



Personal Spelling Coach - PSC

Online Distance Learning Course for Advanced Spelling

Course Overview

Hexco's Personal Spelling Coach (PSC) system is designed to challenge and encourage serious students who are working toward advanced placement in the National Spelling Bee (NSB), the North South Foundation Bee, and/or the MetLife South Asian Bee. Experienced spellers attest that, at the highest levels of competition, the ability to "figure out" a word can be as vital as possessing a rich word foundation. Our coaches are trained to identify words your student has never seen before and emphasize understanding rules for spelling words from multiple language groups such as German, Spanish, French, Japanese, Italian, Russian, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and more. Centered on advanced 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.

This is broken into two categories, a Fast Track program for fairly new spellers or our one-on-one PSC program for more experienced spellers. The Fast Track version is a group quizzing session with assignments covering several major language families with word lists plus lists of difficult words and Latin and Greek root study. This gives a student a taste of coaching.

- **8 Sessions - \$2,100** includes 1 hour of one-on-one weekly or bi-weekly quizzing and coaching
- **16 Sessions - \$3,450** includes 1 hour of one-on-one weekly or bi-weekly quizzing and coaching

Includes

- Word lists, language information, and accelerated assignments
- Quizzing on assigned word lists plus unexplored words
- Specific email feedback on student progress and problems

Before sessions begin, students are assessed to determine their level of expertise so that the coach can challenge the student at the appropriate level. After each oral session, the student and parents receive a detailed recap and guidelines for correctly spelling words missed. Assignments require at least one to two hours per day (based on average time spent) to fulfill weekly requirements and to enable students to master difficult word patterns, language rules, and language roots.

What does my student receive?

- Assessments of your child's best learning styles and current level of spelling expertise
- Guidance in preparing for all levels of competition in spelling bees
- Instruction on using recommended tools to prepare for higher level spelling bees
- Lessons geared to increase word knowledge and vocabulary and to extend his/her ability to figure out how to spell unfamiliar words based on language patterns, rules, conventions, roots, etc.
- Personal, one-on-one instruction weekly via telephone or Skype
- Coaches who are passionate for spelling preparation and who will be rooting for your student all the way!



Why not coach my own child?

A parent who has a very strong language background and/or one who is willing to spend hundreds of hours ferreting out information, compiling massive lists, searching the dictionary for obtuse words, and quizzing his/her child may be able to provide comparable instruction. However, the number of hours that it takes to organize, execute, and manage a customized high-level lesson plan is intense. This is why many spellers, particularly at the higher rungs of competition, have a coach.

Monitoring a student's errors and successes involves 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. Since our coaches have already committed thousands of hours to spelling bee preparation, needless to say, we are well-equipped at the start of this journey. Please keep in mind, however, that while our time-tested curriculum and methodology can save a parent hundreds of hours of homework, parents of our coached students stay involved and informed from start to finish, and they are critical for quizzing students as they are learning various word lists.

How does PSC Work?

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

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

Step 3: Begin coaching

- **QUIZZING** - Quizzing for 1 hour weekly or every other week 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, quizzing over additional unfamiliar words to test a student's "guessing" skills, and going over excerpts from the *Spelling Rules Book*.
- **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 students. All interchange with students is constructive and positive. The role of the coach is not to grade, only to teach and motivate your student.
- **ASSIGNMENTS** - The coach will make assignments to be completed by the student. These will center on language groups, rules, conventions in spelling, Latin and Greek elements, and/or lists of "difficult-to-guess" words, such as trademarks, homonyms, eponyms, etc. The assigned words generally complement the language or rules covered. Some coursework will be based on information in the *Spelling Rules Book* and some will be based on supplementary language or rule information that will be provided via email. In addition, a generous list of words will be assigned for student study after each session. Please note, however, if a student has not learned the words from a current assignment, the words will be reassigned. Pages or sets of words in *New Nat's Notes* (or *Verbomania*, or the *eMentor* for these be assigned. Weekly quizzing will monitor progress. The key to gaining the *maximum* benefit of coaching, however, is by regular, parental quizzing which will aid the student in learning and mastering all the words in his/her assignments.
- **COMPILING PERSONAL WORD LISTS** – As assignments are carried out, each student is required to compile his/her 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 an Excel document with tabs for the various types of words. The student will be asked to search Webster's Third for words of a particular type, and many of these will be added to his/her notebook.



About our coaches

Michelle Horton is our original coach who assisted in developing the Spelling Coaching Program with Linda Tarrant. Michelle has been writing and editing products for Hexco for the past several years and has been coaching students using our new system for over seven years. Prior to coaching Hexco spellers, Michelle coached all of her children using Hexco products, and they together spelled at the National Bee a total of seven years. Michelle's youngest, Mary, ultimately tied for fifth place at the NSB in her final attempt and has since aged out of the competition. 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 many language families and beyond. Currently, Michelle is expanding the Personal Spelling Coach Program to include new areas for mastery for coaching students as well as working with Linda Tarrant to convert our current program to include coaching eMentors for the PSC program. 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.

Kim Willett has a BA in Developmental Psychology from William and Mary and an MSW in Clinical Social Work, Child and Family Therapy from Virginia Commonwealth University. She began spelling coaching her own children 11 years ago and has been using Hexco products for 8 years. All three of her daughters have each competed in the Scripps National Spelling Bee twice (2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2016). Kim has homeschooled her children for 16 years and runs the local homeschool spelling bee. Her education in developmental and learning theories combined with her love of words have helped her develop strategies for spelling studies. She believes that the family is an important part of the spelling team and, therefore, keeps in communication with spellers' parents. Kim loves spellers and develops strong, trusting relationships with each student which leads to a coach/student/parent team that can work diligently toward the common goal.

