

SPELLING



Hints for supporting young people with spelling.

Holyrood Secondary Spelling Support.

Rationale

There are more than one hundred and seventy thousand words in the English language. Some young people are naturally good spellers whilst others experience varying levels of difficulty. It is these young people who need to learn spelling strategies that can be applied to any word. The aim is to make overt what is usually covert. Modelling by a parent/carer can be very useful. Such an approach can allow the learner to access another's experience of the word and strategy used. Valuable discussion can then follow and an evaluation of the suitability of the strategy

This booklet is a general guide for Parents/Carers and should complement spelling in school as well as a variety of learning styles. Some strategies such as mnemonics are transferrable to other curricular areas, eg, remembering a list of facts in Social Subjects. It is important that the young person understands the meaning of any word presented for spelling and that they choose words meaningful words themselves.

In encouraging young people to be successful, confident, effective learners/communicators it is vital that we encourage independent learning so that they can develop resilience and a positive attitude.

For example, using positive words and phrases with each attempt helps develop confidence. So instead of being annoyed at 'getting it wrong' he/she can say:

E.g, *'I'm nearly there with this word - just missed the letter 'g' - what can I do to help myself?'*

Try introducing the 1-5 scale (5 best) to support the young person's self-assessment.

5 - Best ever!

4 - Good work

3 - Okay

2 - More effort needed.

1 - Poor - not trying!



In this way targets for improvement, can be identified and form the basis of learning conversations. Improvements in confidence and motivation are likely to produce opportunities to apply spelling strategies across writing.

An Important Consideration

Self - Regulation

The strategies suggested should help young people to learn what works best and what their strengths are. Engaging with the strategies, talking about their spelling, listening to others do the same and setting personal goals, should increase motivation. The young person may then monitor their own progress and self-reflect on the effectiveness of strategies presented. This is likely to add value to learning and promote self-satisfaction.

How to Structure the Spelling Revision

- **Plan** - *Short chunks of spelling practice - 10/15 minutes.*

- **Monitor** - *How am I doing?*
 - *Should I continue with this strategy?*

- **Evaluate** - *How did I do this week?*
 - *Mnemonics are good but take a lot of time...*

Two basic principles behind supporting spelling development.

1. A multi-sensory approach is vital

We all learn using our senses to varying degrees. When young people are developing their reading and spelling we can help by showing them ways of using visual, auditory, tactile (touch) and kinaesthetic (movement) cues to remember words.

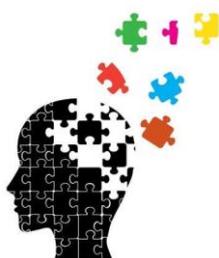


2. Young people must be encouraged to think about how they are going to learn and remember words.

They should take responsibility and an active part in their own learning. Automaticity in spelling skills can be acquired through repetition (when the young person repeats the same words or phrases a few times to make the word clearer and more memorable) but it is important that this is not seen as rote learning of the spelling to be learned.

Over-learning provides a good opportunity to utilise a range of materials and a variety of techniques. There are a wide variety of spelling/word games available including memory games, sequencing, mnemonics and rhyme.

Young people should be encouraged to identify their **own** priority words for spelling and to be flexible in their choice of spelling strategies. Modelling by a parent/carer should help by making overt what is usually covert saying - "*This is how I can help myself to spell this word*" - This



scaffolding support through dialogue and/or demonstration, can fade as it becomes less necessary.

Self-monitoring of progress in spelling should be promoted as well as organisation.

Understand the word

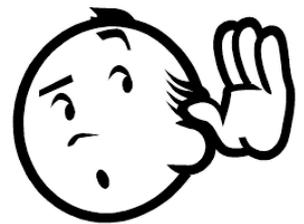
We remember things which are meaningful to us and interesting for us. It is very important therefore that the young person has a clear understanding of the word to be learned. Discuss the word together and encourage him/her to use the word in a meaningful, well-constructed way. Suggest that the young person formulate a sentence of their own, supporting where necessary. This could be done in oral or written form.



Strategies for spelling a new word

Sounding

The young person can tackle the spelling of some words using a PHONETIC (sounding out) approach. Encourage the young person to stretch the word (suggest the image of an elastic band) so that s/he can hear the sounds.



