

**Water Street Curriculum Guide:
Spelling
September 2017**



**A guide to how spelling is taught at
Water Street and how you can help
your child at home to 'Spell Well...'**

Spelling in English is notoriously difficult. There are 205 different spellings for the 44 English sounds. To make it even harder over a third of these spellings are used to represent more than one sound. For many of these sounds there is no dominant spelling pattern – eg **bought**, **caught**, **port**, **Autumn**, **all**.

When teaching children how to spell we begin with the most common way to write each sound. We then look at the alternative ways a sound can be written.

These are called sound families. These 'graphemes' are listed in your child's reading diary in the order in which they are taught.

Following this the children learn which spelling pattern to choose when spelling a word. We call this 'Best Bet.' To help with this we teach the children rules to follow. For example we say '**Shy i, toughy y**' as in words with an ai or oi sound at the end the i is too shy so it changes to a y. For example **day** or **toy**. The rule extends to the ee sound which usually becomes either y or ey.

Often no rules apply or there are lots of exceptions so children will need to learn the spelling of the words. However, this is not as simple as reciting the letters of a word. Children need to retain their spellings in their long term memory. Part of this is in the physical act of writing the word down in order to 'get the feel of it.' But they also need to explore the word, to know the shape of it and be able to visualise it. It is for this reason that weekly spelling tests are not an effective method for learning how to spell. Children are able to learn their spellings in a week but will only have them in their short term memories and will probably not be able to apply them in their writing. It is through continually revisiting and reviewing spellings that children are able to retain them.



How do children remember spelling?

Visual :

‘Does it look right?’

Writer responds to the shapes of words and the patterns of the letter strings within words.

Auditory: ‘Sound it out!’

Writer recognises the relationship between sounds and letters and analyses words in these terms...



Kinesthetic:

‘let the spelling come out the end of your pencil!’

Spelling is a graho-motor skill: writer is accustomed to making specific hand movements to produce particular words or letter strings.

Linguistic:

‘Why is it spelt like that?’

Writer is aware of relationships between words or parts of words, based on meanings, syntax, derivations etc

All children have a preferred learning style and by offering them activities which suit this, they can learn more quickly and effectively.

The daily teaching of spelling rules is extremely important...

Below are just a few of the main spelling rules in the English language.



Knowing spelling rules, and the exceptions to the rule, is a great strategy to help you understand why spelling is the way it is and helps you spell. In this section we'll look at the top ten spelling rules.

Some people think if they learn a spelling rule they'll be able to spell. Unfortunately, the trouble with rules is you have to remember the rule! And which words work with the rule and the words that don't!

But some people like learning rules, get a buzz out of finding out how to use them. It's always good to know why spelling is the way it is, and knowing spelling rules is one of many strategies to help you spell well. So even if you forget the rule, maybe you'll remember the spelling pattern, and at least you hopefully will know why a spelling is the way it is.

Let's look at the top ten rules in a very basic way with no exceptions just the bare bones of the rule ...

1. the "i before e except after c" rule

believe - receive

As a basic rule this is great

but what about ancient, leisure, neighbour...

We have a longer version of the rule:

" i before e except after a long c but not when c is a "sh" sound and not when sounded like 'a' as in neighbour or weigh."

(i before e rule) believe, achieve, (except after c),receive, ceiling (but not when c is sounded like sh) ancient, proficient

not when sounded like 'a') eight, beige

But there are exceptions always exceptions so watch out for them.

2. Changing "y" to "ies"

You might not know the spelling rule but you might know the spelling pattern - most people do.

When the word ends in a vowel + y just add 's'

key → keys delay → delays trolley → trolleys

(because we can't have three vowels in a row delaies x)

If the word has a consonant before the 'y':

take off the 'y' and add 'ies'

baby → babies company → companies difficulty → difficulties

3. Adding -es to words ending in -s, -ss, -z -ch -sh -x

This was added centuries ago to stop the plural 's' clashing with these letters and it softens the 's' sound to a 'z' sound

bus → buses business → businesses watch → watches
box → boxes quiz → quizzes

4. Doubling up rule

put - putting, big-bigger, quiz - quizzes, swim - swimming...

When a word has one syllable + 1 vowel next to 1 consonant we double up the final consonant with a vowel suffix:

sit - sitter, big - biggest, tap - tapping, shop - shopper/shopping, fat - fatten, fattening, fatter, fattest...

