Teaching Spelling

What do we need to teach in order to help children develop into effective spellers?

Christine Topfer

- Six spelling principles
- Stages of spelling development
- Word study activities
  - Activities for pre-communicative and semi-phonetic spellers
  - Activities for semi-phonetic and phonetic spellers
  - Activities for transitional and conventional spellers
- Spelling strategies
  - Strategies for solving words
  - Strategies for learning new words
  - Phonetic strategies
  - Visual strategies
  - Morphemic strategies
  - Reference to authority
  - Connection strategies
  - Memory joggers/gimmicks/mnemonics
- Monitoring spelling
  - Spelling analysis
  - Developmental spelling test
- Implementing spelling
  - Word walls
  - Spelling journals and individual spelling lists
  - Through literature
  - Proofreading
- References
Six spelling principles

Many educators believe that there are six important principles of spelling.

Principle One  Spelling is learnt as we use it

Teachers have an essential role in increasing students' interest in words and in influencing their attitudes toward spelling. Students need to feel they are able to succeed in learning to spell.

How to translate this into classroom practice?

- Provide frequent opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences
- Provide a print rich environment that includes displays of letters, words, and word patterns on Word Walls (LINK TO ‘WORD WALLS’ BELOW)
- Encourage students’ attempts to spell words. Let them approximate – especially when they are trying to use new words. Point out the parts they have spelled correctly. Use the parts they have misspelt as a focus for teaching spelling
- Ensure students proofread (LINK TO ‘PROOFREADING’ BELOW) their writing to identify possible spelling errors
- Select words from their have-a-go pad (LINK TO THIS BELOW) to put into their spelling journal (LINK TO THIS BELOW)
- Respond to the messages in children's writing by writing back to them. Make use of words that are misspelt in order to model the correct spelling

Principle Two  Learning to spell is part of the developmental process of learning to write

When teachers understand spelling development, they can match teaching strategies to developmental needs. Records can be kept showing the developmental indicators, strategies and skills that children are using by monitoring students' writing. In this way, teachers can decide when and how it is appropriate to intervene. Teachers are able to determine what students already know about spelling and they can then build on that knowledge.

Principle Three  Errors can be viewed as diagnostic and developmental signposts

Error analysis (LINK TO ‘SPELLING ANALYSIS’ BELOW) provides information about how far students have developed their understandings of spelling. Analysis of errors from students’ writing guides understanding of the strategies the students are relying upon as they attempt to spell.

Principle Four  Exploring words and vocabulary are part of learning to spell

Teaching spelling is an on-going activity. Whenever students come across new words, they should be encouraged to analyse them and to look at their structure and relate this to word meanings. Word study is an important part of the literacy program.

Principle Five  Independence and self-evaluation are essential in spelling development

How to translate this into classroom practice?

- Teach proofreading skills - proofreading is different from normal reading. Encourage students to proofread their work. Get students to underline words they think might not be correct, even when they don't know how to correct the words. Knowing when a word looks wrong, is the first step towards getting it right
- Encourage students to evaluate their own progress, identifying goals achieved and areas that need further work
- Teach students how to learn words and how to check spelling of words they have attempted
- Make students aware of processes for trying to write new words

Principle Six  Effective spellers use a number of different strategies interactively in order to spell correctly

Students need to be explicitly taught a range of strategies in order to internalise them and use them interactively to produce correct spelling. There are three major spelling strategies - visual, sound/symbol and morphemic. (The
activities described below are colour-coded, depending on which type of strategy is involved.) Other strategies used are: analogy strategies (the ability to consider words they know when faced with writing new words - ‘tree and duck can spell truck’); and reference strategies.

Strategic spellers/readers/writers know the strategies and can describe them as well as use them. Spelling is a thinking activity, not a rote learning activity.

*Teaching Kids to Spell* by Richard Gentry and Jean Wallace Gillet (Heinemann 1993) has a chapter on developing each of the three main strategies.

**Stages of spelling development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Phonetic</th>
<th>Phonetic</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letters are used to represent sounds in words</td>
<td>Letters are chosen on basis of sound rather than visual patterns</td>
<td>Insight that one must disassociate written language from spoken language (must write not only what English <em>sounds like</em>, but also what English <em>looks like</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial phonetic mapping</td>
<td>Represents all substantial sounds in a word</td>
<td>Vowels appear in every syllable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often begin with consonant</td>
<td>Short vowels often incorrect</td>
<td>Nasals before consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often use letter names</td>
<td>Often omit ‘m’ and ‘n’ (nasal sounds)</td>
<td>Use of vowel digraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represents whole word with one, two or three letters</td>
<td>-ed ending often spelled in three different ways(-ed, -d, -t)</td>
<td>-vCe over-used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tend to omit the vowel when the syllable has a consonant that carries the vowel sound</td>
<td>move from phonological spelling to visual+morphemic spelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>allowed</th>
<th>girls</th>
<th>eagle</th>
<th>Humpty</th>
<th>Dumpty</th>
<th>duck</th>
<th>you</th>
<th>am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ald</td>
<td>giz</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>HMT</td>
<td>DPD</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this</td>
<td>boys</td>
<td>picture</td>
<td>hope</td>
<td>eat</td>
<td>eighty</td>
<td>bank</td>
<td>cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tas</td>
<td>baz</td>
<td>pichr</td>
<td>hop</td>
<td>et</td>
<td>ate</td>
<td>bak</td>
<td>cot</td>
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<tr>
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<td>want</td>
<td>fried</td>
<td>chicken</td>
<td>eighty</td>
<td>bank</td>
<td>soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theis</td>
<td>bois</td>
<td>wont</td>
<td>fride</td>
<td>cheken</td>
<td>eightee</td>
<td>bangk</td>
<td>supe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: *Gentry and Gillet (1993)*

**Key differences between each phase**

*Semi-phonetic phase*

Realisation that there is a relationship between letters and sounds. Students tend to spell by sound, often using consonants. At this stage, teachers should ensure that phonetic strategies are taught.

