

An EAST Guide to

SPELLING

Rationale

Good spelling is an essential skill for all pupils. This pack has been developed by EAST and aims to provide a range of information including spelling development, the teaching of spelling and various activities/resources to support pupils.

It is hoped this guideline will help teachers to better meet pupils' individual spelling needs and create a more effective spelling program.

There is no single approach on how to teach spelling that is best for all pupils, all teachers or all parents but there are some general guidelines that can be applied.

A few spelling facts

- 85% of the English spelling system is predictable
- the alphabetic system has 26 letters creating 44 phonemes in 144 combinations to form about half a million words in current use
- English orthography is made up of 4 basic kinds of words:
 1. regular for reading and spelling e.g. mat, sprint etc.
 2. regular for reading but not for spelling e.g. boat, rain – could be spelled bote or rane
 3. rule based e.g. planning – doubling rule, baking – drop e rule
 4. irregular e.g. *beauty* (it should be noted that parts of an 'irregular' word are actually regular so only the irregular part needs to be specifically addressed)

"Tell me I'll forget. Show me I may remember. But involve me and I will understand."

CHINESE PROVERB

"If you do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."

OLD ADAGE

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Curriculum for Excellence Links

Spelling progression from Early to Third Level

<i>CfE Level</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<i>Early</i>	I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read and write.
<i>First</i>	I can spell the most commonly-used words, using my knowledge of letter patterns and spelling rules and use resources to help me spell tricky or unfamiliar words.
<i>Second</i>	I can spell most of the words I need to communicate, using spelling rules, specialist vocabulary, self-correction techniques and a range of resources.
<i>Third</i>	I can use a range of strategies and resources and spell most of the words I need to use, including specialist vocabulary, and ensure that my spelling is accurate.

Some theories around Spelling

According to Gentry and Gillet (1993), the acquisition of spelling skills is a sequential process involving these five stages in progression.

1. **Pre-communicative:** Spelling cannot be read by others, usually random strings of letters and numbers.
2. **Semi-phonetic or pre-phonetic:** Knowledge of sounds of letters, only one or two letters used to represent an entire word.
3. **Phonetic:** Spelling of words does not conform to standard spellings, but the reader can understand the word, and the spelling is close to standard spellings.
4. **Transitional Stage:** More words spelled correctly than incorrectly, with the student realising that words cannot be spelled solely based on how they sound.
5. **Conventional or Correct Spelling:** Spelling more than 90% of words correctly.

For those pupils who continue to spell phonetically, an examination of prior knowledge needs to be done to understand where the sequence is weak e.g. using the spelling diagnostic assessment from the Pupil assessment Profile (PAP) (Appendix i) or Single Word Spelling resource. A programme of study can then be created to suit the pupil and reinforce weak components.

When spelling is viewed as developmental, it has a profound effect on how spelling needs to be taught. Teachers need to level lists of words to suit the individual needs of pupils.

A key finding in the 1990s was that low-achieving spellers had notable difficulty learning to spell when they were given words estimated to be at their frustration level. These pupils did not have sufficient orthographic knowledge to benefit from spelling instruction aimed at words typically given to pupils at their stage.

Several researchers developed a guideline to help teachers align the developmental level of the speller to the word lists being assigned for testing:

Like the instructional reading level, word lists can be adapted to meet the instructional spelling levels of pupils by assigning less challenging lists of words to students who consistently spell fewer than 40 percent of words correctly on lists of words presented on pre-tests or final tests.

Morris et al (1995) found that when low achieving pupils were taught using word lists intended for younger students, they improved their spelling skills appreciably. Wallace (2006) discussed the findings of a study by Schlagal, Trathen, Mock, and McIntire (*as cited in Schlagal, & Trathen, 1998*). Results indicated that by levelling spelling instruction to the instructional needs of low-achieving pupils, the pupils made significant gains in both spelling and reading.

Spelling instruction will be most effective if:

- spelling acquisition is understood as a developmental process
- reading and spelling skills are understood as supportive of each other; decoding for reading and encoding for spelling
- well-developed phonological awareness skills are recognised as essential for spelling
- assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills in phonological awareness, letter–sound correspondence and spelling patterns informs instructional planning
- pupils are taught strategies for spelling
- instruction is matched to the pupil's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky's theory) to ensure tasks are challenging but within grasp

What skills do pupils need to become confident spellers?

- good articulation
- sound discrimination
- auditory sequential memory
- segmentation of the spoken word to identify individual sounds
- phoneme/grapheme correspondence
- blending skills
- recognition of syllables and morphemes
- knowledge of spelling rules
- knowledge of vocabulary
- pencil control and letter formation skills

Features of a balanced Spelling Programme

In order to support pupils to become confident spellers it is necessary to teach rules and conventions systematically and explicitly while helping pupils recognise strategies they can use to support their spelling.

