

American Library Spelling Bee 2020

Bee Word List (for students taught primarily in a language other than English)

Definitions are provided as a courtesy.

abysmal	extremely poor or bad
accolade	an award or an expression of praise
address	1. a place where a person lives or an organization is situated; 2. a formal speech
affiliated	closely associated with another group or set of ideas
alas	a word used to express unhappiness, pity, or concern
ambiguous	1. having more than one possible meaning; 2. not expressed or understood clearly
apocalypse	1. a great disaster; 2. the end or destruction of the world especially as described in the Bible
apron	a piece of clothing worn on the front of the body over clothes to keep them from getting dirty
ardently	having or showing very strong feelings
arrow	a missile shot from a bow and usually having a slender shaft, a pointed head, and feathers at the butt
articulate	able to express ideas clearly and effectively in speech or writing
aspiration	something high or great that one wants very much to achieve
assess	to make a judgment about something
asthma	a physical condition that makes it difficult for someone to breathe
astute	having or showing an ability to notice and understand things clearly; mentally sharp or clever
attic	a room or space that is often below the roof of a building and is often used to store things
avocado	a pulpy green- to purple-skinned nutty-flavored fruit of any of various tropical American trees
bamboozle	to trick or confuse someone
basically	in a general or basic way
behemoth	something very big and powerful
behoove	to be necessary or proper for someone to do
benevolence	an act of kindness; a generous gift
bite	to press down on or cut into someone or something with the teeth
borrow	to take and use something that belongs to someone else for a period of time before returning it
bravo	a shout to express approval of a performance
brilliant	very impressive or successful
bristle	a short, stiff hair, fiber, etc.
camaraderie	a spirit of friendly good-fellowship
candid	saying what you think openly and honestly
cantankerous	often angry and annoyed
chauvinism	an attitude that the members of your own sex are always better than those of the opposite sex
clientele	the group of people who are regular customers at a particular business
cloak	a long outer garment
colossal	of very great size
column	a group of items such as numbers or words shown one under the other down a page
compassion	a feeling of wanting to help someone who is sick, hungry, in trouble, etc.
compendium	a collection of things such as stories, facts, etc. that have been gathered together and presented as a group especially in the form of a book
concierge	a person who takes care of an apartment building and checks the people who enter and leave
conjure	to practice magical arts
constituency	a body of citizens having the right to elect a representative to a legislature
contentious	likely to cause disagreement or argument
convenience	a quality or situation that makes something easier or more comfortable for someone by reducing work or time
cordial	warm and friendly
couch (verb)	to say or express something in a particular way
covet	to want something very much that you do not have
curriculum	the courses that are taught by a school, college, etc.
deprivation	the state of not having something that you need
despicable	very bad or unpleasant
destination	place to which a person is going or something is being sent
dichotomy	a difference between two opposite things; a division into two opposite groups
duvet	a thick bed covering made of two layers of cloth containing a filling such as down
eerie	strange and mysterious

American Library Spelling Bee 2020

Bee Word List (for students taught primarily in a language other than English)

Definitions are provided as a courtesy.