*Phonetic phase*

Students write one letter or letter cluster for every sound in a word. Teachers should ensure that visual strategies are included in the program.

*Transitional phase*

Beginning to use visual memory eg *mayk, maik, make*. Students have learned about letter patterns but often use them incorrectly. At this stage, visual and morphemic strategies should form the major part of the teaching program.
Word study activities

Word study should have time allocated for mini lessons, daily games and practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD STUDY should include:</th>
<th>• Spelling patterns - sound patterns and letter patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See Snowball, D. &amp; Bolton, F. <em>Spelling K-8</em></td>
<td>• Compound words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenhouse Pub. 1999 for more details</td>
<td>• Base words, prefixes and suffixes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Words</strong></td>
<td>• Derivatives of words, word origins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Words</strong></td>
<td>• Homonyms, antonyms, synonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Frequency Core Words</strong></td>
<td>• Abbreviations, contractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possessive apostrophes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section contains ideas about how to develop students’ spelling knowledge in ways appropriate to their stage of spelling development. The ideas are taken from Gentry & Gillet (1993) *Teaching Kids to Spell* Heinemann.

**Activities for pre-communicative and semi-phonetic spellers**

**To develop letter-sound correspondence:**
- Beginning sound brainstorm
- Picture sorts
- Stand-up sorts
  Instead of placing cards in the correct category as in a picture sort, have each child hold his or her card so everyone can see it and stand in the correct group next to or behind the child holding the example card.
- Oral matching
  Say a word with a selected beginning sound and invite children to match its beginning sound with a word of their own. Then switch roles: a child names a word and you say another one; the child says whether they match at the beginning or not
- Aural discrimination
  Give each child some means of physically indicating ‘same’ and ‘different’ such as a card with the words printed on it. Pronounce word pairs or threes and have each one in the group hold up the correct card, for example if the words have the same beginning (or ending) sound, or different sounds.

**To develop phonemic awareness:**
- Syllable clap
  Teach children how to clap once for each syllable in spoken words, and then practise a little every day; say a word in a natural way, and then repeat it with each syllable emphasised as the children chant it and clap once for each syllable. For example: ‘chicken; chick-en’ (with two claps)
- Rhyming words
  Collect rhyming words from literature the children have read or rhymes
- Sound counters (Elkonan boxes)
  Children place a counter in each box for each sound they hear in the word. The following example is t-r-u-c-k

**To develop concept of ‘wordness’**
- Shared reading
Voice and finger pointing
With individual copies of dictated stories, rhymes etc, children should practise reciting and pointing to each word as it is read. Children should practice quickly finding and pointing to individual words throughout the story as they are called out by the teacher or a partner.

Stand-up sentences
Cut up a familiar sentence. Hand each child a word. Have the children get up and stand in the right order, left to right, to make the sentence by holding their cards in front of them. Alternatively have them make the sentence on the floor.

Hide-a-word - similar to a cloze activity
Add-a-word - building on the sentence, often called ‘silly sentences’

Activities for semi-phonetic and phonetic spellers

Develop knowledge of patterns that occur in words. We learn to spell pattern by pattern, not word by word.

Developing letter-sound relationships

Word searches
These may be done orally or in combination with the written form of the words. Start by providing two or three examples of words that have a common beginning sound; say ball, bears, and butter for the /b/ sound. Have children look all around the room and offer other words that begin with the same sound.

Word searches can begin from a story stimulus. In the following example a rhyme which contained many words with the /c/ sound was the beginning of learning about the variety of ways /c/ can be represented.

Children spent time searching in books for words which had the /c/ sound.
Finally the teacher worked with the students to collate their search by categorising the different letters representing the /c/ sound.

Teaching word families and onset and rimes

Word families should be linked to writing and reading needs of students. Otherwise there is a danger of the 'families' becoming a 'spelling program' in their own right, with little likelihood that they will generalise to the children's writing.

- **Word families**
  Word families are groups of rhyming words made by changing the first letter or letter group; for example bat-sat-cat-rat- or keep-sleep-creep-deep.
  For any word family, write words with the same pattern on strips of paper then cut between the beginning letter(s) 'onset' and the word stem (-at, -eep) 'rime'.
  
  ```
  sl eep
  ```

  Put the 'rimes' in a column on a pocket chart; distribute the initial letters 'onsets' amongst the children. Model making the words by placing one letter to the left of the 'rime' to make a whole word (deep). Then have the children place their 'onsets' with a 'rime'. Write all the words in one family on a large chart and display it.

- **Whole to part phonics (onset and rime)**
  Choose predictable stories or rhymes. For each story, have one big book and at least one little book for every two children in the group. Poems, songs and language experience stories may be included.

*The Hungry Giant* is used in this example.

1. Initially read the story as a read-aloud to the whole class. With emergent readers teach the story by having it as shared reading twice each day until the children have memorised the language of the story. Once the children have memorised the story, begin partner reading.

2. Demonstrate partner reading. Show children how to sit side-by-side. Teach children to ask their partner, "Do you want think time or help?" when they are stuck on a word. Have children take turns reading the story to their partners.

3. On subsequent days repeat shared reading and partner reading with the story. When children can 'read' the story, teach letter-sound correspondences in the text.
4. Ask the children their favourite words in the story. As each child chooses a word, write it on a blank card with the logo representing that particular story and ask the children to find the word in the story.

5. After class, plan the letter-onset, letter-rime, or letter-syllable correspondences you will teach in the words the children have chosen. If you find matching patterns across words, teach those patterns if appropriate.

6. The next day, in front of the class, highlight the letters you have chosen to teach, saying for example, "I'm putting a yellow square around the h in honey, h says /h/. Do you hear the /h/ in honey?"

7. After you have highlighted letters in the words place them on a word wall according to their highlighted letters. Notice that home and hit are placed under h as that is the letter highlighted, however flying and riding are placed under i as it is the ing which is highlighted.