The main components of a balanced spelling programme are:

- understanding the principles of word construction (phonemic, morphemic and etymological);
- recognising how (and how far) these principles apply to each word, in order to learn to spell words;
- practising and assessing spelling;
- applying spelling strategies and proofreading;
- building pupils' self-image as spellers.

(Support for Spelling – The National Strategies DfE)

A good spelling programme will provide opportunities for children to learn spellings according to their learning style and preferences. Additionally, it should build pupils' spelling vocabulary by gradually introducing patterns or conventions and continually practising those already introduced.

The Spelling Session

A suggested teaching sequence:

Revisit

- revise previously taught phonics/rules
- short oral activity to confirm prior knowledge

(Drill and practice will ensure that previously learned concepts are not forgotten.

Learning needs to be reinforced and practised so that forgetting past information is reduced.)

Teach

- introduce new rule/pattern
- discuss and define how the rule/pattern works
- ensure pupils are able to read key words

- discuss meaning of each key word
- model spelling examples

Practise

- spelling practice e.g. find and write words/diacritical spelling
- range of interactive activities to practise new learning
- discuss strategies for remembering spellings

Apply, Assess and Reflect

- revise new learning
- apply in writing e.g. work with a partner to create a short paragraph using some of the focus words
- assess – spelling test/dictated sentence
- reflect on learning – What letter pattern did these words share? What did you learn about e.g. 'soft c'? What strategies did you find most useful to learn/practise these words?

Spelling Strategies

What strategies should be taught to develop more effective spellers?

For pupils to become effective and confident writers they need to develop and use a range of effective spelling strategies. By providing pupils with a range of strategies to use, it is hoped pupils show more independence in attempting spellings before seeking adult help.

Asselin (2002) in Wallace (2006) reported that poor spellers knew and used fewer spelling strategies, tending to sound out words letter by letter. On the other hand, good spellers used a wide range of strategies:

- visual imagery
- breaking words into chunks
- recognising certain parts of words
- combining word segments with a visual image of the word
- using active monitoring - slowly pronouncing words to cue auditory memory, whilst making use of visual and semantic information

Difficulties with spelling are indicators that pupils need more and better strategies.

Spelling strategies can be learned that will improve pupil spelling.

Pupils need to be taught to:

- sound out each word slowly
- look for visual patterns
- think about word meaning (especially with homophones like *meet* and *meat*)
- examine words structurally for prefixes, suffixes, and roots
- look for word families such as *-ake* in *bake*, *cake*, and *rake* (brothers and sisters!)
- use syllables
- look for small words within words
- word shape – look at letter shape, size, ascending and descending letters.
- use mnemonics (These are more powerful if they are absurd, amusing or accompanied by a picture. It also helps if the first word is the word to be spelled e.g. DOES ‘Does Oliver Eat Sweets?”)
- use of exaggerated pronunciation (this works well for remembering silent letters e.g. *k-night for knight, g-nome for gnome, skissors for scissors*)
- ‘have a go’ to encourage independent spelling

Focus on successful strategies, asking what the pupils have learned that has helped them to spell a particular word correctly. Encourage pupils to articulate what they know and how they have applied it. Then focus on some errors and help pupils to understand why they might have misspelt the word (Were they tripped up by the difficult bit? Did they forget to apply the rule? etc.)

In addition, when words are given in lists on a weekly basis, pupils need to learn a procedure to study words e.g. "look, say, cover, write, check". This can also be done online at:

<http://www.ictgames.com/lcwc.html>

Spelling Logs

The use of a Spelling Log is a useful tool in supporting spelling. Spelling logs can be used in two main ways:

As part of the spelling programme:

As a regular part of spelling activities pupils identify specific words from the spelling unit they are working on. These could follow a particular pattern/rule or could be high frequency words. These are put into logs with tips on how to remember spellings.

To record spellings arising from independent writing:

These will be specific to the individual and will be the ones he/she regularly gets wrong. Pupils are encouraged to devise/select strategies for learning them.

they – ‘the’ with a ‘y’

when – when is the hen coming?

what – what hat shall I wear?

school – six cruel hours of our life

hoping – drop the ‘e’ before adding ‘i-n-g’

im-prac-ti-cal

(Memory joggers are an alternative to a jotter and are available from the Dyslexia shop)

Some spelling techniques

In their book Dynamic Learning, Robert Dilts and Todd A Epstein offer the following hints on helping pupils who are having difficulty with problem words:

- a. picture the word in a favourite colour
- b. make any tricky letters stand out by making it look different to the others in some way
e.g. size or colour
- c. break the word into 3 letter groups and build the word 3 letters at a time:
com mit men t
- d. visualise the letters on a familiar background like a favourite object or movie scene
- e. if it is along word, make the letters small so that the whole word can be seen
- f. trace the letters in the air and picture the letters in your mind

Simultaneous Oral Spelling (SOS)

For really tricky words Simultaneous Oral Spelling has proved useful for some pupils. These are likely to be words that the pupil uses regularly but finds difficult to spell.

