



# Personal Spelling Coach - Beginning Track

## Personalized Distance Learning for Novice Spellers

### Course Overview

Hexco's Personal Spelling Coach - Beginning Track (PSC-BT) program is designed to engage young spellers with the intent of getting them started on a path to become savvy spellers with a love of language. As spellers progress, they will aim for placement in the National Spelling Bee (NSB), the North South Foundation spelling competition and/or the South Asian Spelling Bee.

**The cost of the PSC-BT program for 4 sessions is \$495, or for 8 sessions, it is \$950. It includes the following.**

- **A brief assessment** to determine a speller's skill level so studies start at a challenging place
- **Assignments** to expand spellers' word knowledge and understanding of language patterns that require about an hour of daily study time or preferably two 30-minute sessions
- **A quizzing/coaching session** every week or every other week scheduled by the speller and coach to "spot check" all facets of assignments given and to teach skills in language patterns and sounds as well as to expand a speller's word bank and eventually to field unfamiliar words
- **Access to eMentor** word lists that are used exclusively by coached spellers. (This does not include published lists, such as the *Spell Buddy* collection, which must be purchased separately.)
- **Email feedback** to both speller and parent after each quizzing/coaching session to recap words missed and to give additional word information or study suggestions

**A thorough written assessment of a speller's skill is available as an option for \$400.**

### What does my student receive?

- Direction in getting off on the right foot with fielding words and understanding language
- Coaching on spelling rules and how prefixes and suffixes work
- Some coaching on Latin and Greek roots
- Introduction to rules for spelling words from other languages and lists to study of a given language
- Guidance in preparing for the next level of competition in spelling bees
- Instruction on using recommended skills and tools to prepare for spelling bees
- A coach who is supremely knowledgeable in the field of spelling preparation and will be rooting for your student all the way

### Why not coach my own child?

This is definitely an option, particularly in the initial phases. Suggested directions for your own coaching are available on our website at [www.hexco.com/new-to-nsb](http://www.hexco.com/new-to-nsb). As your speller gets further into the intricacies and lengthy word lists, coaching your own speller requires a parent who has a very strong language background and/or one who is willing to spend hours ferreting out information, compiling lists, searching the dictionary for obtuse words, and quizzing their child.



A coach is charged with monitoring a student's errors and successes, keeping up with problem words, and revisiting words until the student "owns" each word. Being able to decipher a "lucky guess" from a student's actually *knowing* a word is just one of the skills a trained spelling coach can offer. Our coaches have committed many, many hours to spelling bee preparation. Please keep in mind, however, that while our time-tested curriculum and methodology can save a parent hours and hours of homework, parents of our coached students stay involved and informed from start to finish, and they are necessary for quizzing.

## How does PSC-BT work?

Step 1: Assessment of your student's skill level in spelling and of their best style of learning

Step 2: Begin coaching

- **ASSIGNMENTS** – The coach will make assignments to be completed by the student. These will center on understanding what sounds are produced by various language patterns initially. This knowledge is then used to expand the youngster's word bank and teach rules and conventions in spelling. As the speller grows in knowledge, they will learn about Latin and Greek elements and how these affect the ultimate spelling and meaning of words. They will study a plethora of words, some topical lists, some collections of "difficult-to-guess" words, and some collections of words from a given language assimilated into English with explanations of the spelling rules for that language. After each quizzing/coaching session, a new list of words and assignments in the *Spell Buddies* will be made. The key to gaining the *maximum* benefit of coaching, however, is regular study and parental quizzing which will aid the student in learning and mastering all the words in their assignments. *(Please note, however, if a student has not learned the words from a part of a current assignment, the section will be reassigned.)*
- **QUIZZING/COACHING** – Quizzing will be scheduled for 30 minutes every week or every other week via Skype or Zoom based on the course chosen. Students will call in at a scheduled time. This individualized time will be spent on teaching, reviewing problem words from prior coaching sessions, additional quizzing over current assignments, and eventually quizzing over additional unfamiliar words to test a student's "guessing" skills and enhance these abilities. Each group of 4 sessions must be completed within 10 weeks.
- **FEEDBACK** – The coach will email the student and parent(s) to analyze errors, review rules that cover misspellings, explain why the student may have made the errors, and generally encourage the student. All interchange with students is constructive and positive. The role of the coach is not to grade, only to teach and motivate a student.
- **COMPILING PERSONAL WORD LISTS** – As assignments are carried out, each student is required to compile their own spelling notebook. This will be a personal collection of words, Latin and Greek elements, and oddities found or learned along the way. The notebook may be in a printed format or in a Google Sheets document with tabs for the various types of words. As a speller progresses, he or she will be asked to search *Online Merriam Webster* for words of a particular type to add to their notebook.