8. Check to see if the highlighted letters in the words that have been grouped together have multiple pronunciations (e.g. the g in get and giant; the -ow in know and now). Talk to the children about the different pronunciations of the same letters and colour the letters that represent a second pronunciation a second colour.

9. Repeat the cycle with other predictable stories.
10. As the phonics word wall becomes crowded, take down word families (e.g. flying, riding, skating) put each family on a ring, and put them in the class literacy centre.

For more information, visit Margaret Moustafa's web site at http://curriculum.calstatela.edu/margaret.moustafa

**Developing visual memory and the visual coding mechanism**

Expert spellers visualise words. They retrieve an image of what the word looks like, they visualise it in their mind’s eye. Most poor spellers cannot do that. When asked to spell an unfamiliar word, a poor speller spells it like it sounds.

One of the tasks of teachers is to use instructional techniques designed to improve children's abilities to visually store and retrieve words. The visual coding mechanism is elusive and complex. It is not simple visual memory or a learning style.

- **Kim's Game**
  In this game, a collection of objects is arranged on a tray, for students to memorise. When the objects are covered over, students try to remember as many of them as they can. A more advanced version of the game involves removing one of the objects, and asking students to identify what is missing.

- **Memory sentences**
  Write a sentence on the board with words that most or all of the students can spell easily. Read the sentence and have students look carefully at each word. Then cover the sentence and have students write the sentence from memory. Uncover the sentence and have them note to themselves words they missed or misspelled. Don’t make a test out of this; its purpose is to have children practice using their visual memory every day.

- **Sorting words by length**

- **Making words**
  Sets of letters and holders or boards are needed for this activity. Pass out the letters needed to make words in a particular word family. Have children place their vowel letter/s in the middle of their holders. Demonstrate with large letter cards in your pocket chart. Then as you call out words and give a context sentence, have children put the consonant letters in their holders to make the words from the word family in focus. As each word is made, have a child come up and make the word in your pocket chart.

- **What looks right?**
  Identify a rhyming pattern that has two different spellings; for example, -ane and -ain, -ite and ight. Write an example of each pattern at the top of two columns on the board. Give two students dictionaries and the job of being spelling checkers; all others have paper and pencils. Say a word that fits one of the two spelling patterns and give a context sentence; write it both ways on the board, once under each example word; for example, in the sentence 'The sun is very______today,' is the spelling word brite or bright? Have students predict which spelling 'looks right' and write the word under the correct example word, while the checkers check the dictionaries. Students make any necessary corrections on their papers. This activity helps students see that rhyming is an important clue to the spelling of similar words, but that seeing if it 'looks right' is also important.

- **Read my mind**
  Have students number a piece of scrap paper from one to five. As you call out a clue, have them write a word from the wall they think is the answer next to each number, spelling it from memory. Clue number one is that the word is from the Word Wall. Clues two through five help the students narrow the possibilities; for example, clue two may be 'It starts with a T'; three might be 'It has three syllables', four might be 'It is a time-related word' and five might be 'It rhymes with borrow.' By the time you get to five, the children will already have figured out that the word is 'tomorrow.'

Children have found rhyming pairs from Lynley Dodd books
♦ Focus on key visual features of words perhaps through *Spelling Journal* activities

♦ Look at letter strings representing more complex sound units - *ight, ous, ough* also words containing the same letter string but with less predictable pronunciation e.g. *bomb, comb, tomb*

A sound pattern based on a letter string
e.g. *right, tight, might*

♦ Investigate words containing silent letters e.g. *scent, climb, knee, wrap, gnaw, debt*

♦ Introduce the strategy of spelling by analogy where students are encouraged to spell *swing* by using their knowledge of *sw* in *swim* and *ing* in *sing*

♦ Introduce vowels used in combination with other letters *aw, ar, ie, ea*

♦ Provide practice in writing spelling words e.g. Make a Spellamadoodle

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**Activities for transitional and conventional spellers**

Students at this stage need to develop morphemic principles

**Developing awareness of structural patterns**

♦ Prefix of the week
Select a prefix each week. Have students look up the prefix in different dictionaries and compare the etymology (word history). Brainstorm and list as many words as can be thought of that begin with the prefix. Have them try to explain what the prefix means in each word. These words, written on posters, may become part of the *Word Wall*

♦ Word search race
List words beginning with a certain prefix, as above. Have students work in teams to search newspapers and magazines for as many occurrences of those words, or others with the same prefix, as they can find in a given amount of time. At the end of the time each team counts all the words it found and checks to make sure that each one found really belongs
to that category; for example, for the prefix re-, replay, repossess, and recant would be acceptable, but really and readership would not.

- Word Sorts
Compare and contrast and categorise two or more words based on points of similarity or difference. Students may explore words containing the long "a" sound, as in pail, male and pay. Search for further words that fit into this category. Lists of words can be created. Generalisations or rules about the occurrence of the letter pattern can be developed.

Give students cards with words to sort, such as back, sick, block, pluck, lock, rack, kick or 'ation' - inspiration, presentation, invitation, relation

Selection of words for study must be relevant to students' stage of development.

Open word sorts using Spelling Journal words

Students select visual patterns to sort

Sorting according to the /er/ sound

Developing awareness of derivational patterns
Spellers at the transitional stage who are in the middle grades and beyond need to develop a level of spelling awareness that goes beyond the sound in words to a deeper level of relationships between and among words. These semantic or meaning patterns are encoded in base words and affixes, and in the related or derived forms of words sharing the same base. For example, receive, receiver, received, receiving, receipt, receivership, reception, receptionist, and receptor are derived forms of the same word. Study of the relationship between such groups of words gives transitional spellers a means of mastering many new words.

