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## WHY TEACH SPELLING?

The purpose of learning to spell is to write and write and write some more without having to stop and check the dictionary every few minutes. While the spell check available on computers may be convenient, it may not identify which spelling to use in the context (*there* or *their* for instance) or offer any choices for a phonetic attempt that doesn't resemble the actual word. There are also times when a spell check isn't convenient—filling out forms, taking tests, or writing notes, for example.

“Natural” spellers usually need less practice in order to remember a word, but still require practice adding prefixes and suffixes in order to increase their understanding of word meaning. Allow them to move through the spelling lists at a pace suitable to their ability, adding words misspelled in their compositions, and focusing on building skills listed at the end of the word lists. Practice adding prefixes and suffixes, noting how they change a word, aids in the understanding of new words. **Use of the words in the Latin and Greek sections will also boost vocabulary development.**

Students struggling with spelling often try to memorize each word letter by letter. Seen as a random series of letters, it is not surprising that retention of the new word is short lived. *These students can become “natural” spellers with help.* This program simplifies spelling by combining words by sight and sound patterns, an aid to long-term retention. That and the multi-sensory approach outlined in *How to Study a Word* will help the student approach any difficult word in a manner that will lead to spelling success.

## TEACHING SPELLING

Because spelling requires long-term visual memory, most words here are organized not only by a sound pattern, but also by a sight pattern. That is, only one spelling of a sound is used per list so that the student can see and hear a pattern. (For example, *few*, *too*, and *blue* would not be on the same list because they use different spellings of /oo/.) This helps the student later recall a word by linking it to one he can spell—“Oh, yeah, that was on the list with *blue*—I spell it t-r-u-e.” Since pronunciations may vary slightly, any word on a sight/sound list may be moved as necessary.

Other words are organized by category, which, again, can provide a memory link. Struggling students should take any especially troublesome word from its category and combine it with another word with a common sight/sound pattern, as needed. Those listed in the category *Words for Review* have also been added to sight/sound lists at various grade levels since they are commonly misspelled words requiring extra practice. Words listed as *sight words* are included as common words which require special focus.

**Regular, short frequent practice aids memorization.** The student should work with a group of words four days in a row for 15 to 30 minutes, followed by a test on day five.

1. **Turn to the graded word list appropriate for the student's grade level. If his written work suggests that level will be too difficult, choose the graded list you believe will be most appropriate. Then write, or have the student copy, a list of words for study.** Number of words may vary. For students having great difficulty, begin with 5-10 words to ensure success. Words misspelled in tests or in compositions can be added to weekly spelling words for study. For a student that struggles with spelling, add those words to lists where there will be a sight/sound pattern in common.

You may pretest by having the students spell words from the list selected. Dictate the word, then use it in a sentence for clarity. The student may spell the word orally or in writing, whichever he finds easier. Continue with the pretest, marking those he misses, until there are ten to fifteen words to study for the week. Words spelled correctly can be added to the list for study if prefixes or suffixes can be added. After a week of study and the test for that group of words, pretesting can begin again. Students that spell readily will prefer this approach. However, if the student has a great deal of trouble spelling, he may need words he does know on the list with those he doesn't as he studies in order to aid his long-term retention. If that's the case, it is not necessary to pretest.

2. **Choose at least four activities (pages 58-62) and write them in the student's spelling folder or notebook.** These same activities can be used weekly. As time allows, the teacher can adjust the selection, or allow the student to choose alternatives.

**One activity should be to add prefixes and suffixes** to the spelling word or its root word. List the prefixes and suffixes found in the *Spelling and Grammar Skill* section at the end of the graded word list you will be using with the student. As in the example found in that section, the student should make as many words as possible.

**When teaching the rule for adding a prefix or suffix, do NOT give exceptions to the rule until the student has had a chance to apply the rule to a number of words.** If exceptions are introduced too quickly, he is likely to decide that rules aren't really helpful and revert to the bad habit of trying to memorize a series of single letters.

A child challenged by spelling should be assigned the procedure outlined in *How to Study a Word* until it becomes a habit. He can air-write the word, or write it with his finger in a tray of fine sand or corn meal not only for a multi-sensory approach, but also to eliminate handwriting if he finds writing difficult. A dyslexic child should find this activity especially helpful.

3. **Have the student complete at least one activity per day for four days.** That is, he should spend about 15-30 minutes working with the assigned word list. If an activity takes less time, he can add another activity or practice each word using the procedure outlined in *How to Study a Word*. Encourage students to use this method for any words they find difficult, especially those that don't follow common patterns or rules.

