

# How to Help with Spelling

- Make sure any words taught are already in the learners listening, speaking and reading vocabulary.
  - the best source for spelling is the child's own oral language, writing errors and personal writing needs.
  - another good source for spellings is the child's most commonly used words and also the most common mistakes.
- Teach only one rule at a time
- Encourage self correction – always encourage the child to have a go when they say "I can't spell that". Then compare the correct spelling to their own version – see where they went wrong.
- When correcting any spellings always point out the letters they get right first
  - **bough** – "that's nearly right – you've just mixed up two letters – do you know which two"
- When a child is writing (any writing, but especially creative) ask them to underline the words they think are misspelt. This distinguishes between the words they know and the words they can't spell ) and more importantly the mistakes they don't realise they're making.
- Never allow a learner to correct over a misspelling. Always insist he/she rubs out the entire word or crosses it out before writing the correct version.
- Writing letters in the air or using very large letters visual memory.
- Write the same word on to two flash cards. Cut one up into individual letters and use the complete word to piece together the letters.
- Use various types of cloze exercises:

bath	ba - - .
b - th	b - - h
ba - h	- - th
bat-	b-- -
- Syllabic awareness – encourage the child to pronounce syllables loud and clear. Get them to count syllables in words – this encourages chunking or breaking words up in pieces.
- When spelling long words get them to count the syllables on their fingers (it can be split whatever way it will be most easily remembered – it doesn't have to be an exact syllable.

- Spell a long word – pronounce the syllables clearly and spell it syllable by syllable.
- Break up words in boxes to help the syllabic approach  
tomorrow =  
somewhere =
- Use the syllabic approach to highlight vowel sounds  
elephant  
spider  
→ Some vowels work in pairs but they have only one sound  
ai → curtain  
ea → really  
ou → about
- Give them words to break up into syllables and ask them to highlight the vowels with colours.
- Use visualisation – ask the children to imagine what the word looks like in their head (to balance sounding out words) – if they find this difficult at first use an introduction exercise – “try and picture what the kitchen looks like”
- Encourage visual spelling / learning by colouring / highlighting the part of a word which causes difficulty.
- Use the “look, say, cover, write, check” strategy (and repeat).
- Discourage mispronunciation when it affects spelling  
( de / the      bananad /banana      cause / because
- Be careful of handwriting and punctuation (especially basic punctuation – full stops, capital letters, commas.....)
- Do proof reading exercises – checking for mistakes in passages. This increases the ability to proof read their own work for spelling mistakes.
- Encourage creative writing and tell them not to worry about the spelling.
- Avoid any puzzles that jumble up letters – even some crosswords / word searches – can be confusing to very poor spellers.

- Intentional mispronunciation can be very helpful with difficult words

fri – end (friend)  
 sal – mon (salmon)  
 te – ach (teach)

this tactic is especially helpful with silent letters

k – night  
 k – nee  
 h – our

(say the word as it really is and then say it as if the letter wasn't silent)

- Some silent letters can have associative words that help

muscle - musclular  
 sign - signature

- Try to invent mnemonics – a special way of trying to remember something –

**eye**

soldiers sometimes **die** in battle

an **island** is **land**

never believe a **lie**

also words hidden in words

know → now                      bread → read  
 late → ate                        them → hem

- One word can lead to many spellings using prefixes / suffixes / morphemes  
 → grace - gracefully - graceful - disgrace - disgracefully

- Highlight root words

assistance → assist  
 disability → ability  
 exchange → change  
 engineer → engine  
 service → serve  
 beggar → beg

- Always look for / point out patterns in words / or groups of words that go together  
 fright / might / night

- Link common words together to make chains



- Experiment with words – add one or more of these endings - **ing, ed**
- Analyse words carefully – change them – build words  
change the f in fair to ch → chair  
change the t in tear to b → bear
- Teach the most common words which don't rhyme consistently  
eg: enough → (uff)  
bought → (aw)  
through → (oo)  
though → (oh)
- Associate words together in meaningful sentences to reinforce certain spelling  
one **man** too **many**  
the **beach** is by the **sea**  
a **piece** of **pie**  
a **bus** is always **busy**
- Highlight words with more than one meaning to increase spelling store  
date, post, ring, left
- Focus on one aspect of spelling at a time – double letters  
appear, better, cliff, messy  
(look at the word and try to remember which letter is doubled)  
  
doubles often occur when 'ing' is added to a word  
running, swimming  
also comparisons  
hot, hotter, hottest  
big, bigger, biggest
- Use cloze procedure to highlight double letters  
**Tom - - ow I'm going swi - - ing in the sea**
- Highlight trouble letters such as a soft C  

<u>Hard C</u>	<u>Soft C</u>
cat	ice
card	mice
cottage	rice
cook	place

C turns soft when followed by an e, l or y. Use word analysis.



- Do regular dictation to encourage good aural memory – give plenty of time. Usually read the full passage first, then repeat sections twice (if possible chunk sections according to meaning), this can be done using some of the stories written by children.

- Practice writing / copying short sentences / passages from books or independent passages.

- Don't touch homonyms together (words that sound the same but are spelt differently) as this can lead to more confusion.

aisle / isle / I'll

root / rout

buy / by / bye

teach them separately in context.

- Collect words for regular review and revision – words can be stored in shoe boxes etc. – a poor speller can carry his or her own personal reference book for useful words. An address book could be used for his/her own dictionary.

- Highlight some common letter combinations (some are phonetically confusing)

ambition → shun

overture → chur.

l = y - onion, million, senior

ar = er - dollar, liar, sugar

ph = f - phone, photo, dolphin

le = il - apple, paddle, jungle

ce = s - once, violence, romance

ch = k - chemist, christian, mechanic

v – never alone at the end of a word – leaves room for a friend e  
dive, love, slave, have