Globe Primary School

Supporting your child's spelling at home

Guidance for Parents

Many discussions with parents regarding spelling are often centred around the fact that their child seems to forget how to spell words, even when they have spelt them correctly in a test. This booklet contains spelling activities that aim to not only help your child to remember the spelling of new words, but will hopefully be fun to do too.

Key points to remember when helping your child with spellings

- Practice makes perfect
- Encourage your child to use the words they've practised – write stories together, keep a notebook of all the words they've learned to spell so far.
- Review words they can spell. Have them practise them once or twice each before looking at new words as this will boost their confidence.
- Discourage your child from learning all the spellings on a list at once – focus on a few at a time.

Important approaches

- Encourage your child to attempt to spell new words and praise their efforts
- Never spell words for them – point out mistakes and tell your child what he/she got right in their attempt.
- Encourage your child to try spelling the word in parts, by breaking it up into syllables and sounding it out. Try to focus on prefixes, e.g. un**happy**, compound words, e.g. flower/pot and root words, e.g. bene – beneficial.
- When studying a spelling list with your child, try to focus on the 'look, say, cover, write, check' method.

'Look, say, cover, write, check' method

Encourage your child to look at the word and say it out loud. Then cover the word and ask your child to write it down from memory. Lastly, check to see if they have spelled the word correctly.

Tips for helping younger children with their spelling

- Write words in alphabetical order
- Try splitting the word into parts (syllables). Every syllable must have a vowel in it, e.g. four-teen, tea-cher
- Colour in and illustrate words – write a word in one colour, then go over it again and again in different rainbow colours. Repetition will help your child to learn the shape of the word. Writing words with coloured chalk on black paper is another way of carrying this out.
- Write each spelling word on 2 cards and play a matching game.
- Let your child use their finger to write words on your back – guess what they have written and then reverse the process. Children seem to love doing this!
- Have fun writing words in the air, on different textures e.g. sand, condensation. Flatten a piece of plasticine and use a pencil to write the word into it. Note any patterns within the word and then smooth the plasticine and challenge your child to write the word from memory.
- Encourage your child to draw pictures to accompany their spelling words and then write the words underneath.
- See if your child can spot their spelling words in a reading book or comic.
- Make flashcards to help you when revising spellings with your child.
- Find a picture in a magazine and try using the spelling words to write sentences relating to the picture.
- Count the number of letters each word has. Focus on how many vowels, consonants, double letters etc.
- Jumble up the letters and see if your child can unscramble them correctly to spell the word.

Tips for helping older children with their spelling

- Ask your child to write down their spelling words. Ask them to colour all the short vowels red, the long vowels blue and all the blends green.

- When your child has learned their spelling words and is confident they know them, write them down in a muddled fashion and then set your child the challenge of unmuddling them e.g. onhisaf = fashion

- Make a word search using the spelling words and ask your child to do the same. When you have both finished making your word searches, swap them over and see if you can find the hidden words.

- Let your child use Scrabble tiles to spell the words. Then ask them to add up the score for each word. Which word is worth the most points? The least? Scrabble is an excellent game to play when learning new vocabulary.

- Challenge your child to write a really silly sentence, including as many of the words on their list as possible.

- Encourage your child to spot familiar letter patterns in the words on their spelling list and then to collect other words that contain the same letter pattern.

Word Challenges and Games

Dictionary challenge

Challenge your child to find all their words in the dictionary. You might like to set them a time limit or have a race between you as to who can find each word the fastest.

Hidden words

Write the words on your child's list, hidden in a number of letters. Ask your child to find them within a set time, e.g. *nftkkiteingh – kite*.

Crosswords

Produce a crossword puzzle together using the words on a spelling list (you will need a blank grid and dictionary for this).

Skeleton Story

For this, children use their spelling words to form the 'skeleton' on which they create a short story, such as;

Once upon a time in a *gloomy* castle there lived a *beautiful* princess etc, etc.

