

Ideas for supporting Spellings, Games and Activities

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



Before you start

- Try to establish whether your child's difficulties are with specific words, sounds or blends
- Find out how the school is approaching the spelling difficulty – perhaps you could be supporting your child by using the same message at home
- Be aware of the words being used within the classroom; get lists from the teacher and suggest having access to these words in advance to allow more preparation and learning time for your child

General rules

- Having fun is important – be creative in this task
- Create a multi sensory approach to spelling – planning, making, seeing, doing, reading, hearing. By using these skills, your child will be given a wider 'experience' of the words you are working on, which will help their memory
- Be aware of concentration dropping and don't push too hard when tired
- Begin with already known words before starting with new ones
- Involve them in working on words that interest them – their own name, their address, their siblings or friends names, their favourite food, film or computer game. Perhaps 'trade' with them... one word they want, and one word for school.
- Take time to practise these activities in as many different environments as possible – in the kitchen using magnets on the fridge, at the table, playing scrabble as a family, doing word searches, in the car – incorporating in a game of 'eye spy'.

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Practical games and activities

Sound talk

Say words in sounds e.g. 'Simon says touch your t-oe-s.'

Wordle

Create your own beautiful word cloud following a spelling pattern:

<http://www.wordle.net/create>

Word shapes

Create your own wordshapes challenge:

<http://tools.atozteacherstuff.com/printable-word-shapes-worksheets/>

Draw your words

Use shapes of letters to create drawings e.g. a skyline

Air and back spelling

Write the word in the air, really big, then really small, saying each letter as it is written. If the word can be sounded out, use the phonemes, if not, use the letter names.

Try writing words on each other's backs and see if your partner can say what word you're writing.

Media search

Using a timer, give the children x minutes to find their spelling in the newspaper or magazine. Circle them in bright colours or highlight when they have been found.

Couscous/ salt box spelling

Practice writing spellings in salt or couscous.

Scrabble spelling

Find the letters you need to spell your words, mix them up in a bag and time how quickly you can unscramble them into the words.

Pyramid power

Sort a given group of words into a list from easiest to hardest. Write the easiest once in the middle at the top of the page, the next easiest twice underneath, third easiest three times below that etc so forming a pyramid.

Ransom note

Cut the letters needed for your words from a newspaper or magazine and glue them down to spell the words.

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Water wash

Use a paintbrush and water to write your words outside in concrete or pavements.

Colourful words

Use two different colours to write your words- one for vowels another for consonants then write them all in one colour.

Rainbow writing

Write your words over and over, each time on top of the last but in a different colour- create a rainbow word.

Graffiti wall

Create a graffiti wall, inspired by graffiti artists, draw your target words again and again across a page to create the artwork.

Spelling pairs memory game

Make pairs of spelling cards. Turn them over and mix them up. Flip over two and if they match you get to keep the cards, if not turn them back over in the same place for others to remember.

X words

Find two target words with the same letter in and then write them so they criss cross.

Ambidextrous

Swap your pen into the hand that you don't usually write with. Now try writing your spellings with that hand.

Secret agent

Write out the alphabet in code e.g. giving each letter a number i.e. a=1, b=2 etc. Now spell your words in secret code.

Acrostic

Use your target word to make an acrostic poem with each line beginning with the next letter to spell out the word- it's easier to remember if the poem makes sense! e.g. what:

While Sam was walking down the path,
He saw a cat that stared, then laughed.
A cat that laughs is quite a feature,
Tell me, have you seen such a creature?

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Deliberate mistakes

Working in partners, write a list of words with some mistakes. Can your partner spot them?

Hangman

Using given words, play hangman with a partner. How quickly can they spot the word?

Type 'em

Type the list of words, each word in a different font/colour. The children could email them to the teacher?

Words without vowels

Write spelling words in a list, replace all the vowels with a line. Can your partner fill in the gaps? (Also could be done without consonants instead, which is easiest?)

Words within words

Write down target words and then see how many other words you can make from the same letters.

Dots game

Am is to make a square from 4 dots.

2 players. On a page of dotty paper (create your own if necessary), if a word is spelt correctly you can join up two dots. Whoever completes the box writes their name in it.

Wordsearch

Create your own wordsearch with key words to find.

Roll a word

Roll a ball back and forth with a partner spelling out words.

3D words

Create your target words in clay, playdough, gingerbread (these ones can then be eaten!)

Countdown

How many high frequency words/ sounds can they read as flashcards in a minute?

You could use one of the countdown timers from this site:

www.online-stopwatch.com/bomb-countdown/

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Scrambled words

Fold a piece of paper into 3 columns. Write the words in the first column, then write them in the second column all jumbled up. Fold the correct answers behind the page and see if a partner can unscramble the words.

Treasure/ rubbish

Write a range or nonsense and real word on gold coins, or words spelt correctly or incorrectly e.g. swimming and swimming. Pupils decide whether they go in the treasure chest or in the bin. A real bin and treasure chest are more exciting for the pupils!

Rhyming couplets

Collect a range of words with using a targeted spelling pattern and invent silly rhyming couplets/sentences e.g. The monkey ate some funny honey! A slice of pie should be eaten in July!

Word Detectives

Children to be 'detectives' using a variety of texts (fiction/non-fiction) and find examples of words that fit the particular unit for spelling. These could be recorded on tape recorder, white boards, class lists, computer, spelling journals or added to the spelling wall.

