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**Turning Students
into Word Wizards:
Strategies That Lead
to Success in UIL
Spelling and
Vocabulary**



- Man is separated from all other animals by the ability to communicate across Space and Time.
- This ability is made possible by Written Language.
- Communication in Writing is made possible by Man's agreement on the symbols he uses.



- The Agreed sequence of those written symbols is called
Spelling.

The Importance of Correct Spelling



When our spelling is perfect, it's invisible. But when it's flawed, it prompts strong negative associations.

--Marilyn vos Savant

Take care that you never spell a word wrong. Always, before you write a word, consider how it is spelled, and, if you do not remember, turn to a dictionary. It produces great praise to a lady to spell well.

--Thomas Jefferson in a letter to his daughter Martha



Spelling counts. Spelling is not merely a tedious exercise in a fourth-grade classroom. Spelling is one of the outward and visible marks of a disciplined mind.

--James J. Kilpatrick

Journalist and grammarian

Why so much vocabulary??...



Vocabulary is the best single indicator of intellectual ability and an accurate predictor of success in school.

--*W.B. Elley, education professor emeritus and literacy researcher*



Knowing how to spell words correctly is important, but it is equally or perhaps more important to know what words mean and how to use them accurately. As Mark Twain once remarked, “The difference between an almost right word and a right word is really a large matter—it’s the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning”.



To put it simply, spelling and vocabulary are important! Correctly spelled words, coupled with precise and compelling diction, are two of the most important aspects of effective communication.

This is the Official Word list for this Contest. It also contains the rules and procedures for the contest as well as a sample test. The UIL Constitution is the source for all the rules.



Word Power

High School Spelling & Vocabulary
List and Rules for 2013-2014



UIL Spelling and Vocabulary Contest



**PART I. PROOFREADING AND
VOCABULARY**

**PART II. SPELLING FROM
DICTATION**

PART III. TIE-BREAKER

Part I

Proofreading

Part I Proofreading



Worth **15 points** - requires that contestants given sets of five-word lists recognize the word which is misspelled in each list and write it spelled correctly.

Most of the words from this section of the test are from Word Power.

Up to twenty percent (20%) of the words on this part of the test may be from other sources.

Questions 1-15 of Part I are comprised of 15 Proofreading sets. Each question is worth one point each.

Part I

Vocabulary

Part I Vocabulary



15 points - multiple choice test of word origins and meaning.

The **350 words** designated for this part of the test are **marked** in the Word Power list with a • DOT.

The Vocabulary section has **NO** misspelled words, but contestants are still responsible for the correct spelling of these words.

Questions 16-30 are comprised of vocabulary entries and are worth one point each.

Part II. Spelling from Dictation



70 points - 70 words, pronounced at a rate of 4 words per minute - one every fifteen seconds. A definition will be given for every word.

Part III. Tie-breaker



20 words, pronounced at 4 words per minute with definitions given for all words.

With the exception of the State Meet, this part is scored **ONLY** in case of ties and then only those involved in the tie are scored.

Sources of Words



At least **80%** of the test words for questions 1-15 of Part I and Parts II and III come from the Word Power list.

Up to **20%** come from...

- Common Usage,
- Words from school course materials, such as textbook glossaries,
- News and Current Events - Words and Proper names
- Vocabulary Builders - roots and affixes which appear in the list as other parts of speech,
- and other words of interest.

How to prepare for those dreaded outside words...



- Study roots and affixes.
- Read widely and to **PAY ATTENTION** to words that are new to you.
- Go to the Internet and find lists of SAT or college vocabulary. For instance, quizlet.com has a list called “College Board Top 100 SAT/ACT Vocabulary Words.” Majortests.com also has helpful word lists. A great list of 5,000 (yes, 5,000!) words can be found at freevocabulary.com
- Take vocabulary tests on Facebook

The Official Dictionary



The **official dictionary** of this contest is

***The American Heritage Dictionary of
the English Language,***

Third, Fourth, or Fifth edition.

This contest is based **only** on the definitions,
pronunciations, and usages in **this dictionary**.


All the contest words are in **this dictionary**.

