# 96th Scripps National Spelling Bee Preliminary Rounds Showcase Diverse Strategies and Notable Competitors



The preliminary rounds of the 96th Scripps National Spelling Bee took place on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at a convention center outside Washington, D.C. Amongst the 245 competitors, notable participants included 14-year-old Shradha Rachamreddy from San Jose, California, who returned for another chance after finishing third last year due to missing the word "orle."

Shradha focused her preparation on short, tricky words—a strategy she hoped would address her previous mistakes. Commenting on her experience, she said, "I try to identify words that seem likely to show up. If they're not spelled particularly the way they sound, then it's fair game."

13-year-old Aryan Khedkhar from Rochester Hills, Michigan, who tied for fifth place last year, utilized language patterns to tackle words without obvious roots. Aditi Muthukumar, another participant from Westminster, Colorado, concentrated on words derived from various languages, expecting to confront unfamiliar terms during her final bee.

This year, Team Ghana made a notable appearance with competitors donning custom-designed kente fabric jackets. Under the guidance of former competitor Darren Sackey and program director Salome Dzakpasu, the Ghanian spellers displayed national pride and a strong sense of teamwork.

Since 2021, the competition has included multiple-choice vocabulary questions, described euphemistically as "word meaning" questions. These queries add a layer of complexity, testing the spellers' comprehension as well as their spelling accuracy.

The competition will continue with quarter-finals and semi-finals on Wednesday, followed by the finals on Thursday evening.