

SPELLING

An information pamphlet for parents

The governors and staff at William de Yaxley Junior School hope that these notes, which attempt to summarise our guide-lines for spelling in school, will be useful to you in supporting your child's learning.

Spelling does matter but we must not forget that spelling, like handwriting, is a means to an end and what a child wants to say is more important than how it is spelt. However, the better your child's spelling the freer he is to write what he wants.

Learning to spell is quite different from learning to read. Good readers are not necessarily good spellers. This is because reading is about cracking a code, whereas spelling is about a blank space on the paper and our memory.

It is important to remember that older children's writing improves the more they read. The more they read, the better they get at writing. Parents can help with this by encouraging children to follow their reading interests at home and by encouraging writing for pleasure as well.

Spelling is a memory activity

In spelling we move from 'think' to 'write' in at least four ways.

Sight

It may help to close the eyes and visualise a photograph of the word.

Hearing

It may help to mutter the word aloud and tap the syllables.

Feeling

It may help to write the word in the air or with a finger on the table, before writing.

Association

It may help to look for a pattern or silliness, for instance: necessary has one 'c' and two 's' letters so you think of one collar and two socks or father can be split into fat + her.

A good speller needs to enjoy:-

- ♦ accuracy in writing
- ♦ checking spellings
- ♦ examining letter patterns
- ♦ joined handwriting

Good joined up handwriting and spelling go together. Spelling is remembered in the fingertips. It is the memory of moving the pencil to make words that makes for accurate spelling.

How can you help your child practise spelling?


Always look for reasons to write and ways to enjoy words.

- Play games with word lists. You could ask your child to put a list into alphabetical order. Try this with ice cream flavours, Premier League football teams or makes of cars.
- Play word finding games with old magazines and newspapers. You could get your child to draw a circle round every word that ends with -ing or every word beginning with the first letter of their name. The games can get harder as your child becomes more confident so with older children you could ask them to find words from their spelling tests from school.
- Get your child to rearrange the letters in their name or other words they know to make new words (anagrams). For example, the letters in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire can be arranged to say 'Portray battle of frightened hero'.
- Help your child find out what a new word means or how to spell a word by helping them use a dictionary. Children need help in looking up words, following alphabetical order and guessing how a word may start.
- Have a word of the day. This can be a fun way of increasing vocabulary, and can be an easier or harder word, depending on their age. They will need to use the word correctly in a sentence during the day, and spell it as well.
- Write to relatives and pen friends – people love receiving news.
- Write notes for the milkman, or messages, or shopping lists.
- Fill in crosswords or puzzle books.
- Write away for information and fill in coupons.
- Look up telephone numbers to reinforce alphabetical order.


How to learn spellings


Never copy a word.


Always write the whole word from memory.

1. **Look** at the word carefully in such a way
 that you remember what you have
seen.

2. **Say** the word aloud, tapping the syllables.


3. **Cover** the word so you cannot see it.


4. **Write** the word from memory (in the air,
on the table, using a pencil)
 muttering it as you write.

5. **Check** what has been written. If it is not
 correct repeat all the five steps
again.

- ♦ Have fun and make up silly tags – You hear with your ears, 'A/walked and talked about chalk on stalks' or 'U and I build a house'
- ♦ Enjoy discovering patterns
fly flies, try tries,
perhaps, person, whisper
fraction, production, invention
- ♦ Seek for hidden words – every
very
ever
eve
- ♦ Look at words around you – tomato sauce can be used to learn how to spell potato or saucer, or match (tomato/tomato).

Ask school for ideas of further activities or for help with lists of spelling rules.

Remember – memory is essential for spelling and memory can be trained.

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