## Meet our Head Spelling Coach

**Michelle Horton** is our original coach who assisted in developing the Spelling Coaching Program with Linda Tarrant since 2008. Michelle is well-respected for coaching top-tier spellers, and many of her students have become coaches who also work for Hexco. Prior to coaching for Hexco, Michelle coached her son and two daughters using Hexco products, and they participated in national bees, advancing to the semifinals multiple times. Michelle is an expert grammarian who holds a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a specialization in Chemistry. As head coach, she has developed instructions for approaching the spelling of words in various language families beyond what is in Hexco's *Spelling Rules Book* and has added multiple lists for each language family. Her positive attitude helps build excellent rapport with students as she continues to receive stellar reviews from customers who have had the opportunity to benefit from her coaching, many of whom have made it to the higher rungs of the National Spelling Bee. Currently, Mrs. Horton coaches our **Crash Courses** that are offered for five weeks prior to the National Bee each year, and she coaches individual spellers who have excelled in our coaching program and have been in our program for an extended period.

## Agreement

### The Ideal Candidate

- Very young students who have an interest in reading or spelling or youngsters who show an acumen in spelling at an early age
- Committed spellers who are willing to study at least 5 hours weekly beyond the half-hour of one-on-one coaching times
- Students who need help with pronouncing and learning difficult words and word patterns
- Spellers who are willing to commit to an initial 6-week period with possible continuation, if it is a good fit for all involved

### Required Materials

- Hexco's *Spell Buddies* collection of grade appropriate words
  - *Merriam Webster's Unabridged Online Dictionary* subscription (not the free version)
  - Computer with Internet access and camera
  - Access to Microsoft Office or Google Docs and Google Sheets
  - A contract for the services provided stipulating that instruction and lessons are for their single student with the understanding that this material may not be shared with other students, not even siblings, or posted to the Internet
- Payment in full is required at the beginning of each group of 4 or 8 sessions by personal check, Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, or PayPal. Due to a limited number of slots available, and the preparation that takes place immediately after the initial assessment, payments made to Hexco are nonrefundable even if you choose to discontinue coaching.
  - Unlimited, unscheduled, or round-the-clock attention from a spelling coach or Hexco is not guaranteed.
  - No guarantee of increased placement within the NSB framework can be made. Ultimate placement, as you probably already know, is dependent on a variety of intangibles including luck of the draw, level of study, willingness to study, student error, etc.
  - All lesson plans, word lists, recordings, and guidance are copyrighted by Hexco. The sharing of such is illegal and an infringement of the copyright law to share with anyone, including siblings, even when coaching has ended.



## FAQs

### **What happens if my student misses an appointment for spelling instruction?**

Life happens and can sometimes interfere with the best-laid plans. However, a scheduled appointment, if missed, is still billed at the set fee schedule. If both parties AGREE to reschedule ahead of time, there will be no charge for the rescheduled service. We can change our time well in advance without a problem. However, if you forget about the conflict and simply miss the scheduled appointment time, you will be charged for the appointment. If there is a serious emergency, we will reconsider. "My student is not prepared" is NOT a reason to reschedule.

### **What about vacations?**

These can be scheduled in advance so families can have time together.

## Contact Us!

Spellers are enrolled on a "first come, first served" basis. If you are interested in coaching or have questions, we encourage you to fill out our student interest form ([www.hexco.com/spelling-coachinterest-form](http://www.hexco.com/spelling-coachinterest-form)). Thank you for your interest in our spelling program.

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