This method of learning spelling is called the SOS method. Dr. Lynette Bradley at Oxford University has shown that this method is almost twice as effective as simple writing or repetition. SOS is a multi-sensory learning method. When a child uses the SOS method, he/she is using all sensory channels to learn how to spell new words. He/she is using visual, auditory and motor/movement channels to take in the spelling pattern of the new target word. The child is also using his/her intelligence to check that they have not jumbled the order of letters by mistake. The SOS method also involves over learning. Each word is practised for 3 days in a row.

Procedure

1. The child copies out the word to be learned on a card.
2. He/she reads it aloud and then turns the card over.
3. Ask the child to write out the word, naming each letter as he/she writes it.
4. He/she reads aloud the word written.
5. Then he/she turns the card over and compares his/her spelling with the correct spelling.
6. Repeat steps 2-5 three times.

Cued spelling

This is a paired programme devised by Keith Topping and colleagues at Dundee University. It is a programme to support children to work with each other or with their parents to take responsibility to improve their spelling.

Pupils choose 5 words to learn for 3 days of the week and think of strategies for remembering spellings. Working on cues, they learn spellings over the day and then over the week. The speller needs a practice buddy for this approach.

1. Speller chooses word.
2. Check right spelling and put in spelling diary/log.
3. Read the word, together and alone.
4. Choose cues (what do you notice about the patterns in the word, any rule that might apply, a mnemonic etc.)
5. Say cues together.
6. Speller says cues. Helper writes word.

7. Helper says cues. Speller writes word.
8. Speller says cues and writes word.
9. Speller writes word *fast*.
10. Speller reads word.

Remember:

- Helper covers previous tries
- Speller checks own try
- If try is wrong, do step before again
- Helper praises

Daily speed review

Speller writes *all* words for the day *fast* and checks

Wrong words – do the 10 steps again.

Weekly – Mastery review

Speller writes *all* words for the week *fast* and checks

Decide what to do about wrong words.

See online resource: www.education.gov.uk/lamb/spld/literacy-interventions/cued-spelling

Air writing

An air writing technique by Nanci Bell, as discussed by Hook and Jones (The Importance of Automaticity and Fluency For Efficient Reading Comprehension) involves having the pupil look at a word or word part, name the letters and then use his/her finger to write the word in the air directly in his/her visual field while looking at his/her finger. The pupil then visualises the word while the teacher questions him/her about the order and placement of specific letters in the word e.g. what is the third letter? Second letter? etc. The emphasis here is on enhancing the pupil's ability to 'see' the letter patterns in his mind.

Other ideas

-Use colour, pictures and humour to remember tricky spellings.

-Highlighting, underlining or enhancing the visual pattern in some way is recommended to direct the pupil's attention to the components of the orthographic image.

-Approaches have also been developed that use a variety of repeated reading strategies to strengthen these orthographic images e.g. speed drills in which pupils read lists of words (One Minute a Day exercises may be useful). Most of the words that we know how to spell are acquired through reading, not intentional memorisation.

-Sky writing, which involves using gross motor movements of the whole arm to form letters in the air also helps reinforce orthographic images.

Multi-sensory learning

By using a multi-sensory teaching style, Yvonna Graham (Dyslexia Toolkit) believes a good teacher builds on the pupil's strongest mode while still training the weaker ones. For example, if a pupil is artistic Graham recommends starting with drawing/colour-based activities but also include auditory (speaking or singing the word aloud) and kinaesthetic (touching or moving) to start linking the pupil's strength to other senses as well.

Skills that support accurate spelling:

- good visual recall (mental image)
- good auditory discrimination (awareness of letter sounds, syllables, word sounds)
- good kinaesthetic skill (feel for the movement of the hand while writing or typing)
- good linguistic skills (awareness of relationships between words or parts of words, based on meanings, syntax, derivations, etc.)

A statistic to think about...

We remember

20% of what is said

30% of what we hear

40% of what we see

50% of what we say

60% of what we do

90% of what we see, hear, say and do.

