

Supporting Children with Spelling

Did you know....? The bulk of the work on learning how to spell should be completed by the end of primary school.

Different children learn in different ways. There is no blueprint for teaching children to spell.

1) Fundamental issues

- In order to spell properly children need to be able to speak properly. Parents and teachers should sensitively correct poor articulation and mispronunciations.
- Joined handwriting helps spelling accuracy.

2) LSCWCh

3) Rainbow writing

- The link between the brain and the writing hand is the key, therefore when learning spellings pupils should write them out
- They should say the word before writing it
- They should write in a joined script
- As they write each letter they should say its name
- At the end of the word they should repeat the word
- This process should be repeated twice more using a different colour each time and tracing over the letters
- In this way a striking visual image ('rainbow writing') is created. This enhances the visual impact of the word on the child's memory – a stronger imprint.

4) Key Issues when teaching spelling – Melvyn Ramsden

- Teach children to segment words rather than looking at individual letters
diff-er-ent rather than d-i-f-f-e-r-e-n-t; dis-gust-ing rather than d-i-s-g-u-s-t-i-n-g
- Teach them to '*get a feeling for the word in their mouth*'. Speak the word out loud
- Repeating words out loud is very important
- Single letters rarely indicate and represent a sound in isolation. Letters work in combination with other letters – does your child know this?

5) Using the segmentation technique

- 1) Segment your target word
- 2) Ask: do I recognise any of the segments?
- 3) Ask: do I know how to write any of these segments?
- 4) Write down the segments you know how to write in order
- 5) Leave a blank for those segments you don't know and ask a partner (parent) to help you with those segments

6) Visualisation and spelling

Some researchers stress the importance of visualising spellings as key to learning them. They suggest an alternative to the look-cover-write-check methodology.

Master strategy for teaching spelling Harry Alder 'Neuro-linguistic programming', 1994

- The secret to good spelling is being able to store words in a visual way
- The best way to remember a spelling is to visualise it, a little up and to your left in your mind's eye, and store that picture
- When you see that word again, it will 'look right' or 'feel right', or, if it was spelt incorrectly, it will 'look wrong' or 'feel wrong'
- All top spellers that have been researched use some form of visualisation, usually looking up or straight ahead as they recall a word, then down as they confirmed that it felt right

The strategy to follow:

- First, think of anything that feels familiar and comfortable
- Next, for a few seconds, look at the word you wish to remember
- See the word in your favourite colour, in a place you really like
- Look away from the word, up and to your left, and picture the word as best you can as you try to spell it in your mind
- Look back at the word, noticing any letters you have missed and repeat the process until you can picture the whole word
- To test yourself, after a short break, visualise the word and write it down
- Now look up at the word again and spell it backwards. This will confirm that you are learning through the best, visual strategy (you cannot learn to spell a word backwards if learned phonetically)
- For longer words chunk them down into smaller units of three or four letters. Visualise separate chunks

7)Using mnemonics

Mnemonic – A device or system for improving memory
Irregular words cause most trouble to children

Word	Mnemonic
are	A re rhinos e legant
beautiful	B oys eat a pples u nder t ress in F rance u ntil l unch
beacuse	B ig e lephants c an a lways u pset s maller e lephants
believe	Never b elieve a l ie
build	u and i will build a house
busy	This b us is b usy
business	Do your b usiness in the b us
could <small>Same rule for should/would</small>	O h u lucky d ear OR could o ld u ncle l ie d own?
does	D oes O liver eat s ausages?
friend	i to the e nd will be your friend
great	It is g reat to e at

intelligent	Tell the gent to come in
island	An island is land
mother	Mother ate a moth The other lady was his mother
piece	Eat a piece of pie
present	She sent a present
special	A special agent is someone in the CIA
sure	Save up red elephants
Wednesday	Nes was wed on Wednesday

8)Creating spellings, rather than remembering them

- An alternative to asking pupils to learn a set list of words is to ask them to generate as many words as they can – this creates more ownership of the learning experience.
- Think of all the words you / find all the words you can that contain a particular pattern. For example:

ight

bright, fight, fighting, height, light, lightening, might, mighty, night, nightly, right, rightly, sight, sighting, tight, tightly.

- Take a prefix: How many words can you create or find in a text using the following prefix

pre

pretend, pretending, present, presently, presentation, preview, prepare, prepared, preparation, predict, prediction, preposterous, preachg, preacher, precise, precisely, preoccupation, prescribe, prescription.

- Take a suffix: How many words can you create ending in the suffix:

ly

carefully, thoughtfully, cowardly, terribly, seriously slowly, quickly, fortunately, unfortunately, casually, meaningfully, normally, dramatically, aggressively, amazingly,

- Take a common phoneme. For example:

ir

bird, third, thirteen, thirty, thirst, thirsty, first, shirt, skirt, dirt, dirty, birth, birthday, girl, firm, firmly, stir, stirred

- Take a vowel digraph. For example:

ai

chain, train, rain, rainy, brain, Spain, again, main, remain, pain, painful, explain, paint, painted, painter, painting, rail, railway, sail, sailing, sailor, wait, waiting

For all the above activities pupils need to have an alphabet close at hand.

