

Helping your child with spelling



When we write we have to consider a number of aspects:

We need to know what the purpose of our writing is and for whom we are writing.

We need to think about the content and what form our writing will take, for example, is it a shopping list, a report, a letter to a friend, an email?

We then need to think about the structure appropriate to the purpose and form of our writing - the use of sentences, paragraphs and punctuation.

We then select the vocabulary that will best convey our meaning.

And finally we think about how to spell the words we write.

Children can find writing a real challenge; they need encouragement, support and praise for their efforts. You can best support them by encouraging them to write on every possible occasion, praising their efforts and, importantly, by letting them see you writing whenever possible. You can play word games with them (e.g. **I spy**, **Find the word** puzzles), you can point to interesting or new words as you read to your child (without interrupting the flow of the story) and you can compose emails together.

Most of us, even if we consider ourselves to be good spellers, make spelling mistakes at some point. What is important is that we know what to do when we get stuck and we know how to correct our mistakes.

The English language is a rich but complex language but, despite its complexity, 85% of the English spelling system is predictable. Your child will learn the rules and conventions of the system and the spelling strategies needed to become a confident speller.

Here are some of the strategies that will help your child become a confident and accurate speller:

Sounding words out: breaking the word down into phonemes (e.g. *c-a-t*, *sh-e-ll*) - many words cannot be sounded out so other strategies are needed;

Dividing the word into syllables, say each syllable as they write the word (e.g. *re-mem-ber*);

Using the **Look, say, cover, write, check** strategy: look at the word and say it out aloud, then cover it, write it and check to see if it is correct. If not, highlight or underline the incorrect part and repeat the process;

Using mnemonics as an aid to memorising a tricky word (e.g. *people: people eat orange peel like elephants; could: O U lucky duck*);

Finding words within words (e.g. *a rat in separate*);

Making links between the meaning of words and their spelling (e.g. *sign, signal, signature*) - this strategy is used at a later stage than others;

Working out spelling rules for themselves - a later strategy;

Using a dictionary as soon as they know how to.

Encourage your child to have a go at spelling words they are unsure of. This will give them the opportunity to try out spelling strategies and to find those that they find useful. You can help them to use the strategies outlined above and praise their efforts.

In KS1, the children follow a phonics programme to introduce them to letters and phonemes. Have a look at our **support for phonics and handwriting** section for more guidance on this. In KS2, the children follow specific spelling objectives to support them with learning spelling rules and strategies. Alongside this, the children learn high frequency words across both Key Stages. Use the links below to see what spelling objectives your child will be learning from Year 2 to Year 6 and the lists of high frequency words they are expected to know.

Year 2

To secure the reading and spelling of words containing different spellings for phonemes (e.g. /gh/, igh, ie, y, i-e -I, night, tie, my)	To split compound words into their component parts and to use this knowledge to support spelling (e.g. milkman, pancake)	To add common prefixes to root words and to understand how they change meaning (e.g. happy - unhappy, fair - unfair)
To understand and begin to learn the conventions for adding the suffix -ing for present tense and -ed for past tense (e.g. play - playing, played)	To learn how to add common inflections (suffixes) to words (e.g. plurals, -ly, -ful: book - books, loud - loudly, harm - harmful)	To discriminate syllables in multisyllabic words as an aid to spelling (e.g. tomorrow, together)

Year 3

To consolidate knowledge of adding suffixes i. and to investigate the conventions related to the spelling pattern -le	To know what happens to the spelling of nouns i. when -s is added (e.g. army - armies, ash - ashes)	To embed the correct use and spelling of i. pronouns (e.g. my, your, his)
To spell regular verb endings and to learn ii. irregular tense changes (e.g. carry - carries, carried, go - went)	To understand how words change when suffixes ii. are added (e.g. homeless, reliable)	To develop knowledge of prefixes to generate ii. new words from root words (e.g. sense - nonsense, cook - precook)

Year 4

To distinguish between the spelling and meaning i. of homophones (e.g. new - knew, heard - herd)	To investigate and learn to spell words with i. common letter strings	To understand the use of the apostrophe in i. contracted forms of words (e.g. I'll, you're)
To investigate, collect and classify spelling ii. patterns related to the formation of plurals (e.g. church - churches, box - boxes)	To understand how suffixes change the function ii. of words (e.g. verbs into nouns: create - creation, nouns into verbs: apology - apologise)	To revise and investigate links between meaning ii. and spelling when using affixes

Year 5

To spell unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words i. (e.g. company, poisonous)	To explore the spelling patterns of consonants i. and to formulate rules (e.g. full becomes -ful when used as a suffix, c is soft when followed by i)	To investigate and learn spelling rules for adding i. suffixes to words ending in e, words ending in -y and words containing ie (e.g. live, living, lively, lifeless, happy, happiness, happier)
To spell words with common letter strings and ii. different pronunciations (e.g. -ough: tough, plough, through)	To explore less common prefixes and suffixes (e.g. ii. -ian: magician, im-: immature, il-: illegal)	To identify word roots, derivations and spelling ii. patterns as a support for spelling (e.g. sign, signature, signal)