Teaching spelling with Visual Recall:

- Show the pupil a simple picture and then cover it and have the pupil draw or describe as many details as possible. Now do the same thing with the word to be spelled. Ask questions such as 'How many letters are in this word? How many tall letters? How many vowels?'
- Ask the pupil to say the letters in the word forwards and backwards
- Practise writing the word in the air using big motions
- Write the first letter of the word with dashes for other letters, then fill in some of the letters and discuss whether this could be the word the pupil is learning...why or why not?
- Use rainbow writing – write the word several times using a different colour each time. This striking visual image enhances the visual impact of the word in child's memory
- Make the word with magnetic letters, jumble letters then ask child to remake
- Use a highlighter to identify tricky parts or letter strings

Teaching spelling with Auditory Recall:

- Clap the syllables of a word. Explain that every syllable has a vowel. Be sure that the pupil knows consonants from vowels.
- Play rhyming games
- Explore word families, such as all the 'at' words, using magnetic letters
- Practise breaking words into roots, prefixes and suffixes
- Invent mnemonics to remember spellings e.g. The secretary keeps a secret
- Sing the spelling of a word e.g. to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
- Volcano spelling: pupil gets louder and louder while saying each letter
- Sing each letter like an opera singer/chant each letter like a cheerleader
- Snap the vowels and clap the consonants
- Touch a body part while spelling aloud e.g. use head, shoulders, knees and toes
- Throw and catch a ball while spelling words aloud
- Use of a voice recorder to say and spell words then play back

Teaching spelling with Kinaesthetic Recall

- Write words lightly so the pupil can trace over it
- Do air writing, perhaps with sticks, flags or scarves
- Write words in a sand box
- Ask the pupil to walk around the room and say spellings out loud
- Do giant writing on a white board at arm's length
- Use a mirror so the pupil can watch his mouth while enunciating each syllable
- Place letters on the floor and 'hop' the spelling
- Practise writing words with eyes closed to enhance kinaesthetic feedback (vision can mask other channels such as hearing and touch unless it is cut off)
- Pupil writes word on his arm with a finger to 'feel' the word
- Pupil counts the number of letters in each word and holds that number of fingers up when spelling aloud, this helps to ensure pupil includes right number of letters
- Work in pairs taking it in turns to write spelling of a word on partner's back
- Use a torch to write a target word onto the wall. The pupil can track the word with his/her eyes and then finger, repeating the letters
- Mould letters of target words using play dough/plasticine and stand them upright so they can be seen from all angles

Supporting pupils with spelling

Identifying spelling problems, reflecting on cause of difficulties and creating independent solutions will reinforce pupils' sense of capacity and power over language.

- Make note of the types of errors regularly made by pupils and work on those e.g. doubling rule, drop 'e' rule, change y to an i etc.
- Engage pupils in reflective activities to help them think about errors they make, why they make them and what strategies they could use to avoid the errors. This can be done through the use of the Spelling Log.
- Teach rules that work most of the time.
- Teach the ways in which words are constructed. Gradually build word walls that reinforce the way words grow using prefixes, suffixes and roots.
- Slow down with spelling. Pupils can be unsuccessful when bombarded with too much too fast.
- Identifying spelling problems, reflecting on cause of difficulties and creating independent solutions will reinforce pupils' sense of capacity and power over language.
- Use professional judgement, observations of pupils' work and any relevant assessments to determine next steps.
- Consider using a reflection log with older pupils:

Pupil Reflection Log

Word I misspelled:

How I misspelled it:

Why I think I misspelled it as I did:

Strategy I will use the next time:

Strategies to support struggling spellers

- give a shortened spelling list
- use spelling lists in which all words use the same pattern
- allow older pupils to use a spell checker in extended writing
- provide a place to spell out loud
- let pupils work with a spelling buddy
- to build confidence encourage all pupils to always have a go at spelling

b/d confusion

Peter Young and Colin Tyre (Teach Your Child to Read) recommend 'back writing':

- place a large piece of paper on wall at child's shoulder height
- child stands at arm's length from the paper
- write the first letter to be taught on child's back, describing the formation of the letter
- child then writes letter on paper
- concentrate on one letter at a time

Spelling Games

Games which allow the pupil to guess what letter would come next or at the end/beginning help to build spelling sense. 'Snowman' is a child-friendly version of Hangman. When you play Snowman, for the first incorrect answer the lower (and biggest) snowball is drawn, for the second the middle snowball is added, and for the third a snowball is added at the top (the head of the snowman). After that, the snowman gets two sticks (the arms), a top hat, two eyes, a carrot nose and a sad face. Let the pupil test the teacher too – the pupil can find hard words to spell using a dictionary.

