

How Do You Spell Unfair?
MacNolia Cox and the National Spelling Bee
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Illustrated By: Frank Morrison

Synopsis: In 1936, eighth grader MacNolia Cox became the first African American to win the Akron, Ohio, spelling bee. And with that win, she was asked to compete at the National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC, where she and a girl from New Jersey were the first African Americans invited since its founding. But celebration turned to chill when the train crossed the state line into Maryland, where segregation was the law of the land. Prejudice and discrimination ruled--sadly, at the spelling bee itself.

Suggested Reading Date: October 9 – International Spelling Day; April 4 – National Spelling Day; Tue-Thu after Memorial Day – Scripps Spelling Bee

Activity Descriptions:

- Learn what a spelling bee is. Watch a video clip of Scripps Spelling Bee.
<https://www.youtube.com/@ScrippsNationalSpellingBee>
- Discuss. How would you feel if this happened to you?
- Look up information about qualifications for the Scripps Spelling Bee.
- Have a spelling bee with your class. Use words from curriculum.

Related Websites:

- Author’s website - Carole Boston Weatherford: <https://cbweatherford.com/>
- Illustrator’s website - Frank Morrison: <https://morrisongraphics.com/> -
- Scripps Spelling Bee: <https://spellingbee.com/>

Text to Text Connections:

- *Because Claudette* by Tracey Baptiste
- *Max’s Words* by Kate Banks
- *Ron’s Big Mission* by Rose Blue
- *Word Collector* by Peter Reynolds

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