

2021 National Spelling Bee Champ Zaila Avant-garde Makes History as First Black American Winner

Jen Juneau Thu, July 8, 2021



Zaila Avant-garde

And the [2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee](#) winner is ... Zaila Avant-garde!

The 14-year-old eighth-grader from Harvey, Louisiana, correctly spelled "Murraya" — a genus of flowering plants — to clinch victory Thursday night during the bee's live finals at [Walt Disney World's ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex](#) in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Zaila, who is also a basketball prodigy, is the first Black American student to be crowned the champion in the bee's nearly century-long history, as well as the first winner from Louisiana. (Her sponsor was the [New Orleans Chapter of the Links.](#))