Hard Words Spelling Bee Words

Round 1 (the easiest)

quiche — a baked pie filled with eggs, cream, cheese and often vegetables

risotto — a creamy Italian rice dish cooked slowly in broth

kohlrabi — a pale green vegetable of the cabbage family with a round, swollen stem

meringue — a light, sweet topping made of egg whites and sugar beaten stiff

baguette — a long, thin loaf of crusty bread

crochet — to make cloth by looping yarn with a small hooked needle

lacrosse — a team game played with a ball and long sticks that have nets at the end

caribou — a large deer of the far north, the same kind of animal as the reindeer

toboggan — a long, flat sled with a front that curls up

cockatoo — a parrot with a tall crest of feathers on its head

toucan — a tropical bird with a huge, brightly colored bill

macaw — a large, long-tailed parrot with bright feathers

ocelot — a wild cat of the Americas with a spotted and striped coat

alpaca — a South American animal related to the camel, raised for its soft wool

chinchilla — a small furry rodent from the Andes with very soft gray fur

cilantro — the fresh leaves of the coriander plant, used to flavor food

quinoa — the small seeds of an Andean plant, cooked and eaten like a grain

bratwurst — a thick German sausage, usually grilled

tomatillo — a small green fruit in a papery husk, used in salsa

biscotti — crunchy Italian cookies baked twice, often dipped in a drink

enchilada — a rolled tortilla with a filling, covered in sauce and baked

concierge — a hotel worker who helps guests with tickets, directions and plans

flamenco — a lively Spanish style of dance and guitar music with stamping and clapping

mariachi — a Mexican street band with violins, trumpets and guitars

karaoke — singing along to recorded music while the words show on a screen

bonsai — a tree kept tiny by careful trimming and grown in a pot

tycoon — a very rich and powerful businessperson

teriyaki — a Japanese dish of meat or fish glazed with a sweet soy sauce

schnitzel — a thin slice of meat coated in breadcrumbs and fried

brioche — a soft, rich bread made with butter and eggs

schnauzer — a dog breed with a wiry coat, bushy eyebrows and a beard

slalom — a ski race on a zigzag course between poles or gates

samovar — a large metal urn used to boil water for tea

balalaika — a stringed instrument with a triangle-shaped body

fondue — a pot of melted cheese or chocolate that you dip bread or fruit into

dungaree — a heavy, coarse cotton cloth, often blue, used for work clothes

pistachio — a small green nut in a hard tan shell

cappuccino — a coffee drink topped with foamy steamed milk

focaccia — a flat Italian bread brushed with olive oil and herbs

armoire — a large, tall cupboard for storing clothes

tiramisu — a layered dessert of coffee-soaked sponge cake and sweet cream

marionette — a puppet moved by strings attached to its arms and legs

ricochet — to bounce off a surface at an angle

vignette — a short piece of writing or a brief scene that shows one moment

bassoon — a long woodwind instrument with a low, deep sound

gondola — a long, narrow flat-bottomed boat rowed with one oar, used on the canals of Venice

staccato — played with each note short and sharply separated

crescendo — a gradual increase in loudness in music

pirouette — a full turn on the toes or ball of one foot in dance

arabesque — a ballet pose on one leg with the other stretched out behind

Hard Words Spelling Bee Words

Round 2

bivouac — a simple camp set up outdoors for a short stay, often without tents

incognito — with your true identity hidden, often in disguise

isthmus — a narrow strip of land with water on both sides, joining two larger lands

dachshund — a dog breed with a long body and very short legs

connoisseur — an expert who knows a lot about the fine points of an art or a food

aficionado — a person who knows a lot about and loves an activity or subject

nonchalant — seeming calm and relaxed, not worried or excited

chauffeur — a person whose job is to drive other people around in a car

raconteur — a person who tells stories in a skilled and amusing way

camaraderie — a feeling of friendship and trust among people who spend time together

repertoire — all the songs, plays or pieces a performer is ready to perform

dossier — a collection of papers with detailed facts about a person or subject

milieu — the surroundings or setting in which a person lives or works

potpourri — a mix of dried petals and spices kept for its pleasant smell

mezzanine — a low floor between two main floors, often a balcony

gouache — a thick, opaque kind of watercolor paint

chiaroscuro — the use of strong light and dark contrast in a painting or drawing

virtuoso — a person with outstanding skill, especially in playing music

arpeggio — the notes of a chord played one after another instead of together

pizzicato — by plucking the strings with the fingers instead of using a bow

vibrato — a slight, quick wavering of pitch that makes a note sound richer

intermezzo — a short piece of music played between the acts of a longer work

glockenspiel — an instrument of tuned metal bars struck with small hammers

stalactite — a stony icicle-shaped deposit hanging from the roof of a cave

prosciutto — thin slices of salted, dried Italian ham

gnocchi — small soft dumplings, often made from potato and flour

charcuterie — cooked, cured or smoked meats served sliced, often on a board

vinaigrette — a salad dressing made of oil, vinegar and seasonings

ratatouille — a stew of eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes and peppers