Caterpillar game

Draw a caterpillar on a dry wipe board with e.g. 4 body parts. Use dashes to represent letters in a word. Ask child to spell word aloud. Child suggests letters in order. Teacher records these. If pupil is wrong on any letter, teacher erases a part of the caterpillar. If pupil spells whole word correctly a new body part is added. How long does the caterpillar get? Be careful not to kill your caterpillar!!!

Disappearing words

Write a word on a whiteboard. Ask pupil to study word then have him/her turn around while you erase one letter. Pupil must fill in the missing letter. Next erase 2 letters and so on until the pupil can write the entire word. Teacher should take a turn as well!!

Spelling X and Os

Split small group of pupils into 2 teams. Call out a word for a team member to write. If correct then an X/O is placed in the grid. As an alternative, use 2 spelling words to complete the grid instead of Xs and Os.

Spelling Bingo

Pupils draw a 4x4 grid. Teacher calls out words. Pupils write words anywhere in the grid. When complete teacher asks pupils to spell words. Circle correct words, put a line through incorrect words. Winner is the first to get 4 correct in a row. Continue game for a 'full house'.

Open scrabble

Turn all letters up. Players can use any tiles to spell a word. Pupils keep score. Switching quickly between the left brain (maths) and the right brain (word images) strengthens the connection between the 2 brain hemispheres, increasing critical thinking and problem solving ability!

Spelling Tennis

Two pupils spell the word by saying alternate letters until the whole word is spelt. Both win a point if spelt correctly. If a mistake is made point is awarded to other player.

Back-words

Use your index finger to write (spell out) list words on a partner's back. Guess the word.

Word Wager

Each player receives a certain number of tokens. Teacher/player asks everybody to spell a word. Those who think they can spell it correctly put as many tokens as they want into the centre of the table. If someone isn't sure how to spell the word, they can sit out the round, but they have to pay the 'pot' one token or point. All players write the word down. The ones who spell it correctly divide the 'pot' equally. Players who misspell a word have to pay one/two tokens into the pot as a penalty. If everyone gets it wrong, the pot stays in the centre for the next word.

Down the Ladder

Pupils can work in teams or individually. Each team or pupil needs a ladder to write in (a page with a ladder drawn on it.) The spelling pattern is written on the top step of the ladder. Teams then race to be the first to 'Climb down the Ladder' by filling the ladder with words that rhyme. Teams either have one person as the recorder or pass the ladder around so each person writes a word.

Simple letter patterns, e.g. at, ill, am, ug, en, op.

More difficult letter patterns, e.g. ight, atch, unch, ound, tion.

Race against the clock

Pupils compete against each other. Each pupil has a white board and one pen. Teacher selects spelling pattern. Pupils then have two minutes to spell as many words as they can using that particular pattern. Score a point for the most words correctly spelt.

Password

Think of a word to be the "Password". Write it on a piece of paper.

Pupils have to guess what the word is but the only clue that they are given is the first and last letters and the number of letters in between, e.g. p _ _ _ t.

Pupils write down as many words as they can that fit the pattern. Pupils score 1 point for each correct word and 5 points if they have the password.

For older pupils choose a longer word.

Long distance copying

Put a text at the other side of the room. Work in pairs. One pupil goes to text and memorises one word at a time, returns and writes it down. Then partner's turn. Repeat until the text is complete. 1 point for each correct word or fastest team to finish. Correct the finished writing using the original text.

OUCH!

Write key spellings on cards. On 5–7 separate cards, write the word “OUCH!”

Place all the cards in a bag and shake it to shuffle. The first player reaches into the bag (without peeking!) and pulls out a card. The player reads the card, covers it, and spells it out loud. If he/she spells it correctly, he/she keeps the card. If incorrect, the card goes back in the bag. Pass the bag to the next player who repeats the process.

Once a player has one or more cards and then pulls an OUCH! card, all the player’s cards (including the OUCH! card) go back in the bag. If the player has no cards and pulls an OUCH! card, the player simply puts the OUCH! card back in the bag.

Set a timer for 5-10 minutes. When time is up, the player with the most cards wins!

Five Lives

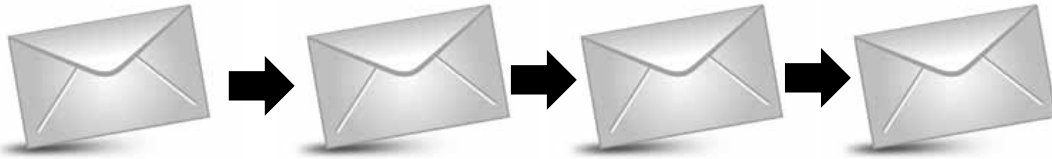
Each person has 5 lives (marked on whiteboard). Teacher gives word to be spelt. Each pupil takes turns to say one letter at a time. Whoever says last letter in word loses a life. Saying a wrong letter also means losing a life. Winner is last person standing.