- Use word families to build knowledge of base words and their associated prefixes and suffixes play, plays, played, playing, playful, replay, player, playtime, playground

- Concentration
Two players or teams attempt to find as many related pairs as possible. Make a word card set that contains many pairs of related words (for example, various related forms of receive, decide, remember, and motion could be used), write them on cards, shuffle them, and lay them out in horizontal and vertical rows. Players take turns turning over pairs of cards. If they are related forms of the same word, they keep the pair and get points; if they are not related, the cards are turned back over.
Word webs
Words that are related by meaning will often have similar spelling patterns.
Build webs of words to illustrate the relationships

Other suggestions:
Hand - handy, mishandle, handcraft, handcuff, handful, handle
Trans: meaning across - transport, translate, transform, transfusion, transfer
Port: meaning carry - transport, import, deport, porter, portable

Spelling strategies

**Strategies for solving words**
Students should be encouraged to reflect on their learning and the strategies they apply in the spelling process (metacognition). Students need to develop the language to talk about their learning. These strategies should be explicit taught and constantly referred to in the classroom.

**How do I spell a new word?**
Think about meaning. Does it give you any clues to spelling patterns?
Say the word slowly listen carefully. Write the word syllable-by-syllable. Make sure you have represented each sound with a letter or letters. Look carefully to see if the pattern looks right
Try different patterns that might be right
See if you know another word which is similar
Ask yourself what it means
Begin with the base word

**Have-a-go strategy:**

Do I know this word?
How many syllables can I hear?
Do I know any other words that sound almost the same?
How are those words written?
Does this word I have written look right?
I'll try it again.
Does this look better?
I'll write the part I am sure of and leave a blank for the difficult part. I will try different ways to fill in the blank.
Strategies for learning new words

Brainstorm ideas children use to learn new words. Give time and practice to develop some of the following strategies.

Questions to help you learn how to spell new words:

Does the meaning of the word help you with the spelling?

Is it a word you can break into parts (or syllables), such as 'temp/er/a/ture'?

Is it a word you can use a spelling hint (Gimmick) for, such as:
'a piece of pie',
'you hear with your ear'
or 'necessary has one collar and two socks'?

Does the word have other words inside it?
It may be a compound word, such as 'football'
or it may be a base-word with added letters, such as 'dresser'.

Can you sound the word out easily?

Can you change the pronunciation of the word to help you with the spelling?
For example, emphasising the 'n' sound in the word 'government' would mean that you would be less likely to leave the 'n' out.

Is it a word that you may just have to learn by using the Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check method?

Brainstorm with the class the things you think make a good speller.
Place these on a chart in your classroom

Good spellers

- Use dictionary, spell check or other reference to check
- Look for patterns
- Look for word parts (know some words help you spell other words)
- Try several ways to write a word
- Write sounds in words
- Write a vowel in each syllable (can clap syllables)
- Think about words that sound the same
- Think about words that look the same
- Check to see if words look right
- Think about what words mean
- Practise words
- Ask someone if they can't figure it out

Helpful hints for remembering spelling words

Picture the word in your head
Paint the word on your eyelids
Paint the word on an easel in your head, use yellow/red
Look at the word;
Say the letters/sounds as you write the word
Break the word into syllables
Look, say, cover, write, check
Look closely at the tricky parts
Make a story up about the word eg. was “What a surprise”
Freckle words – look for the word in your reading and writing
Practise the word by writing with your finger on your other hand

Brainstormed by children in 1/2 class
It is not just important to teach knowledge about words but to include teaching of strategies of how to learn words. Students must be taught how to learn words and how to check spelling of words they have attempted.

**More strategies for learning words:**

*Look Say Cover Write Check*
- Look at the word
- Say the word
- Cover the word
- Write and say the word
- Check the word

(You could add another step to this)

*Trace and say the word*
*Write the word from memory and check it.*

*Camera*
- Use your eyes like a camera. Take a picture of this word
- Close your eyes and imagine you can still see the word
- Trace the letters in the air with your eyes closed
- What colour are the letters in your mind?
- Imagine the letters have changed colour. What colour are they now?
- Open your eyes and write the word on your paper
- Now check your spelling with the word on the card

*Visual imagery*
- Look at the word
- Close your eyes and imagine you can see the word as you say it
- Name the letters from left to right
- Open your eyes and write the word
- Check against the model
- Repeat if necessary until the word can be recalled easily

*Syllables*
- Analyse the words into syllables

*Analogy*
- Think of other words with the same letter pattern

*Motor Habit*
- Include letter strings in handwriting lessons. Research indicates that linking the letters of letters strings assists recall of these patterns.

*Cluster Analysis Glass Analysis*

Glass analysis focuses on letter clusters, for example, the cluster 'eigh' taken from words in progress. Ask:

In the word 'weigh' -
- Which letter stands for the /a/ sound?
  *Children reply 'e' 'i' 'g' 'h' says /a/ in 'weigh'*
- Which letter stands for the /w/ sound?
  *Children reply 'w' says /w/ in the word 'weigh'*
- In the word 'neighbour' which sound does the letter 'n' stand for?
  *Which sound do the letters 'eigh' stand for?*
  *Children reply 'e' 'i' 'g' 'h' says /a/ in 'neighbour'*
Memory Joggers/Gimmicks/Mnemonics

Most people have difficulty remembering how to spell particular words and they devise something that will help overcome this. As students learn about memory aids and share them they may like to make a class book for the class library. Students may also record the ones they find useful in a personal spelling book.

Some useful memory aids:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Mnemonic Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>They is the word I can spell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separate</td>
<td>Always smell a rat when you spell separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piece</td>
<td>a piece of pie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quiet/quite</td>
<td>Silent ends with the letter t and quiet ends with the letter t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>here/hear</td>
<td>You hear with your ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there/their</td>
<td>Both words begin with the and the word here is in the word there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two/too/to</td>
<td>Two is related in meaning to twin and twice. Too means also.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currant/current</td>
<td>Is an ant eating the currant bun. So currant is the food and current is the flowing of the tide or river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice/practise</td>
<td>Ice is a noun, so practice is a noun and practise is a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal/principle</td>
<td>The principal is your pal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because</td>
<td>Betty eats cake and uncle Sam’s eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accommodation</td>
<td>There are two caravans and two motels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few</td>
<td>few elephants wink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>fri the end of your friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where, here, there, everywhere</td>
<td>Place names all have here in them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who, where, when, why, what</td>
<td>Questions begin with ‘wh’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat/meet</td>
<td>I like to eat meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary/stationery</td>
<td>A car is stationary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>island</td>
<td>An island is land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phonetic strategies Sound/symbol strategies

You can read or write some words by thinking about the sounds

(Taken from Bolton & Snowball (1993) *Teaching Spelling: A Practical Resource, Heinemann.*)

To spell any unknown word that has not been seen before the writer may try to represent the sounds heard in the word. Beginning writers rely heavily on this strategy because they do not yet know a lot about written language. Experienced writers may use this strategy first and then try to apply other aspects they know about written language.

