

American Library Spelling Bee 2020

E-Bee Word List (for students taught primarily in English)

Definitions are provided as a courtesy.

accentuate	to make something more noticeable
acupuncture	a method of relieving pain or curing illness by placing needles into a person's skin
addendum	something that is added; especially, a section of a book that is added to the main or original text
addition	the act or process of adding something; mathematics: the act or process of adding numbers
mentioned	mentioned before; spoken about or named earlier
aggressive	showing a readiness to fight or argue
alacrity	quick willingness; a cheerful readiness to do something
although	despite the fact that; though
altitude	the height of something above sea level
amiable	friendly and pleasant
ancestor	one from whom a person is descended and who lived several generations ago
antipathy	a strong feeling of dislike
appraise	to say how much something is worth after you have carefully examined it
aquatic	living or found in or near water
assiduously	showing great care, attention, and effort
associate	to think of one person or thing when you think of another person or thing
assuage	to make something unpleasant less painful, severe
atmosphere	the whole mass of air that surrounds the Earth
audible	heard or able to be heard
audience	the people who attend a performance
authority	the power to give orders or make decisions
autobiography	the biography of a person narrated by himself or herself
aviation	1. the operation of aircraft; 2. airplane manufacture, development, and design
backward	toward the back; to or toward what is behind
barbaric	very rude or offensive and very cruel
beautiful	having qualities of beauty; generally pleasing; excellent
besiege	to surround a city, building, etc., with soldiers and try to take control of it
betrothal	an agreement that two people will be married in the future
bravery	the quality that allows someone to do things that are dangerous or frightening
burglar	a person who illegally enters a building in order to steal things
calligraphy	the art of making beautiful handwriting
capricious	apt to change suddenly
category	a group of people or things that are similar in some way
caucus	a closed meeting of members of a political party or faction usually to select candidates or decide policy
censorship	the system or practice of censoring books, movies, letters, etc.
challenge	a difficult task or problem
charisma	a special charm or appeal that causes people to feel attracted and excited by someone
chasm	a deep split or gap in the surface of the earth
cheerfully	in a happy way that shows or produces good feelings
clockwork	the system of moving wheels inside something like a clock or an old-fashioned toy
cloister	a place where monks or nuns live; a monastery or convent
colleague	an associate in a profession; a fellow worker
committee	a group of persons appointed or elected to perform a specific duty
concoctions	something such as a food or drink that is made by mixing together different things
consternation	amazement, alarm, or disappointment that makes one feel helpless or confused
controversy	argument that involves many people who strongly disagree about something
decaffeinated	not containing caffeine; having the caffeine removed
delighted	made very happy; full of great pleasure or satisfaction
disadvantage	something that causes difficulty and makes things worse
disguised	to change the usual appearance, sound, taste, etc., of someone or something so that people will not recognize that person or thing
eavesdrop	to listen secretly to private conversation
eligible	qualified to be chosen, to participate, or to receive

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eliminate	to get rid of; remove
elucidate	to make something that is hard to understand clear or easy to understand
embezzle	to steal money that you have been trusted with
embroider	to sew a design on a piece of cloth
envious	feeling or showing unhappiness over someone else's good fortune and a desire to have the same
equinox	a day when day and night are the same length
ethereal	resembling heaven; seeming to belong to another world
euphemistic	the art of using a mild or pleasant word or phrase instead of one that is unpleasant or offensive
euphoric	characterized by or feeling intense excitement and happiness
exorbitant	going far beyond what is fair, reasonable, or expected; too high, expensive, etc.
expunge	to remove something completely
exquisite	marked by flawless craftsmanship; pleasing through beauty, fitness, or perfection
extinguish	to cause something to stop burning
extraordinary	1. very unusual; 2. extremely good or impressive
exult	rejoice; to be in high spirits
feasible	possible to do or carry out
fidget	uneasiness or restlessness as shown by nervous movements
flagrant	very bad; too bad to be ignored
forethought	careful thinking or planning for the future
fraught	causing or having a lot of emotional stress or worry
frighteningly	in a way that makes you feel afraid
fundraising	activity done to collect money for a political party, charity, school, etc.
gallantry	very brave behavior; courage
garrulous	tending to talk a lot; very talkative
gentrification	to change a place such as an old neighborhood by improving it and making it more appealing to people who have money
gibberish	foolish, confused, or meaningless words
gratuitous	not necessary or appropriate
guarantee	a usually written promise that the quality of a product will be as good as expected
hawk	a bird of prey that has a strong hooked bill and sharp curved claws and is smaller than most eagles
hesitation	to stop briefly or to be unwilling to do something especially because you are nervous or unsure
hiccup	a sound in your throat that is caused by a sudden, uncontrolled movement of muscles in your chest after you have eaten or drunk too much or too quickly
hieroglyphic	any of the symbols in the picture writing of ancient Egypt
hilarious	very funny
homeopathic	a system for treating illnesses that uses very small amounts of substances that would in larger amounts produce symptoms of the illnesses in healthy people
hydraulics	the science that deals with ways to use liquid such as water when it is moving
hypnosis	a state that resembles sleep but in which you can hear and respond to questions or suggestions
hypochondriac	a person who is often or always worried about being ill
hypocrite	a person who pretends to have virtues or qualities that he or she does not have
hypothetical	involving or based on a suggested idea or theory
imagery	pictures or photographs; language that causes people to imagine pictures in their mind
immersion	the act of putting someone or something completely in a liquid
impeccable	free from fault or error
improvement	the act or process of making something better
inadequate	not enough or not good enough; not adequate
inevitable	sure to happen
inquisitive	in search of information; overly curious
instructor	a person who teaches a subject or skill
intangible	not made of physical substance; not able to be touched
interesting	attracting your attention and making you want to learn more about something; not dull or boring
jealous	feeling or showing an unhappy or angry desire to have what someone else has
knack	an ability, talent, or special skill needed to do something

