

# 59th Scripps National Spelling Bee

The **59th Scripps National Spelling Bee** was held in Washington, D.C. at the Capital Hilton on May 28–29, 1986, sponsored by the E.W. Scripps Company.

The winner was 14-year-old Jon Pennington of Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania, correctly spelling "odontalgia".<sup>[1][2]</sup> Second place went to 13-year-old Kenneth Larson of Tequesta, Florida, who missed "kaolinic". Larson was competing for the third time, having finished 111th in 1985 and 65th in 1984.<sup>[1][3]</sup>

There were 174 participants this year (100 girls and 74 boys, ages 9–14), and a total of 725 words used.<sup>[1][4][5]</sup> Nine spellers missed in the first round, 36 in the second, and 14 in the third.<sup>[6]</sup> 115 spellers made it to day two of the competition, and the final round between the last two spellers began at about 4:40pm.<sup>[7][8]</sup> Alex Cameron was the pronouncer.<sup>[8]</sup>

The first-place winner received \$1000 (and other non-cash prizes). Second place got \$500, and third received \$250. Fourth through eighth places received \$100, the next ten received \$75, and the remaining 156 spellers received \$50 each.<sup>[8]</sup>

## References

- ↑ (30 May 1986). Jon Pennington wins national spelling bee (<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=799&dat=19860530&id=EdY0AAAAlBAJ&sjid=7VEDAAAAIABJ&pg=4197,6005128&hl=en>), *Bryan Times* (Associated Press)
- ↑ Healy, Rita (19 May 2007). 1986: Jon Pennington ([http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1624100\\_1624098,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1624100_1624098,00.html)), *Time*
- ↑ Mesce, Deborah (29 May 1986). Student spells success 'o-d-o-n-t-a-l-g-i-a' (<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1979&dat=19860529&id=WqQiAAAAIABJ&sjid=gK0FAAAAAlBAJ&pg=3210,5872980&hl=en>), *Sumter Daily Item* (Associated Press)
- ↑ (29 May 1986). Fayette girl a survivor of bee's 5th round (<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1144&dat=19860529&id=EnMdAAAAlBAJ&sjid=-mIEAAAAIABJ&pg=6824,7880371&hl=en>), *Pittsburgh Press*
- ↑ (29 May 1986). Area Spelling Advances Into Final Rounds of Bee (<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1350&dat=19860529&id=bA1PAAAAIABJ&sjid=0AIEAAAAIABJ&pg=4437,2795436&hl=en>), *Toledo Blade*
- ↑ Povich, Elaine S. (29 May 1986). Forty-three diehard champions survived today's tough fifth round of... (<http://www.upi.com/Archives/1986/05/29/Forty-three-diehard-champions-survived-todays-tough-fifth-round-of/9383517723200/>), *UPI*

## 59th Scripps National Spelling Bee



The Capital Hilton, site of the 59th National Spelling Bee

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Date</b>               | May 28–29, 1986                        |
| <b>Location</b>           | The Capital Hilton in Washington, D.C. |
| <b>Winner</b>             | Jon Pennington                         |
| <b>Age</b>                | 14                                     |
| <b>Residence</b>          | Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania            |
| <b>Sponsor</b>            | <i>The Patriot-News</i>                |
| <b>Sponsor location</b>   | Harrisburg, Pennsylvania               |
| <b>Winning word</b>       | odontalgia                             |
| <b>No. of contestants</b> | 174 <sup>[1]</sup>                     |
| <b>Pronouncer</b>         | Alex Cameron                           |
| <b>Preceded by</b>        | 58th Scripps National Spelling Bee     |
| <b>Followed by</b>        | 60th Scripps National Spelling Bee     |

7. Williams, Vanessa (30 May 1986). Pa. Teen's Spelling-bee Win Is Good As His Words ([http://articles.philly.com/1986-05-30/news/26051439\\_1\\_national-spelling-bee-jon-pennington-final-round](http://articles.philly.com/1986-05-30/news/26051439_1_national-spelling-bee-jon-pennington-final-round)), *Philadelphia Inquirer*
8. Povich, Elaine S. (28 May 1986). All but nine of the record 174 champion spellers... (<http://www.upi.com/Archives/1986/05/28/All-but-nine-of-the-record-174-champion-spellers/4727517636800/>), *UPI*

## External links

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- President Reagan's remarks to finalists, May 30, 1986 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160921060320/https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/speeches/1986/53086a.htm>), from the Reagan Library
  - Jon Pennington on Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, June 10, 1986 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdhnBbajOvs>)
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