**Example 1**

The beginning writer who is aware of representing the sounds in a word may write the word *said* as S or SD or SED.

**Example 2**

An older writer who can apply many strategies may attempt an unknown word such as *phagocyte* as *fagosite* or *fagasite* or *phagasite*. Then they would apply knowledge about its meaning (a special type of blood cell), decide the spelling is more likely to be *phagocyte* (because other science words end with *cyte*) and then use a dictionary to check the correct spelling.

To develop sound symbol strategies:

- Teach students that letter-sound correlation is different in different words. Students need to learn that:
  - One letter can represent a number of sounds; eg. cat, able, car, probable, apparent, father, any;
  - The same sound can be represented by different letters; eg. ate, ray, rain, obey, steak, veil, gauge, reign, ballet.
• Teach students an awareness of onset and rime (eg tr-uck; sh-op; p-et)

• Sort words according to spelling patterns - strings or clusters of letters which occur in many words sharing common sound units (eg ite/ight)

• Teach children to listen to the order of sounds in a word and represent these with a letter or letters in the correct sequence. Map sounds into Word Frames or Elkonan boxes.

If a child asks for the spelling of ‘jumped’, the teacher might prepare a frame to help the child fill in as many letters as possible.

---

Teachers can ask:
What is the very first sound you hear?

Do you know what letter can be used for that sound?

In which box do you think it should be written?

• Teach phonemic awareness through shared book sessions - rhyme, alliteration and syllables. For example: *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox can be used as the basis for tongue twisters such as, ‘The precious possum has a piece of pavlova in Perth.’ This could be followed by reading the rhyme, ‘Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater’ and further ‘p’ words could be collected.

• Teach phonemic awareness through shared book sessions - rhyme, alliteration and syllables. For example: *Possum Magic* by Mem Fox can be used as the basis for tongue twisters such as, ‘The precious possum has a piece of pavlova in Perth.’ This could be followed by reading the rhyme, ‘Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater’ and further ‘p’ words could be collected.

**Visual strategies**

You can read or write some words by thinking about the way they look

Sometimes the writer remembers what a word looks like, or will try a word several ways and then decide which way looks the best. Sometimes they will recognise particular visual patterns of letters and know that some are acceptable patterns in the English language but others are not. They may know that a particular word is likely to have the same spelling pattern as another known word.

**Example 1**
To spell the word *cake* the writer may think of the spelling of words such as *take* and *bake* and presume it will have the same spelling pattern and then possibly check with a dictionary or wordbook.

**Example 2**
To spell the word *misspell* the writer may think that *mispell* looks better than *misspel*, but another strategy will need to be applied, such as adding a prefix to a base word (*mis/spell*)

**To develop visual strategies:**

• Teach students to look for highly predictable patterns or letter sequences of English. Encourage children to make associations with words of similar patterns. Focus on sequential letter patterns. Group words that contain common patterns; eg *other*, *brother*, *mother*, *brother*. Word sorting and categorising activities are useful.

• Teach students that words must not only sound right, but they must also look right
- Choose a high frequency word to focus on each week. Every time a child reads or writes the word they are allowed to place a coloured dot on the word. This word can also be used as a screen saver for the week.

- Identify the critical features of words whenever children are shown how to spell a word, (ie the most significant features in the word and the pattern) Then encourage them to write the word from memory, not by copying. See Spelling Journals (LINK TO THESE BELOW)

- Collect words. Regardless of sound, collect according to visual patterns. When you have a collection, you classify them according to sound or pattern.
  For example:
  'ough' or 'crack\[\text{ed}\] hoped planned cried'
  double consonants 'll', 'bb', 'tt' (Try to have vowel plus consonant cluster 'ell, ill all')

**Morphemic (meaning) strategies**

You can read or write some words by thinking about what they mean
Spelling is related to meaning rather than sound.

**Example 1** To spell a word such as ‘somebody’ the writer should use knowledge about the spelling of ‘some’ and/or ‘body’ and realise that a compound word will have the same spelling because it has the same meaning base.

**Example 2** To spell words such as ‘unnecessary’ (un\[\text{necessary}\]) or ‘commitment’ (commit/ment) the writer should use knowledge about adding prefixes or suffixes to base words.

**Example 3** To spell words such as ‘hopped’, ‘budgeted’, ‘carried’, ‘troubled’, ‘panicked’ the writer should use knowledge of generalisations about how to add suffixes to base words.

**Example 4** To spell words such as ‘pasteurisation’ the writer should apply knowledge about how the word was derived. In this case it is from a person’s name (Louis Pasteur). There are many words where the origin of the word provides valuable information about the spelling. This is often referred to as etymological knowledge.

In English language, most words that have the same meaning-base are spelt the same. If the meaning is different, then the spelling is different. The way a word is written (orthography) reflects meaning. In this way we can go straight to the deep structure or meaning of written texts without sounding-out the words. For example; ‘sign’ and ‘signature’ have related spellings and related meanings, while ‘seen’ and ‘scenery’ have different meanings and different spellings.

