



A collection of tips
from teachers

Ideas For Teaching Spelling



The Philosophy of Teaching Spelling

Are spelling tests useful? Some children will spell with ease, and some will never write a perfect spelling test. Children who are good visual learners will spell well without out help, and those who have a poor visual memory will have difficulty, as they cannot reproduce a word from memory or 'see' it in order to write it correctly, As we do want our students to learn to spell correctly in all work, what is the best way to produce this result?



Perhaps the best way to encourage good spellers is to expect good spelling and give the students lots of practice learning words that are useful for them. The word walls that are used in most classrooms are a wonderful tool for this. The words are taught and practiced and drilled - and then put on the word wall. After that they must be spelled correctly at all times.

Another way to encourage accurate spelling is to teach a sequential phonics program, and have the students spell the phonetic words as they learn to read them - to encode words at the same time as they learn to decode them. This will give your students a large bank of words to use.

One of the main problems with free creative writing in which spelling is not corrected is that poor spelling habits are being imprinted. If a child writes 'thay' many times, he is imprinting that spelling and that makes it so much more difficult to learn the correct spelling. Some children will 'emerge' to become good spellers, but they would be good spellers anyway. It is the poorer spellers who will imprint these errors. Many upper elementary students have dreadful spelling habits because of this imprinting.

That is the key - do not allow incorrect spelling on a regular basis. Have the students correct all errors in their work and always expect words to be spelled correctly. Teach spelling strategies and phonics.

Does testing fit in this on a weekly basis? Probably not! Learning words that are not meaningful for a weekly test and then going on the next week may not be the best way to produce good spellers. But learning a set group of words each week, putting these words on the word wall and then expecting that these words will be spelled correctly after in all written work will go far to producing a class of good spellers.

The following ideas for teaching spelling are taken from the old Primary Success magazines. I hope you will pardon any repetition - I have tried to weed out similar ideas - but have likely missed some!

(After I finished this, I realize that there are LOTS of repetitions - my apologies!)

Teaching Spelling

Spelling is one of the pre-requisites to writing. In order to write, the children need to be able to print, to read what they have printed, they must be able to sound out unknown words and have a number of words they know how to spell. Many children find it hard to write because they are worried about spelling the words they need. Thinking about all the necessary facets can be a block to writing and if spelling is not reasonably automatic, the constant pausing and thinking about how to spell the words can ruin the flow of the writing. Most children who write well can spell and very often those who find spelling hard do not write well.



Children who struggle with spelling usually have no strategies to use when they get stuck on a word. Ask any weak spellers the question, 'what do you do when you cannot spell a word?' They usually have only one basic strategy. To help them become better spellers they need to acquire a range of different approaches.

Using phonics:

The most common approach for students in *Grade One* or *Grade Two* may well be 'sounding' the phonemes in a word. As long as the children can hear sounds in words and know which letters typically go with which sounds then this strategy works quite well. So, a word such as 'strap' can be sounded out as s-t-r-a-p. It has 5 phonemes.

Tapping out syllables:

Another basic strategy is to listen to and tap out the syllables in a word. Sometimes a long word can seem daunting and children give up. Breaking a word into its different syllables and then carefully listening to each syllable may help to make the job more manageable. The syllables are often simple enough to spell in themselves. Sometimes they contain familiar words or parts of words in themselves, e.g. 'pollinate' contains -in- and 'ate- and the beginning is easy enough if you know how to spell 'doll', because the two words rhyme!

Spelling by rhyme:

As long as children can hear words that rhyme and generate (even if they are nonsense words) a string of words that rhyme, then they can use this tactic. The tactic of saying 'can you think of a word that rhymes with it' is a useful one.

Using similar words and patterns:

Another useful strategy is to think of another word that contains a similar pattern. This can

help with:

Prefixes, e.g. anti-, auto-, de-, dis-, extra-, im-, in-, inter-, mega-, micro-, re-, un-, etc.

Suffixes, e.g. -able, -ed, -er, -est, -ing, -ism, -ful, -let, -ly, -ness, -s, -ward, etc.

It can also help to use any word that is linked by meaning. So, if you know how to spell 'ear' then many other words cause little problem, e.g. hear, hears, hearing, hearsay, heard, eardrum, ear-mark, earphones, earring.

Applying spelling rules:

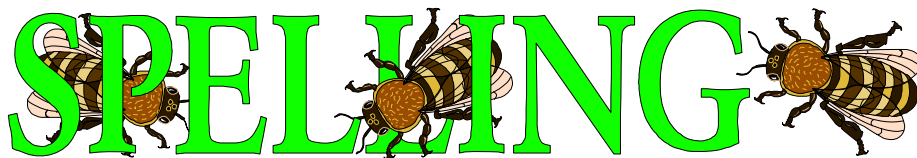
As children build up a bank of basic spelling rules and conventions they should use these to help them tackle different spellings. It is important that they also begin to note common exceptions and learn these. Therefore a word such as 'have' can be spelled if the students know 'Never end a word with 'v', always add a silent 'e', and 'receive' can be spelt if you know 'i' before e, except after 'c'.

The rules of word endings:

It helps to know the rules to make plurals, and to add 'ed', 'ing', 'er', 'est', etc.

Using tricks:

Good spellers use all the above strategies - plus tricks of their own. A student may have a poem to say to spell 'because', for example. So, when tackling a difficult word a good speller uses a range of different strategies, double-checking, till they think that the word is correct. The key point for children is that they have a number of ways to swiftly, almost without thinking, get a reasonable spelling down, so that the flow of their writing is not hindered.



What can you do if you can't spell a word?

- Look on the word wall.
- Use the sounds to come as close as you can to the correct spelling.
- Break the word into syllables or 'chunks'.
- Try the word and see if it looks right.
- Look it up in a dictionary
- Look around the room and see if you can find it.
- Ask someone.

