

Spelling Handout for Teachers

(from http://www.susancanthy.com/Workshops/spelling_hand.html)

Signs of a Successful Speller

All students should be expected to become successful spellers according to these criteria:

- Acceptance of personal responsibility for correct spelling in one's own writing.
- Mastery of the most common and useful words and rules.
- A systematic and adequate method for approaching the study of new words.
- Independence in using the dictionary and other memory aids.
- Recognition of regular and irregular spellings (*state* v. *great*).
- An understanding of word construction, roots, prefixes and suffixes (*made* v. *played*).

Steps to Mastery of a Spelling Word

Spellings have not been *mastered* until they seem "easy" and are correctly written at all times, including in first draft writing. The weekly test is just a first step. Without extensive mixed review and dictation, the time spent memorizing a weekly list may essentially be wasted. There are five steps toward mastery of a spelling word. The word is spelled correctly:

1. On the weekly test.
2. On a mixed review test in succeeding weeks.
3. In dictation.
4. In final draft writing. Mistakes in first draft writing are caught and corrected as the work is edited.
5. In first draft writing and at all times.

The Creative / Critical "Bridge"

Creative and critical thinking are incompatible and should not be taught at the same time using the same methods. Teach spelling separately from creative writing and help students "bridge the gap" with editing, dictation and personal words. When teaching creative writing, focus on the student's *ideas* and the writing process. Do not comment too much about mistakes, but use errors to guide instruction in the "critical" realm (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, form). The "bridge" reaches from creative toward critical with editing and personal words, and from critical toward creative with dictation.

Daily Practice (10-12 minutes a day)

Use a list from this handout *or* compile lists of words your child doesn't know by pretesting from the 1000 word list or collecting misspelled words from his/her writing. The same words should be taught and practiced again and again until they're mastered. The procedure below provides six practices in just a few seconds per word.

1. Point to the first word. Spell and read it.
2. Trace, spell and read the word.
3. Cover the model. Write the word and read it.
4. Check from the model.
5. Check and correct the word you wrote.
6. Close your eyes. Spell the word and say it.

Daily Dictation (15-20 minutes)

Dictate four sentences daily which contain review spelling words, homophones, and capitalization/punctuation rules children have been taught. Teach language rules and review them frequently.

1. The sentence is, "Who's coming?"
2. Say, "Who's coming?"
3. Students say the sentence.
4. Write, "Who's coming?"
5. Students write the sentence.
6. Ask if there is anything special about the sentence (apostrophe, question mark).
7. Teacher writes the sentence correctly, pronouncing each letter and saying each word.
8. Students check and correct their own sentences.

Suggested Schedule

I often get questions as to how I structure the spelling and language portion of the day. Here is a general schedule:

- Handwriting practice (about 10 minutes for 2 letter forms)
- Daily practice (about 10 minutes for 20 words--15 group and 5 personal words)
- Lesson (5 minutes or so to teach a capitalization rule, punctuation rule, or set of homophones)
- Daily dictation (about 10 minutes for four sentences)

I did handwriting instruction only at the first of the year, until all letter forms had been taught. I took handwriting grades from dictation after that. I used this

10 minutes a day to teach keyboarding skills once we had practised all the letter forms.

Daily practice went on pretty much all year, with the exception of short holiday weeks, when we did review testing. Words missed in review went back onto personal lists.

I didn't teach a lesson every day. Generally, I taught a lesson and incorporated the skill into dictation for at least 2-3 days until the students seemed to understand it well. Then I'd introduce a new concept or skill and fade the practice of the old one, but not completely. Dictation is a vehicle that allows you to constantly check and review what you have already taught. If children make a mistake on something you've taught, reteach it briefly and include it in dictation more frequently until it's learned.

Daily dictation took place every day. This program will not be much more successful than any other without systematic review. Most years I dictated four sentences a day every day, regardless. One year I just dictated four days a week because of a difficult schedule.

