



Personal Spelling Coach (PSC)

Only the Best

Overview

Hexco's Personal Spelling Coach (PSC) program is designed to challenge and encourage serious students working toward advanced placement in spelling competitions, including the National Spelling Bee (NSB), the North South Foundation Spelling Competition, the South Asian Spelling Bee, and many others. Experienced spellers attest that at the highest levels of competition, the ability to “figure out” a word can be just as important as having a strong word foundation. Our coaches are trained to identify unfamiliar words and emphasize the rules behind spelling from multiple language groups, such as German, Spanish, French, Japanese, Italian, Russian, Hebrew, and more. Centered on the study of Latin and Greek elements for vocabulary augmentation and the understanding of language intricacies and patterns, Hexco's PSC program can help optimize study time while tapping into long-term memory. We welcome spellers at all levels—from beginner to advanced.

What does my student receive?

- Expert guidance in preparing for any spelling bee competition—from class bees up to the National Spelling Bee level
- Instructions on using the recommended tools to best prepare for high-level spelling bees
- Lessons geared to increase word knowledge and vocabulary and to extend ability to “figure out” unfamiliar words based on language patterns, rules, conventions, roots, etc.
- Personal, one-on-one instruction conducted weekly or every other week via Teams
- Coaches who are passionate, experienced, and highly knowledgeable about spelling preparation and who will be rooting for your student all the way

What does Hexco's PSC include?

- A brief assessment to determine skill level (so studies can start at a challenging place)
- Accelerated assignments designed to expand spellers' word banks, requiring 1–2 hours of daily study time by the student
- 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 fielding unfamiliar words
- Limited-access word lists exclusively used by Hexco's coached spellers (Note: The Elite package, which also includes eMentor access, allows 4 weeks of access to a single volume of *New Nat's Notes* or *Verbomania*. Full versions of published lists—such as *Verbomania*, *New Nat's Notes*, *Spelling Rules Book*, and *BlitzLists*, may be purchased separately if desired.)
- Email feedback to the speller and the parent after each coaching/quizzing session to recap words missed and to give additional word information or study suggestions



A Family/Coach Partnership

Developing a high-level study plan requires time, strategy, and expertise—one reason many top-performing “spelling families” rely on Hexco’s PSC program. Our coaches go far beyond routine practice sessions; they draw from over 40 years of our coaching experience to guide progress, spot weaknesses, and build mastery through focused review. They also know how to distinguish between true word knowledge and lucky guesses—an invaluable skill in high-stakes competitions.

As a family-owned academic company in business for over 40 years, we attribute much of our success to positive relationships with spellers’ families. We realize that the thousands of hours we’ve spent developing our curriculum are most impactful when paired with encouragement and mentorship at home. That’s why we actively promote family involvement, especially when it comes to quizzing and reinforcing word-list study between sessions. Together, we help students reach their highest potential.

What are the steps to get started?

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

Step 2: Placement with an appropriate coach who will challenge and encourage your student

Step 3: Begin coaching

- **ASSIGNMENTS** – Coaches will provide tailored assignments based on the student’s level and goals. These typically focus on language families, spelling rules and conventions, Latin and Greek roots, and specialized word categories—such as homonyms, eponyms, and trademarks—that are often difficult to guess. Assignments are designed to reinforce the concepts being studied and may include material from the Spelling Rules Book as well as supplemental content shared via email or online videos. Students will also receive a list of words to study one to two weeks before each session. Regular weekly or biweekly quizzing helps track progress. If a student has not mastered a portion of an assignment, that section will be revisited in future sessions or reassigned to ensure retention and understanding.
- **QUIZZING/COACHING** – Quizzing and/or coaching will be scheduled for up to 1 hour weekly or every other week via Teams. This time may also be spent on teaching and/or reviewing problem words from prior coaching sessions. Each group of 4 sessions must be completed within 8 weeks.
- **BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL WORD COLLECTION** – Each student is also tasked with building a personalized spelling collection, or “notebook.” This evolving list will include words missed in coaching sessions, Latin and Greek elements, unusual words, and other linguistic patterns encountered along the way. Students will maintain their notebook in a shared Excel file or Google Sheet, organized with tabs for different word types. Coaches will also guide students on how to use *Merriam-Webster Online* for research and adding new words to their collection based on assigned themes or categories.
- **STUDENT ENCOURAGEMENT & REVIEW** – After each session, the coach will email both the student and parent(s) with constructive feedback. This includes analyzing errors, reviewing relevant spelling rules, and offering insight into why mistakes may have occurred. Coaches aim to motivate and support students—not to grade them—but to guide their learning with encouragement and positivity. All communication is designed to be helpful, respectful, and confidence-building.