Track game

Design a race-track game using A1 card and pictures/icons on random squares (these are the ones worth a point). Make the game a loop so that there is no finish line. Also prepare (using the word lists from the attached units) a set of cards that use the spelling pattern. Children can play in pairs or small groups and start anywhere. Roll a dice and move forward that number. If they land on a square with a picture they pick up a card from the central pile. Depending on the ability of the group the task can vary:

- a) think of a rhyming word;
- b) think of another word that uses the same spelling choice;
- c) read the word on the card;
- d) count or clap the syllables correctly;
- e) fill in the missing letters to make a word e.g. pl-- , r--n (for ai/ay);
- f) make the word into a compound word.

If the child answers correctly then they can collect a counter. The child with the most counters wins.

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Word Sort

Use this activity to sort words into their different spelling patterns.

Resources:

Word cards with words you are investigating.

Activity:

- Select a word and read it out.
- Underline the part of the word being investigated.
- Explain to your friend what it is you are investigating.
- Find other words that follow the same pattern or rule and place them together in a column.
- When you have used all the words for that pattern start a new column for a different pattern.
- If you have any words left that do not fit into your columns put them in a 'problem pile'. Discuss how they differ and how you will be able to remember them.
- Make up a label for each column which explains what the words have in common.
- Can you think of any new words for each column?

Guess My Word

Use this activity to investigate and explain the rules for how words are spelt.

Resources:

Lists of words that have the same rule and one or two exceptions. A range of words can be displayed around the room, the child then needs to find it from the clues. e.g. 'The root word has three phonemes. The ing is added after the doubling the final g'. (begging)

Make the Team

Use this activity for recognising 'family groups' when looking at spelling patterns, sorting words into sets or finding related words.

Resources:

- Sets of cards for each 'family group' spelling pattern. e.g. le - candle bottle people

Activity:

- Discuss the rules/words that were investigated in the shared session.
- Spread the cards out face upwards and sort them into their 'families';
- Discuss the reasons for the way you have sorted the words;
- How would you describe them without actually saying the word?
- Shuffle the word cards and give five to each player;
- Any left over cards are placed in a pile, face-down;
- Make a fan of your cards so that no one else can see them and begin to sort them into teams. If you have three cards of the same team place them face-up on the table and explain why you have grouped them together;

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- The youngest player picks up a card from the pack on the table. If they now have three cards of the same team they place them face-up on the table.
- The next player picks up a card from the pile on the table and if they have made a team of three, they place it face-up on the table;
- The game ends when one player has no cards left.

Clap and Count

Use this activity for spelling compound words, words with prefixes and other multisyllabic words.

Resources:

- Word cards; each card showing one word.

Activity:

- Discuss the rules/words that were investigated in the shared session.
- Shuffle the word cards and place them in one pile face-down on the table;
- Each child takes a turn to take the top card from the pile;
- They read it aloud and then place it face down in front of them;
- The rest of the group clap the syllables, draw lines for each syllable and write the letters on each line;
(e.g. Wed nes day; e qui lat er al)
- When all the cards have been turned over, each child checks their spellings, getting one mark for the correct number of syllables and one mark for each syllable spelt correctly;
- Add up the marks to see who has won!

Spot the Difference

Use this activity to investigate spelling of elided words; (contractions).

Resources:

- Sets of about 20 pairs of word cards; one with the complete words and one with the elided word; e.g. can not and can't;

Activity:

- Discuss the rules/words that were investigated in the shared session.
- Place all the cards face-down on the table;
- The first player turns over two cards. If they are a pair, the complete words and the elided word, the player keeps the pair and has another go;
- If they are not a pair they are turned face down and left on the table;
- Play continues until all the words have been paired;
- The winner is the player with the most cards;

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- The players should then group the cards by the letter that is missing in the elided words;
- Which letter is the one most often replaced by the apostrophe?

Words in words

Use this activity to investigate prefixes and suffixes.

Resources:

- Word cards with root words and words with prefixes and suffixes added.

e.g. happy unhappy happiness lone alone lonely

sense nonsense sensibly definite indefinite indefinitely

Activity:

- Discuss the rules/words that were investigated in the shared session.
- Sort the cards into families of the root word and ones with prefixes and suffixes;
- Look at the words and discuss how the meaning of each one has been changed when a prefix or suffix has been added;
- Write down each word and its meaning;
- Does the spelling of any roots words have to change when adding a prefix or suffix is added?
- Write down any other words you know with the same prefix or suffix.

Find the 'tricky bit'

Aim of activity: For children to develop the skill of spelling as they write by identifying the tricky bit in a word that they have tried.

Whole-class work: Exploring different tricky bits **Preparation:** A list of high frequency/cross-curricular words.

- Introduce the activity, explaining to the children that the goal is to improve their spelling of certain words by being able to identify and check the tricky bit.
- Dictate the first word for the children to write on their whiteboards and ask them to underline any bit in the word they find difficult.
- Ask them to hold up their boards.
- Ask individual children to explain what they identified as the tricky bit and why.
- Copy some of their versions of the word, including the correct spelling, onto the class whiteboard and discuss the tricky bits in the word.
- Talk about the mis-spelt words and why the error was made, e.g. it may be phonetically plausible, the spelling and pronunciation are not the same, etc.
- Focus on the correct spelling by covering or rubbing out the others and underline the tricky bit, explaining why it can catch you out as you are writing.
- Agree a way of recalling the word for the future.

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- Cover the word. Ask the children to say the word and to try spelling the word again on their whiteboards. Remind them to think carefully about the tricky bit.
- Ask them to hold up their boards again and compare the word to the original. Ask them to reflect on their progress – have they spelt it correctly this time? Do they understand why they made an error? Do they have a strategy for remembering the spelling?
- Repeat for other words on the word list.