Spelling Rules

The following rules for English spelling have very few exceptions:

1. The letter *q* is always followed by *u* in English words. (*question, quite*)
2. English words do not end with the letter *v*. (*gave, have*)
3. When a one-syllable word ends with a short vowel and a single consonant, double the final consonant before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel. (*swim + -ing* is *swimming*)
In a two-syllable word, double the final consonant only if the word is accented on the last syllable. (*begin + -ing* is *beginning* but *open + -ing* is *opening*)
4. When a word ends in silent *e*, drop the *e* before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel. (*make + -ing* is *making*)
Keep the silent *e* before adding a suffix beginning with a consonant. (*time + -ly* is *timely*)
5. When a word ends in a consonant and *y*, change the *y* to *i* before adding a suffix, unless the suffix begins with *i*. (*happy + -ly* is *happily*, but *hurry + -ing* is *hurrying*)
When a word ends in a vowel and *y*, do not change the *y* to *i*. (*play + -ed* is *played*)
6. Capitalize proper nouns.
7. Write *i* before *e* except after *c*, or when sounded like *-ay* as in *neighbor* and *weigh*. This rule doesn't apply when *ci* is pronounced *sh* as in *ancient*.

Spelling Guidelines

1. Choosing between *k* and *c*. *k* is used before short *e* and short *i* in one-syllable words. *c* is used before short *a*, *o*, and *u* in one-syllable words.
2. To pluralize many nouns ending with a single *f* or *fe*, change the *f* to *v* and add *-es*.
3. Add *-es* rather than *-s* to words ending with the sound of *s*, *x*, *z*, *sh*, or *ch*.
4. Choosing between *-ize*, *-ise* and *-yze*. Most common words end with *-ize*. *Surprise*, *exercise* and *revise* are common two-syllable words that end with *-ise*. *Paralyze* and *analyze* are the only common words ending with *-yze*.
5. Choosing between *-ary* and *-ery*. Most common words end with *-ary* rather than *-ery*, with the exception of *cemetery* and *stationery*.
6. Choosing between *-able* and *-ible*. The suffix *-able* is more common than *-ible*. *-ible* is generally not added to a whole root word. *-ible* is used to keep *c* or *g* soft (*eligible*, *invincible*). Since *notice* is a whole word, *-able* is added. *Noticeable* retains its *e* to keep the *c* soft. *-ible* is used if a related word ends in *-ion* (*collection* / *collectible*).
7. Choosing between *-le*, *-el* and *-al*. *-le* is more common at the end of a word than *-el* or *-al*.
8. Choosing between *-ence* and *-ance*. If the base word ends with *-ent*, *-ence* is correct. If the base word ends with *-ant*, *-ance* is correct.
9. Choosing between *-cede*, *-ceed* and *-sede*. *-cede* is the most common spelling of this root. Three common words end with *-ceed*: *succeed*, *proceed*, and *exceed*. *Supersede* is the only common word which ends with *-sede*.

Spelling Mnemonics

1. all right: It's either all right or all wrong.
2. argument: He lost an *e* in the argument.
3. beauty: Be a beauty.
4. believe: Don't believe a lie.
5. business: Busy ness.
6. cemetery: You go to the cemetery with *e*'s (ease).
7. etc.: Remember E.T., the extra terrestrial?
8. familiar: He is a familiar liar.
9. February: You say "br" in February.
10. foreign: Kings reign in foreign countries.
11. friend: You'll be my friend to the end.
12. grammar: Gramma knows her grammar.
13. hear: You hear with your ear.
14. independent: There is a dent in independent.

15. innocent: in no cent
16. lose: Whenever you use one o, you lose.
17. misspell: No little miss should misspell this!
18. niece: My niece is nice.
19. parallel: Not all lines are parallel.
20. piece: Have a piece of pie.
21. pleasant: Picnics are pleasant for an ant.
22. prairie: There is air on the prairie.
23. principle: A rule can be called a principle. (Both end in *-le*)
24. principal: The principal is my pal.
25. prison: Her son is in prison.
26. receive: R-E-C-E Is Very Easy.
27. secretary: A secretary can keep a secret.
28. separate: There is a rat in separate.
29. sincerely: You can rely on me, sincerely. (Sincerely ends with *rely.*)
30. stationery: Use stationery to write a letter. (Both have *-er.*)
31. together: to get her. They went together to get her.
32. tomorrow: tom or row
33. weather: We eat in all kinds of weather.
34. weird: We are weird.
35. whether: I wonder whether they're together.
36. whose: Whose hose is that?

1000 Core Spelling Words

90% of English test is just 1000 base words.

Base your classroom work here at Puhinui on the New Zealand Word List, which has been specifically researched for children in this country.