The following link will give access to many other games:

<https://highlandliteracy.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/spelling-games.pdf>

Other Teaching Strategies

The envelope technique for spelling (as recommended by Daniel Gabarro)



Get 4 envelopes and number 1-4.

Put a set of words to be practised into envelope 1.

Child is given time to study these words.

Partner/teacher then asks pupil to spell each word backwards – this guarantees that the pupil is using visual memory.

Next pupil is asked to spell each word forwards. Any words which are spelt correctly are then put in envelope 2. Misspellings remain in envelope 1.

This method is continued - daily if possible. When a word is spelt correctly, it moves from one envelope to the next. Any words which are misspelt go back to envelope 1. Envelope 4 should contain words which have **been spelt correctly 3** days in a row. These words should then only be asked once in a while to ensure they are not forgotten.

When envelope 1 is empty, add a new set of words. Encourage pupils to be consistent: 1) visualise the word, 2) spell the word backwards and 3) spell the word forwards.

A simple technique for spelling

Dr David Raffle (Raffle Brain Institute) advocates the importance of the visual memory. He believes in order to remember how to spell a word, you must first store the memory of that word, and then retrieve that “picture” when you are about to write it. He talks about three kinds of memory:

1. Blackboard memory, lasting from 1-30 seconds
2. Short-Term Memory, lasting from 31 seconds to about 2-3 months
3. Long term memory, stored memories of information and experiences

The goal of learning is to place what needs to be remembered into the pupil’s short-term memory so that e.g. facts, dates and spelling words can be recalled. Once this information is stored in the short-term memory a pathway is established so that the pupil can retrieve this information for up to three months. Repeated exposure to this information means that the pathway becomes even more established, forming a long term memory.

Dr Raffle suggests using the following technique:

- Pupil writes out spelling word on paper.
- Pupil traces word with index finger while saying the spelling word out loud. The pupil says the word normally while tracing, not individual letters.
- Remove the paper for a minimum of 30 seconds.
- Give a blank piece of paper to the pupil and ask them to write the word.
- If the pupil spells the word incorrectly – which may be the case at the beginning of this technique – go back and repeat steps.

Once the pupil has established a pathway to the short-term memory it is THERE. When the pathway is there, the pupil will remember the spelling. Regular revision will help it into the long term memory.

W o r d / m a p / p i n g

How to Study Spelling Words (from The Reading Genie)

The word mapping strategy helps students focus on the pronunciation of a word before seeing its spelling. When spellings are understood as pronunciation maps, they are much easier to remember.

The word mapping procedure has nine steps. For five steps, the student examines the phonological structure of the word by attending to phonemes (mouth movements), all without seeing the word. For the remaining four steps, the student constructs and studies the spelling as a word map.

First, examine the mouth moves of the spoken word.

Example:

1. **Say** the word.

night

Say the syllables if there are more than one.

2. **Stretch** the word.

/nnnniit/

Work syllable by syllable with multisyllabic words.

If a phoneme can't be stretched, exaggerate it.

3. **Segment** (split up) the phonemes.

Work by syllables if necessary.

First phoneme? /n/

Next phoneme? etc. /i/

Last phoneme? /t/

Snapping/clapping/**finger flicking** can all aid segmenting. Skilful spellers may simply report the segments.

4. **Count** the phonemes.

3

5. **Draw blanks.**

— — —

The blanks stand for the phonemes.

Put slashes between syllables.

Next, construct a word map to learn the spelling.

6. **Record** the spelling phoneme by phoneme.

On the first blank, write [letters]

n — —

On next blank, write [letters]

n igh —

On last blank, write [letters]

n igh t

7. **Write** the word in your best cursive handwriting.

night

8. **Study** the spelling.

What does *igh* say?

Ask about how a phoneme is spelled. How do we spell /i/ in *night*?

Ask what we need to remember about the word. What's tricky about *night*?

(Only ask about tricky parts.)

9. Give the **meaning**.

What does *night* mean? Opposite of day, when it is dark outside.