This happens in longer words when the stress is on the final syllable:

begin (beGIN) - beginner, beginning

refer (reFER) - referring, referred

occur (ocCUR) - occurring, occurred, occurrence

5. Drop the 'e' rule

We usually drop the final silent "e" when we add vowel suffix endings, for example:

write + ing → writing hope + ed = hoped excite + able = excitable
joke - joker large - largish close - closing sense + ible = sensible
opposite + ion = opposition imagine + ation = imagination

We keep the 'e' if the word ends in -CE or -GE to keep a soft sound, with able/ous

courage + ous = courageous outrage + ous = outrageous

notice + able = noticeable manage + able = manageable

6. Changing the "y" to "i" when adding suffix endings.

If a word ends in a consonant + Y, the Y changes to i (unless adding endings with "i" -ing -ish, which already begins with an i)

beauty+ful > beauti+ful =beautiful, beautify, beautician

happy + ness = - happiness, happily, happier, happiest

angry + er = angrier, angriest, angrily,

pretty: prettier, prettiest but prettyish

ready: readily readiness

dry: dried, BUT drying, dryish

defy: defies, defied, but defying

apply: applies, applied but applying

7. "-f" to "-ves" or "-s"

Most words ending in "-f" or "-fe" change their plurals to "-ves"

calf - calves half - halves knife - knives leaf - leaves loaf - loaves
life - lives wife - wives shelf - shelves thief - thieves yourself - yourselves

Some words can have both endings -ves or -s:

scarf - scarfs/scarves dwarf - dwarfs/dwarves wharf - wharfs/wharves
handkerchief - handkerchiefs/handkerchieves

Words ending in -ff you just add -s to make the plural.

cliff - cliffs toff - toffs scuff - scuffs sniff - sniffs

Some words ending in -f add -s:

Nouns which end in two vowels plus -f usually form plurals in the normal way, with just an -s

chief - chiefs spool - spoofs roof - roofs chief - chiefs oaf - oafs

EXCEPTIONS: thief - thieves, leaf - leaves

8. Words ending in -ful

The suffix -FUL is always spelt with one L, for example:

grate + ful = grateful faith + ful = faithful hope + ful = hopeful
careful helpful useful grateful beautiful (notice the "y" becomes "i")

9. Adding -ly

When we add -ly to words ending in -ful then we have double letters

gratefully faithfully hopefully

We also add -ly to words ending in 'e'

love + ly = lovely like + ly = likely live + ly = lively complete + ly = completely
definite + ly = definitely

BUT not truly (true + ly) This is a common misspelled word.

We change the end 'e' to 'y' in these -le words

gentle > gently idle > idly subtle > subtly

10. When we add "all" to the beginning of words we drop the l

all + so = also

all + most = almost

although always almighty already

alright (all right as two words is used in more formal English)

altogether (Note that altogether and all together do not mean the same thing. Altogether means 'in total', as in there are six bedrooms altogether, whereas all together means 'all in one place' or 'all at once', as in it was good to have a group of friends all together; they came in all together.

What happens when?

Reception (EYFS)

In Reception our primary approach to teaching spelling is through phonics. We teach the children all of the phonemes in the English language and the sounds they make. They can then apply this knowledge in their play and more formal Literacy sessions as they read phonically decodable words and write words, then simple sentences, using their phonic knowledge. At this stage some words will be spelt correctly but all will be phonetically plausible.

Alongside this we also teach the children Common Exception Words, which are words that have irregular spellings but which are considered high frequency words, e.g. the, to, said, he, she, are, they... In Reception, we like to call these 'special' words. Many of the spelling patterns in these words are explained later in years one and two when the children explore alternative ways to make the phonemes.

We don't test spelling in Reception, only the children's phonic knowledge as well as their knowledge of the Reception Common Exception words, through a range of ongoing activities in class. Parents are always kept aware of the phonemes and 'special' words we are covering each week in the Weekly Email, and are sent activities home each week to help support their children in their phonic development.

Year 1:

In Year 1 we continue our approach to teaching spelling through daily phonics sessions including the 'segmenting' of words—looking at how words sound so we are able to use that knowledge to help us write those words.

There will be no weekly spelling test to start with, but parents will always be kept aware of the phonemes and common exception words we are covering that week through our weekly email. Handwriting practice linked to that week's phoneme will be sent home on a Monday afternoon. Later in the year and leading up to Year 2, children will bring spelling homework home to practise and these will be our Common Exception words. These are words that we need to start using in our writing and will be practised once in class very informally.

Year 2:

In Year 2 children will be taught spelling rules and patterns as part of daily phonics sessions, there will be a weekly spelling test, this is different to other years within school, and is used as practice for the end of Key Stage 1 statutory spelling test.