<p>th</p>  <p>Stick your tongue out!</p>	<p>f</p>  <p>Put your front teeth over your bottom lip!</p>	<p>v</p>  <p>Like a motorbike!</p>
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Be aware that this may be difficult for some young people with speech and language difficulties.

Some words need a different approach and cannot be sounded out.

Eg. **although**.

Many common words fall into this category.

Some visual strategies

We tend to remember things better if we can organise them into groups. **Highlighters or coloured pens** can be used to change the look of the word and make it more memorable.



- Chunking words may be an option for some children

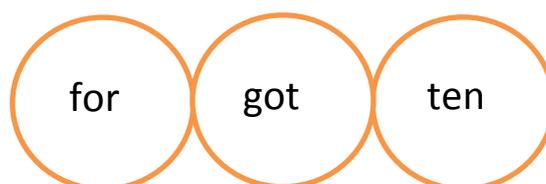
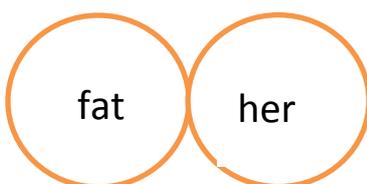
Eg yesterday **yes** - **ter** - **day**

The young person can write the word in this way using highlighters to identify the way s/he is breaking up the word (modelling beforehand can help). It is important that the young person makes this decision. Saying the word as s/he writes the 'chunks' should help. The word should be practised 2-3 times a day over 5-6 days and written as a 'whole' when s/he feels ready.

- Another option is for the young person to identify the tricky part of a word (for him/herself) and to highlight just that part.
Can the young person 'see' words within words?

This is a useful strategy for some young people.

Eg.



Another choice is to change the appearance of the word

Eg. receive

The young person might write

re	/	ce	/	ive
rec	/	e	/	ive

or a different format. Again the young person chooses which method is best for her/him.

- Look out for **special features** in a word such as silent letters (thumb) or double letters. Sometimes a visual method helps

Eg Success two collars and two socks



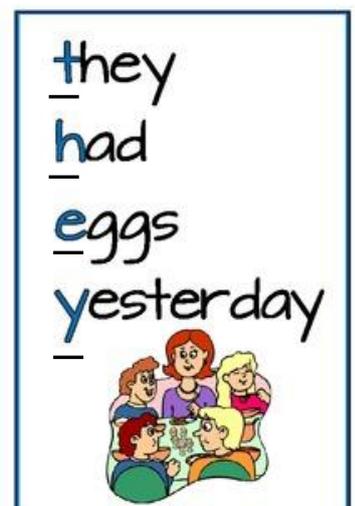
- **Mnemonics** - These can be time-consuming, but work well for some young people, especially for irregular words.

Eg s a i d sad animals in danger

or sally ann is dancing



The young person may choose to draw a picture of the image or discuss this visual image with someone. It is more meaningful if they can compose her/his own mnemonic but support and encouragement are necessary. The wackier the mnemonic the easier it is for the student to remember, so allow them creativity.





The young person may decide to use a mnemonic for only the tricky part of the word.

Eg fright - ghosts have teeth

Demonstrate that this is a transferable skill

Eg, Can be used to remember a list of facts. Eg. In Social Subjects, Science, Biology etc.

- Can the young person visually identify 'rimes' in words?

Eg ink ing drink ing





Some auditory strategies

Here are some approaches which a young person with an auditory preference may find useful.

- Say the word in a **silly or exaggerated way**
Eg Tee-you-E-S-day
Wed-nes-day
- Spell the word in **rhythm**
queue = qu-eu-e
Mississippi = Mi-ssi-ssi-ppi
- Say the word in 'chunks'
- Count syllables in words eg. Television (4).

If this is difficult rest chin on hand, say the word and count the number of times the chin drops.



- Record the young person saying the whole word, then each letter name, then the whole word again. The young person listens to the recording, stops the recording then writes the word. S/he checks it by listening to the recording again.

Some kinaesthetic strategies

- The young person can write the word to be learned on a strip of card and then cut it into parts to be reassembled - either individual letters, or chunks. S/he should say the letter names/sounds or chunks as they are placed in the correct order, (ensure lower case).
- Plastic/magnetics letters are useful on the fridge.
- Encourage cursive writing. When used with other senses, it often has a strong impact on memory.



