



Dare to be a Linguist

On Wednesday the 27th of March the MFL department had the pleasure to host our very first Year 7 Spanish Spelling Bee House Competition.

The challenge? Being able to pronounce and spell accurately in one minute as many Spanish words as possible using the Spanish alphabet amongst the list of words displayed on the screen.

Our Year 7 students, with the wonderful help of their MFL/Spanish teachers, worked really hard throughout the three weeks ahead of the competition to become Spelling Bee masters and to be chosen to represent their form on the “B (Bee) day”.

The week before the competition, we could feel the tension in the air: rumours about a student who was able to spell 19 words in one minute, pupils with time saving strategies to be able to spell the highest number of words in the time given and all sorts of whispers were circulating around the school.

And finally... the big day arrived. The event, hosted by the linguist (and entertainer) Miss Montes, started with a presentation about Spelling Bee: its origins, previous winners, fun facts, tv shows references to the competition, etc.

Straight after, the nine students selected were called to come to the stage. They stood bravely in the front line whilst the crowd cheered like they were in a Taylor Swift concert. Every form fancied their representative to be the winner!



First, our nine students faced one by one the individual challenge: each of them managed to hold their nerves and not only translate into Spanish, but also spell as many words as they could in 1 minute out of a randomised list of words displayed swiftly by Mrs Hanbury and read aloud in English by Miss Montes.



When all the contestants finished, our sharp and stylish judges, Mr Spada and Mrs Kallah, took a few minutes to work out the scoreboard.

For some students, those 3 minutes were probably the longest of their lives: sweat dripping down foreheads, teeth grinding, pupils trying to work out who spelt the most words accurately... But the last decision was only on the judges' lips.

“AND THE WINNER OF SPANISH SPELLING BEE COMPETITION 2024 IS.....

NABEEHA G.!!!” (huge ovation)

“Very closely followed by Dorothea C. (in second place) and Micaela R. (in third place)!”

This was followed by the prizes and certificates awarding.





But if our audience thought that this was the end of the event... the best was yet to come! A Spelling Bee 1 vs 1 challenge between Mr Spada and Mrs Hanbury put an even more exciting end to the event with a shocking draw between these two languages teachers! As you say in the UK... great minds think alike!



Finally, Miss Montes closed the event addressing a few words in particular to the contestants and in general to all Year 7s: "The Spelling Bee contest is not really about spelling. Just like any other competition or challenge in your lives, this is a test to prove to yourselves your ability to push yourselves out of your comfort zone, to be resilient, to fall and get up again, to train yourselves on how to persevere and to not give up in your future adult life. Well done to everyone who has taken up this challenge and has tried their hardest to be the "best speller".



It is safe to say that this has been one of the most exciting, nerve-wrecking and competitive tournament that Queens' School has witnessed. We have received such wonderful feedback from the members of staff who attended the event about the contestants and their ability to spell so quickly in a different language, the atmosphere in the Assembly Hall and the Year 7s overall behaviour and engagement with the event. Well done Year 7s, we are so proud of you and we cannot wait until next year's Year 8 French Spelling Bee House Competition!!



This is what our 2024 Spanish Spelling Bee House Competition had said about the event:

<<I was extremely happy that I was chosen for the spelling bee. I took into consideration that the other participants may be a bit quicker at spelling than me, so I started practising the words for thirty minutes every day. Then came the day of the competition. I went to the library to revise for the remaining time.

Upon being called to the stage, I was very nervous as I did not want to disappoint anyone. I stood there listening to how fast all my other peers were spelling - it was finally my turn. I trembled as I began to doubt myself. As the timer began, my heart beat rapidly. I tried my hardest to accurately spell the words as rapidly as I possibly could.

I waited anxiously for the teachers to add up the scores. 'Did I win?' 'Did I do bad?' I thought to myself. The scores were added up. Then Miss Montes declared: 'This person won by just one word'. My hopes rose as she read out third, second, and finally first place.

"And first place, from 7SN..."

That was all I needed to hear to jump up in the air and celebrate. I did not believe it. I won! And again, I am thankful for my friends and teachers who made this possible!>>

Congratulations to our nine brave contestants: Aarna K. (7AB), Alex C. (7AE), Micaela R. (7FD), Dorothea C. (7FR), Zara Y. (7FX), Alice G. (7TC), Viyana de Z. (7TM) and Gahan A. (7SW), and to our wonderful winner Nabeeha G. (7SN).

Un saludo, Señorita Montes



Daring to be Great by pursuing our values of Scholarship, Tenacity, Altruism and Respect