Chunking Words:

Put your hand under your chin and see how many 'chin drops' there are in the word. This is the number of syllables.

in - ter - net

be - cause

re - mem - ber

Mnemonics can help you remember the correct spelling:

PIEce of PIE

There is a LIE in beLIEve

BECAUSE - Bunnies Eat Carrots And Uncle Sam's Eggs

WEDNESDAY - WED - NES - DAY

FRIEND - Fri the End - I am your friend to the end.....

KNIFE - k - nif -e

WAS - Wally and Sam

Remember little words inside big words!

Father - fat, her, he

Believe - be, lie, eve

working - or, king



Spelling Ideas

"This is how I do my weekly Spelling (Grade Two).

I have the weekly words up before school begins on Monday. I usually choose words that have one sound, sometimes with different spellings. For example, if the sound is /ow/ as in 'now', I have words with the 'ow' and also words with 'ou'. We have 10 words each week. I use coloured pens to write the words on the chart, and do the specific letters in a different colour.

In Monday's lesson we do an oral part first. We discuss each word and talk about the phonetic parts, whether there are rhyming words, etc. Then we spell it orally - saying the word, spelling it and saying it again. Sometimes we spell and say and spell and say to make a chant. Then the students print the words, and then we say and spell again.

On Tuesday the students tell me about the words, and spell any rhyming words. We chant and cheer them. Then the students must make the words with letter cards or plastic letters. Sometimes I have them print the words using the plastic letter tracers.

Wednesday we review the words and chant and cheer them. Then the students make the words by cutting letters from a newspaper or magazine, or make them with modeling clay.

On Thursday, we play a game with the words - Wordo, or a Spelling Bee. I may have a crossword or wordfind puzzle that I make from

www.puzzlemaker.com or from <http://www.edhelper.com/puzzles.htm>

Friday is the test day. I have a serious testing atmosphere and insist on perfect printing, too. I mark them immediately, and we cheer everyone who gets the words perfect. Then the words go up on the word wall, and must be spelled perfectly from then on in all work.

"I always have a treat time on Friday afternoon for the students who get all the spelling words correct. I read about the teacher who let the students make paper airplanes with the spelling sheets and let them fly the planes in the gym as the treat for 'A' papers. My kids love this, and will work really hard on the spelling to have this treat! Sometimes it might be a beanbag toss game or even a candy - although I don't do this very often!"

"I have my kids print the words in odd ways or with odd things. They 'write' on the floor (rugwrite) or ceiling (hand in the air) or deskwrite or write on their feet or hand or knee. I also call a word and then a body part and we 'body spell' together. We spell with our elbows, our noses, our belly buttons, our tongues (this one is obviously a little difficult to understand but they know what they are saying!) and I usually throw in their 'behinds' because they love that. After we spell, we erase each word with the same body part. The kids love to do strange printing! We also do visualization - thinking about the word and keeping the picture that we saw when the eyes are closed, and then print the word with the eyes closed."

"I have a box of tactile surfaces - pieces of carpet, sandpaper, velvet, satin, lace, window screen, rubber, etc. The students choose one, and print their words with the finger. Then they trade to get a different 'feel'."

"I think that the best spelling technique is to not let the students become accustomed to seeing incorrect spelling and having it imprinted. Of course, young children will spell incorrectly, but if you point it out quickly and give them the correct spelling they will be much better spellers. Seeing the incorrect spelling of a word many times imprints it and it is very difficult to change."

Rhythmic Spelling

Multi-sensory strategies can help your children spell. These procedures can be used to teach any rote skill, including: math facts, alphabet, letter sounds, foreign language, etc.

Do rhythmic recitation (auditory and kinesthetic): The teacher says letters aloud in rhythmic pattern while students softly tap or clap the matching rhythm. school s-c-h o-o-l school /-/-/ /-/-/

Then the students repeat the pattern with voice and tapping the rhythm.

As they become familiar with this, fade out your voice until they are doing it alone.



Air Writing: (auditory and kinesthetic): Teacher uses the above to start this activity. Replace tapping with writing the letters of the word in the air in front of you, using whole hand and whole arm motion. (You will need to do this with your back to them so they see the proper orientation.) Students follow the teacher's example. Fade your spelling prompt. Say the word before and after the spelling.

Visualization: (visual and auditory): Students close their eyes and try to visualize letters as the teacher says them. (If student cannot see the letters with eyes closed, they can softly say the letters after the teacher says them.)

Blind Writing: (auditory, visual, tactile and kinesthetic): This is similar to visualization, but adds the tactile and kinesthetic. As the teacher says the letters, the students, with eyes closed write the words. Do: Air Writing: students use index finger to print the word. Carpet Writing: Students use finger to write words on the carpet or floor.

Touch Board: (auditory, visual, tactile and kinesthetic): Students use a lap-board covered with a textured fabric to write their words. Students say the word, use their index finger to write the letters as they say them and repeat the word.

Individual Chalk or Dry-Erase Boards: (auditory, visual and kinesthetic): Print the word on an individual board, saying the word and each letter as it is printed.



"I use the five weekly word wall words for spelling as well as reading. I introduce them with the clapping and snapping drills on the first day, and through the week we review and drill the words each day. Also each day we do one of the following exercises:

- Word searches. I make my own word searches at www.puzzlemakers.com . I also copy graph paper and have my kids make their own word searches to trade with others.
- The children cut letters from newspapers or magazines to spell the words. I put a waste paper basket on each table to try to cut down on the mess!
- My kids love to do spelling aerobics! As you spell the words aloud, you touch your stomach for letters that are written in the middle line, touch your toes for words that go down in the basement (like g, p, q, y, j) and reach over their heads for

words that stand tall (like b, d, f, h, k, l, t).