Meet our Head Spelling Coach

Michelle Horton is our original coach and has been instrumental in developing the Spelling Coaching Program alongside Linda Tarrant since 2008. Michelle is highly respected for her work with top-tier spellers, many of whom have won or placed at the National Spelling Bee and later attended Ivy League universities or pursued prestigious careers. Before joining Hexco, Michelle coached her son and two daughters using Hexco products; collectively, they participated in the NSB and advanced to the finals five times.

Michelle is an expert grammarian and holds a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a specialization in Chemistry. As head coach, she has expanded upon *The Spelling Rules Book* by developing strategies for spelling words from additional language families and creating multiple supplementary lists for each. Her positive attitude helps her build strong rapport with students, and she consistently receives outstanding reviews from families who have benefited from her guidance. Mrs. Horton also leads Hexco's annual Spelling Crash Course, a five-week program offered prior to the National Spelling Bee.

The Ideal Candidate

- Motivated students who want to reach the NSB or to improve placement in the NSB
- Committed spellers who are willing to study at least 5-10 hours weekly beyond the one-on-one coaching times
- Competitors who need someone to motivate them
- Students who need help pronouncing and learning difficult words and word patterns
- Students who are unsure how to tackle preparation for the NSB
- Spellers who are willing to commit to an initial 4-week period with possible continuation, if it is a good fit for all involved
- Families must agree to a service agreement stating that all instruction and materials provided are intended solely for the enrolled student. These materials may not be shared with other students—including siblings—or distributed in any form, including posting to the internet.

Required Materials

- *Merriam Webster's Unabridged Online Dictionary* subscription (not the free version)
- Computer w/ Internet access and a webcam
- Access to Microsoft Office or Google Docs and Google Sheets

Recommended Materials*

- Hexco's *Spelling Rules Book* for mastery of spelling rules, languages, etc.
- *New Nat's Notes* or *New Nat's eMentor*
- Hexco's *Verbomania* or *Verbo eMentor*
- *Spell Buddy* or *Spell Buddy eMentor*

**Based on the level of speller and interest/goals*



Agreement

- **Payment Policy** – Payment in full is required at the beginning of each set of four sessions and may be made through a secure payment link on our website (link may be password protected). This link will be provided by email when your student is accepted into the PSC program and you are ready to sign up. Due to the limited number of coaching slots and the immediate preparation that begins after the initial assessment, all payments are nonrefundable—even if you choose to discontinue coaching.
- **Coach Availability** – Please note that unlimited, unscheduled, or round-the-clock access to a spelling coach or Hexco staff is not included or guaranteed.
- **Performance Disclaimer** – While our coaching program is designed to help students reach their highest potential, we cannot guarantee improved placement in the National Spelling Bee. Final results depend on numerous factors including study habits, student effort, and unpredictable elements such as word selection during the competition.
- **Copyright Notice** – All lesson plans, word lists, session recordings, and coaching materials are copyrighted by Hexco. Sharing any of these materials—whether in print, digital format, or verbally—with anyone, including siblings or others, is a violation of copyright law and strictly prohibited, even after 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. For instance, if your student's Science Fair is scheduled for our appointment time, you will know in advance about this. 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.

Will you come to our spelling competitions?

While we're typically unable to attend most local competitions, Michelle usually travels to the National Spelling Bee to cheer on all of our coached students. We will keep you informed when the time comes!

Contact Us!

If you are interested in coaching or considering it, we encourage you to **fill out our student interest form** on our website at <https://www.hexco.com/spelling-coach-interest-form>. *The info you provide helps us determine the best fit for your speller and is never shared with anyone outside our company.* We typically reply within 1-2 business days, and as always, feel free to use our Contact form on our website to reach us directly.