To develop meaning based strategies:

- Teach children word meanings and derivations; eg. graphics, graphology, telegraph or sign, signal, resign. Teach base word and its derived forms e.g. Latin ‘medica’: medical, medic, medicine (teach the pattern as word is tied to meaning rather than sound.)
  Ask: why is 'medicine' spelt like the following words? ‘medical’, ‘medico’, ‘medication’. This encourages students to think about the word meanings as a problem-solving approach to working out the connections between words.
Latin Roots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aqua</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>I hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centur</td>
<td>a hundred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duo</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luna</td>
<td>moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malus</td>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mare</td>
<td>sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikros</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terra</td>
<td>the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedis</td>
<td>foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnus</td>
<td>great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unus</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentio</td>
<td>I feel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Roots</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aster</td>
<td>a star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudor</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metron</td>
<td>measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okto</td>
<td>eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele</td>
<td>far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermos</td>
<td>hot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Teach students to use morphemic knowledge, because this will also help them to recall spelling. Morphemes are units of meaning. ‘Dissolve’ contains two morphemes *dis* and *solve*, and thus has a double ‘s’. ‘Disappear’ only has one ‘s’ because the two morphemes are *dis* and *appear*.

- Practise word building - base words and prefixes and suffixes that are added to these

- Introduce word association – start with a word morpheme and build an ever – growing set of branches where the new word is related to the previous word

- Teach knowledge of word structure; eg past tense

  - want-*ed*/ sounds *id*
  - bang-*ed*/sounds *d*
  - pick-*ed*/sounds *t*

  The common element is *ed*, which signals the past tense

  - Ask: why do all these words end with 'ed'?
  - How many different sounds does 'ed' represent in these words?

- Teach other meaning knowledge through suffixes.

  For example `-er` suffix

  Write these words on cards:

  - reporter
  - computer
  - fatter
  - cover
  - photographer
  - pointer
  - skinnier
  - never
  - teacher
  - heater
  - greater
  - master

1. Place randomly along whiteboard; say words; ask students what “chunk” they have in common.
2. Arrange words in 4 columns as above. Ask, ‘Why have I put them in these groups?’ If students need help, say, ‘In one group the words are all for people who do something.’ In another group the words are all things that do something.’

3. Explain and label the columns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who do something</th>
<th>Things that do something</th>
<th>More</th>
<th>Last chunk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reporter</td>
<td>computer</td>
<td>fatter</td>
<td>cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographer</td>
<td>pointer</td>
<td>skinnier</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>heater</td>
<td>greater</td>
<td>master</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Add other words to the appropriate columns

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>richer</td>
<td>fighter</td>
<td>winner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>winter</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>heavier</td>
<td>air conditioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>murderer</td>
<td>manger</td>
<td>copier</td>
<td>dish washer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>runner</td>
<td>diaper</td>
<td>writer</td>
<td>typewriter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other suffixes

-tion (same applies for 'ment')

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing verb</th>
<th>Thing done</th>
<th>noun</th>
<th>Last chunk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>collect</td>
<td>collection</td>
<td></td>
<td>nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elect</td>
<td>election</td>
<td></td>
<td>fraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attract</td>
<td>attraction</td>
<td></td>
<td>vacation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-sion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing verb</th>
<th>Thing done</th>
<th>noun</th>
<th>Last chunk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>confuse</td>
<td>confusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extend</td>
<td>extension</td>
<td></td>
<td>mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invade</td>
<td>invasion</td>
<td></td>
<td>vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide</td>
<td>provision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collide</td>
<td>collision</td>
<td></td>
<td>passion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by David Hornsby, taken from Cunningham (2000) *Phonics They Use* Addison Wesley.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Non-example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ly</td>
<td>In that manner</td>
<td>happily</td>
<td>assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>steadily</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>briefly</td>
<td>ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-or</td>
<td>Person who or Thing which</td>
<td>inspector</td>
<td>mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>generator</td>
<td>horror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ist</td>
<td>person</td>
<td>scientist</td>
<td>consist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>artist</td>
<td>exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ance</td>
<td>State of/act of</td>
<td>tolerance</td>
<td>balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ignorance</td>
<td>romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ment</td>
<td></td>
<td>development</td>
<td>document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>argument</td>
<td>moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ness</td>
<td></td>
<td>laziness</td>
<td>witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>blindness</td>
<td>harness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ant</td>
<td></td>
<td>tolerant</td>
<td>assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ignorant</td>
<td>elephant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ent</td>
<td>Related to</td>
<td>violent</td>
<td>incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>confident</td>
<td>urgent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ive</td>
<td></td>
<td>creative</td>
<td>motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>active</td>
<td>adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ous</td>
<td></td>
<td>nervous</td>
<td>curious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>malicious</td>
<td>delicious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-al</td>
<td></td>
<td>comical</td>
<td>animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>memorial</td>
<td>initial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by David Hornsby from Cunningham, P. (2000) *Phonics They Use* Addison Wesley

- Teach students about compound words. Try sorting compound words according to the following categories.

| B is of A (Eyebrows are brows of eyes) eg. backyard, snowflake, eardrum, milkshake |
| B is from A (Sheepskin is skin from a sheep) eg. beeswax, pancake, moonlight, seaweed |
| B is for A (A dustpan is a pan for dust) eg. bathroom, bookcase, playground, notebook |
| B is like A (A ponytail is a tail like a pony's) eg. Batman, houseboat, grasshopper |
| B is A (A pipeline is a line that is pipe) eg gentleman, bluebird, |

- Provide grids for compound patterns (similar to the one illustrated), for students to develop patterns using compound words.
Reference to authority
Students need to learn to use resources to help them obtain the correct spelling and to learn more about words.

- Model consulting an authority and encourage students to consult an authority (a dictionary, word wall or a good speller) when they are unsure if spelling is correct.
- Dictionary skills need to be taught and systematically reinforced throughout the primary years. For example, develop an understanding of:
  
  - Alphabetic order,
  - Function of guide words at the top of dictionary pages,
  - Words being listed under the root word eg ‘paint’, ‘painting’

- **Word wall** activities familiarise children with the words on the wall and ensure it becomes a resource for spelling.