- We write spelling words with the vowels in red and the consonants in a different colour.

- My kids like to play 'Disappearing Words'. Write the word on the chalkboard twice with water and then two students come up and fan on the word to see who can make it disappear first.

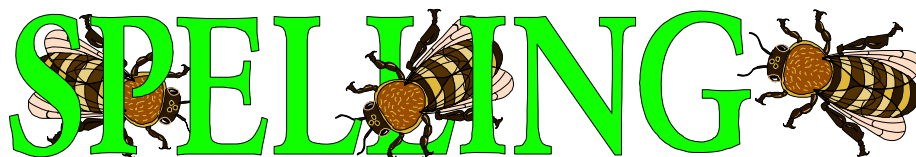
- I have a set of alphabet stencils. I cut the sheets of lower case letters into single alphabets (they come with a number of alphabet fonts on each sheet), and the children trace the stencils to print the words.

- Some of the children are printing the words in large font on the computer while others are doing activities at their seats. I have this set up on each computer with a word processing program and primary font.



"In grade one, we don't begin the spelling program until the end of January. I tape the core words on each desk each week. This way the words are looked at every day, and I find that the children learn them more solidly. When they misspell a word in their daily work, it is highlighted with a marker, and they re-write the word correctly. All words are previewed, and used during the week. I also teach my kids how to use their personal dictionary. Many children of them don't like to use invented spelling and go to their dictionary in search of the word."

"We do these activities as we spell each word. We clap our hands high in the air in front of our heads if the letter is a tall one, 't' or 'l', for example. We snap our fingers if the letter is short, like 'a' or 'o'. We scoop with our hands by our sides if the letter goes under the line, like 'y' or 'g'. So c-a-p would be snap, snap, scoop, and f-l-a-t would be clap, clap, snap, clap. They really like doing this."



Spelling Tricks

"We did the King of -ing and the boys wore crowns that day. They loved it!

Today we are doing Quiet Queens (two of our word wall words are quiet and queen to have words for the 'q' ...and the girls have been asking when they get to wear their crowns...so today is the day...they have to talk in whisper voices for a time period...."

We play 'I spy' with the word wall. I start the games saying something like:

I am in the short a family. (take one guess from the class)

I am an animal. (take one guess from the class)

I end with a sound /t/ and so on. (take one guess from the class)

I rhyme with bat. (take one guess from the class)

The child who answers the questions correctly (cat) chooses a word from a stash of slips I have made. They give out clues to the word. Clues include how the word might look, sound, what it means, kinds of books it might be in, describing the word. Kids love this silly game and beg to play every day. I change slips often so that we do not do the same words over and over. I put words that are causing troubles or commonly asked about in the pile so we have a chance to talk about them."

"Some tricks I have taught are:

oo - have them colour gross eyeballs to think of when they see oo

au and aw , ou and ow go together because the 'u' can turn into a curvy w."

Sing the letters to the song as if they were the words to the song. Do the whole song since it reinforces the word more often. Point to the word on a piece of paper or use flash cards.

Songs for 3 Letter Words

This Old Man

Jingle Bells

Three Blind Mice

Songs for 4 Letter Words

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Skip to My Lou

YMCA

Are You Sleeping?

Songs for 5 Letter Words

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

You Are My Sunshine

BINGO ("There was a class that learned to spell; And this is what they sang-o")

Songs for 6 Letter Words

This Old Man
Jingle Bells
Happy Birthday
The Farmer in the Dell
Skip to My Lou

Songs for 7 Letter Words

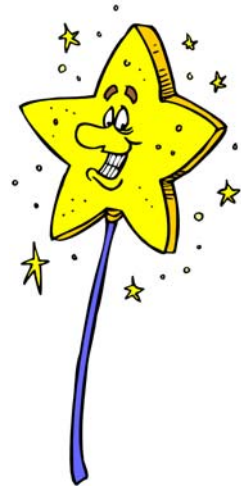
My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean
Twinkle, Twinkle
Willoughby Wallaby Woo

Songs for 8 Letter Words

We Wish You a Merry Christmas
For He's a Jolly Good Fellow

Songs for 9 Letter Words

I'm A Little Teapot



Ways to Practice Your Spelling Words

If you can have many different ways for the children to practice their words, spelling time becomes a lot more fun and the spelling aptitude will increase. Try a different way each day!

- Write your spelling words 4 times each.
- Write a sentence for each of your words.
- Write your words in alphabetical order.
- Write a story with as many of your words as you can.
- Make a three panel comic strip using as many words as you can (speech bubbles and illustrations).
- Use a spelling word to create a new word by changing one letter at a time as many times as possible.
- Make a word search using your spelling words.
- Make rainbow words - write your words in three colours or in all the colours of the rainbow.
- Make silly sentences using as many spelling words in each as you can.
- Draw a picture and write your words in the picture.
- Write your words replacing all vowels with a line.
- Write your words replacing all consonants with a line.
- Write a short story using all your words.
- Scramble your words - write your words, then write them again with the letters mixed up.