- Segment a word and create other words by using the letter strings

unknowingly

un	know	ing	ly
underneath	known	cooking	badly
understand	knowing	fighting	carefully
unhappy	knowingly	hating	quickly
unhelpful	knowledge	sitting	slowly
unkink		singing	terribly
unknown		watching	seriously
unusual		throwing	extremely

- Use a base word to generate as many words as you can. For example

sign

sign					
design	signature	signal	resign	consign	significant
designer	signed	signalling	resignation	consignment	signify
designing	signatory		resigning		
redesign			resigned		

Noticeable errors in written work

The 100 words most commonly mis-spelled by children

(in order of error frequency)

1) their	26) went	51) mother	76) interesting
2) too	27) where	52) another	77) once
3) there	28) stopped	53) threw	78) like
4) they	29) very	54) some	79) they're
5) then	30) morning	55) its	80) cousin
6) until	31) something	56) bought	81) all right
7) our	32) named	57) getting	82) happened
8) asked	33) came	58) going	83) didn't
9) off	34) name	59) course	84) always
10) through	35) tried	60) women	85) surprise
11) you're	36) here	61) animals	86) before
12) clothes	37) many	62) started	87) caught
13) looked	38) knew	63) that's	88) every
14) people	39) with	64) would	89) different
15) pretty	40) together	65) again	90) interesting
16) running	41) swimming	66) heard	91) sometimes
17) believe	42) first	67) received	92) friends

18) little	43) were	68) coming	93) children
19) things	44) than	69) to	94) an
20) him	45) two	70) said	95) school
21) because	46) know	71) wanted	96) jumped
22) thought	47) decided	72) hear	97) around
23) and	48) friends	73) from	98) dropped
24) beautiful	49) when	74) frightened	99) babies
25) it's	50) let's	75) for	100) money

Common words that are frequently confused

- where and were
- than and then
- two, too and to
- there, their and they're
- will and well
- quite and quiet
- accept and except

Two words that pupils hear as one word

- a lot
- all right
- in case
- in trouble

Hearing issues

- could've ----- could have Pupils write could of
- should've ----- should have Pupils write should of

IT IS NEVER COULD OF/ WOULD OF / SHOULD OF!

- Hearing the s in the third person singular:
He needs, she wants, he thinks - He need, she want, he think
- The difference between of (ov) and off
- The difference between are and our (ower)

Some spelling rules that help children to make decisions when unsure

Rules should never be taught in isolation. They must be backed up by practical activities. Most spelling rules have exceptions. It helps if the children are taught the exceptions.

- Every English word must contain at least one vowel
- No words in English end in i – we use y instead
- The letter q is always followed by the letter u (queen; quite, quintessential)
- The letter j is never used at the end of a word – we use ge instead
- No complete words ends in v – we use ve instead

f) The doubling rule: words with a short vowel ending in f, l, s or z double the final consonant (stiff, bell, Miss, fuzzy)

g) Suffix rules

i) The lazy 'e' rule

Drop the 'e' before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel:

like – liked

hate – hating

shake - shaking

ii) The 'e' that isn't being lazy

Keep the 'e' before adding a suffix beginning with a consonant

hope-hopeful, hopeless

iii) The lazy 'e' meets 'a'

Keep the 'e' in words ending in 'ce' or 'ge'

orange-orangeade

manage-manageable

j) shun endings - There are four different ways of spelling shun – but none are spelt as they sound:

- ssion profession, progression, discussion

- tion prevention, protection, station

- cian musician, electrician

- sion decision, confusion, revision

Eleven common endings to teach

ain	contain, complain, brain, drain, main, pain, rain, stain, train
augh(t)	caught, daughter, naughty, slaughter, taught, laugh, laughing
ful	careful, thoughtful, painful, wonderful, resntful
ight	bright, fight, fright, light, night, right, sight, slight, tight,
ite	bite, kite, polite, satellite
ous	famous, cautious, ambitious, delicious
ough	although, cough, enough, rough, tough, thorough, though
ow	blow, follow, grow, low, slow, show, snow, yellow
sion	comprehension, confusion, decision, revision
tion	action, attraction, collection, direction, investigation, reaction, station
ture	capture, creature, fixture, furniture, future, mixture, nature, picture

Silent letters

Silent letter	Common examples
b	bomb, comb, crumb, doubt, thumb
c	descent, discipline, science
g	design, neighbour, sign
h	honest, honour, hour

i	business, marriage, parliament
k	knee, knife, knight, knock, know, know, knot
l	chalk, walk
n	autumn, column
t	castle, listen, whistle
w	wrong, wrap, wriggle, write, wrist, wreck, whole

Homophones – revise, revise, revise!!

Homophones	Examples of use	Teaching tips
to, too, two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have two cars. He is too tired. Are you coming too? I go to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use two when you mean the number 2 Too: means '<i>more than enough</i>', or '<i>as well</i>' In all other cases use 'to'
there, their, they're	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their dog is fierce They're coming over There is a willow grows askance a brook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember if there can be a 'my' spell their with an i. You can say 'my house is big', you can say 'their house is big'.
here, hear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can't hear you. I'm over here. 	You hear with your ear .
are, our	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are going on a trip. Our class is going to Richmond. 	This is a 'false homophone'. Correct speech distinguishes between the pronunciation of the two words.
one, won	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have one sister They won a prize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you can win it then it has a w.
by, buy, bye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I go by car I must have a new pen He waved goodbye 	
sea, see	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can swim in the sea. Did you see the boy? 	
meet, meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will meet you in London. We had to eat the meat. 	Remember: we eat meat .
no, know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No you don't Oooh I know . . . ! 	No belongs with yes
wait, weight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will wait here. Guess the weight of the cake? 	