A shortcut version of word mapping:

1. Say
2. Stretch
3. Split up
4. Count
5. Draw blanks
6. Record
7. Write
8. Study
9. Give meaning

Spelling dos and don'ts

- **Don't** use the alphabet names for spelling with younger children. Using letter names forces children to translate from letter name to sound, impeding instant recall of the sound-letter correspondences. Instead, ask pupils to say the individual phonemes (sounds) audibly as they form a word. Hearing their own voice acts as a powerful cue.
- **Do** get pupils to write down the words that they need to remember how to spell. The physical act of writing helps to bind words in memory (some experimental studies have shown that copying words by hand is the best way to learn them.)
- **Do** get pupils to devise and write a silly sentence to aid their memory of spellings taught e.g. *the thirsty bird wore a dirty skirt and a dirty shirt to the girl's third birthday party.*
- **Do** focus the pupil's attention on target spellings by getting them to underline/highlight the focus sound.
- **Do** allow pupils to apply and practise their spellings by writing simple dictated sentences.
- **Do** remind pupils that all words have a vowel spelling.
- **Do** encourage pupils to notice patterns e.g. the spelling of 'o' after 'w' e.g. wasp, warm, swan etc.
- **Do** provide pupils with an alphabet code chart to use for reference.
- **Do** continue to teach spelling with older pupils, building on previously taught phonics along with morphology and etymology.
- **Don't** be resource driven, instead focus on where the pupil has gaps in his/her spelling knowledge.

Teaching needs to focus on getting kids thinking about spelling, helping them to care about it and developing strategies for getting better at it.

Conclusion

Spelling is a critical aspect of the curriculum and is a subject which is best taught systematically.

Recent research highlights that effective spelling instruction consists of:

- Giving weekly spelling lists and administering weekly tests, with the difficulty of the words being adjusted to the instructional level of the speller.
- Administering words in a pre-test/teach/post-test format with students self-correcting the tests as much as possible.
- Including words originating from other subjects and from students' own reading and writing in conjunction with commercially prepared word lists.
- Use of a spelling log that notes misspelled words offering the pupil, parent, and teacher, a way to isolate and practise words that are personally difficult for a pupil to spell.
- Direct teaching of strategies and procedures that assist pupils to learn new words.

Spelling can, however, be a persistent difficulty for some children.

We, as teachers, need to help challenged spellers develop confidence and competence with the written word.

Glossary

Orthography	the conventional spelling system of a language
Phoneme	a unit of sound
Morpheme	the smallest unit of meaning
Etymology	the study of the origin of words
Semantic	relating to meaning in language

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APPENDICES

- i Spelling diagnostic assessment (from PAP)
- ii EAST key resources
- iii ICT resources
- iv Infant Pupil Cue Card
- v Upper Pupil Cue Card
- vi 9 Great Spelling Rules

Appendix i**PAP Diagnostic Spelling list (Appendix 11)**

man	hen	pig	cut	bed
frog	snap	plum	step	clan
twig	nest	stand	tramp	junk
park	risk	ring	song	sack
still	hay	call	ink	catch
fish	rich	ship	chin	bath
thin	with	when	splash	thrush
good	green	queen	cool	sweep
gate	ride	tune	here	note
dream	rain	coat	chair	shirt
sugar	because	bought	tracing	shopping
disappear	skies	draw	below	graph

circle	ghost	island	write	wealth
soldier	circus	exciting	photograph	tough
naughty	colleague	politician	admission	manufacture
examination	special	ache	thieves	surgeon
pneumonia	parachute	ocean	leisure	especially
destruction	distraught	discotheque	extraordinary	governor

EAST Key Resources (arranged alphabetically)

A Hand for Spelling

A Hand for Spelling is based on the strong principle that free-flowing handwriting contributes to success in spelling. Visual and kinaesthetic skills are taught together. Photocopiable books have words selected from the known writing vocabularies of children and are presented in age bands.

Alternatives to Spelling (EAST) -targeted at highly able pupils

This pack is aimed at pupils who are strong spellers with a wide vocabulary and who require additional challenge. Much of the pack is based on word investigations and the study of the origins of words. A Master copy of material is available from EAST and should be in most schools.

P.A.T (Phonological Awareness Training)

PAT is designed to help pupils read and write phonically regular words. It uses the overlearning of onsets and rimes to teach reading and spelling – following a developmental progression rather than traditional phonic teaching order. Because the emphasis is placed on the process of reading and spelling, rather than the content, the PAT programme is directly applicable to a wide age range.

Rapid Phonics

Rapid Phonics is designed to support pupils in both reading and spelling. A placement test is provided to assess skills and to identify a starting point on the programme. Lesson plans are provided which are designed to be fun, multisensory and engaging. Step 1 focuses on single sounds, Step 2 teaches vowel and consonant digraphs with Step 3 examining alternative spellings for vowels and consonants. Photocopiable material is included. This is an ideal resource for small groups.

Single Word Spelling Test

The Single Word Spelling Test is intended for use in identifying gaps in a pupil's knowledge of the spelling system of English at a particular point in time and also for tracking a pupil's progress over successive years. The results of the tests inform teachers of a pupil's immediate learning targets and can be used in the effective planning of spelling instruction. The tests are graded in difficulty. Guidelines are also provided for analysis of a pupil's errors in the tests. The tests map on to a set of structured spelling lists which provide a resource for use in spelling instruction.