### Connection strategies

As word solvers students have categories for words in their head. As they meet unfamiliar words, they connect the unfamiliar words to those categories. Teachers need to help students expand the categories by making connections among words and drawing out important principles that they know.

One useful strategy to assist students make links between the words they are learning and those already known is outlined in the following chart.

#### Make Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sounds like (Have some of the same sounds)</th>
<th>Write your words</th>
<th>Looks like (other words are spelled the same way)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>swell          switch street        sweep</td>
<td>sweet            beet   swim  feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green          keel               heal</td>
<td>feel              peel   wheel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chin           chest             leak</td>
<td>cheek             week   seek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was            her               wind          father</td>
<td>water             later</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but            brother          wetter</td>
<td>better            letter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jar            lump             mother</td>
<td>jumper            bumper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Connections can be made with meanings, as in word association.
Monitoring Spelling

**Spelling analysis**
A useful example of the importance of error analysis for both teachers and parents:

**Spelling Test**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luft</td>
<td>Elefant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jrf</td>
<td>giraffe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both these children had a 2/4 score, but one child is in the semi-phonetic phase of spelling and the other child is in the transitional phase. This demonstrates the need to constantly look at the ways children write words rather than the score they receive on a test. A close analysis of a child's spelling of each word provides the key to the stage of spelling development they have attained. Developmental phases signify which spelling strategies need to be emphasised in the teaching program.

**Spelling analysis chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Child's spelling</th>
<th>Phonic Alternatives</th>
<th>Analysis of structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faulty auditory perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alternatives not conforming to spelling precedent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reasonable alternatives (including homophones)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters omitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters added</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters transposed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letters substituted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doubling errors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Similar visual configuration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unclassifiable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from *Learning Phonics and Spelling in a Whole Language Classroom* by D. Powell and D. Hornsby, Scholastic1993

**Developmental spelling test**

Using the following Developmental Spelling Test will give teachers an opportunity to analyse the spelling strategies students use and indicate the appropriate phase of spelling. Read each word to the students and ask them to write the words. Analyse student attempts according to spelling phases. The following chart gives examples of the type of spellings students may attempt. There will be a multitude of other development spellings.

Gentry & Gillet, *Teaching Kids to Spell*, Heinemann, 1993

....% semi-phonetic ....% phonetic ....% transitional ....%correct
Implementing spelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Child's spelling</th>
<th>Semi-phonetic</th>
<th>Phonetic</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>monster</td>
<td>The boy was eaten by a monster.</td>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>MOSTR</td>
<td>MONSTUR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>united</td>
<td>Have you been to the United States?</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>UNITD</td>
<td>YOUNIGHTED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress</td>
<td>The girl wore a new dress.</td>
<td>JRS</td>
<td>JRAS</td>
<td>DRES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bottom</td>
<td>A big fish lives at the bottom of the lake.</td>
<td>BT</td>
<td>BODM</td>
<td>BOTTUM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hiked</td>
<td>We hiked to the top of the mountain.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>HIKT</td>
<td>HICKED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human</td>
<td>Miss Piggy is not a human.</td>
<td>UM</td>
<td>HUMN</td>
<td>HUMUM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eagle</td>
<td>An eagle is a powerful bird.</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EGL</td>
<td>EGUL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closed</td>
<td>The little girl closed the door.</td>
<td>KD</td>
<td>KLOSD</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bumped</td>
<td>The car bumped into the bus.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>BOPT</td>
<td>BUMPPED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>type</td>
<td>Type your story on the computer.</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>TIP</td>
<td>TIPE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Word Walls**

Children need to have high frequency words displayed in some readily accessible place so that they can find them when they need them while reading and writing. Just having a Word Wall is not enough; you have to ‘do’ the Word Wall.

Doing the Word Wall means:

1. Being selective and limiting the words to those really common words that children need a lot in writing
2. Adding words gradually - five a week

3. Practising the words by chanting and writing them, because struggling readers are not usually good visual learners and can't just look at, and remember words.

4. Doing a variety of review activities to provide enough practice so that the words are read and spelled instantly and automatically.

5. Making sure that Word Wall Words are spelled correctly in any writing students do.

Some Word Wall activities:
(See Phonics They Use by Patricia Cunningham Addison-Wesley 2000 for further details on Word Wall activities)

Write Tap and Spell
- Students number a sheet of paper with numbers one to five
- The teacher calls out five words putting each in a sentence
- As the teacher calls out each word a student finds and points to the word on the Word Wall.
- Students clap and chant the spelling of each word
- Students write each word - this can be tied to the handwriting program

Read My Mind
The teacher thinks of a word on the Word Wall and gives five clues to that word.
Students number their paper from one to five.

Tell the students you will give them five clues. By the fifth clue everyone should have guessed the word. For your first clue always give the same clue:
'It's one of the words on the wall'.

Students should write the word they think it might be next to number one. Each succeeding clue should narrow down what it can be until by clue five there is only one possible word. If succeeding clues confirm the word a student has written next to one number, the student writes that word again by the next number. Clues may include any features of the word you want students to notice.

You get five points if you guess the word on the first clue, four points on the second clue until only one point if you guess it on the last clue. For example:
1. It's one of the words on the wall
2. It has four letters
3. It begins with 'th'
4. The vowel is an 'e'
5. It finishes the sentence 'I gave my books to ....'

Wordo
Is a variation of Bingo. Students will need a grid of 9 or 25 blocks and some small blocks to cover the words.
Students pick words from the Word Wall they want to include in the game. As each word is picked students write it in one of the blank spots on their WORDO sheet. The teacher writes each word on a separate card. As you call out the words have the students say the spelling of each word before they cover it up. The first student to have a complete row covered up wins. This child can be the next caller and the teacher can play their WORDO sheet.

**Spelling Journals and Individual Spelling Lists**

In this grade 2/3 class the children use Spelling Journals as a way of organising their learning about words. Each week children learn five words from an ever-increasing list of words collected from their writing or reading. Words are added to the list throughout the week. At the beginning of each week the next five words listed in the journal become the focus.

