

Spelling Strategies

Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check

Look, say, cover, write, check is the method used to practise spellings in most primary schools. It works because it's a multi-sensory approach, using sight, sound and touch: research shows that the more senses a child involves in their learning, the better the outcome.

With this method, your child will start with a list of spellings written down on paper. They then go through the following steps:

1. **Look at the word carefully.** Pay attention not just to the letters and their order, but also to the shape the word makes on the page
2. **Say it aloud.** Say the word both as you would usually say it, and then again enunciating any silent letters, e.g. Wed – nes – day.
3. **Cover the word** with a piece of paper or your hand
4. **Write the word** down from memory.
5. **Check** your answer letter by letter. If you've got it wrong, write it out again correctly.

Spelling sentences

This involves practising spellings by writing sentences that include the words that have to be learnt. For example, if a child was given the word 'highlight' to learn, they might write: 'Going to the roller disco was the **highlight** of my weekend.'

The benefit of writing sentences is that it doesn't just help children learn how to spell the word, but **it also reinforces the meaning and how to use it in context.**

Dictation

This is similar to spelling sentences, but instead of children writing their own sentences, the teacher reads out a sentence that includes the spelling word. The child has to write down either the word itself, or the whole sentence, for example:

'A shape with four sides is called a quadrilateral. Spell 'quadrilateral'.'

Spotting patterns

Often, children will be given a list of words that are connected by a certain rule, such as 'I before E except after C.' Making sure your child knows the rule can take a lot of the effort out of learning what might look like difficult spellings, as the pattern can be applied to most or all of the words. It is, however, important that they know any exceptions to the rule to avoid slipping up.

Listen and spell

This may seem like an old-fashioned way of learning spellings, where the word is simply read aloud and your child has to write it down. But while it may not be the most revolutionary or exciting technique, it works well for children who are auditory learners.

There are two different ways to do this:

- Saying the whole word aloud and getting your child to write it down.

- Spelling the word out letter by letter, with your child writing each letter as you say it.

You can make the task more engaging by letting your child record themselves saying the words aloud using your phone or tablet; they can then play the recording back and write the word down.

Mnemonics

Often used for so-called tricky words (generally those that don't follow a spelling rule), a mnemonic is any sort of memory aid that helps you remember something. The most common type of mnemonic is an acrostic, where you make up a sentence where each word starts with the letters in the word to be learnt, for example:



Big elephants can always understand small elephants = 'because'



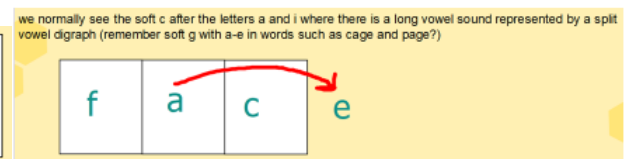
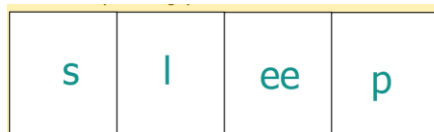
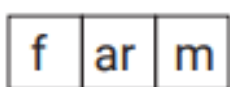
However, mnemonics can take many forms: a visual learner, for instance, might draw a picture that helps them remember how to spell the word.

Word puzzles

These take a bit more preparation, but word puzzles such as crosswords, wordsearches, anagrams and Hangman are great ways to make spelling that little bit more fun. These encourage children to think carefully about the order of letters in a word. You'll find lots of wordsearch and crossword makers like Puzzle-Maker online.

Phoneme frame

A resource used in the teaching of phonics and spelling to help children segment words into constituent sounds. The frame is typically a long rectangle divided lengthways into boxes. When children hear a word, they are encouraged to represent each phoneme heard by placing a grapheme in each box, in sequence and in the order in which we hear the sounds. For example, we would represent the word farm as:



Segment to spell

Sorting words

This involves sorting words based on their spelling pattern

-s | **-es** Practise

hill hamster box beach teacher
stitch cage glass chair match
dragon dress witch flower lunch car banana

- Boggle
- Junior scrabble

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