effervescent	1. an exciting or lively quality; 2. bubbles that form and rise in a liquid
ennoble	to make someone or something better or more worthy of admiration
epiphany	a moment in which you suddenly see or understand something in a new or very clear way
erosion	the gradual destruction of something by natural forces such as water, wind, or ice
erroneous	not correct
examination	1. the act of looking at something closely and carefully; 2. a test to show a person's progress, knowledge, or ability
existence	the state or fact of being real or living
exoskeleton	an external supportive covering of certain animals such as insects
extrapolate	to form an opinion or to make an estimate about something from known facts
flourish	to grow well; to be healthy
foreground	the part of a scene or picture that is nearest to and in front of the viewer
foreseeable	describes something that is expected or likely to happen in the near future
fortnight	a period of 14 days; two weeks
fountain	a device or structure that sends a stream of water into the air in a garden, park, etc.
fuchsia	1. a type of bush that has large pink, red, purple, or white flowers; 2. a bright reddish-purple color
fudge	a soft creamy candy made typically of sugar, milk, butter, and flavoring
gauge	an instrument that is used for measuring something
generally	in a general way; in a way that is not detailed or specific
gesticulate	to move your arms and hands especially when speaking in an angry or emotional way
geyser	1. a hole in the ground that shoots out hot water and steam; 2. the water and steam from the geyser
glee	a feeling of happiness
glimpse	a brief or quick view or look
gloom	1. partial or total darkness; 2. feeling of sadness
gnome	an imaginary dwarf believed to live inside the earth and guard treasure
gourmet	a person who enjoys and knows a lot about good food and wine
gyrate	to move back and forth with a circular motion
hapless	having no luck; unfortunate
havoc	a situation in which there is much destruction or confusion
headache	pain in the head
heaven	the place where God lives and where good people go after they die according to some religions
heighten	to increase the amount, degree, or extent of something
however	in spite of that
humongous	extremely large
inaudible	impossible to hear; not audible
incipient	beginning to develop or exist
inclination	a feeling of wanting or having to do something
indigenous	produced, living, or existing naturally in a particular region or environment; native
inherent	belonging to the basic nature of someone or something
innuendo	a statement which indirectly suggests that someone has done something wrong or improper
inoculate	to give someone a weakened form of a disease so as to create antibodies and protect from stronger forms of the disease
insidious	causing harm in a way that is gradual or not easily noticed
insolent	having or showing a lack of respect for other people
intercede	to try to help settle an argument or disagreement between two or more people or groups
intricacy	the quality or state of being complex or having many parts
irreverent	lacking proper respect or seriousness
jaguar	a large, brown, wild cat with black spots that lives in Central and South America
jelly	a sweet and soft food made by boiling sugar and fruit juice until it is thick
jersey	a loose shirt worn by a member of a sports team as part of a uniform
jettison	to drop something from a moving ship, airplane, etc. especially to lighten it in distress
jiggle	to move or cause something to move with quick, short movements up and down or side to side
jostle	to come in contact or into collision; to make one's way by pushing and shoving
jubilee	a special anniversary

American Library Spelling Bee 2020

Bee Word List (for students taught primarily in a language other than English)

Definitions are provided as a courtesy.

knead	to press and stretch dough or wet clay with the hands
knight	a soldier in the past who had a high social rank and who fought while riding a horse and usually wearing armor
leafy	having, covered with, or resembling leaves
leeway	freedom to do something the way you want to do it
leisure	time when you are not working; time when you can do whatever you want to do
lemonade	a beverage of sweetened lemon juice mixed with water
liaison	a person who helps organizations or groups to work together and provide information to each other
license	an official document, card, etc., that gives you permission to do, use, or have something
likewise	in the same way; in addition
lioness	a female lion
literal	following the ordinary or usual meaning of a word
lynx	a large wild cat found in North America, northern Europe and Asia; a bobcat
marriage	the state of being united in a legal relationship between two people
maze	a complicated and confusing system of connected passages
meadow	a usually flat area of land that is covered with tall grass
medley	a varied mixture of people or things; a miscellany
menagerie	1. a collection of animals kept especially to be shown to the public; 2. a diverse collection
merchant	someone who buys and sells goods especially in large amounts
millennial	of or relating to a millennium, a period of 1000 years
mistletoe	a plant with yellowish flowers and white berries that is traditionally used as a Christmas decoration
mixture	something made by combining two or more ingredients; a combination of different things
morbid	characterized by gloomy or sick ideas or feelings
mortgage	a legal agreement by which one borrows money to buy property and pays it back over a period of years
mozzarella	a soft Italian cheese that has a mild flavor
mushroom	a fungus that is shaped like an umbrella
niche	a job, activity, etc., that is very suitable for someone
nuance	a very small difference in color, tone, meaning, etc.
ooze	to flow out slowly
orbit	the curved path that something such as a moon or satellite follows as it goes around something else such as a planet
orchestrate	1. to compose or arrange music for an orchestra; 2. to organize or plan something complicated
panache	lots of energy and style
pantheon	1. the gods of a particular country or group of people; 2. a temple that is built to honor all the gods
paradigm	a model or pattern for something; a theory or a group of ideas about how something should be done, made, or thought about
paradox	a statement that seems to say opposite things and yet is perhaps true
parasite	an animal or plant that lives in or on another animal or plant and gets food or protection from it
pathos	a quality that causes people to feel sympathy and sadness
patronize	1. to give money or support to someone or something; 2. to talk to someone in a way that shows that you believe you are more intelligent or better than other people
pedestrian	a person going on foot; walker
pensive	quietly sad or thoughtful
perennial	persistent; enduring; happening again and again
peruse	to look at or read something in an informal or relaxed way
plummet	to fall suddenly straight down especially from a very high place
polyglot	a person who knows and is able to use several languages
pompous	speaking and behaving in a very formal and serious way to show that one is better, smarter, or more important than other people
poultry	domesticated birds kept for eggs or meat
proxy	a person with authority to act for another
quirky	having or showing an unusual habit or way of behaving
quizzical	showing that you do not understand something or that you find something strange or amusing

