

Parents' Spelling Workshop

 **Fox**Federation

Supporting your child with **spelling**

→ Please consider:

1. Any specific **difficulties** your **child** has with spelling, e.g. 'th' vs. 'f', or high frequency words (wen, whent)
2. Any **challenges you face** in supporting your child with spelling.



Why is correct spelling important?



What makes spelling in English so challenging?

26 letters of the alphabet

44 sounds or 'phonemes'

19 - vowel sounds

25 - consonant sounds

- Sounds can be represented by more than one letter, e.g.
sh-o-p
- One sound can be represented in a variety of different ways,
e.g. shop, chef, sugar, tissue
- One spelling can represent a variety of sounds
e.g. moon, book.

What makes spelling in English so challenging?

I take it you already know
Of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Others may stumble but not you
On hiccough, thorough, slough and through.
Well done! And now you wish perhaps,
To learn of less familiar traps?
Beware of heard, a dreadful word
That looks like beard and sounds like bird.
And dead, it's said like bed, not bead-
for goodness' sake don't call it 'deed'!
Watch out for meat and great and threat
(they rhyme with suite and straight and debt).

Aims and Objectives

- To review some research on spelling and dyslexia;
- To share how spelling is taught in school and how dyslexia-friendly approaches are embedded;
- To give parents and carers practical ideas of how to support their child's spelling;
- To share helpful resources and websites.

If parents engage with their children's education, the attainment of the child will increase by 15% no matter what the social background of the family. [Professor Charles Desforges](#)

This is not a session to discuss the school curriculum and homework approach. Any questions that are personal, please speak to us or your class teacher after the session. Any questions that may help others, please ask in the Q and A at the end.