- Make a word search with a friend, then trade and solve.
- Solve a pre-made word search puzzle.
- Write your words on graph paper and outline in colours.
- Write your words by cutting out letters in a newspaper or magazine and gluing them on a paper.
- Pyramid words - write your words adding or subtracting one letter at a time. The shape is a pyramid.
- Words-in-words - write your word and then write at least two words made from each.
- Delicious words - Write your words in whipped cream, peanut butter, or anything you can eat!
- Clean words - write your words in shaving cream on your desk or table top.
- Dirty Words - write your words in mud or sand.
- Edible words - write your words by arranging alphabet pasta or Alphabits. Glue them on paper.
- 3D words - use modelling clay rolled thinly to make your words.
- Magazine words - use an magazine or newspaper and find your word. Cut it out and glue it on paper.
- Cheer your words - pretend you are a cheerleader and call out your words!
- Use a tape recorder and record your words and their spelling.
- Criss-cross words - write two words having one common letter so they criss-cross.
- If you are right-handed, write with your left, or vice versa.
- The word train - Write the entire list end-to-end as one long word.
- With a long length of string, 'write' words in cursive, using the string to shape the letters.
- Using your finger, draw each letter on a partner's back and see if the partner can tell the word.
- Telephone words - translate your words into numbers from a telephone keypad.
- Give each letter a number, 1 to 26 in alphabetical order. What are the spelling words worth?
- In a darkened room, use a flashlight to draw letters in the air.
- Search a newspaper page from top to bottom, circling each letter of a word as you find it.
- Make words using popsicle sticks.
- Number the alphabet from 1 to 26, then convert your words to a number code.
- Use magazines or newspapers to cut the letters of the spelling words and glue them onto paper.
- Assign every letter of the alphabet a number. Then write the numbers that correspond to the letters of the spelling word. The student must use the number clues to write the spelling word.

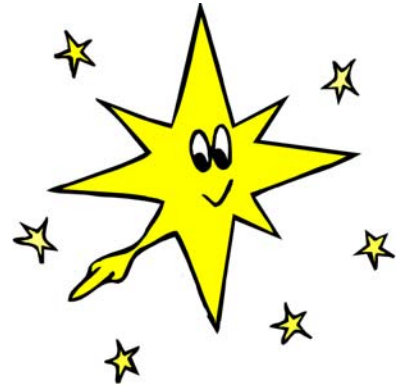
Go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com/> and make different puzzles with this week's spelling words. Try lots of different kinds!

Sparkle

The students are in a circle. You give the spelling word.

1. The first student says the word.
2. The next child spells the first letter.
3. Next child spells second letter.
4. Continue around the circle, each child saying one letter.
5. After the word is spelled, the next child says the word.
6. The next child says 'Sparkle!'
7. The child after that is out.

This is a great game! You can help the children who have difficulty, if you want - the child who is out is random and the winner has nothing to do with skill. It is luck, so every child can feel confident.



Words in Words

This is a very handy website - go to:

<http://www.wordles.com/getwordsinwords.asp>

See Paola's book called 'One Word a Day'. It gives you lots of words to use!

Working With Words

"Are you required to do formal spelling in your classroom? I don't do formal spelling in mine - I do use the Four Blocks Working with Words in which we work on five word wall words each week. We do daily word practice activities, clap the words, chant the words, and so on, all week long. Our goal is to have all students be able to read and spell those words. Lots of them have word chunks (word families) so we work on those, too. We do other activities such as Making Words, Tongue Twisters, and Guess the Covered Word as well. I have just assessed each of my students for the end of our quarter. I had each read them to me - almost all could read the words we have learned so far. I also dictated the words and had each student write them down. Again, most students could spell them. I attribute this success to the way in which Working with Words in implemented each day. We use and refer to the word wall all the time and my kids know that these words are expected to be spelling correctly in their writing. The Four Blocks book, Month by Month Phonics for First Grade is a terrific resource."

Spelling Thoughts

A teacher asks questions about spelling dictation:

"Is there one 'right' way to do it? At our school, we were directed to say the sentence once, have the children

say it, give them time to write it, and then read it slowly for the children to proofread and edit. This works fine for most children. But what about the children with poor auditory memory who can't remember what the sentence was? Basically, I'm wondering WHAT we are testing. If we are testing spelling, why are they looking at the word wall? If we are testing word wall use this method makes more sense. If we are testing auditory memory, I guess it's OK with the way it is. Are you supposed to use ONLY word wall words?"

"When I dictate a sentence from the word wall, yes, I let them look at it! I tell them that is how they learn to use the word wall, by using it! I also say the sentence more than once. I say it slowly, then I repeat it 2 or 3 more times. When I grade my spelling tests with the one sentence I dictate, I check it for

1. Upper case at the beginning
2. Ending mark at the end
3. All word wall words spelled correctly

They have learned after a few of these dictations that they have to rely on the word wall, even if it is to just check their work. I have so many that use phonics, which is great, but I want them to start really using the word wall."

"Our school researched spelling a few years ago. Research seemed to support that memorizing for a test didn't help develop students who could apply correct spelling to their writing. We adopted and were trained in the Rebecca Sitton Spelling Program. The words are arranged from Grade 1 to Grade 6 in the order in which they are most commonly used in writing. Children aren't given weekly tests but held accountable in any writing they do in all areas of the curriculum for words introduced. Words are introduced at the rate of 5 a week and teachers' materials give lots of interactive activities to help the children learn the words. The training also stressed the need for children to learn significant editing skills which focus on looking at each letter. Her method taught us how to teach this method of editing to our students. The primary teachers at our school use this program and are happy with the results. It's working for us and is quite stress free. The children enjoy spelling and are doing quite well in their writing application. It focuses on homophones, antonyms, synonyms, etc., and is repetitive. If I see words they are often using incorrectly that haven't yet been introduced, I am able to introduce out of sequence. I am also able to easily revisit any words that I see they haven't yet mastered. There are materials that include cloze procedures to help assess in addition to the assessments we do naturally in their daily writing."

Spelling Practice Ideas

ABC order: Write words in alphabetical order. Watch 2nd and 3rd letters!

Acrostics: out of the word. example: THERE: the hairy elephant raced eagerly

Bingo: I divide a sheet of paper into 9 squares (you can use more than 9). The students write one spelling words in each box and then choose extra words off the word wall. I have the words on strips in a jar and pull one out at a time. If they have the word on their lists, they trace over it with a coloured pencil. If they don't have the word they write it on the back of their paper. Once they get bingo in one direction, they may keep playing. I usually play until everyone wins at least once.

