

Helping your child with spelling

English spelling can be confusing. There are 44 sounds (phonemes) in the English language but only 26 letters to represent these sounds.

Words don't always look as they sound or sound as they look. For example, 'rough' and 'bough' look as if they should rhyme but are pronounced differently. So it is important that children learn the sounds of words and are able to break up words into separate sounds.

Early phonics work concentrates on this. It's also important that children develop a visual memory for words to enable them to judge if a word 'looks right'.

To spell well, a child needs to:

- Be able to break a word into its separate sounds
- Know which letters represent the sounds
- Recall tricky words
- Know when to use the appropriate word (e.g. 'meet' or 'meat')
- Look for links between words according to meaning (e.g. 'warrior' and 'war')

Many of the spelling patterns that the children will learn include

- Spelling words using different graphemes (set of letters) for similar sounds such as 'igh' in light, 'y' in sky and 'ie' in tie
- Words using prefixes and suffixes
- Words that are often misspelt
- Letter strings, e.g. /shun/ - station, passion, magician
- Homophone words (their, there, they're)
- Words containing silent letters
- Using morphology and etymology in spelling

Useful websites if you would like further information

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/english/primary-spelling/>

<https://dyslexia-assist.org.uk/for-parents/how-can-i-help-my-child-with-their-spelling-and-grammar/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/skillswise/spelling/z6c6d6f>

Spelling Strategies to Use at Home

A Guide for Parents

Learning to spell correctly is a crucial skill for life. Children begin to learn the basics of the language as soon as they start school, and their skills and knowledge build as they progress. However, the English language is one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn to spell, as there are so many different ways of spelling the same sounds, and different sounds represented by the same letter strings!

Many words in the English language follow specific rules, and children will be taught these rules at school. However, some words just have to be learnt, and the weekly spelling list can often be greeted with dread by parents!

If you and your child are looking for some new and fun ways to get the spellings of words learnt, try these:

Use each word in a silly sentence. The sillier the sentence, the more memorable. Underline the spelling word in each sentence.

Play hangman with a partner, using your words.

Write a sentence or short paragraph that contains every single one of your words.

Make up a code for your words e.g. A=1, B=2 and so on. See if someone else can crack your code.

Write each word and incorporate it into a silly picture. For example, if one of the words is 'thumb' draw a hand with the word itself instead of the thumb.

Play charades with the words. When each one is guessed, spell it.

Make a mini-dictionary. Sort the words into alphabetical order then write them out with a definition next to each one. For a challenge, see if you can also say whether each word is a noun, verb, adjective etc.

Make a word search with your words and list them underneath.

Paint your words onto paper, write them in water with a big brush onto the outside wall of the house, or write them on the ground with coloured chalks.

Ask your helper to write your words as anagrams (mixing up the letters) Can you work out which one is which?

Write out the letters in the words with different coloured felt-tips or pencil crayons.

Write out the words on the computer. Use different fonts and different colours for the different letters.

Your child will have their own favourites, but experiment with a variety of strategies so that learning the spellings is part of a game rather than a chore.

Further ideas

Tracing

- Get children to write the word very large and trace over it with their finger.
- Using your finger as an imaginary pen write the word on the child's back and get them to say the letters aloud and then say the whole word. Now try to write the word spelt correctly.

Repeat copying

- Write the word three times in different sizes – small, medium and large.
- Look at the spellings written this way, then cover them, try to write the word and then look back and check.

Pyramid words.

- Write the word a letter at a time in a pyramid shape

e.g.  This means children repeat practicing the spelling, building up a letter at a time.

(Repeat copying also works on action memory)

Spot a word in a word.

- Children spot words that they can spell within words that they cannot yet spell, e.g. 'a rat' in 'separate'. Children can make up a silly sentence to help them remember, e.g. There's *a rat* in *sep* – *a* – *rat* – *e*. This is further supported by saying the word in a way that emphasises the word within a word.

1. Circle the right one.

- Write out the words, but include wrong spellings.
- The child needs to circle the right one and explain how they know.

e.g. **escaped** **escapt**
 holidays **holydays** **hollidays**

Spelling word list for Year 3 and Year 4

100 words that children in England are expected to be able to spell by the end of Year 4 (age 9). How many can you spell?

accident(ally)	disappear	interest	pressure
actual(ly)	early	island	probably
address	earth	knowledge	promise
answer	eight/eighth	learn	purpose
appear	enough	length	quarter
arrive	exercise	library	question
believe	experience	material	recent
bicycle	experiment	medicine	regular
breath	extreme	mention	reign
breathe	famous	minute	remember
build	favourite	natural	sentence
busy/business	February	naughty	separate
calendar	forward(s)	notice	special
caught	fruit	occasion(ally)	straight
centre	grammar	often	strange
century	group	opposite	strength
certain	guard	ordinary	suppose
circle	guide	particular	surprise
complete	heard	peculiar	therefore
consider	heart	perhaps	though/although
continue	height	popular	thought
decide	history	position	through
describe	imagine	possess(ion)	various
different	increase	possible	weight
difficult	important	potatoes	woman/women

Spelling word list for Year 5 and Year 6

100 words that children in England are expected to be able to spell by the end of Year 6 (age 11). How many can you spell?

accommodate	correspond	identity	queue
accompany	criticise (critic + ise)	immediate(ly)	recognise
according	curiosity	individual	recommend
achieve	definite	interfere	relevant
aggressive	desperate	interrupt	restaurant
amateur	determined	language	rhyme
ancient	develop	leisure	rhythm
apparent	dictionary	lightning	sacrifice
appreciate	disastrous	marvellous	secretary
attached	embarrass	mischievous	shoulder
available	environment	muscle	signature
average	equip (-ped, -ment)	necessary	sincere(ly)
awkward	especially	neighbour	soldier
bargain	exaggerate	nuisance	stomach
bruise	excellent	occupy	sufficient
category	existence	occur	suggest
cemetery	explanation	opportunity	symbol
committee	familiar	parliament	system
communicate	foreign	persuade	temperature
community	forty	physical	thorough
competition	frequently	prejudice	twelfth
conscience	government	privilege	variety
conscious	guarantee	profession	vegetable
controversy	harass	programme	vehicle
convenience	hindrance	pronunciation	yacht