

Spelling Bee (A2)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What are the most difficult aspects of the English language, in your opinion?
2. Do you ever find it difficult to remember the spelling of English words?
3. Did you know that in English-speaking countries children and even adults have that problem?
4. Is the spelling of your language difficult? Why (not)?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and choose the correct answer.

1. In the United States, spelling competitions take place in
a) elementary schools. b) middle schools. c) both of these.
2. Scripps National Spelling Bee is held
a) once a year. b) once every two years. c) twice a year.
3. The final competition can be seen on TV.
a) True. b) False. c) The article doesn't say.
4. In English,
a) there are more letters than sounds. b) there are more sounds than letters.
c) there is a letter for each sound.
5. The first National Spelling Bee was organised by
a) the state of Kentucky. b) a newspaper. c) a university.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What happens in a spelling bee if a contestant makes a mistake?
2. When did spelling bees first start in the United States?
3. What does the overall winner get besides money?
4. What did *bee* mean in the 18th century?
5. What other examples of *bees* are there in the article?
6. What possible reason is given for the popularity of spelling bees in the United States?
7. What final word did Frank Neuhauser have to spell to win the first competition in 1925?
8. Who was he able to meet as part of his prize?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. In my grandmother's day, schoolchildren said a _____ called 'grace' before school dinner.
2. That sports car isn't Jake's. He _____ it from his rich cousin.
3. This jacket feels like wool but I think it's made of some kind of synthetic _____.
4. You'll never succeed if you don't make an _____.
5. It's difficult to persuade people to follow rules if they don't understand the _____ of them.
6. Alice had two job offers to choose from. It was the _____ decision she had ever had to make.

E – Ready for the A2 KEY English Test? (Paper 1, Part 4)

Choose the best word for each space.

The spelling of modern English has developed ¹ _____ (*from/around/over/while*) many centuries. During this time there ² _____ (*are/is/has/have*) been several attempts to reform it. One of these was made by author and lexicographer Noah Webster, ³ _____ (*his/whose/which/who's*) first Dictionary of the English Language was published in 1806. He suggested spellings like *center* and *color* ⁴ _____ (*except/instead/against/in front*) of the usual *centre* and *colour*. Many of Webster's proposals were adopted in the United States, but not in other countries like the United Kingdom. This is ⁵ _____ (*what/because/why/that*) there are now some differences in spelling ⁶ _____ (*between/beside/among/through*) American English and British English.

F – Check your pronunciation

One of the four words in each group has a different vowel sound. Which one?

1. bee compete each series
2. hundred fusing country accomplish
3. many national annual cash
4. worth word awarded first
5. trip live (*adjective*) which winner

G – Write about it

Write about a local or national competition for schoolchildren/students in your country. Mention:

- the subject of the competition (e.g. Maths, Science, Writing Skills, etc.);
- where it takes place;
- how often;
- what the prizes are;
- who the latest winner was.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. c 2. a 3. a 4. b 5. b

C – Read and answer

1. The contestant is eliminated. 2. They started about a hundred years ago. 3. He or she also gets \$400 worth of the Encyclopedia Britannica. 4. It meant a gathering of people who unite to accomplish a task. 5. The article mentions apple bees and quilting bees. 6. The article says it's perhaps because the US was historically a melting pot fusing many nationalities. 7. He had to spell 'gladiolus'. 8. He was able to meet US President Calvin Coolidge.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. prayer 2. borrowed 3. fabric 4. effort 5. purpose 6. toughest

E – Ready for the A2 KEY English Test?

1. over 2. have 3. whose 4. instead 5. why 6. between

F – Check your pronunciation

1. series 2. fusing 3. many 4. awarded 5. live (*adjective*)