**Point out that every word should be learned by saying it in syllables and focusing on the spelling of each syllable.** First or second grade students can clap to the sound of the two syllable words listed. From third grade on have students write each word in syllables until saying and spelling each syllable has become a habit.

Words misspelled on compositions even after study, or those identified as *Words for Review*, may require special attention. Have the student write the word on a plain index card, or a paper kept for this special list, highlighting the trouble spot with a highlighter or writing it in a different color [ for example: w **h** e n ].

He can practice spelling the word by looking at it, then closing his eyes and spelling it OR by writing the word with his finger on his arm or leg or in a tray of fine sand or corn meal *while looking at the word* and saying each syllable and its spelling: For example: “fortune: for – f-o-r, tune – t-u-n-e.”

4. **Require NEAT handwriting of each word and all spelling assignments.** This avoids confusion and requires the student to maintain concentration.
5. **Dictate sentences during testing to provide a meaningful context for the word. Unless the student has physical difficulty writing, he should write the entire sentence.** This provides a more realistic test of memory since the goal is to increase a student’s ability to spell words correctly when he composes his own sentences.

### Sample Weekly Lesson

The student copies two short lists from the *Grade 3* word lists:

sought	bought	thought	fought	brought
toy	boy	joy	enjoy	employ

Inside the student’s spelling folder, the teacher has placed the following list of daily activities. The student practices on the same handwriting paper used for handwriting lessons and places the daily work in the folder.

- Day 1: Write each word three times as part of handwriting practice.
- Day 2:\* Add the following prefixes and suffixes to make real words:  
Suffixes: s or es, ful, est, er, ed, ing, ly, y Prefixes: un, re  
Check your answers in the dictionary.
- Day 3: Alphabetize the words.
- Day 4: Write each word in a sentence.
- Day 5: Test. On the day of the test, the student writes the entire sentence dictated. Misspelled words are noted and added to future spelling lists.

\*The student should check his answers for Day 2 using a dictionary if ability allows: thoughts, thoughtful, toys, boys, joyful, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, employs, employer, employed, employing, unemployed, reemploy, reemployed.

## GRADES 1 - 2

Words for grades one and two are combined to allow for coordination with the phonic program in use. Choose words that the child can already read fluently. It is not necessary to have the same number of words each week—assign from 5 - 10 words. Add to lists by having students add endings to spelling words. Also assign words from “Words by Category” as needed. (Some are listed below for convenience.)

### sight/sound pattern: one vowel with a short sound

<u>a</u>	<u>a</u>	<u>a</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>i</u>	<u>i</u>
am	bad	mask	red	best	help	in	this
an	ask	had	jet	nest	belt	sit	thin
and	sad	sat	bed	let	send	big	with
ran	stand	last	sled	set	end	it	inch
man	black	fast	men	them	step	chin	trip
can	at	act	get	then	next	chip	its
than	that	glad	beg	yes	neck	him	milk
plan	bat	map	led	test	fresh	if	print
hand	back	trap	went	ten	felt	six	sick
					belt	list	pick
						did	quick

### one vowel/ short sound

<u>o</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>u</u>	<u>u</u>	<u>ar</u>	<u>ar</u>		
on	cost	but	much	are	art	win	thick
got	box	cut	such	arm	cart	mix	quit
hop	dog	us	trust	farm	start	fix	wish
drop	fog	sun	must	car	part	<u>-ing</u>	<u>-ll</u>
shop	block	fun	just	far	apart	wing	hill
top	clock	run	luck	hard		sing	ill
not	stop	up	truck	harm	<u>o - /wuh/</u>	thing	bill
hot	mop	cup	jump	card	one	bring	will
lot	pond	rub	running	star	once	sting	pill
soft	frog	club	cutting	dark		string	still

### vowel-consonant-e/long vowel, silent e

<u>a - e</u>	<u>ir</u>						
cake	gave	name	age	place	bird	swing	fill
take	save	game	page	face	first	spring	ball
bake	tale	came	late	race	girl	morning	fall
make	cane	same	state	trace	third		wall
shake	ate	made	grade	brace	stir	<u>word + ing</u>	all
					shirt	being	call
					birth	going	stall
						helping	small