Using Mnemonics

Mnemonics are silly sentences that your child can make up and then learn to remind them how to spell a difficult word, for example;

BECAUSE – Big Elephants Can Always Use Sticky Envelopes

Necessary/successful – a saying, such as *'One collar and two socks are necessary but you need two collars and two socks to be successful'* is a way of remembering the number of Cs and Ss included in each of these words.

Word Ladders

☆ About the Game

Lewis Carroll is credited with inventing this game. Maybe that's why it seems to take you into an Alice's Wonderland where cats can turn into dogs, work into play, and morning into evening!

Skills: Spelling skills, and dictionary skills.

Players: Individuals, pairs, or groups.

Materials: Writing materials and dictionary.

☆ How-To's

1. If playing on their own, the children start with two words that have the same number of letters. (You may assign the words, or they may choose their own.) One word is the top of the ladder, where they start, and the other is the bottom of the ladder, where they hope to end up. How about *cat* and *dog*?
2. The children try to think of a word that differs by one letter from the top word. If possible, the new letter should be in the bottom-rung word: for example, *cot*. (With some words, especially longer ones, this direct route may not be possible. So it's a good idea to use tested words.)
3. Change one letter at a time. Each change must make a real word:

   CAT COT COG DOG
4. Some other examples include turning a HAND into a FOOT:

   HAND HIND FIND FOND FONT FOOT
5. You can also turn the MOON into a STAR:

   MOON LOON LOOK BOOK BOOT BOAT

   BOAR SOAR STAR
6. For the group version of Word Ladders, assign the same starting and finishing words to all groups. Children in each group work together to see who can be first to complete the word ladder.

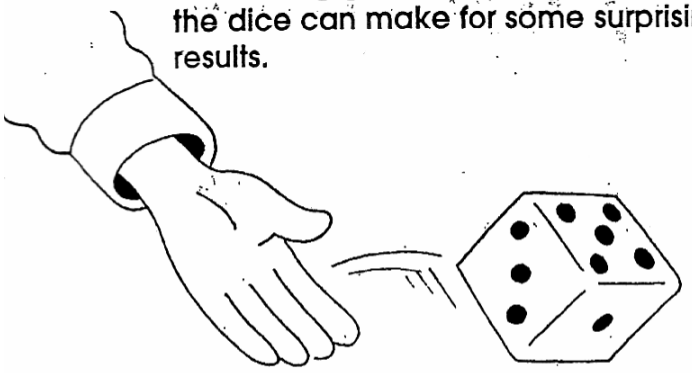
☆ **Tip:** Start with words of only three or four letters. You don't have to finish a word ladder in one sitting. Set some word ladder pairs as puzzles, and see if the children can solve them in their spare time. A challenging word ladder might take days to complete – or prove impossible! You might let children contribute their word ladders to a class book. Also encourage them to play this game at home with their friends and families. Some examples to start with –

Try turning *flour* into *bread*, or *walker* into *runner*, or *cold* into *heat*.

Word Starters

☆ About the Game

This is a great game for developing interest in word study and facility with prefixes. It's an exciting game, too, because the toss of the dice can make for some surprising final results.



Skills: Word study and prefixes.

Players: Any number from two to the whole class.

Materials: One dice, a dictionary, and a list of six prefixes (see samples below). Each prefix is assigned a number. The following is an example, but you can choose prefixes appropriate for the players.

☆ How-To's

1. One player is appointed Ringmaster for the first round. The Ringmaster tosses the dice three times in the round. The first throw determines the prefix for the round.

1	2	3	4	5	6
pre	anti	non	de	con	im

2. The second throw determines the numbers of words that the players (including the Ringmaster) must find. Each word must start with the given prefix.
When a player has written the right number of words, he or she calls out "Ready." All the other players must immediately put down their pens and pencils.

3. The Ringmaster now tosses the dice again. This time the number determines how many points each correctly prefixed word is worth. Players work in pairs to check each other's spelling and also to calculate their scores. For example, if the dice shows a four, then every correct word would be worth four points. A player with six words would have a score of 24.

4. The player with the highest score in that round becomes the Ringmaster for the next round. Players accumulate scores from each round, and the winner is the one with the highest total at the end of the game.