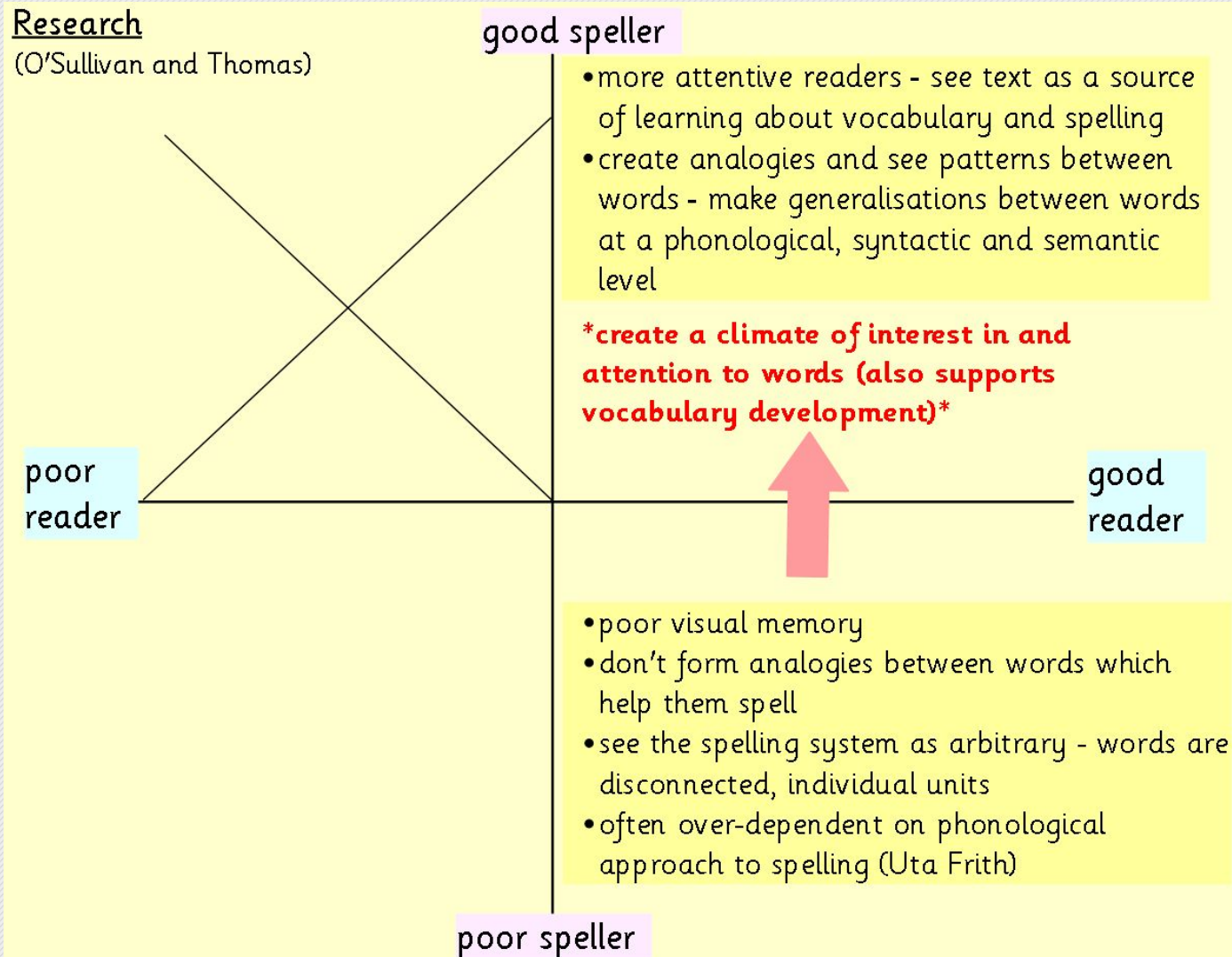
Aims for your child

- To equip every child with a range of spelling strategies (including phonics) to enable them to attempt to spell unfamiliar words;
- To equip every child with a range of dyslexia-friendly strategies that help them to learn spellings;
- To ensure every child can spell the 200 most common high frequency words correctly (either while writing, or through editing);
- To build children's confidence in spelling and in writing.

Research

Research

(O'Sullivan and Thomas)



'Learning to spell involves the integration of several skills. These include knowledge of phonological representations, grammatical and semantic knowledge, as well as the formulation of analogies with words in visual memory and the knowledge of orthographic rules and conventions.' (Lennox and Siegel)

Being able to spell involves different strategies:

- **phonics**
- **grammar**
- **meaning**
- **analogies** - patterns, visual memory
- **spelling conventions** - a sense of probability

Research: multi-sensory approach

- O-Sullivan and Thomas found that effective teaching of spelling involved helping children develop a **variety of spelling strategies**, helping children discuss and investigate the **semantic and syntactic features of words** and **sharing information with parents**.
- Dyslexia International promotes a **multi-sensory approach** to spelling which uses techniques which link what pupils **see** in front of them (the visual modality), with what they **hear** (the auditory modality), what they feel around their **throat and mouth** when they speak out loud (the oral-kinaesthetic modality) and what they feel in their **hand** when they write each letter and word (the manual-kinaesthetic modality) in order to improve memory and awareness.
- The Orton-Gillingham approach emphasised the importance of an approach to spelling that is **personalised, systematic, multi-sensory, meta-cognitive (about how we learn)**, includes **direct instruction (teaching spelling patterns and rules)**, **applied linguistics (i.e. grammar, syntax, semantics)** and **linguistic (writing) competence**. This benefits dyslexic pupils and *all* pupils.
- At Fox: this spelling approach has led to a significant increase in the percentage of words spelt correctly in the Year 6 SATS SPAG test and in the percentage of words spelt correctly in writing across KS2 with wider range of spelling strategies used by pupils.

Spelling at school

- **Phonics** (Reception – Year 2)

Letter and sound correspondences

Segmenting words (splitting them into the smallest sounds – phonemes) to spell

Irregular/ high frequency words, e.g. *the*, *people*

s a t
• • •

sh a p e
• • •



1. Investigate

Find a pattern/ rule
(position within a word, or
letter friends)


Discuss the most common
spelling – the ‘best bet’

ay	ai	a_e	eigh	ei	ey	a
day	raisin	cake	neighbour		grey	stable
away	wait	came	eight	rein	prey	apricot
lay	tail	snake		reign		table
way	rain	shame				
	paint	make				
	train	bake				
		lake				
		drake	grapes			
			dates			


What are the rules?

Which is the most common?


2. Practice and apply




way X
wei
weigh
wey




Say and stretch
Robot talk




Count the sounds



Sound button




brain ✓




great grate


8 eight




Stretch




Count phonemes




Write



sh a p e



Sound buttons



Read and check

• Spelling (Year 3 - 6)

Same model: investigate, practise, apply

Prefixes and suffixes (e.g. adding –un, -re, –ly, -ful, -ed)

Letter strings, e.g. /shun/ - station, passion, magician

Specific dyslexia-friendly spelling strategies

Being able to spell involves different strategies:

- **phonics**
- **grammar**
- **meaning**
- **analogies** - patterns, visual memory
- **spelling conventions** - a sense of probability