<u>vowel-consonant-e/long vowel, silent e</u>			<u>double consonants</u>		<u>ew - /oo/</u>	<u>—s - /z/</u>
<u>i - e</u>	<u>i - e</u>	<u>o - e</u>	<u>— one sound</u>		new	as
time	nice	hole	off	tell	few	has
side	mice	rose	egg	well	blew	was
hide	mile	nose	full	fell	flew	is
ride	smile	hope	miss	shell	stew	his
wide	dime	rode	less	smell	dew	
mine	five	those	mess	shall	grew	<u>—er</u>
shine	wide	close	press	doll	crew	her
dine	life	broke	class	dull		father
line	size	home	pass	odd	<u>—nk</u>	mother
nine	white	note	mitt	add	sank	sister
life					thank	brother
		<u>ee says e</u>	<u>two vowels - 1 sound</u>		drink	rubber
<u>u - e</u>	<u>end in vowel</u>	bee	<u>oo</u>	<u>ai says a</u>	pink	water
tube	do	see	cook	rain	sink	after
cube	to	free	look	sail	think	other
mule	who	tree	took	train	stink	winter
use	two	feed	book	wait		cover
used		sleep	brook	tail	<u>ay - /ā/</u>	
		three	crook		way	<u>y says /ē/</u>
<u>y says i</u>	<u>aw</u>	meet	hook	<u>oa - /ō/</u>	day	baby
my	saw	feet	shook	foal	say	many
by	draw	keep	foot	goal	stay	happy
fly	paw	deep	good	coat	may	very
fry	straw	seen	stood	goat	pay	every
cry	jaw	green		road	play	heavy
try		need	<u>ea says e</u>		gray	pretty
dry	<u>—er</u>	seem	clean	<u>o - /uh/</u>	pray	any
shy	never	feel	each	of	away	many
why	ever	week	eat	son		
	river		beat	from	<u>ow - /ah/</u>	<u>ow</u>
<u>ow - /ō/</u>	over	<u>air</u>	heat	done	gone	now
show	under	air	meat	dove	long	how
slow	helper	fair	team	love		cow
snow	farther	hair	read	above	<u>or - /er/</u>	brown
crow	summer	pair	east	come	word	clown
yellow	together	chair	dream	some	world	gown
low	bigger	stair	weak	welcome	work	crown

## Spelling and Grammar Skills

Students should practice adding endings to spelling words.

- ▶ Practice **spelling rules**: Add endings **s**, **ing**, **ed**

(See “The Rules - Plurals” or “Practicing the Rules” and “Words by Category - Irregular Verbs.”)

- ▶ Notice that some words have meaning as a noun and as a verb.

I take a trip. I take trips. / Don't trip. He trips. He tripped.

### EXAMPLES

Add **s** to make a noun plural:

jet - jets

bed - beds

car - cars

horn - horns

map - maps

sled - sleds

truck - trucks

jaw - jaws

Add **s**, **ing**, **ed** or use the irregular form of the verb:

bring	brings	bringing	brought	( <u>not</u> bring <u>ed</u> )
do	<u>do<u>e</u>s</u>	doing	did	( <u>not</u> do <u>ed</u> ) (Note rule for adding es to do.)
stand	stands	standing	stood	( <u>not</u> stand <u>ed</u> )
bat	bats	batting	batted	(Note rule about doubling the final consonant.)
run	runs	running	ran	( <u>not</u> run <u>ned</u> )

Add **s**, **ing**, **ed** or use the irregular form of the verb:

go	<u>go<u>e</u>s</u>	going	went	( <u>not</u> go <u>ed</u> ) (Note rule for adding es to go.)
stir	stirs	stirring	stirred	(Note rule for doubling final consonant)
tell	tells	telling	told	( <u>not</u> tell <u>ed</u> )
make	makes	making	made	( <u>not</u> mak <u>ed</u> )
hope	hopes	hoping	hoped	(Note rule for adding ing)
plan	plans	planning	planned	(Note rule for doubling final consonant)

- ▶ Practice writing **contractions**. Learn the meaning of the contraction. (I'm - I am)  
(See “Words by Category - Contractions.”)

**Students should practice capitalization and punctuation.**

- ▶ Practice **writing rules** for capitalization and punctuation: (See “*The Rules - Writing.*”)

**Capitalize**

The first word in a sentence  
Proper names  
Principal words in a title

**Use**

Periods at the end of a sentence.

**Students should practice using a dictionary.**

- ▶ Practice **dictionary skills**: (See “*The Rules - Syllables.*”)
  - ▶ **Alphabetize** by first and second letter.
  - ▶ Count **syllables** in a word by listening and clapping to indicate each syllable.
- ▶ Practice finding **antonyms** and **synonyms** for spelling words, as possible.  
(Check a dictionary and/or thesaurus if necessary.)