In Case of Error in the Word Power List



- If the Word Power list has an error in spelling, the correction is announced in the Official Notices of the *Leaguer*, the UIL's newspaper, which is now found online at the UIL website.

Using Language Skills to Build Strength in Spelling



**Phonics, Pronunciation,
and
Spelling**



How to spell a
really long word?
Sound it out!

SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS



SUPER CALI FRAGIL ISTIC EXPI ALI DO CIOUS

Problems in Pronunciation



PRONOUNCE

ghoti

Problems in Pronunciation



“Non-correspondence” exceptions:

- **ghoti is pronounced “fish”**
- **How?**
- **cough** **women** **nation**

This is English!!

Watching out for the schwa = ə



acolyte (ăk' ə-līt') o

adenoma (ăd' ən-o' mə) e, a

babushka (bə-boosh' kə) a, a

cacophonous (kə-kăf' ə-nəs) a, o, and ou

distensible (dĭ-stĭn' sə-bəl) i, blend

indecipherable (ĭn' dĭ-sĭ' fər-ə-bəl) e, a, blend

pachydermatous (păk' ĭ-dŭr' mə-təs) a, ou

(These words are not from this year's list)

Problems in Pronunciation



Consonant Blends

Consonant pairs (*bl-,br-, ch, etc.*) have blended sounds that are different from that of the letters when pronounced separately.

Diphthongs (Vowel pairs) such as *-ae, -ai, -au, -ea, etc.*) are the same issue.

Separating these pairs into their component sounds, exaggerating each sound, facilitates spelling.

One solution



Sound Color = exaggerated “Pure” letter-sound

Consonant/vowel blends can be more troublesome; they may sound the same but look different:

Precious > preshus

Contentious > contenshus

○ **precious > presheeus**

○ **contentious > contenteeus**

Speak the Spelling!

Troublesome Spelling Items



- Compound words
- Words with non-alphabetical marks
- Words with alternate spellings
- Capitalized words
- Words with optional capitalization
- Words where definition determines capitalization

Examples from this year's Word Power list

Two-word test items

- Kodiak bear
- in extenso
- feme sole
- data processor
- writer's block
- viva voce

Non-alphabetic elements

- béchamel sauce
- double-entendre
- entrepôt
- All Fools' Day
- fourragère

Examples from this year's Word Power List

Alternate Spellings

- **ascendancy or ascendancy**
- **clerestory or clearstory**
- **crape myrtle or crepe myrtle**
- **yogurt, or yoghurt or yoghourt**
- **Magna Carta or Magna Charta**
- **lacrimator or lachrymator**

Capitalization

Capitalization Required

- Deccan
- Gestaltist
- Louis Seize
- Wounded Knee
- Novocain (trademark)

Capitalization Optional

- alastor, Alastor
- philistinism, Philistinism

Capitalization depends on the definition given

- euonymus = any of various shrubs
- Euonymus = the genus

- mecca = center of activity
- Mecca = city in Saudi Arabia

Root Words, Language History, and Spelling



Words can be put together from source words and root words to form words that never existed before:

Tele = distance

-metrics = measurement

-phony = sound

-graphy = writing

-vision = viewing

New Needs = New words from old
parts



Television

Telephone

Telemetry

Telegraph

Root Words and Affixes



- **a- : without**
- **angio- : pain**
- **arterio- : artery**
- **arthro- : joints**
- **cardio- : heart**
- **cranio- : skull**
- **dys - : unhealthy**
- **-ectomy : cutting out**
- **eu- : healthy**
- **-graphy: recording, writing**
- **hemo- : blood**
- **-itis: inflammation**
- **laryngo- :throat**
- **lipo- : fat**
- **litho- : stone**
- **meter : measure**
- **myelo- : muscle**

Root Words and Affixes



- **neuro-** : nerve
- **-ology**: study
- **oto-** : ear
- **-otomy** : cutting into
- **patho-** : illness
- **-pathy** : disease
- **peri-** : around
- **-pnea** : breathing
- **rhino-** : nose

- **thoraco-** : chest
- **thrombo-** : clot
- **trauma-** : damage or injury

...and there are many more that you can find as they are used in the **WordPower list**.

Google **Root Words** for much more on this topic.