Spelling in KS2

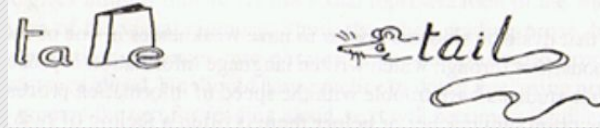


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- Children are given a list of home learning spellings for each unit, each week **linked by a spelling pattern**
- Children are tested weekly
- As well as spelling unit words, words from **national curriculum word lists** (years 3/4 or years 5/6) will be sent home weekly
- These national curriculum word list words are **statutory** for children to learn and affect their end of year standard for writing
- *NB: Spelling is a part of the assessment procedures for children's standards in writing.*
- A selection of these words, as well as a selection of the previous term's spellings, will be tested in **termly assessments**: 3 termly assessments – end of Autumn, Spring and Summer
- Children will be given an opportunity to **revise** for these assessments in the penultimate week of every term and the test will be in the last week of each term – this will be an opportunity for children's retrieval
- *NB: There is always the possibility for the same coverage of certain words in different year groups.*
- At the **end of every term**, children will take home a list of spellings which they have spelt incorrectly in their literacy books and will be tested on these in the first week back
- Strategy practice is expected in spelling books every week
- Engagement at home with the importance of spelling practice is essential for children's spelling success

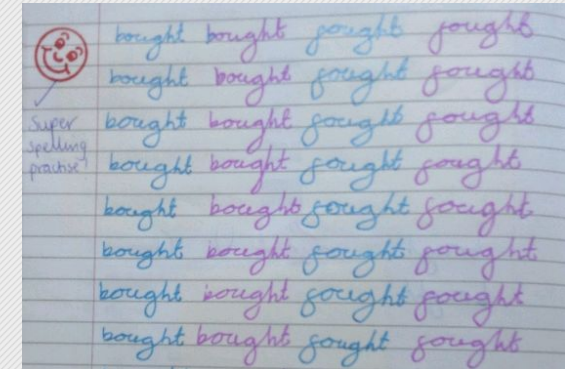
Spelling strategies:

- Visual



- Auditory M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I Feb-r-uary

- Kinaesthetic



We want to encourage meta-cognitive thinking:

- Understanding how I learn – the best learning strategies for me;
- Understanding the most appropriate learning strategies for these particular words.

Visual memory

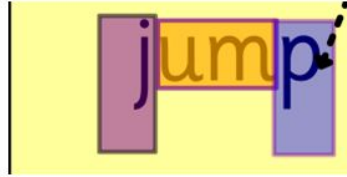
1. Circle the right one.

- Write out the words, but include wrong spellings.
- The child needs to circle the right one and explain how they know.

e.g. **escaped** **escapt**
holidays **holydays** **hollidays**

2. Colour-block and trace.

- Get your child to colour block the letters EXACTLY as THEY want – it does not need to match either the syllables or the sounds. This will show how the child actually sees the word.
- The teacher / peer can draw the shapes of three words the child is learning and get the child to identify which shape represents each word before writing in the letters on the blank shapes to spell each word.

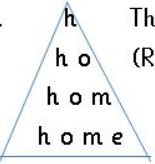


3. Naughty letters.

- Spot the 'naughty' letter in a word (the letter that is unexpected or which you often miss out of get wrong) and write the word with the 'naughty' letter bigger than the rest. You can even draw a picture for that letter, e.g. draw a face around the 'o' in people, draw a fruit for the 'i' in juicy.
- Look at the spellings written this way, then cover them, try to write the word and then look back and check.

4. Pyramid words.

- Write the word a letter at a time in a pyramid shape

e.g.  This means children repeat practicing the spelling, building up a letter at a time.
(Repeat copying also works on action memory)

5. Spot a word in a word.

- Children spot words that they can spell within words that they cannot yet spell, e.g. 'a rat' in 'separate'. Children can make up a silly sentence to help them remember, e.g. There's *a rat* in *sep* – *a* – *rat* – *e*. This is further supported by saying the word in a way that emphasises the word within a word.

Ukulele
Broccoli
Necessary

Sound memory

1. Say it as it sounds.

- Mispronounce a tricky word. Read the word exactly as it looks, e.g. business = 'bus – i – ness'
- Then look at how it is actually spelt to identify the unusual spelling or letter.

2. Say the letters aloud to a rhythm

- For example, M-I-S-S-I-S-I-P-P-I
- You can sing, rap or clap the letters to a rhythm to help memorise it.
- Saying the word / rap silently, whispering it, saying it aloud (and shouting it) can also help to memorise it.

3. Mnemonics

- Choose a tricky word with an unusual spelling, e.g. ough. Make up a word for each letter, e.g. Oh U Grass Hopper. This can be useful for some tricky words, but cannot be used all the time.

4. Tape players

- Children record themselves saying the word or spelling the word. They listen back to the word and try to write it, they then listen again and check.

Ukulele
Broccoli
Necessary

Action memory

1. Tracing

- Get children to write the word very large and trace over it with their finger.
- Using your finger as an imaginary pen write the word on the child's back and get them to say the letters aloud and then say the whole word. Now try to write the word spelt correctly.

2. Repeat copying

- Write the word three times in different sizes – small, medium and large.
- Look at the spellings written this way, then cover them, try to write the word and then look back and check.