Clay/play dough rope letter words: First have a rag or waxed paper on the surface to protect it. Use a small piece of clay or play dough and roll it between the hands to make a rope shape into a letter shape. Continue until the whole word is spelled. Read the word to someone. Do the next word.

Chalkboard Spelling Bee: Every student stands by his/her desk with a chalkboard in front. The teacher gives a word. All write on the chalkboard. At a signal from teacher, the students turn their boards towards the teacher. Check and correct. Students with correct boards remain standing for the next round.

Coloured vowels and consonants: Write words twice. Once with vowels being one colour and consonants being another colour. The second time, use a third colour and write the word in one colour.

Crossword: I generate a crossword puzzle for each list and offer it as a choice for an activity.

Cut out words: This one is a bit time consuming, but for what it's worth... Keep a box of magazines on hand and have students find their words, pictures of their words, or cut out individual letters to make the words and glue them to a piece of drawing paper.

During the week - If students see or hear one of their weekly spelling words, they tally it next to the word. (For some reason they think this is fun - they love to use vis-a-vis markers!) It seems to have brought the spelling test scores up somewhat because they're constantly looking for those words in their books and in their own written work.

Dictionary/thesaurus scavenger hunt: Look for definitions, synonyms, antonyms or homonyms where appropriate. Write down the page number.

3 Different ways: Write words using a different way of writing until there are 3 of each word. Choose from: printed, cursive, crayon, marker, coloured pencil, squiggly lines, puffed letters, upside down, or your own way.

Disappearing words: happy happ_ hap __ ha ___ h _____

'Heads Up, Spell Up': It's like the 'Heads up Seven up' game. I select five students to be the 'taggers' of the game. The other kids sit at their desks, heads down, with their thumbs up. The taggers sneak around the room and each tagger selects one student and pushes their his or her thumb down. When all taggers have selected someone, they return to the front of the room. I then say 'Heads up spell up.' If a student had been tagged, he/she stands up. I then give the student a word to spell. If it is spelled correctly, the student gets two guesses as to who tagged him/her. A misspelled word only gets one guess. Guess correctly, become a tagger.

Here Comes The Judge: One person is selected to be the judge and leaves the room. Four or five students go to the board and write a spelling word on the board in their best handwriting. When the class calls, "here comes the judge" (anyone remember the 1970s??), the judge returns to the room and selects the word spelled correctly with the best handwriting. The judge does this by erasing the other choices. The winner is the new judge.

Make a word search: Using graph paper, write all the spelling words, then fill in all the extra squares with other letters. No backwards words. They can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal as long as they are spelled from left to right.

Once Upon a Time: In this activity, the students write a story using all the words on their list. This one appeals to my writers!

Outline your words: I give the class a half sheet of graph paper, they write their words in the squares, being careful to use two squares for the long and tall letters. Then they outline the squares they used with coloured pencil.

Picture words: Draw a picture, write all your spelling words somewhere in the picture. Make a frame for your picture by writing the spelling words around the outside of the picture. See if someone can find all the spelling words in your picture.

Rainbow words: Write spelling words in coloured pencil or crayon. Write them first in one colour, go back over them in another colour, then do this a third time.



Reappearing words: k _____ ki _____ kit _____ kitt _____ kitte _____ kitten

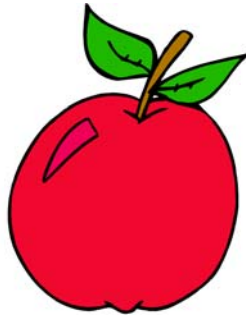
Scrambled words: Write each word with mixed up letters. Make it neat so someone else can try to unscramble your words.

Secret Code: I make up a secret code sheet and have the children decode the words. I type the words on the computer and then change the font to one of the fonts with symbols. I do include the key to the code on each sheet.

Shaped words: Write words letter by letter in a pyramid, square, rectangle or circular shape.

Example:

a
a p
a p p
a p p l
a p p l e



Silent spelling game: Divide the class into groups and give each group a set of alphabet cards which may be spread out on the table. Each student in the group must spell a word with the cards in rotation. Other members of the group may help by pointing, but can not talk. When the word is spelled, all group members must raise their hands. First group spells it aloud.

Silly Sentences: Write ten sentences using two different words from your spelling list in each sentence. The sillier the better, although I have had some students who wrote serious sentences.

Smack! Make flashcards of the alphabet. The kids write on a piece of paper a word of five or more letters. You call randomly the letters on the flash cards and they have to cross out the letter if it is in their word. The first one to cross out all the letters smacks the desk and says SMACK!

Sparkle: Have the class stand in a circle in an open area. Tell the students that you are going to give them a spelling word and that it is very important for them to listen. Say a spelling word, e.g. 'animal' The first student will repeat the spelling word 'animal'. The next student will say the first letter of the word 'a'. If the student misspells the word, he/she has to sit down. Students go around the circle, spelling out the word. Once all of the letters have been correctly spelled out, the next student says the whole word. The next student in the circle says 'sparkle' and the person after them sits down. The game is started over when only a few students are left standing.

Spelling dice: Divide the class into two teams. Teams take turns spelling a word. If it is

correctly spelled the team can roll dice and keep the score.

Spelling minute: Teams line up and students take turns spelling words. If it is correctly spelled, the speller rolls dice and scorekeeper records the score. Each team is timed and spells for one minute. If the word is misspelled the speller goes to the end of the line and next person must spell the word. The winner is the team with the highest score when it is rounded to the nearest 10.

Spell a Word: Split the class into two groups and give members of each team index cards with containing alphabet letters. Some kids will get one letter, others more. When you call a word, the students with the cards must run to the front of the room and hold the letter card in front of them so the class can read the word. Stamp out spelling words with letter stamps.