The journal page provides a space for: writing words in syllables; highlighting letter patterns or features; identifying base words; and recording daily tests.

The children are involved in a number of activities that assist them to learn the words.

One of the key strategies is **Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check**. This is a frequently used strategy, however in order to place more emphasis on the looking aspect, the words to be learned are written on separate cards and kept in a separate zip-locked bag. Using words in this way enables the child to **look** at the word (take a picture, visualise in their mind) and then turn the card over before writing it from memory.

As each word is practised, students are trained to look at the 'tricky bit' - the part they find difficult to remember when writing. This part is written in a different colour to bring students' attention to it.
This strategy aims to increase the children's 'focused looking' at words. Each day, time is allocated to learning the words and using the words in a variety of activities.

Activities include:

- Grouping words according to sound, e.g. *or, oor, ore, au, aw*. Or visual patterns, e.g. *ea – bread, great, seam*;
- Alphabetical order – grab five words and put them in alphabetical order or take five ‘s’ words and put them in order;
- Sort according to syllables, letters, prefixes, suffixes;
- Grouping words with short vowel sounds.

Words that are consistently spelled incorrectly are marked with a T for transfer. These words are written at the bottom of the Spelling Journal list to be included for further practice in weeks to come.

For further ideas on using spelling journals, see the spelling journal page of the Queensland Education Department website. (LINK TO [http://education.qld.gov.au/learning_ent/ldf/schools/spelling/implementing/isj3t.htm](http://education.qld.gov.au/learning_ent/ldf/schools/spelling/implementing/isj3t.htm))

See also Education Department of Western Australia (1994) *First Steps Spelling Resource Book*, Rigby Heinemann.

**Individual Spelling Lists**

Similar to a Spelling Journal, an Individual Spelling List (ISL) is an alternative format for individualising spelling. An example from Grade 1/2 can be seen below. The weekly activities are included within the booklet.

**Through literature**

**Process**

- Start with literature (shared book) and identify a pattern for study.
- Collect words (word search, visual pattern) eg. 'ment' words, drop into an envelope at base of chart, as you find them.
- Write collected words onto an overhead and take ‘ment’ off. Working with the students discuss what is left. (Sometimes it is a suffix and related by meaning; sometimes part of the base word - verb to noun)
- Use words in sentences to see the pattern, compose rule from own understanding

(Find pattern, see how it works and then discover the rule) Children learn pattern by pattern not rule by rule.

**An example of a spelling mini-lesson.**

A year five/six class were reading the well known story *Alice in Wonderland*

During the reading a discussion of homophones began, prompted by Alice’s confusion about the homophones in the text.
As a result the children were asked to write their own sentences to highlight homophones.

“Mom I’m going to see my best,” I say.
“Just your best is in the sea,” Mum said.

“I’m going to knead the bread,” I said.
“I don’t need more bread,” Mum said.

“Look over there at the pear tree,” said Tamieka.
“Where is the pair of trees? I can only see one!” said Nicola.

Early on, spelling can be taught within a phrase,
for example:
A piece of cake
A can of coke
A glass of milk
Add these to a chart (students can add more)

Once meaning is associated look and say the word (visual)
Chant the spelling (auditory)
Write the word (kinaesthetic)
Trace over the word (kinaesthetic)
Practise reading the phrases on the chart.

Keep the chart so that next week you add
A piece of cake for Tom

The week after add
A piece of cake for Tom from Alice

Proofreading

The process of proofreading written text is not easy. The process requires the reader to move away from the powerful influence of the meaning of what is being read to allow careful attention to the actual letters and words on the page. Teachers expect students to proofread their work but are proofreading skills, knowledge and understanding taught? Students need to be aware of the writing process and where proofreading is placed in the process - after the draft writing has been edited for meaning.

Teachers need to model proofreading and think aloud as they do so, demonstrating how:
- to slow the reading down so they can ‘see’ visual patterns and letter sequences
- to change from writer of a text to reader of a text
- the use of resources (Word Walls, dictionaries) in the room can assist with locating the correct spelling
- to make links between spelling patterns students know and new words

Students need teachers to model proofreading strategies.

For example
- Use a slip of paper or a ruler to cover all but the line you are checking
Experiment with starting at the bottom of the page and working upwards
Read slowly, word by word
Underline any word that needs to be checked
Write two or more versions of a word and try to decide which one looks correct
Sometimes exchange writing with a partner for proofreading purposes
Teach some of the typical symbols used by editors to signal changes needed in the text

Taken from Peter Westwood 1999 *Spelling - approaches to teaching and assessment*  ACER

**Proofreading Guide**
Questions to ask yourself when proofreading.

**Spelling**
- Have you underlined words that you think may be spelt incorrectly?
- Have you had a go at the standard spelling?
- Have you used a dictionary, a book or wall charts where you recall seeing the word?
- Have you asked a friend or your teacher to check your spelling?

**Sentences**
- Is each sentence a complete thought?
- Does each sentence begin with a capital letter?
- Does each question (if any) end with a question mark?
- Do all your other sentences end with a full stop, or perhaps, an exclamation mark?

**Punctuation and Grammar**
- Is your paragraphing correct?
- Have you used a capital letter for the names of people and places?
- Have you used speech marks correctly to indicate where people are talking?
- Is the grammar correct? Are nouns, pronouns and verbs in agreement? Circle any words that look wrong so you can check them later.

**Handwriting**
- Is your writing clear and easy to read?
- Are your letters well formed?

Taken from Bouffler C, Bean, W. *Spelling: a Writer’s Resource*  Rigby 1990

Once students have completed their proofreading, they can copy some of the underlined words from their writing onto a Have-A-Go sheet like the one below. After students have tried alternative spellings a teacher or helper can provide assistance if necessary. The last column can be cut off and used as a personal spelling list or for individual cards for spelling games.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HAVE A GO CARD</strong></th>
<th>This list belongs to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How I spelled the word in my writing</td>
<td>Have-A-Go</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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