- Develop a personal word list, The ASL department can offer support here.
- Spell word when doing an activity outwith school. (aloud or internal voice)



How can I help?

Remember the two basic principles!

You can support the young person by saying "How are you going to remember this word?" S/he may need to be reminded of the choices available and it may be helpful for you to provide an example. The young person is more likely to remember the spelling if s/he takes responsibility.

If a word is spelt wrongly, **discourage** the young person from merely inserting or changing letters which are incorrect. The word should be corrected and written out in full. This allows the young person to see (and/or hear) the word as a correct whole.



Remember that spelling is a predominantly visual skill; therefore improving handwriting will have a knock-on effect on spelling. The use of wider lines for this purpose, will aid the formation and dimensions of letters. If cursive script has been taught then encourage this as it can reduce visual confusions and reduce the likelihood of reversal/rotations.



It is important to help the young person to retain the spelling of new words in their **long-term** memory. A large amount of detail is lost within the first twenty four hours from the short-term memory. It is therefore important that the spelling be practised two-three times a day for five-six days. This will greatly assist recall. This idea should be explained to the young person. A visual image may help the young person to understand this better - eg going through a field of tall grass for the first time may be difficult, but each subsequent journey makes it clearer until eventually there is a clear path. Or, tell the young person to watch a baby in a pram reaching for a rattle/toy. Notice how their arms are all over the place to begin with. Then with practice, they find it straight away?

Try asking the young person to spell words as they dry the dishes, walk along the corridor, put on their coats - any time in fact! Point out to them that this is how we learn best, by practising.

Remember:



Young people learn better when they feel positive about themselves as learners.

If a young person is interested in a particular topic, he/she is more likely to look up a word and remember it.

Words that are used most often can cause the most difficulty.

We want them to feel that they themselves have strategies for spelling.

- Give positive feedback when they do well and also when they are struggling.
- They should keep a note of all the words they have learned. Build a record of Words I Can Spell. (ASL can provide a wordbook or advise)
- Help them to identify which strategies seem to work best for them.
- Talk to them about their learning.
- Check spelling games and activities online.



Eg, doorwaysolinespelling.com.

[BBC Skillwise Spelling](http://BBC.com)

Explore free spelling applications. Some offer the opportunity to personalise spelling lists and record your own voice.

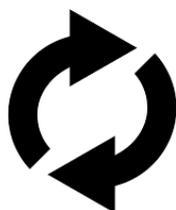
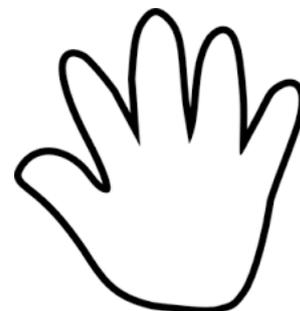
- Some young people find hand held Spellcheckers useful.

Developing a personalised, alphabetical wordbook can be useful for some. This can also be used as a Writers Notebook to record similes, metaphors, mind maps/ drawings/songs?



Another Consideration

- Words are presented one at a time.
- Parent/Carer says the word and young person repeats it.
- The young person names the letters or sounds in the word as s/he traces the word. (On hand, on the table, in the air - be creative!) Consistency is important here - either letter sounds or names - not a combination.
- The young person decides for him/herself how to remember the word, using sounds, chunks, pictures (see below for suggestions)
 - The young person writes the word, naming each letter name or sound as it is written. (Be consistent)
 - The young person then checks word with the original to see if it is correct. Try to emphasise the positive - *"You're nearly there - only one letter missed"* or *"The letters are correct, now check the order"*
 - The word is covered and the process is repeated twice more.
- The word is practised approximately 2-3 times a day for 5-6 days using this technique.
- The word should be related to others with the same pattern and sound:
 - Eg. should
 - would
 - could
- Be flexible.
- Sessions should be short. (Time limit eg. fifteen minutes)



This may help:

Already Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>
In Progress	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yet to be Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Favoured Method	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date:					
Look, Say, Trace, Cover, Write, Check					
Mnemonics					
Words in Words					
Use of Highlighter					
Visualisation					
Chunking Words (visual)					
Chunking Words (auditory)					
Stretching Words					
Raps/Rhythm					
Rimes					
Alphabet Arc Activities					
Other Method eg Ask a friend. "What helps you remember how to spell... <i>knowledge?</i>					