Year 6

<p><i>To embed the use of independent spelling</i></p> <p>i. <i>strategies for spelling unfamiliar words (e.g. phonemic, syllabic, visual, word families, mnemonics, etymology)</i></p> <p><i>To investigate the meaning and spelling of</i></p> <p>ii. <i>connectives (e.g. furthermore, nevertheless)</i></p>	<p><i>To revise and extend work on spelling patterns,</i></p> <p>i. <i>including unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words (e.g. definite, separate, miniature)</i></p> <p><i>To use what is known about prefixes and suffixes</i></p> <p>ii. <i>to transform words (e.g. negation, tenses, word class)</i></p>	<p><i>To spell unfamiliar words by using what is known</i></p> <p>i. <i>of word families and spelling patterns</i></p> <p><i>To revise and use word roots, prefixes and suffixes</i></p> <p>ii. <i>as a support for spelling</i></p>
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Each year children must also *extend the knowledge of spelling strategies and apply to high-frequency and cross-curricular words.*

The first 100 high-frequency words in order

1. <i>the</i>	26. <i>are</i>	51. <i>do</i>	76. <i>about</i>
2. <i>and</i>	27. <i>up</i>	52. <i>me</i>	77. <i>got</i>
3. <i>a</i>	28. <i>had</i>	53. <i>down</i>	78. <i>their</i>
4. <i>to</i>	29. <i>my</i>	54. <i>dad</i>	79. <i>people</i>
5. <i>said</i>	30. <i>her</i>	55. <i>big</i>	80. <i>your</i>
6. <i>in</i>	31. <i>what</i>	56. <i>when</i>	81. <i>put</i>
7. <i>he</i>	32. <i>there</i>	57. <i>it's</i>	82. <i>could</i>
8. <i>I</i>	33. <i>out</i>	58. <i>see</i>	83. <i>house</i>
9. <i>of</i>	34. <i>this</i>	59. <i>looked</i>	84. <i>old</i>
10. <i>it</i>	35. <i>have</i>	60. <i>very</i>	85. <i>too</i>
11. <i>was</i>	36. <i>went</i>	61. <i>look</i>	86. <i>by</i>
12. <i>you</i>	37. <i>be</i>	62. <i>don't</i>	87. <i>day</i>
13. <i>they</i>	38. <i>like</i>	63. <i>come</i>	88. <i>made</i>
14. <i>on</i>	39. <i>some</i>	64. <i>will</i>	89. <i>time</i>
15. <i>she</i>	40. <i>so</i>	65. <i>into</i>	90. <i>I'm</i>
16. <i>is</i>	41. <i>not</i>	66. <i>back</i>	91. <i>if</i>
17. <i>for</i>	42. <i>then</i>	67. <i>from</i>	92. <i>help</i>
18. <i>at</i>	43. <i>were</i>	68. <i>children</i>	93. <i>Mrs</i>
19. <i>his</i>	44. <i>go</i>	69. <i>him</i>	94. <i>called</i>
20. <i>but</i>	45. <i>little</i>	70. <i>Mr</i>	95. <i>here</i>
21. <i>that</i>	46. <i>as</i>	71. <i>get</i>	96. <i>off</i>
22. <i>with</i>	47. <i>no</i>	72. <i>just</i>	97. <i>asked</i>
23. <i>all</i>	48. <i>mum</i>	73. <i>now</i>	98. <i>saw</i>
24. <i>we</i>	49. <i>one</i>	74. <i>came</i>	99. <i>make</i>
25. <i>can</i>	50. <i>them</i>	75. <i>oh</i>	100. <i>an</i>

The next 200 most common words in order of frequency

This list is read down the columns (i.e. in the list, *water* is most frequently used and *grow* is the least frequently used).

water	fox	let's	fell
away	through	much	friends
good	way	suddenly	box
want	been	told	dark
over	stop	another	grandad
how	must	great	there's
did	red	why	looking
man	door	cried	end
going	right	keep	than
where	sea	room	best
would	these	last	better
or	began	jumped	hot
took	boy	because	sun
school	animals	even	across
think	never	am	gone
home	next	before	hard
who	first	gran	floppy
didn't	work	clothes	really
ran	lots	tell	wind
know	need	key	wish
bear	that's	fun	eggs
can't	baby	place	once
again	fish	mother	please
cat	gave	sat	thing
long	mouse	boat	stopped
things	something	window	ever
new	bed	sleep	miss
after	may	feet	most
wanted	still	morning	cold
eat	found	queen	park
everyone	live	each	lived
our	say	book	duck
two	soon	its	horse
has	night	green	rabbit
yes	narrator	different	white
play	small	let	coming
take	car	girl	he's
thought	couldn't	which	river
dog	three	inside	liked
well	head	run	giant
find	king	any	looks
more	town	under	use
I'll	I've	hat	along
round	around	snow	plants
tree	every	air	dragon
magic	garden	trees	pulled
shouted	fast	bad	we're
us	only	tea	fly
other	many	top	grow
food	laughed	eyes	