



Personal Spelling Coach

Personalized Distance Learning for Advanced Spellers

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 spelling competition, and/or the South Asian Spelling 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, 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. **Our coaching programs have produced three National Bee winners and many runners'-up!**

The cost of the PSC program for 8 sessions is \$1,725 and includes the following.

- **A brief assessment** to determine a speller's skill level so studies start at a challenging place
- **Accelerated assignments** to expand spellers' word banks that require 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
- **Access to eMentor** word lists that are used exclusively by coached spellers (This does not include published lists, such as [Verbomania](#), [New Nat's Notes](#), [Spelling Rules Book](#), and [Blitz Lists](#) which must be purchased separately.)
- **Email feedback** to both speller and parent after each coaching/quizzing 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?

- 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 their ability to "figure out" how to spell unfamiliar words based on language patterns, rules, conventions, roots, etc.
- Personal, one-on-one instruction conducted weekly or every other week via telephone, Skype, or Zoom
- Coaches who are passionate about 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. Our advice on how to pursue this endeavor can be found on our website at www.hexco.com/new-to-nsb. As a speller gets further into the intricacies of language and lengthy word lists, coaching 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 speller. 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 professional 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 distinguish 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 thousands of hours to spelling bee preparation. 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 their best style of learning

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

Step 3: Begin coaching

- **ASSIGNMENTS** – The coach will make assignments to be completed by the student. These will center on language groups, rules and conventions in spelling, Latin and Greek elements, and/or topical lists or collections 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 and online videos. In addition, a generous list of words will be assigned for student study one to two weeks before each spelling/quizzing session. Pages or sets of words in the printed or eMentor version of *New Nat's Notes* and *Verbomania* will be part of every assignment. Weekly or biweekly quizzing will monitor progress. 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. *(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 1 hour weekly 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, quizzing over additional unfamiliar words to test a student's "guessing" skills and enhance these skills, and going over excerpts from the *Spelling Rules Book*. Each group of 8 weekly sessions must be completed within 10 weeks, and 8 biweekly sessions must be completed in 18 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 students. 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 is preferable in an Excel document or Google Sheet online which is shared with the coach. It will have tabs for the various types of words. The student will be asked to search *Online Merriam Webster* for words of a particular type to add their notebook.

Meet our Head Spelling Coach

Michelle Horton is our original coach who has 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 collectively 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 individual spellers who have excelled in our coaching program and participated for an extended period.

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 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 8-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, or posted to the Internet

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](#)
- *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



Agreement

- Payment in full is required at the beginning of each group of 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 it is an infringement of the copyright law to share with anyone in printed, digital, or verbal form, 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. 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 competitions?

Unfortunately, we will likely not be able to come to your local competitions. However, should your student make it to the NSB, Michelle usually attends to watch all coached kids.

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 the cost for a session being \$225.

Contact Us!

Advanced spellers are enrolled on a "first come, first served" basis. If you are interested in coaching or have additional questions, we encourage you to fill out our student interest form on the website (www.hexco.com/spelling-coach-interest-form) as soon as possible because we frequently have a waiting list. Thank you for your interest in our PSC program.

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