

Practical Ideas to Support Spelling

Skills used for spelling:

- Listening and studying articulation
- Sound discrimination (th? f?)
- Clear 'mind's ear' representation – auditory sequential memory
- Phoneme/grapheme correspondence
- Blending – sound patterns
- Recognition of syllables and morphemes (the smallest unit of meaning such as prefixes and suffixes)
- Knowledge of spelling rules
- Knowledge of vocabulary
- Familiarity with the mechanics of writing – pencil control and letter formation

Some strategies:

- There needs to be a huge amount of overlearning.
- Don't gloss over the spelling of words such as 'whent'.
- Think about learning the sounds – articulatory awareness – how might you teach these pairs: /th/ /f/; /s/ /sh/; /p/ /b/; /tr/ /ch/?
- A good resource is a 'Hear Myself Speak Phone' which allows the child to say the sound which is then amplified into their ear.
<https://eypdirect.co.uk/hear-myself-sound-phone>
- It is important to practise auditory discrimination:
 - Alliteration – silly sentences could be played using the first letter of their name.
 - Where can you hear the sound? – circles can be given to children to hold up which have B (beginning), M (middle) and E (end). Where is 's' in 'sun'? This also lends itself to movement.
 - Rhyme.
 - Minimal pairs – are words the same or different?
 - Segmenting and blending.
- Learning shapes when learning a new letter:
 - Make use of a ziplock bag with gel in it – this can then be used to draw a letter.
 - 5-minute box.
 - Have the letter in their hands so that it can be felt.
 - Marking vowels – long vowels can be marked with a macron – bē, shē - and closed in, short vowels can be marked with a breve – bĕd, shĕd.
- Syllable awareness:
- Clapping and tapping. However, placing the back of the hand under the chin when saying words to identify syllables may be better than clapping.
 - Singing songs.
 - Stressed and unstressed syllables.
 - Syllable house – the door can be closed to show a closed syllable (short vowel) or left open to show an open syllable (long vowel).
- Phonological awareness is extremely important. Make use of the activities in The Ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness.
- Rules and Patterns:
 - These are important because they help to explain why words are spelt the way they are and do add some consistency.
 - Dyslexic learners need to have these pointed out to them.
 - Rules should not be taught isolation.
- Spelling by analogy:
 - Teach an awareness of spelling patterns, word families and onset-rime, e.g. sight, light, tight, right.
 - A paper plate could be used to draw foods and food related words which have the 'ea' spelling in them, e.g. meal, peas, peach, beans etc.
 - Rhyme – write poems, limericks, songs and raps.



- Spelling techniques:
 - Overlearning is important but there should also be time given between each try.
 - Each child could have their own sheet which is individualised and glued into the front of their writing book. An example is below (double-sided):

- Echo – Spell – Write – Check – this should be carried out with a helper. The helper says the word twice, the child says the word twice, they then spell it, write it and show it. This is multi-sensory as ears, eyes, hands and mouth are used.
- Rainbow writing – making use of colour.
- Cursive writing aids motor memory.
- Touch typing helps with memory.
- Mnemonics:
 - These are best when they are owned by the speller and
 - Linked to the word to be spelt, e.g. “Save Animals In Danger,” **said** Tom.
- Multi-sensory games such as hopscotch or an alphabet arc will help as they are multi-sensory. Other multi-sensory suggestions:
 - Sand/shaving foam tray
 - Rainbow writing
 - Plastic/felt letters
 - Say – Write (naming letters aloud) – Say
 - Back writing – drawing letter with finger on child’s back
 - Pictorial aids
 - Physical spelling
 - Visualisation
- Homophones – only teach one at a time really well. This must be consolidated.
- Words within words, e.g.
 - believe – never **bel**ieve a **lie**
 - piece – a **pie**ce of **pie**
 - standard – **stand** up for **stand**ards
 - friend – I am your **friend** to the **end**
- Word chains – this can be good for auditory processing, e.g. bet, bed, bad, ban, bank, blank.
- Other games
 - Cut up words and rebuild them to play word dominoes.
 - Pair games – pelmanism and snap.
 - Hunt (and highlight) the silent letter/the spelling pattenr/the 2/3/4/5 syllable word.
 - Bingo – use syllables, spelling patterns, etc.
 - Dacey spelling (I have instructions for this game)
 - Shannon’s Game
 - Make a long word by adding prefixes and suffixes (separated by colour), e.g. enjoy, enjoy**able**, **un**enjoy**able**

Additional resources and ideas

The Ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness (Essex) - <https://schools-secure.essex.gov.uk/pupils/sen/Speech%20and%20Language%20Resources/Pages/Speech-and-Language-Resources.aspx> This can easily be found by carrying out a Google search.

Spelling Aids – Dictionary of Perfect Spelling (Christine Maxwell); ACE Dictionary; Personalised Dictionary.

When proofreading, work backwards – context cannot then be used.