Root Words and Affixes



- Oto- = ear
- -rhino- = nose
- -laryng- = throat
- -ologist = One who studies

Ear, Nose and Throat doctor =

Otorhinolaryngologist

Root Words and Affixes



As you study the Word Power list, especially for Vocabulary Words, make lists of the Root Words, prefixes, and suffixes you identify.

That way you **learn the pieces once** and have them every time you need them, such as when you take the SAT.

Basic Spelling Rules



- Words Ending in a Silent e

Before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel to a word ending in a silent e, drop the e (with some exceptions).

amaze + ing =amazing

nerve + ous = nervous

Exceptions: Words ending in a soft “g” sound, such as *change + able =changeable; courage + ous = courageous*

Words Ending in a Consonant



In words of more than one syllable, double the final consonant when the word ends with one consonant preceded by one vowel **AND** when the word is accented on the last syllable.

be GIN + ing = beginning

per MIT + ing = permitting

re FER + ing = referring

Note that in the new words formed with suffixes, the stress remains on the **SAME** syllable.



In the following examples the accent does **NOT** remain on the same syllable; thus, the final consonant is **NOT** doubled.

RE fer + ence = reference

CON fer + ence = conference

PRE fer + ence = preference

Prefixes and Suffixes in Spelling



- When adding a prefix to a word, do not change the spelling of the base word. When a prefix creates a double letter, keep both letters.

ir + regular = irregular

il + logical = illogical

mis + spell = misspell

- When adding the suffix *-ness* to a word ending in *n*, keep both *n*'s.

sudden + ness = suddenness

thin + ness = thinness

i before e???



- Remember this rule learned in elementary school: *i* before *e* except after *c* or sounded long *a*.

i before *e*: thief, relieve, grieve, niece, field

except after *c*: conceit, perceive, ceiling, receipt

sounded long *a*: skein, vein, feint

Exceptions: either, weird, seize, leisure

Rule for using -ible or -able



- If the root is **not** a complete word, add –ible. For example, visible, horrible, terrible, possible, edible.
- If the root **is** a complete word, add –able. For example, fashionable, laughable, suitable, comfortable.
- If the root is a complete word ending in –e, drop the final –e and add –able. For example, advisable, desirable, valuable, debatable.
- Once again, however, exceptions exist: contemptible, digestible, flexible, responsible, irritable, inevitable.

When to use -sede, -ceed, or -cede



Only one English word ends in **-sede**:
supersede (often seen on UIL tests!)

Only three words end in **-ceed**: exceed,
proceed, and succeed.

All other verbs ending in the “seed”
sound are spelled with **-cede**, as in
concede, precede, recede, and secede.

Organize for Learning



All of these features of words in the WordPower list can be used to organize the words to help you learn them.

Put words with similar features together in Word Families.

Word Families



- Words with common or similar characteristics
- Word forms
- Words with non-alphabetic elements
- Alternate spellings
- Capitalization (Required, Optional, for Definition)
- Root words and Affixes
- Contexts

Contexts and Word Families



- Trademarks
- Medical terms
- Legal terms
- Food terms
- Political terms
- Musical terms
- Words from the same language
- Words with non-alphabetic elements

Non-Alphabetic Written Symbols



- Words which have come in to English from other languages may have non-alphabetic features which designate pronunciation, such as
- the tilde ~
- the circumflex ^ and caron ˇ
- the cedilla ,
- the dieresis ¨ or umlaut
- and the acute ´ and grave ` accents

These are Pronunciation features and must be used correctly in spelling the word correctly.

Ways to Study and Prepare

How to begin?



- Understand the team aspect of this contest and encourage and support your teammates!
- Expect to devote a good deal of time to preparing for this contest. It takes work to produce winners!
- Have fun! If you are bored or uninterested in this contest, you will likely not be successful! A love for words is a must!
- Be on the lookout for words you haven't seen before. Write them down and share with your team!
- Purchase resource materials...more about this later!
- Plan to compete in invitational meets.

Create Study Materials



- Word Cards and Practice sets
 - Look up each word;
 - On a 3 x 5 card:
 - ✦ Write the definition;
 - ✦ Write the derivation (root or origin)
 - ✦ Write the pronunciation given and the pronunciation that reflects the “sound color” of the vowels in unaccented syllables.