American Library Spelling Bee 2020

Bee Word List (for students taught primarily in a language other than English)

Definitions are provided as a courtesy.

refute	to prove wrong by argument or evidence; show to be false or erroneous
retailer	a person who sells something to customers for their own use
rhetoric	the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion; skill in the effective use of speech
savvy	having practical understanding or knowledge of something
sedate	calm, dignified, and unhurried
seditious	taking part or encouraging people to disobey their government
slouch	a way of walking, sitting, or standing with the head and shoulders bent forward
somersault	a forward or backward movement of your body on the ground or in the air that is made by bringing your feet over your head
spire	a tapering roof or pyramidal construction surmounting a tower or a church
sprawl	1. to lie or sit with arms and legs spread out; 2. to spread or develop irregularly or without restraint
squirm	to make a lot of twisting movements because you are nervous, uncomfortable, bored, etc.
stout	of a strong or lasting sort; sturdy, tough
stratosphere	Earth's atmosphere that begins above the clouds and ends about 30 miles (50 kilometers) beyond
superstitious	believing that certain events or things will bring good or bad luck
surly	rude and unfriendly
swerve	to turn aside abruptly from a straight line or course; deviate
swiftly	with speed; quickly
synonym	a word that has the same meaning as another word in the same language
tacit	expressed or implied without words or speech
taciturn	tending to be quiet; not speaking frequently
tackle	1. to forcefully seize someone and cause that person to fall to the ground; 2. to deal with something difficult
talon	the claw of an animal and especially of a bird of prey
target	something that you are trying to do or achieve
taunt	to say insulting things to someone in order to make that person angry
terse	brief and direct in a way that may seem rude or unfriendly
thorough	careful about detail
thwart	to effectively oppose or confuse
tiptoe	to walk with your heels raised up and only your toes touching the ground
tissue	a piece of soft and very thin paper that is used especially for cleaning
trait	a quality that makes one person or thing different from another
transport	to carry someone or something from one place to another
treatise	a book, article, etc., that discusses a subject carefully and thoroughly
triangle	a flat geometric figure with three sides and three angles
trifle	something that does not have much value or importance
triumphant	resulting in victory or success
trough	a long, shallow container from which farm animals such as cows, pigs, horses, etc. eat or drink
truculent	easily annoyed or angered and likely to argue
twice	two times
typhoon	an extremely large and destructive storm that occurs in the region of the Philippines or the China Sea
usually	most often; in the way that is normal
vacillate	to repeatedly change your opinions or desires
vanquish	to defeat someone completely in a war, battle, etc.
venture	a business or project that involves chance, risk, or danger
verbatim	in the exact words; word for word
vicious	very violent and cruel; very dangerous
vindicate	to provide justification or defense for
wary	not having or showing complete trust in someone or something that could be dangerous or cause trouble
zookeeper	a person who takes care of the animals in a zoo