**Antonyms**

hot - cold	bad - good	off - on
funny - sad	rise - fall	hard - soft
high - low	light - dark	full - empty
first - last	more - less	end - begin
dull - sharp	fast - slow	inside - outside

**Synonyms**

cent - penny	tell - say	sick - ill
stir - mix	end - finish	far - distant
beg - plead	fast - quick	fall - drop
part - piece	came - arrived	shine - glow

# **THE RULES**

## **SPELLING RULES**

**Phonics: Charts for vowel and consonant sounds**

**Writing plural forms**

**Writing possessive forms**

**Adding prefixes and suffixes (affixes)**

**Dividing words into syllables**

## **WRITING RULES**

**Capitalization**

**Punctuation**

## Spelling Rules

### Plurals

*Although plural refers to nouns, the rules for adding s or es also apply to verbs.*

#### Add

s

#### When — Example

To form most plurals

cat - cats

If the word ends in a vowel followed by y

key - keys

To words ending in a vowel followed by o

radio - radios

To words ending in a consonant followed by o that refer to music: alto - altos piano - pianos solo - solos and to a few others: twos, egos. Several words are correct with either s or es.

To most words ending in f (see "es" for exceptions)

#### Add

es

#### When — Example

If the noun ends in ch, s, sh, x, or z

lunches gases brushes boxes waltzes

If the noun ends in consonant followed by a y, change y to i then add es. lady - ladies

To some one-syllable nouns ending in a single f or fe, change f or fe to v when you can hear the v sound in the plural form, then add es. (Verb forms don't usually change).

leaf - leaves (noun); leafs (verb)

To most words ending in a consonant followed by an o.

echo - echoes hero - heroes potatoes, tomatoes, torpedoes

**Change the spelling** of some words rather than add s or es:

child - children

louse - lice

ox - oxen

foot - feet

man - men

tooth - teeth

goose - geese

mouse - mice

woman - women

**Some words are the same for both the singular and plural form:**

bison

deer

grouse

moose

sheep

swine

## Writing Rules

### Capitalization

First Words	Capitalize the first letter of the first word in a sentence. Capitalize the first letter of the first word in each line of poetry. Capitalize the first letter of the first word in each direct quotation. <i>John asked, "Where are you going?"</i>
Titles/Subtitles	Capitalize the first and all important words in a title. <i>The Cat in the Hat. (Not a, an, the, to, and)</i>
I and O	Capitalize the letter I when it is used as the pronoun I. Capitalize the interjection O. (Not oh.)
Capitalize Proper Names and Proper Adjectives:	
Calendar Words	The first letter of each day of the week, month of the year, and each word naming a holiday.
Race - Nationality	Races, nationalities, and their languages. <i>American, Caucasian, African-American, French, German</i>
Religion	The name of religious terms for the sacred. scriptures - <i>the Bible (but not biblical), the Koran, the Torah</i> deity - <i>God, Christ, Allah, Buddha. (He as the pronoun for deity.)</i> The name of religions and their followers. <i>Christianity - Christians, Judaism - Orthodox Jew, Hinduism - Hindu</i>
Names	Important buildings and monuments <i>White House</i> Specific persons Specific places and geographical regions country, state, city, province, <i>the South, the Northeast</i> Historical events, Documents, Periods, Movements <i>World War I, the Constitution, the Renaissance</i> Organizations and their members. <i>Girl Scouts - Scout</i> Trade names <i>Xerox, Ford</i>

## **TEACHING AIDS**

**Chart of Meanings of Prefixes and Suffixes**

**Practicing the Rules**

**Letter Formats**

***Friendly Letter***

***Business Letters***

**GLOSSARY**

# Friendly Letter Format

*Note margins, capital letters, and commas.*

HEADING

Your Street Address  
Your City, State and zip code  
Month and date, year

Dear Name, SALUTATION (*Greeting*)

BODY

Indent the first line of the letter and the first line of each paragraph. Line up the other lines with the left margin established by your greeting. If you are typing the letter, space in five spaces, then start typing. At the end of a sentence, leave two spaces before typing the next sentence.

In a friendly letter there are no spaces between the paragraphs. The indentation is enough to signal the change.

Notice that the closing and signature are lined up with the left margin of the heading. The heading is started about halfway across the paper. When typing a letter, type the closing but not the name of the author. A personal signature alone is all that is necessary.

Leave two lines between the heading and greeting, between the greeting and the body, and between the body and the closing if the letter is typed. No extra lines are necessary if it is handwritten, but may be added for a better appearance.

Remember to use a comma between the city and state, the date and year (March 12, 1989, for example) and after the greeting and closing. Notice that in a friendly letter the greeting uses the person's name rather than Sir.

The name of your street, city, and state as well as the month, the greeting, and the closing each begin with a capital letter.

CLOSING

— Sincerely,

SIGNATURE

— *Your Name*

ENVELOPE

Your Name  
Your Street Address  
Your City, State, & zip code

Stamp

First and Last Name of person in greeting  
Street Address of the person in the greeting  
City, State and zip code