The words included in a weekly test will be based on work covered that week and we look to ensure that these words can be read and written (in context) with increasing accuracy as the year progresses. In addition, there is a list of 'common exception words' that will be included in spelling test lists, these are made up of 150 words that often don't follow rules and are often

Year 3:

Learn how to 'spell well' using spelling rules and patterns is part of our daily routine in Year 3 and this involves short fast paced activities on children's individual whiteboards and other fun spelling games.

A spelling homework activity will be sent home as homework each week following the spelling rule/pattern that has been taught in class that week. There will be no weekly spelling test in Year 3, however children may be asked to take words home to learn from the national statutory word list for Year 3—around 8 words at a time—at different points during the school year.

Year 4:

Spelling in Year 4 continues as in Year 3 with pupils having short daily spelling lessons focussing on learning spelling rules and patterns. These activities will include games, challenges, whole class teaching, small group work and computer programs.

We hope that pupils will be able to spell words correctly in the context of their own written work—children are given time to self correct any words spelt incorrectly in their work and keep their own spelling list at the back of their English Book.

There is no weekly spelling test, but children will be sent home words to learn from the Year 4 statutory spelling list (this will be at key points in the school year) - the Year 4 weekly email will explain when and which words.

Year 5:

Teaching & Learning Spelling Rules:

In Year 5, the rules and patterns of spelling are taught as part of our daily English lessons. Each week we focus on a different spelling rule and its application and we make use of quizzes, discussions and games in order to memorise the rule. During some lessons, we record our spelling activities in our English books so that we can look back at our progress.

Although Year 5 will not have a formal, weekly spelling test, there are constant small 'quizzes' as part of our daily spelling work. Our weekly spelling rule will be communicated to parents on the class email, and wherever possible, includes the statutory words from Years 3, 4 & 5.

Encouraging Good Spelling Habits In Our Written Work:

Editing and improving our written work is a normal part of our learning in Year 5. We self-assess, peer assess and group assess our writing, supporting each other to check many different features, including spelling. We have a 'do not ask for a dictionary rule', because we know we can & should use them whenever we need to.

When an adult highlights a spelling error in our work, we look up the correct spelling, write it into our book and can choose to add it to our own personal spelling bank inside the back cover of our English books.

Year 6:

The Teaching of Spelling in Year 6.

Spelling lessons in Year 6 will take the form of 2 main activities.

Activity 1 is a 'Be The Teacher' activity in which children edit, individually and in pairs, a piece of writing. Through this editing children will look at spelling patterns and rules as they occur in the piece. They will also look for other words within the spelling patterns they have investigated.

Activity 2 will have as its focus the spelling words for the week; looking at tricky parts of the words, memory hooks for remembering how to spelling the words. This may also include some written tasks in our English books.

Spelling Tests:

Why? Pupils in Year 6 will continue to have a weekly spelling test. In Year 6 we feel this is a useful element of personal learning in Upper Key Stage 2. A formal spelling test is still included in the end of KS2 SATS test; the learning of weekly spelling, and tests, are a useful preparation for this.

What? Year 6 will be tested on a range of spelling blends, statutory spellings for year 6 (and previous years) as well as topic and vocabulary based words, which are useful in extending and enriching pupils' vocabulary, knowledge and understanding.

Which words? For some groups of words vocabulary will be differentiated on 3 levels. Children will self-assess which group of words they wish to learn. On other occasions children will all be given a list of words and will decide on their own personal target.

Homework relating to spellings. Children will sometimes also be given written activities which relate to their spellings. This may include definitions, words in sentences or paragraphs and crossword clues. There will not always be a written task relating to the spelling focus, as sometimes a grammar/ punctuation task may be given instead.

Statutory Spelling Tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

All pupils in Year 6 are given a Statutory Spelling test at the end of Key Stage 2 as part of their Spelling, punctuation and grammar test. The words tested include a range of blends taught throughout Key Stage 2 and could also include words from the Statutory word lists.

In order for children to be assessed at working at the 'expected standard' in writing children also need to be spelling 'most' words correctly from the Year 3,4,5 and 6 Statutory Spelling Lists.