stalagmite — a stony column built up from the floor of a cave by dripping water

jambalaya — a spicy Louisiana dish of rice cooked with meat, seafood and vegetables

gazpacho — a cold soup made of blended raw tomatoes and vegetables

mesquite — a spiny desert shrub or tree whose wood is used to smoke food

equestrian — having to do with horseback riding

kitsch — showy, tacky decorations or art enjoyed in a playful way

zeitgeist — the general spirit, mood and ideas of a particular period in history

wanderlust — a strong wish to travel and explore the world

gesundheit — a word said to wish good health to someone who has just sneezed

hinterland — a region far from the coast or from towns and cities

capybara — the largest rodent in the world, found near South American rivers

axolotl — a Mexican salamander that keeps feathery gills and lives in water

aardvark — an African animal with a long snout that digs for ants and termites

wildebeest — a large African antelope with curved horns, also called a gnu

meerkat — a small African animal of the mongoose family that stands up to keep watch

succotash — a dish of lima beans and corn cooked together

persimmon — an orange fruit that is sweet and soft when fully ripe

guanaco — a wild South American animal related to the llama

abalone — a sea snail whose ear-shaped shell is lined with shiny mother-of-pearl

taiga — the huge northern forest of pine, spruce and fir trees

croquette — a small roll of mashed potato, meat or fish coated in breadcrumbs and fried until crisp

Hard Words Spelling Bee Words

Round 3 (the hardest)

onomatopoeia — the forming of words that imitate the sounds they name, like buzz or sizzle

chrysanthemum — a garden plant with large, many-petaled flowers that bloom in fall

abscissa — the horizontal coordinate of a point on a graph, its x-value

parabola — a U-shaped curve, like the path of a ball thrown into the air

ellipsis — three dots that show words have been left out or a pause

vernacular — the everyday language spoken by ordinary people in a place

hypotenuse — the longest side of a right triangle, opposite the right angle

parallelogram — a four-sided flat shape whose opposite sides are equal in length and run in the same direction

logarithm — the power to which a base number must be raised to give another number

coefficient — a number placed before a variable to multiply it, like 5 in 5x

asymptote — a line that a curve gets closer and closer to but never touches

aphelion — the point in an orbit where a planet or comet is farthest from the sun

vacillate — to keep changing your mind between choices

echinoderm — a sea animal with spiny skin and body parts arranged in fives, like a starfish

cephalopod — a sea animal with arms or tentacles around its head, such as a squid

eucalyptus — a tall Australian tree with fragrant leaves that koalas eat

rhododendron — an evergreen shrub with large clusters of bell-shaped flowers

hyacinth — a spring plant that grows from a bulb and has a spike of sweet-smelling flowers

forsythia — a shrub covered with bright yellow flowers in early spring

gnomon — the raised pointer on a sundial that casts a shadow to show the time

ephemeral — lasting only a very short time

perihelion — the point in an orbit where a planet or comet is closest to the sun

laconic — using very few words

thesaurus — a book that lists words with similar and opposite meanings

perfunctory — done quickly as a routine, without care or interest

palindrome — a word or phrase that reads the same backward as forward, like racecar

dodecahedron — a solid shape with twelve flat faces

crustacean — an animal with a hard shell and jointed legs, such as a crab or lobster

garrulous — talking a great deal, especially about unimportant things

epitome — a perfect example of a quality or type

paradigm — a model or pattern that shows how something is usually done or thought of

euphemism — a milder or more polite word used in place of a blunt one

idiosyncrasy — an odd habit or way of behaving that is special to one person

sesquipedalian — using or full of very long words

acquiesce — to accept or agree to something quietly, without protest

effervescent — giving off bubbles, or lively and full of high spirits

dilettante — a person who dabbles in an art or subject without serious study

reminiscence — a story or memory of past experiences

portmanteau — a word made by blending two words, like brunch from breakfast and lunch

ebullient — bubbling over with excitement and enthusiasm

magnanimous — generous and forgiving, especially toward a rival

obstreperous — noisy and hard to control

recalcitrant — stubbornly refusing to obey or cooperate

obfuscate — to make something unclear or harder to understand

insouciant — calm and carefree, showing no worry at all

verisimilitude — the quality of seeming real or true

syzygy — the lining up of three bodies in space, such as the sun, moon and Earth

ptarmigan — a bird of cold mountains whose feathers turn white in winter

pterodactyl — a flying reptile of the dinosaur age with wings of skin

bouillabaisse — a fish stew from southern France, flavored with herbs and saffron