Tic Tac Toe: Divide the class into two teams. Put a tic tac toe board on the chalkboard. Members of the teams take turns, spelling the word, defining the word, and using the word in a sentence.

Word within a word: Some words have words inside them...others do not. Write your spellings words. Circle the smaller words that you find within your spelling words. Example: s u i t c a s e- it, suit, case, as

Words without Consonants: They also like doing the opposite by writing vowels only _i_e _i_.

Words without vowels: Write the spelling words, but place a line where each vowel should go. L_k_th_s.

And more practice ideas.....

- rainbow writing (three different crayons over words)
- black paper with markers
- Magazine words - Cut out your words and glue them on paper.
- X Words - Write two words having one common letter so they criss-cross.
- Telephone Words - Translate your words into numbers from a telephone keypad.
- write words with finger on the back of a friend
- type spelling words on computer
- write the words on the overhead
- ABC order - Write your words in alphabetical order.
- Silly sentences -Use all your words in ten sentences.



"We do these activities as we spell each word. We clap our hands high in the air in front of our heads if the letter is a tall one, 't' or 'l', for example. We snap our fingers if the letter is short, like 'a' or 'o'. We scoop with our hands by our sides if the letter goes under the line, like 'y' or 'g'.

So c-a-p would be snap, snap, scoop.

f-l-a-t would be clap, clap, snap, clap.

They really like doing this."

"I found that having the core words on their desk all the time and only being responsible for 2 or three words a week made testing unnecessary. Sitton's basic tenet is that the kids are responsible for the words all of the time, not just to memorize them for a test, and then to misspell them in everyday writing. In grade one, we don't begin the spelling program until the end of January, when our kids go into their primer and the third marking period. The words are so basic: a, and, he, she, the, I, etc. that the majority of the kids already know them anyway. When they misspell a word, it is highlighted with a marker, and they re-write the word correctly. All words are previewed, and used during the week. I also teach my kids how to use a Student Dictionary. We use invented spelling at the beginning of the year, but many of them don't like it and go to their dictionary in search of the word. The Rebecca Sitton method also encourages them to proofread and check their work. We like her word activities, so spelling is never tedious, and her literature tie-ins are quite interesting."

"We completely stopped doing formal spelling 'tests' this year...and we're teaching spelling with activities...and I absolutely love it. I always found that there wasn't a lot of carry-over in grade one spelling. Kids would get a word right on Friday's spelling test, and then mis-spell the same word on Monday. We're using lots of the usual word wall activities that have helped our kids learn to automatically spell the words on our word walls, which are mostly sight words. We sing our word wall words to various tunes, for example...and play 'laser tag' where we use a laser pointer to quickly point the various words on the word wall and the kids have to follow the 'red dot' with their eyes and say the word the pointer stops on. Those are just a couple of examples.

"We've also concentrated very heavily on 'chunking' this year. Many of our word wall words have various 'chunks' highlighted. Kids are encouraged to use words they know or parts of words they know to help them figure out other words..... both when spelling and reading/sounding out. (We do a little game where I say a big word, and then they check the word wall for highlighted words that will help them spell the word I've said. I've made a list of these that correlate with my word wall words. The kids love to do this!)

"Then there's 'Making Words', of course, which I've always thought really helps kids' spelling. We do this often. I also do Glass Analysis, which is another word family approach using cards that has kids segmenting a word into clusters or chunks, and I have designed my own homework (words to sound out that a parent then signs off on) that closely follows whatever clusters or 'chunks' we've analyzed that day using the Glass procedure.

Spelling Games

Cherry Pie

The children stand in a circle and the teacher gives a spelling word. The first child says the words, the next in the circle starts to spell the word with the first letter of the word. The game is continued with the spelling of the word around the circle. After the last letter is named in the word the next child says the word again then the following child says 'Cherry Pie' and has to sit down. If a child says the wrong letter they also sit down. After the word is spelled you continue with another word until all the words are spelled or everyone has sat down or you have a winner. The winner is whoever is left. Children don't feel so threatened with this game, as good spellers are 'out', too.



Heads Up, Spell Up

This is played like *Heads up, Seven up*: 7 students are 'it'. They lightly tap one student each. Tapped students have to correctly spell a spelling word before they can guess who tapped them.

Spelling Game

Have students line up in front of the class. Say the first spelling word; the first child will say the first letter; the second child will say the second letter, so on. If a child does not know a letter, they are out of the game. After the first word is done continue with the next child with the next word.

Silly Sentences

Choose between 6-10 spelling words each week. Underline the letters from the spelling words. The first letter in word is first word in sentence, and so on. Examples: Spelling word - *brook* Sentence: Bobby ran over old kites. Spelling word - *waves* Sentence: Wanda and Vinny eat sardines.

Glow-in-the-Dark Spelling

Students write their spelling words on white paper using glow in the dark materials. Then, hang up the words and have the students enjoy reading them in the dark!

Spelling Relay

Divide the students into groups or rows. The first person in the group has a piece of paper on their desk. The teacher will call out a spelling word from their list and say, 'GO'. At the signal, the first person writes that word as quickly as possible and passes the paper to the next person in the group. This continues until everyone has written the word on the paper. The first team finished gets one point for every word which was spelled correctly in that group. This gives the students the initiative to work quickly, but accurately.

Learn about Your Province

Give each student a list of cities and towns in your province or a simple map with the places marked. Have the children write a spelling word from their study list and then find a city or town that begins with the same letter. It gives them a chance to practice the words and also learn the names of other communities. It helps many children to learn the relative locations and distances of places in their province.

