. No word will be addressed more than once. No oral requests for clarification will be addressed.
14. After the tiebreaker, gather all papers and announce where and when the verification period will be held.

Grading the papers

- Exclude contestants from the room when grading. Secure a sufficient number of graders to complete the grading process quickly. If coaches serve as graders, the contest director may choose to divide them into groups and distribute papers to avoid coaches grading their own contestants' tests. Allow sufficient time for careful grading. Use the grader's key supplied in the contest packet. This key can be folded and aligned with the contestant's answer sheet to facilitate grading. Extra keys may be copied, if needed.
- If a question concerning spelling of a word arises, the authority is *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Third or Fourth Edition. Do not use a compact paperback edition. In case any word is misspelled in Word Power, that word is not to be considered in grading the test papers, unless a correction has been published in the "Official Notices" section of *The Leaguer*. If *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Third or Fourth Edition gives additional spellings not on the contest list, consider those spellings correct. Do not consider alternate spellings with different pronunciations.
- If two of three graders rule that a letter is legible, it should be considered correct. Legibility is the only basis on which handwriting is to be evaluated. Plain writing rules do not apply to UIL spelling; however, the writing must be legible. Contestants may print. Further instructions for grading and scoring the papers are explained in the instructions to graders.

DETERMINING PLACES

- Individual competition. First place goes to the contestant making the highest score; second place to the contestant making the next highest; third place to the contestant making the next highest; etc.
- Team competition. (DISTRICT) Schools must have a minimum of three contestants in order to participate in the team event. For schools that enter four contestants, only the top three scores from among those contestants count toward the team score. (DISTRICT AND REGION) Team scores and ranks are calculated when results are entered into the online system from the Roster and Results Form. Declare the team with the highest total the winner of the team competition. All four members of the team will advance to the regional competition. Declare the team with the second highest total score the alternate team.

TIES

- Individual competition. In any case of a tie, award those tied contestants a place before going on to another contestant or place. In the event of a tie after grading Parts I and II, grade Part III only of those contestants involved and use the scores to break the tie. In the event a tie remains after the Part III tiebreaker has been graded, do not break this tie. In the event of a tie for first place, there is no second place. In the event of a tie for second place, there is no third place. In the event of a tie for third place, there is no fourth place and both third place winners advance to the next higher meet. (See Section 900 of the C&CR for division of championship points in the event of a tie.)
- Team competition. If there is still a tie when the scores of Parts I, II and III are totaled for each team, a tie exists. In case two or more teams tie for first place, all tied teams advance to the next higher level and there is no alternate team. Divide points evenly between the teams.

INDIVIDUAL POINTS

1st place.....	15
2nd place.....	12
3rd place.....	10
4th place.....	8
5th place.....	6
6th place.....	4

TEAM POINTS

1 ST Place.....	10
2 ND Place.....	5

Individual school maximum points = 37

SPELLING TEAM

members also qualify to compete for individual awards at all levels. A team may advance only as many contestants as competed at the qualifying meet.

After the contest

VERIFICATION PERIOD

Ask contestants and coaches to refrain from using pens or pencils during the verification period. Announce and/or post as unofficial results the names, contestant numbers, and scores of the contestants who appear to have placed first through sixth. Allow the contestant and coach a time period not to exceed 15 minutes to look at the contestant's papers. The contest director should make corrections to any scoring errors found. Resolve questions at this time. Contact the state director for clarification if necessary.

(DISTRICT AND REGION) Pick up all tests and answer sheets so that none remain with the contestant or coach. Contestants and coaches not present at the verification period forfeit their opportunity to raise questions.

ANNOUNCING OFFICIAL WINNERS

- Individual competition. After all questions have been resolved, the contest director should announce, as official results, the name and the school of each contestant who places first through sixth. These results, once announced as official, shall be final.
- Team competition. While the interested parties are gathered, after team scores have been examined and individual winners have been announced, announce the winner and the alternate in the team competition. Also announce the name of the team's school, team members and total score for the team winner and alternate team. The results, once announced as official, are final.

QUALIFICATIONS TO REGIONAL OR STATE

Contestants can qualify to the next level of competition as individual first, second or third place winners or members of the winning team or the wild card team. All who qualify to regional or state will compete for individual honors.

POSTING RESULTS

Announce or post the names, schools and scores of the persons placing first through sixth and the top two teams.

REPORT TO DIRECTOR

(DISTRICT) Individual contest directors shall give the contest roster/results form and sorting envelopes to the district director immediately after the contest. The district meet director is responsible for entering results into the UIL Spring Meet Online Entry System. District results must be submitted into the UIL online system and made available for public review by 5 p.m. on Monday following the second district meet.

(REGION) Individual contest directors shall give the contest roster/results form and sorting envelopes to the regional director immediately after the contest. The regional meet director is responsible for entering results into the UIL Spring Meet Online Entry System and making them available for public review by 5 p.m. of the Monday following the regional meet. Regional directors shall also provide a list of contestant absentees if alternates were not present to take these individuals' places.

RETURNING PAPERS

(DISTRICT) If results are final and all test questions resolved, entries may be returned no sooner than the end of the contest on the Saturday of the respective district week.

(REGION) If all questions are resolved and if the meet is held on Saturday, return the test, answer keys and answer sheets to the contestants the day of the meet.

MAILING RESULTS

Mailing a copy of the meet results to each participating school is optional since results will be posted online.

EXTRA CONTEST MATERIALS

(DISTRICT) Destroy all extra materials on the Monday following the second district week.

(REGION) Destroy all extra materials on the Monday following the regional meet.

100% CERTIFICATES

Mail applications for 100% papers to the League office. Words missed on the tiebreaker test shall not prevent a contestant from applying for a certificate of excellence.

A team may advance only as many contestants as competed at the qualifying meet.

**ENTER
ALL
SCORES
INTO ONLINE
SYSTEM!**

Enter the scores of all contestants into the UIL Spring Meet Online Entry System — not just the top six. All scores are needed to determine team champions. The UIL strongly urges meet officials to enter unofficial results into the online system prior to verification.