3. Look, cover, write, check

Ukulele
Broccoli
Necessary

Spelling at home

- **Practice**

- Which words do children find most challenging to spell?
- Why is regular practice and repetition important?
- How do we know if a child has learnt a spelling?
- What could your child do if they can spell these words accurately?

Spelling at home

- **Support**

- Why is it important to support your child with learning their spellings?
- What have you found successful?
- What might you do? What might you say?

Spelling at home

- Create a **quiet, relaxing environment** for spelling practice.
- Build **spelling practice into your daily routine** – how can you integrate 10 minutes practice a day?
- Provide encouragement and use your **parental judgement**. Does your child need more or less adult support? Can they spell the words and need to be extended? Do they need fewer or easier words? Children might need support with **choosing the most appropriate strategies** (the strategies that reflect how they learn best and the strategies that are most appropriate for that word).

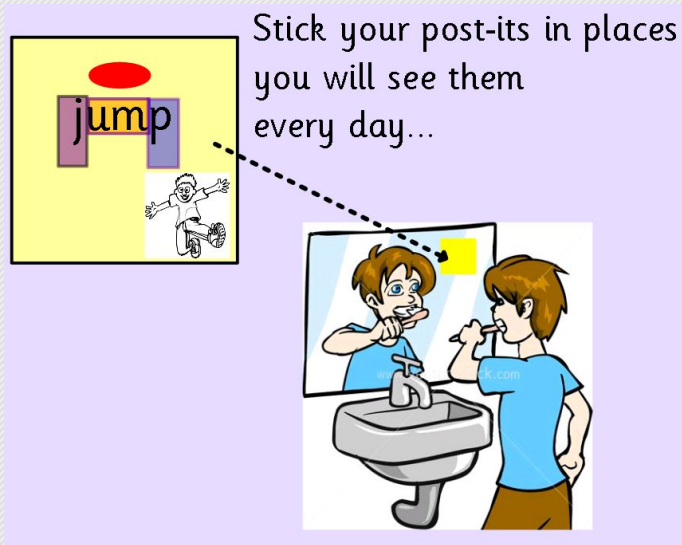
Spelling at home

Discuss the words with them.

- Help children identify what part of the word they can spell (we can almost always spell some letters) and celebrate success!
- Help children identify what part(s) they find tricky. Discuss why they find these particular letters harder – is it that they often write them in the wrong order, or that they miss out a letter, or add in extra letters.
- Come up with strategies together to help remember these specific, tricky letters, e.g. highlight them, draw a picture around them, write those letters bigger, shout those letters as they say the word aloud.

Spelling at home

- Focus on **visual memory**



- Focus on creating links between words:
Can you spot any words that have the same spelling pattern? Or the same sound and a different spelling pattern?

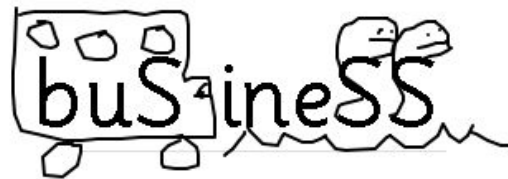
Spelling at home

- What part of the word can you spell?
- What part of the word do you find hardest?
- Why? What is the common mistake you make?
- Let's just focus on these tricky letters. How could we learn them?

business

buSineSS

bus-i-ness



What strategy might you use here?

people chief beast know

thief beach belief stream

please leave was there

bear bare

Growth Mindset

All of us make mistakes. This is how we learn. Encourage a growth mindset in your child by praising them for their effort and recognising their mistakes and trying to fix them.

Remember, there is no such thing as a 'good speller' or a 'bad speller' – our intelligence and ability is not fixed, but can be developed and grow over time. This takes effort, an understanding of how we learn and resilience!

Growth Mindset

- Avoid “good” or “clever” – praise the process: the effort, strategies, focus and perseverance. E.g. “I’m impressed with how hard you have tried.”
- “This is what you wrote..... Can you spot anything wrong with that?”
- “This may take some time and effort. You can improve so keep trying.”
- Remember the power of “yet” – “We can’t spell this yet, but we will if we keep trying.”

Final thoughts..

- Work on the meta-cognitive. How does your child learn? Are they using the best spelling strategies for them? Are they using the most appropriate spelling strategies to learn this word.
- Discuss the spellings with your child. What part of the word can you spell? What part do you find tricky and why? What strategies can we use to remember these letters?
- Focus on growth mindset – praise the effort, discuss the mistakes, use the ‘power of yet’
- Little and often. Repetition is important to commit words to long term memory.

What are you going to do as a result of this workshop?

- Please take a moment to consider any key points you will take away from this workshop.
- Please share this, if you are happy to, with the person next to you.
- When you get home, can you share your learning from this session with any other adults who support your child with spelling?
- The sooner you implement something you have learned today, the sooner it might become routine!!

Celebrate success!

You can always come and speak to your class teacher about your child's English progress.

If you have any questions, you can email:

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