



## Scripps National Spelling Bee welcomes 247 spellers as it returns to Washington, D.C.

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### The 2026 competition will be held in the historic Constitution Hall

CINCINNATI, May 14, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The Scripps National Spelling Bee will return to Washington, D.C. for the first time in 15 years, with 247 spellers earning their place in the 2026 competition, set for May 26-28 at historic Constitution Hall.

This year's national competition includes six returning top finishers and 72 other veterans of past Scripps National Spelling Bees. More than two thirds of the field – 169 spellers – are making their first appearance on the storied national stage. The national qualifiers advanced through local and regional bees that took place through late March.

“For generations, the Scripps National Spelling Bee was part of the fabric of downtown Washington, D.C., and we are proud to be bringing it back,” said Corrie Loeffler, executive director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. “Our 247 spellers – from first-time competitors to returning finalists – will be surrounded by monuments, museums and places of learning that embody the spirit of the competition. It’s a fitting stage for such a talented and dedicated group of students.”

### Highlights of the 2026 Scripps National Spelling Bee field:

- The spellers range in age from 9 to 15.
- Three of the nine 2025 finalists are returning to the 2026 national competition: Sarv Dharavane (speller 56) from Dunwoody, Georgia who placed third; Esha Marupudi (speller 5) from Chandler, Arizona who tied for seventh place; and Oliver Halkett (speller 20) from Los Angeles who also tied for seventh place. There are two 2024 finalists in the field: YY Liang (speller 146) from Hartsdale, New York, who tied for seventh place; and Shrey Parikh (speller 29) from Rancho Cucamonga, California, who placed third. There is one returning 2023 finalist: Sarah Fernandes (speller 132) from Omaha, Nebraska, who placed tenth.
- Three spellers are in their fourth consecutive Scripps National Spelling Bee: Siyona Kandala (speller 222) from San Antonio; Sariah Titus (speller 202) from Abilene, Texas; and Adarsh Venkannagari (speller 102) from Acton, Massachusetts.
- There are spellers from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- 13 national competitors are from outside the 50 United States. Spellers are coming from The Bahamas, Canada, Ghana, Guam, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, the United Arab Emirates and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- 24 spellers have relatives who have participated in a combined 45 Scripps National Spelling Bees.

Find more information on the 2026 national competitors at [spellingbee.com](https://spellingbee.com).

### A new stage for the Bee

All onstage rounds of this year's national competition – preliminaries, quarterfinals, semifinals and finals – will take place at DAR Constitution Hall, an iconic building near the National Mall that is minutes from the White House. It is just the 10th competition venue in the 101-year history of the Bee. The move comes after more than a decade at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, approximately 11 miles outside of D.C.

### New host

Nationally acclaimed ESPN analyst [Mina Kimes will host the semifinals and finals](#) alongside Paul Loeffler, a former national competitor who is marking his 20th year as a Bee analyst. The broadcasts will feature a refreshed production vision from Embassy Row, the award-winning company led by 10-time Emmy-winning producer Michael Davies.

### Two-night ION special event:

- The semifinals broadcast will air from 8-10 p.m. ET on ION on Wednesday, May 27. (The live semifinals will be streamed on [Scripps Sports Network](#) and [spellingbee.com](#) from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. earlier that day.)
- The finals broadcast will air live in primetime on ION from 8-10 p.m. ET on Thursday, May 28.

In addition to ION, the finals will air on Scripps' other popular national entertainment networks and Free Ad-Supported Streaming (FAST) channels: ION Plus, Bounce, Grit, Laff, The Spot, ION, ION Plus, Bounce XL, Grit Xtra, Laff More, Scripps News and Scripps Sports Network. The semifinals will also air on ION, ION Plus, Laff, ION, ION Plus, Bounce XL, Grit Xtra, Laff More, Scripps News and Scripps Sports Network.

**For media covering the Bee:**

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

Learn more: <https://www.spellingbee.com/>.

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**About the Scripps National Spelling Bee:**

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program, having launched in 1925. By inspiring the exploration of words, the Scripps National Spelling Bee illuminates pathways to lifelong curiosity, celebrates academic achievement and enriches communities. Visit [spellingbee.com](http://spellingbee.com) for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by [The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP).

**About Scripps**

[The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP) is a diversified media company focused on creating connection. As one of the nation's largest local TV broadcasters, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of about 60 stations in 40 markets. Scripps reaches households across the U.S. with national news outlet Scripps News and popular entertainment brands ION, Bounce, Grit, ION Mystery, ION Plus and Laff. Scripps is the nation's largest holder of broadcast spectrum. Its Scripps Sports division serves professional and college sports leagues, conferences and teams with local market depth and national broadcast reach of up to 100% of TV households. Founded in 1878, Scripps is the steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, and its longtime motto is: "Give light and the people will find their own way."

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