Spelling Made Easy

Spelling Made Easy is a multi-sensory structured phonics and spelling programme. Dictation exercises are provided to indicate where teaching should begin. Lesson plans, including daily activities, are provided with photocopiable worksheets for pupils. Weekly dictations assess learning.

Stareway to Spelling

Stareway to Spelling is written for pupils who struggle to spell high-frequency words. It deals with the first 300 high-frequency words – 3/4 of all text we read. It uses the SUS3 (stare, underline, say 3 times) and RAWs (read, analyse, write, spell) techniques to help pupils read and spell these words.

It is suitable for pupils aged 7 and up. The manual is designed to ensure that pupils can read and spell high frequency words quickly, confidently and accurately. It is for use on an individual basis.

Support for Basic Spelling

A series of photocopiable books supporting the teaching of basic spelling skills. The books in the series are incremental in difficulty and can be used in a systematic structured way. It can be used with both groups and individuals.

Word Wasp

Word Wasp teaches word building. It begins by teaching pupils to spell basic sounds and simple words. Word Wasp emphasises every letter. Pupils read words and passages in order to see, hear and build the structures and rules of English, making a link between spelling and speech. Spelling rules are introduced in gradual steps.

This is intended to be used on an individual basis from 8 years and up.

ICT resources

Programs that support children and young people to develop their spelling skills include:

- **Word Shark** a comprehensive, interactive, multi-sensory set of spelling/reading games
- **Star Spell** (Fisher-Marriot Software)
- **Spell Track** (SEMeRC)
- **Nessy** (www.nessy.com)
- **Spelling Show** (Sherston)
- **AcceleRead AcceleWrite** (KS1-4) involves reading, repeating, remembering and typing short, phonic sentences from a card into a talking word processor then listening and comparing it to the original
- **Units of Sound** covers four key skills of reading, spelling, memory and dictation

Spellcheckers

A spellchecker is a useful aid used by older pupils for self-correcting. Highlight 3-4 words from the pupil's writing. The pupil then uses the spell checker to correct mistakes. When the pupil sees the right word in a list, he/she uses memory-recall pathways to recognise the word. The more times the recall pathway is used for a particular word, the more likely he/she is able to remember the correct spelling in the future.

A spellchecker is also useful for supporting extended writing. Pupils may be encouraged to use words which they cannot spell by themselves.

Online games:

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/EducationalGames>

<http://www.crickweb.co.uk/ks2literacy.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/spellits/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/spelling/>

www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk

<https://www.spellingcity.com>

My Spelling Strategies



j-u-m-p

Sound out the letters slowly.

S-t-r-e-t-ch it

Use finger flicks.



Wed-nes-day

Chunk it.

Think of a word I know that sounds the same.

day
say

Look for small words.

stand

Use a spelling story to help.

Big Elephants Can't
Add Up Sums Easily

Spelling Strategies



9 Great spelling rules

Name _____ Date _____



1. I before E, except after C, when the sound rhymes with 'bee'.
2. Making plurals – usually you simply add 's',
but if the word ends with s, x, z, ch, or sh, you add 'es'.
3. Making plurals when the word ends with y:
if the word ends with a vowel (a, e, i, o or u) then 'y', just add 's',
e.g. donkey → donkeys
but if the word ends with a consonant then 'y', drop the 'y' and add 'ies', e.g.
penny → pennies.
4. Adding suffixes when the word ends with 'y':
drop the 'y' and add 'i' + the suffix, e.g. worry → worried,
UNLESS you are adding 'ing' e.g. worry → worrying.
5. Adding suffixes when the word ends with 'e':
if the next letter is a consonant, keep the 'e', e.g. amazement,
but if the next letter is a vowel, drop the 'e', e.g. amazing.
6. Doubling a consonant before adding 'ing':
if the last three letters have a vowel in the middle, then you double the
consonant, e.g. stop → stopping, begin → beginning.
7. Adding 'ible' or 'able':
If the word is a word on its own without the suffix (e.g. tax, remark, enjoy),
add 'able'.
If the word is NOT a word on its own without the suffix e.g. terr (terrible), vis
(visible), horr (horrible), add 'ible'.
8. Words ending with 'ick' or 'ic':
if the word has one syllable, use 'ick', e.g. click, pick,
but if the word has two or more syllables, it ends with 'ic', e.g. panic, traffic.
9. Words ending with 'cal' or 'cle':
if the word is an adjective (describing word), use 'cal', e.g. comical, logical,
but if the word is an noun (naming word), use 'cle', e.g. bicycle, vehicle.