Shaving Cream Spelling

This is a great way for the students to review their spelling words and clean their desks. You give each student a 'blob' of shaving cream. They then spread it on their desk. The teacher will give the students one spelling word at a time while the students use their finger to write the word in shaving cream. After they are finished they erase the word and the teacher gives them the next word.

Sing your spelling!

For 3 letter words - This Old Man, Jingle Bells, Three Blind Mice

For 4 letter words - YMCA, Twinkle Twinkle little Star, Skip to my Lou, Are You Sleeping?

For 5 letter words - Row, Row, Row your boat, BINGO 'There was a class that learned to spell; And this is what they sang-o', You Are My Sunshine

For 6 letter words - This old man, Jingle Bells, Happy Birthday, Michael Row Your Boat Ashore, The Farmer in the Dell, Skip to My Lou

For 7 letter words - She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain When She Comes, My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean, Twinkle, Twinkle, Willoughby Wallaby Woo, Go In and Out the Window

For 8 letters - We Wish You a Merry Christmas, For He's a Jolly Good Fellow

For 9 letters - I'm A Little Teapot

For 10 letters - Row, Row, Row your boat, You Are My Sunshine

For 11 letters - If You're Happy and You Know It

For 12 letters - Ten Little Indians

Write your spelling words 4 times each.

Write a sentence for each of your words.

Write your words in alphabetical order.

Dirty Words - write your words in mud or sand.

Make words using popsicle sticks.

Solve a pre-made word search puzzle.

Write a short story using all your words.

Make a word search using your spelling words.



Spelling Tricks

O-U-L-D!

"(sung to the tune of BINGO)

There are three words,
They're hard to spell,
They're 'could' and 'should' and 'would'
Oh you lucky dog
Oh you lucky dog
Oh you lucky dog
Helps you spell could, should, would!

Because

We sing the spelling to the ABC
song....

Or to *Mary Had a Little Lamb*

b-e-c-a-u-s-e

u-s-e

u-s-e

b-e-c-a-u-s-e

because, because, because

More could, would should....

The students, when spelling will say the first sound 'cuh', for example and then verbalize 'oh you lucky dog' as spelling ould. You have to show them just to use the beginning sound. They pick it up pretty quickly and love singing the song."

"A little trick for the 'ould' words is to spell it this way... w - o - u - little - devil, you are so hard to spell!"



"There is a little boy named Larry Dean. His mother called him L.D. for short (explain nicknames). Larry Dean loves to play outside. It had rained for days and he couldn't go out and play. Finally, the rain stopped and his mother said, you can go out but you **MUST NOT** get in the mud. Well, she looked out the window and wouldn't you know it - Larry Dean was standing there in the biggest mud puddle ever. She shouted out the door, '**Oh, you L.D.** Just wait 'till your daddy gets home!'"

And more.....

"I teach 'want' as having the little word 'ant' inside. 'Do you want an ant in your pants?'

'Here' and 'there' are partners - they both show a place. 'Here' is in both, of course. This helps to differentiate the different forms of there, their and they're.

"Here's a trick to remember how to spell "because": big elephants can always understand small elephants.

Also, the word 'friend' always ends in 'end.'"

They

Have all the children stand in a circle. Write "They are in a circle" on a chart. Then choose one boy to stand in the center of the circle. Write "He is in the middle" on the chart. Then write the word 'they' and show 'he' in the middle of the word. Re-read the two sentences and have the students show you the 'he' in the middle of 'they'.

ie

My mother said, 'Never believe a lie!'

My father said, 'I'd like a piece of pie!'

My sister said, 'I'll always be your friend!'

My brother said, 'This song must have an 'end!'

Here and hear, there and their

Pointing..... 'here is here and here is in there.'

For 'there' and 'their' - 'there' is a place and the opposite of 'here' ('here' is in 'there') and when you are talking about people, 'I' am in 'their'.

They'll be an heir when they inherit **'their'** fortune.

If you can **hear** something, you will need your **ear**.

And more

Double the c, double the s, you will always have **success!**

The **Principal** is always your **pal**...(spelling principal/principle).

The princess will **'be a'** beautiful girl, inside and out.' Beautiful begins with 'be a'.

Tomorrow.... Tom or row

rhythm - Rhythm Helps Your Two Hips Move

There is no 'a' in **they**,

There is no 'a' in **they**,

They begins with 't-h-e'

There is no 'a' in **they!**



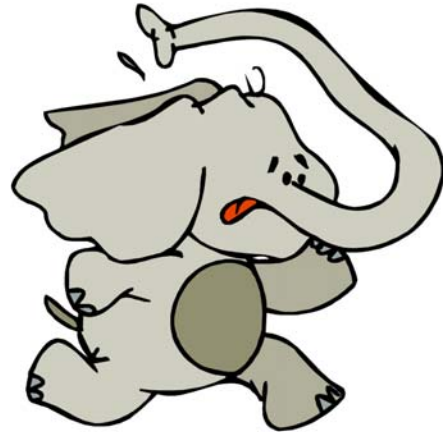
Because

To Mary Had a Little Lamb

B-e-c-a-u-s-e,
a-u-s-e, a-u-s-e,
B-e-c-a-u-s-e,
that's how we spell 'because'!

Betty Eats Cake And Uses Six Eggs
B E C A U S E

Big Elephants Could Always Use Some Exercise



More Spelling Fun

"I do word searches and unscrambles...my kids love them.

I type their spelling words in a large font with a space in between...cut the letters out and put them in envelopes. The students work in teams to build their words. They glue them on a large piece of paper.. They love team scramble day!

My students like to do 'rainbow spelling'. The children take all the colours of the rainbow from their crayon box and use a different colour for writing the same word."

Give each letter in alphabet a number...a=1, b=2, c=3 etc. Then take Spelling word and see how much the word is worth.