Ways a Parent Can Help with **SPELLING**

1

Have your child write spelling words:

- On paper with pencils, pens, markers or paint
- With chalk on a sidewalk or patio
- With dry erase markers on a mirror
- Type on the computer
- With his/her fingers in a plate of pudding
- With fingers in shaving cream on a counter

2

Have your child spell the words out loud while you are in the car or in line at a store

3

Spell words using blocks, Scrabble tiles, or flash cards

(Make your own with index cards - one card for each letter. Consider using different colored cards for vowels)

4

If the list of words to learn is long, have your child choose 4-5 to focus on at a time

5

Have your child write the words in alphabetical order or in order from shortest to longest

6

Play "Hangman" with your child using the spelling words

Make crossword puzzles and word searches with the spelling words for your child to solve

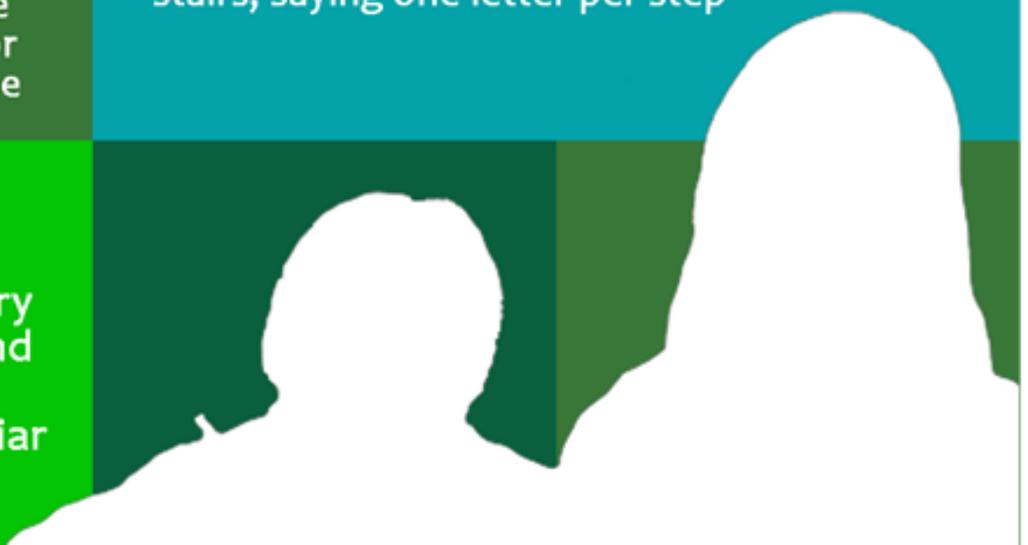
7

Combine spelling with physical activity

Have your child do jumping jacks, saying one letter per jump, or while walking up and down stairs, saying one letter per step

8

Keep a dictionary in your home and help your child look up unfamiliar words



Spelling Strategies

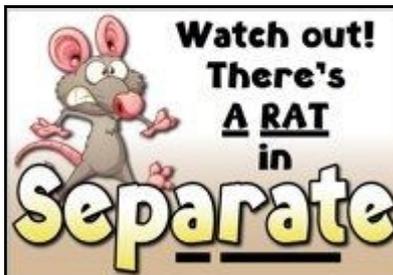
If you are struggling to spell a word or want to check your spellings use the strategies below to help you.

Have you...

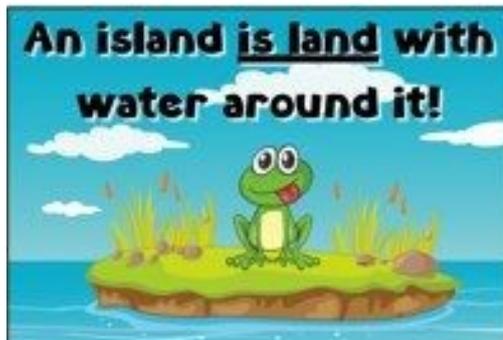
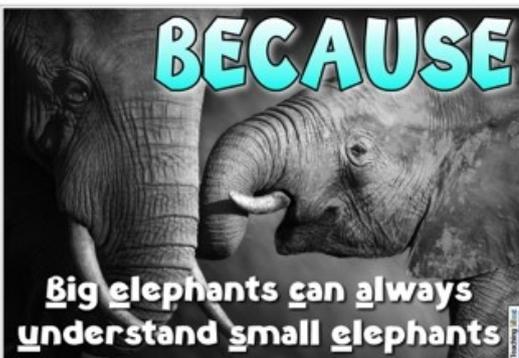
- ...sounded out the phonemes?
- ...analysed the words into syllables and know words?
- ...applied you knowledge of spelling conventions?
- ...used your knowledge of common letter strings?
- ...used your knowledge of visual patterns and analogies?

Spelling Mnemonics

We use mnemonics to help us remember how to spell words correctly.



Never
Eat
Cakes
Eat
Salmon
Sandwiches
And
Raspberry
Yoghurts



Did you know?

When checking your completed work to ensure words are spelt correctly, it is better to start checking from the end of your writing and then read each word from the last to the first.

This means you can only look at one word at a time and not scan read...

This way it is easier to spot your spelling mistakes!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

www.waterstreetschool.org.uk