Dave Riddle is a retired attorney who resides in central California and coached his son to the National Spelling Bee in 2004. Dave himself won the 2005 title of National Senior Spelling Bee Champ and continues to participate in adult spelling bees around the country. He was the last audience member standing in a Broadway performance of the 25th Putnam County Spelling Bee (See his article recounting the hilarious bee at <http://www.word-buff.com/25th-annual-putnam-county-spelling-bee.html>). Dave himself has been the pronouncer in over 50 adult and student bees. In keeping his personal spelling skills sharp while offering time-tested suggestions, Dave also understands what he calls, "Gut Dread," meaning the nervousness that comes with participating in spelling bees. With this experience, Dave fills a unique role in our team when it comes to advising to ensure maximum comfort with spelling on stage. He is known to devote quality time with each student and only takes on a limited number of students per season. Dave brings years of experience, and we are proud to have him on board! Read entertaining interview in Word Buff magazine: <http://www.word-buff.com/spelling-bee-champion.html>.

Linda Tarrant is the President of Hexco, Inc. and the primary author of most of the company's advanced spelling products and other high-level academic study materials. All three of Linda's daughters participated at the National Spelling Bee (NSB) in 1987, 1989, 1992, and 1993. Linda manages and organizes Hexco's PSC program by assisting coaches, reviewing and systematizing word lists, screening potential PSC candidates, and consulting with parents to help individualize a long-term spelling strategy for coached students. Her direct interaction with students is limited, however, Linda continues to play a key role in the coaching process.



(coaches, continued)

Suanne Rudley loves words and the unique individuals who excel at spelling them. She was introduced to competitive spelling when she coached her own daughter to a sixth place finish at the 2004 National Spelling Bee. Suanne likens her work with her spellers to that of an athletic coach who focuses on building skills, providing encouragement and support, and helping students bring their best to every competition- while never forgetting to inject humor and fun into the process. She received her undergraduate degree in history and English from the University of Pennsylvania and a law degree from the University of Virginia.

Roshini Asirvatham is a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley. She attended the Scripps National Spelling Bee twice in 2010 and 2012 after winning the SE Minnesota Regional Spelling Bee, and participated in the North South Foundation National Spelling Bee every year from 2006-2012. She earned 4th place at both the 2012 North South Foundation National Bee and the 2012 National South Asian Bee.

Gokul Venkatachalam is a sophomore in high school. He competed in the National Spelling Bee 4 times, placing 10th, 19th, 3rd, and eventually becoming a co-champion in 2015. He is also a champion of the Southasian Spelling Bee. He has a deep passion for language patterns and roots, and uses his knowledge to help his students become the best spellers they can possibly become.

Meera Suresh has been involved in the spelling bee world for 5 years now, participating in the CBS San Francisco Regional Spelling Bee all 5 years. She went to the National Spelling Bee in 2015 and tied for 50th place. She will be entering her freshman year at Cupertino High School in the fall of 2016.

Snehaa Ganesh Kumar has 9 years of experience in spelling bees, starting from kindergarten and continuing through eighth grade. She competed in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in 2015, tying for 4th place, and in 2016, becoming the runner-up. Snehaa has demonstrated a great mastery of language during her studies for the National Spelling Bee and is looking forward to sharing her expertise with spellers who are excited to participate in Scripps bees. Coaching is her way of giving back to the spelling community and working with spellers in an area of her life that she loves.

Caroline Willett - Bio coming soon!

Jonathan Horton - Bio coming soon!



The Ideal Candidate

- Motivated students who want to reach the NSB or to improve placement in NSB
- Committed spellers who are willing to study at least 5-10 hours weekly beyond the 1 hour of one-on-one coaching times
- Competitors who need someone to motivate them
- Students who need help with pronouncing and learning difficult words and word patterns
- Students who are unsure of how to tackle preparation for the NSB
- Spellers who are willing to commit to an initial 8-16 week period with possible continuation, if it is a good fit for all involved
- Families willing to sign a contract for the services provided and to keep all instruction and lessons for their single student with the understanding that this material may not be shared with other students, not even siblings

Required 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*
- *Webster's 3rd (W3)* CD-Rom or online W3 access
- W3 paper dictionary (nice, but not necessary)
- Spelling notebook (or this can be built in Excel or Google Sheets)
- Telephone and/or computer with internet access
- Access to Microsoft Office or Google Docs
- Webcam with a microphone



Agreement

- Payment in full is required at beginning of the session 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 non-refundable even if you choose to discontinue coaching.
- No unlimited, unscheduled, round-the-clock attention from a spelling coach or Hexco
- No guarantee of increased placement within the NSB framework. 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 solely ours and may not be shared 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. A 24-hour notice is required unless a severe illness, injury, or death in the family has occurred. For instance, if your student's Science Fair is scheduled for our appointment time, you will know in advance about this and 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. *A speller who is on a weekly schedule must complete all eight sessions within 10 weeks or less; those on bi-weekly sessions must complete their sessions within 18 weeks unless interrupted by a planned family vacation, a serious illness, or a death in the family.*

What about vacations?

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

Will you come to our competitions?

Unfortunately, we will likely not be able to come to your local competitions. However, should your student make it to the NSB, Michelle would love to come and see your child compete.

Will my student receive personal, face-to-face coaching during the NSB week?

Should you wish for personalized coaching for your student just prior to the NSB, or during Bee Week, we will generally provide this at a pre-planned time with cost for a session prorated.

Contact Us!

Advanced spellers are enrolled on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you are interested in coaching or have additional questions we encourage you to call or email as soon as possible as we frequently have a waiting list. Thank you for your interest in our PSC program.

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