Paper Planes from Spelling Tests

"A fellow teacher told me he was having difficulty getting his students to take their Friday spelling test seriously. So, one Friday, after correcting the tests, he passed them back to the students and said that anyone who had a perfect score was allowed to fold the test paper into a paper plane. He then took the entire class to the auditorium for a flying contest. The three students whose planes flew the farthest were given a simple reward.

"Back in the classroom after the flying contest, he announced that they would have another paper plane contest next Friday after the spelling test. In one week, he went from having 8 students with perfect scores to 24 students with perfect scores. You have to love that!"

More Spelling Fun

Spell words with alphabet macaroni or alphabet cereal. These can be dipped into glue and put on coloured paper.

Spell words with magnetic letters on cookie sheets, or metal chalkboards.

Use alphabet stamps and have the students stamp out their words on paper.

Cut letters from magazines or newspaper to spell the words.



Write words as triangles. It is fun to do on graph paper.

Use Wikki Sticks and bend the sticks into the desired letters to form each spelling word.

Sandpaper rubbings: Cut each letter out of sandpaper and glue it to an index card. The class spells out their word and puts a piece of paper over it and does a crayon rubbing.

Fun Pens: students copy the words in 'fun pens'. There are shiny ones and glitter ones and wiggly ones and lots of others. Make sure they are washable!

Telephone Writing: The teacher prepares a paper with the spelling words written according to the key pad of a telephone. For example, c-a-t would be 2-2-8 (C is on the 2 button, A is on the 2 button, and t is on the 8 button of a telephone key pad). Students will look at a telephone key pad to figure out the spelling word. They will write the spelling word on the paper the teacher has prepared. Or - do the opposite. Have the students figure out the number for each word.

Practice spelling the words with sign language.

Sorry! Write the spelling words on wooden sticks along with two saying SORRY! Put the sticks in a cup. Students team up and play. When they choose a stick, they must spell the word without looking to keep the stick. If they misspell the word they must put it back. If they get a SORRY! stick, they must put all their sticks back. The one with the most sticks at the end wins. You can keep adding new spelling words to old spelling words as a review through the year as well.

Disappearing words: Write a word on the chalkboard with a wet sponge. Aim a small fan at it to speed drying. The children write the words as many times as they can CORRECTLY AND NEATLY before the word "disappears". It's a nice twist to writing each word multiple times and they LOVE it! Whoever has the most correct (and neat) words gets to write the next word on the board with the sponge!

"I have my kids do a worksheet on their weekly spelling words. Here are some of the exercises:

- Count the syllables
- Divide into syllables
- Find little words in this word
- Print rhyming words
- Print the word in 'sound clumps' clown = cl ow n flower = fl ow er
- Can the student think of a way to remember the spelling?
- Print the word and decorate the letters
- Draw the word shape
- Print the consonants in blue and the vowels in red
- Print the word with stamps
- Find the letters in a newspaper, cut them out and glue them on a sheet"

Studying Spelling words

First, feel what your mouth is doing as you say the word. Example spelling 'night'

- a. **Say** the word. night Say the syllables if there are more than one.
- b. **Stretch** the word. /nnn-iii-t/ Work by syllables if necessary. Some letters do not stretch - just stretch the ones that will. For example, in 'night' the /n/ and the long 'i' sound will stretch, and the 't' won't.
- c. **Split up** the sounds. Work by syllables if necessary. First sound? /n/ Next sound? long i Last sound? /t/
- d. **Count** the sounds. 3
- e. **Draw blanks.** ___ ___ ___ The blanks stand for the sounds. Put slashes between syllables if necessary.

Next, learn the spelling.

- a. **Record** the spelling sound by sound. On the first blank, write [letters] n ___ ___ On the next blank, write igh . On the last blank, write t . n igh t
- b. **Study** the spelling. Discuss the parts of the word that are tricky.
- c. **Write** the word. *night*
- d. Give the **meaning**. What does ___ mean? Put it in a sentence.

A shortcut version of the strategy for studying spelling words:

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



Spelling Through the Week

"Each day of the week I have spelling activities.

Monday - First today I go over the more difficult words that we have had on previous weeks and show them on the word wall. Then I introduce the words and we talk about the phonics (or lack thereof) and sound patterns. Then the students sort the words after deciding on ways the words can be separated: numbers of letters, vowels, syllables, beginning letter, phonics rules, etc. We sort the words in as many ways as possible.

Tuesday - I go over the words again with the class. I have the students tell me about the phonics rules and the sound patterns that we discussed on Monday. We talk about the word families, blends, digraphs and other patterns. Then the children print out the words on a plain sheet of paper - they can do it with colours, bubble letters or any decorative print that they like to use.

Wednesday - The students sort the words with a partner, and talk about why a word goes into the place it does. (I model this often.) Then one child dictates the words to the other like a teacher would and marks the words - and then the other child dictates the words. Talk about any mistakes with the class and how they can remember the spelling.

Thursday - We go over the words again together and the sound patterns. We clap and chant the spellings. Then I have a sheet for the students - either a word search puzzle or a cross-word puzzle. Then they choose the word or words that they think are the most tricky and print these out.

Friday - We have a spelling test. Then I quickly mark them and we have a celebration of the words, clapping and snapping them, doing motions to the spelling and finally, putting them up on the word wall with great fanfare!"

Spelling in Writing

"My kids each have a folder for their writing. They often use it as a privacy screen. Laminated onto the inside of the folder is a 'What to do...' list for spelling.

Is the word on the word wall?

Is the word around the classroom? (As my kids do a lot of 'read the room', this makes sense.)

Is the word in my dictionary? (Each student has a personal dictionary with words that they like to use that are not on the word wall.)

Stretch the sounds to spell if you can't find the word."

"We say this rhyme:

Say it slowly, Stretch the sound, Find the letter, Write it down."