Establish a Context



Write sentences with the words that are clues to their meaning. That way, you remember the entire idea, the sound of the context sentence, and the clue to the meaning. This can help with vocabulary and proofreading questions.

Instead of skipping the words you do not know when you come to them, write them down or highlight them and look them up. (That works for reading for your classwork, too)

Establish a Context



- When you have written the word, its definition, derivation, and pronunciation on the card, write a sentence that uses the word in its appropriate context.
- Pronounce the word and listen to the way it sounds. Repeat it several times if it is a hard word.
- Say the word. Spell the word. Say the word.
- Say the word. Write the word. Say the word.

Ways to Study and Prepare



Word Cards

- **Practice Sets**

- Word Families
- Word Contexts
- Word Structure
- Words with Capitals
- Words with Non-Alphabetic Symbols

Study Buddies

- **Practice Rate: 1 word every 15 seconds**
- **Study Games – Scrabble, et cetera**

Ways to Study and Prepare



- **Source-of-Error Check: “How did I make that mistake?”**
- **Look up new words in your reading**
- **Mix-and-Match Roots and Affixes – a New Game?**
- **Audiotape**
 - Purchased or Teacher-made
- **Self-made Pronounced list– Cell phone file?**
- **To hear words pronounced, try www.mydictionary.com**

Word Wars??



- Lydia: You are such a tatterdemalion! Go rusticate!
- Kendall: I hope you get the screaming meemies, you varlet!
- Lydia: You wisenheimer! You think you're a whiz-bang wonk but vox populi says you're really just a boondoggling Walter Mitty!
- Kendall: You are gauche and lack erudition! Go fall off a cuesta and catch kyphosis!
- Lydia: Your floruit is over! I hope you become an old feme covert making feijoada and falafel!

Cautions for Practice



- Speakers may omit sounds or add sounds in such words as **different, leverage, surprise, temperament, recognize, history.**
- Speakers may transpose (switch) letters in pronouncing such words as **irrelevant, hundred, realtor.**
- **Make sure you are hearing the word as it is to be written.**
- **Use Competition Rate** of pronunciation
 - four words a minute = 15 seconds per word

Practice writing legibly



If graders can't tell what a letter is, they isolate it from the rest of the word by placing their thumbs or cards on either side of it.

If a letter is unrecognizable, it is incorrect. Two of the three graders must agree that the letter is correct or it is a missed word.

Use standard handwriting or print.

Make a **clear distinction** between upper- and lower-case letters – **DO NOT USE ALL CAPITALS!**

Winners Double-check Results



- At contests, always use the fifteen minute **Verification Period** between the scoring of the papers and the announcement of Final Results to check the computation of your score.

Winners Prepare



Practice, Practice, Practice
If you prepare,
you will be a winner!

PRACTICE TEST



Let's apply lessons learned...

Part I Proofreading



1. valueless



2. Yucca



3. Novocain



4. posttraumatic



5. recede

Part I Vocabulary



6. *D. bellicose*



7. E. macrocephaly



8. *A. pentadactyl*



9. C. subterranean



10. D. stupefaction

Part II (Oral portion)



11. deceitful



12. paleobiogeography



13. underreact



14. corrodible



15. revengeful

Part III Tiebreaker



16. retrieve



17. bioenvironmental



18. decipherable



19. Mecca



20. *viva voce*



How to navigate the UIL website



UIL Website:

academics@uilutexas.org

Q and A...



Q: How do I find study materials?

A: Click on “resources” tab (far upper right hand side), scroll down to “additional resources,” then look for Spelling and Vocabulary resources.



Q: How do I access this year's Word Power?

A: Find the box labeled “Academic Study Materials,” then click the box labeled “Order Here.” The digital copy is free!



Q: Does UIL offer any spelling study guides?

A: Yes! Next to the free digital Word Power icon, you will see a 2016 UIL Study Packet, which is made up of last year's District, Regional, and State tests, along with the answer keys.



- Q: How do I find out about invitational meets near my school?

A: On the middle right-hand side of the website, you will see a link entitled “Invitational Meet.” Click on “Listings” button.



Good luck in
becoming Word
Wizards!!