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kneel	to fall or rest on the knees
leprechaun	a mischievous elf of Irish folklore usually believed to reveal the hiding place of treasure if caught
lightning	the flashes of light that are produced in the sky during a storm
lineage	the people who were in someone's family in past times
magazine	a thin book with a paper cover that contains stories, essays, pictures, etc., and that is usually published every week or month
magnificent	very beautiful or impressive; very great
malicious	having or showing a desire to cause harm to another person
maximum	the highest number or amount that is possible or allowed
mishmash	a confused mixture of things
mispronounce	to say a word or name incorrectly
nave	the main part of the interior of a church
obliging	willing to help; helpful in a friendly way
obstacle	something that makes it difficult to do something; an object that you have to go around or over
occasion	a special event or time; a chance or opportunity
omnivorous	eating both plants and animals
outstanding	1. extremely good or excellent; 2. easy to notice especially because of being important or very good; 3. not yet paid
pacifier	a rubber object for babies to put into their mouths and suck or bite on
pandemonium	a situation in which people act in a wild way because they are afraid, excited, or confused
parasol	a light umbrella that you use to protect yourself from the sun
parchment	strong, tough paper; in ancient times: paper made of animal skin
parishioner	a person who goes to a particular local church or parish
participle	a form of a verb to indicate a past or present action and that can also be used like an adjective
peasant	a poor farmer or farm worker who has low social status
peculiar	not usual or normal; not well
penniless	having no money; very poor
permeate	to pass or spread through something
persecution	to treat someone cruelly or unfairly especially because of race or religious or political beliefs
pervasive	existing in every part of something; spreading to all parts of something
petulant	the attitude of people who have or show anger when they do not get what they want
politician	someone who is active in government usually as an elected official
prairie	a large, mostly flat area of land in North America that has few trees and is covered in grasses
preamble	a statement that is made at the beginning of something such as a legal document and usually gives the reasons for the parts that follow
premature	happening too soon or earlier than usual
preposterous	contrary to nature, reason, or common sense; absurd
pretentious	appearing or trying to appear more important or more valuable than is the case
principle	a basic truth or theory; an idea that forms the basis of something
probability	the chance that a given event will occur
pungent	having a strong, sharp taste or smell
punishment	the act of punishing someone or a way of punishing someone
quizzically	showing that you do not understand something or that you find something strange or amusing
recipient	a person who receives something
reign	the period of time during which a king, queen, emperor, etc., is ruler of a country
repeatedly	again and again
repose	a state of resting or not being active
reprimand	to speak in an angry and critical way to someone who has done something wrong
resemblance	the state of looking or being like someone or something else
responsibility	a duty or task that you are required or expected to do
retaliate	to do something bad to someone who has hurt you or treated you badly; to get revenge against someone
righteous	morally good; following religious or moral laws

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roundabout	a circular area where two or more roads meet and on which all vehicles must go in the same direction; a traffic circle
ruse	a trick or act that is used to fool someone
schedule	a plan of things that will be done and the times when they will be done
seize	to use legal or official power to take something
separate	to set or keep apart; to disconnect
serendipity	luck that takes the form of finding valuable or pleasant things that are not expected
shortage	a state in which there is not enough of something that is needed
shudder	of a person: to shake because of fear, cold, etc.; of a thing: to shake violently
sieve	a kitchen tool that has many small holes and that is used to separate smaller particles from larger ones or solids from liquids
similarly	almost the same as someone or something else
skyscraper	a very tall building in a city
sonata	an instrumental musical composition typically of three or four movements in contrasting forms
souvenir	something that is kept as a reminder of a place you have visited or an event you have been to
spacecraft	a vehicle or device designed for travel or operation outside the earth's atmosphere
spectacular	causing wonder and admiration; very impressive
squeaky	having or making a high-pitched sound or cry
straight	1. not having curves, bends, or angles; 2. following one after the other in order
subterranean	being, lying, or operating under the surface of the earth
succulent	full of juice
suffragette	a woman who advocates for women to have the right to vote
suggestion	an idea about what someone should do or how someone should behave
suitcase	portable case designed to hold a traveler's clothing and personal articles
surface	an outside part or layer of something
surprising	unexpected or unusual; causing surprise
swoon	to become very excited about someone or something
symphony	a long piece of music that is usually in four separate sections and that is performed by an orchestra
tedious	boring and too slow or long
testify	to answer questions about something especially in a court of law while formally promising that what you are saying is true
therefore	for that reason; because of that
thermostat	a device that automatically adjusts the temperature in a room to a desired level
thoughtful	serious and quiet because you are thinking
through	into one side and out the other side of something
ticklish	1. sensitive and easily tickled; 2. difficult to deal with
tines	the thin, pointed parts on a fork
tolerate	to allow something bad or unpleasant to exist, happen, or be done
treasure	something valuable such as money, jewels, gold, or silver that is hidden or kept in a safe place
typically	generally or normally
vehicle	a machine that is used to carry people or goods from one place to another
vicinity	the area around or near a particular place
vocabulary	1. the words that make up a language; 2. all of the words known and used by a person
wail	to make a loud, long cry of sadness or pain
whistle	1. a small device that makes a very high and loud sound when a person blows air through it; 2. a high and loud sound made by forcing air through your lips or teeth
widespread	common over a wide area or among many people
wily	full of clever tricks; very clever
windshield	the window at the front of a car, truck, etc., that protects the driver and passengers
wrath	extreme anger
young	being in the first or an early stage of life, growth, or development
zombie	a dead person who is able to move because of magic according to some religions and in stories, movies, etc.