

Spelling

S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G

Spelling, for most of our students, is a much more difficult skill than reading. Perhaps problems arise with spelling because we expect too much from our students. Consider this: It takes from 20 to 140 exposures to a new word for it to become a reading sight word. So how can we expect a student to spell a word from memory at the end of the first lesson? Many, many opportunities must be provided for our students to write a word before they can remember the correct spelling. A tip might be to try the exercise such as the one below.

1. Have the student say the new word.
2. Have the student trace and say the word.
3. Have the student fill in the missing letters (e.g., kitchen k_it_en, k_tch__, ki_ch_n).
4. Have the student write the whole word without looking at it.
5. Have the student check the writing and spelling.
6. Have the student write a sentence using the word.

Source: Rockford, Illinois Literacy newsletter

SOURCES OF SPELLING WORDS

Five major sources of spelling words are noted below. Decide on the best sources for your student's particular needs. Then use those sources in each session to build and reinforce your student's spelling skills.

1. *Word families* After teaching a misspelled word from your student's writing, brainstorm a list of words that belong to the same family. Assign five of the words to study at home for the next session.
2. *Sight words* Misspelled sight words from your student's writing will not necessarily fit into any pattern, so they must be learned separately. Put them on flashcards for drill.
3. *Topic words* Work with misspelled words from your student's writing that are related to the student's reading topic. These words may be more difficult than those he or she would normally use, but they're part of the topic of interest and should be learned.
4. *Homonyms* Use misspelled homonyms (words that sound alike but have different

spellings and meanings) to teach the meanings as well as their spellings. some common homonyms are:

| | |
|-------|----------|
| be | bee |
| by | buy, bye |
| dear | deer |
| eight | ate |
| hour | our |

5. *Spelling rules* If your student consistently misspells words that follow one of the four basic spelling rules, teach the following rules.

SPELLING RULES

The doubling rule: If a one-syllable word has one short vowel and one consonant at the end, double the final consonant before adding an ending that begins with a vowel; for example, stop/stopping and plan/planned, but not mean/meaner and milk/milked.

The final "e" rule: If a word ends in a silent "e," drop the "e" before adding an ending that starts with a vowel; for example, use/using, dance/dancer, and fame/famous, but not place/placement and care/careful.

The "y" to "i" rule: If a word ends in a consonant plus "y," change the "y" to "i" before adding an ending except -ing; for example, ready/readiness, lucky/luckily, and duty/dutiful, but not study/studying.

The "ie-ei" rule: Put "i" before "e" except after "c" or when pronounced as "ay" as in neighbor and weigh; for example, believe, friend, and achieve, but not vein or freight.

Source: TEACH SOMEONE TO READ, by Nadine Rosenthal

TEACHING SPELLING

Many tutors request information regarding spelling and how best to help their students learn to spell new or unfamiliar words. In the book, LOCATING AND CORRECTING READING DIFFICULTIES by Ekwall and Shanker, research of the effectiveness of various techniques for teaching students to spell suggests:

1. It is helpful if the words taught are words that the student also knows the meaning of and that appear on high-frequency word lists.
2. It is better to have the student focus on learning the whole word rather than learning to spell the word by focusing on syllables or other parts.
3. It is helpful when students write the words frequently in the context of sentences or stories, rather than writing the words over and over in isolation.

4. It is best to teach only those spelling rules that apply to a great number of words and have few exceptions. It is usually most helpful to teach these rules inductively.

5. It is best to have the student use many modalities (such as auditory, visual and kinesthetic) when learning to spell words.

WAYS TO PRACTICE SPELLING

RATIONALE: Incorporates all the senses in learning to spell.

MATERIALS: pencil and paper

- PROCEDURE:**
1. Tutor says a word.
 2. Student says the word.
 3. Tutor repeats word and writes it for student to see.
 4. Student closes eyes and tries to picture word.
 5. Tutor asks student to trace word on the table (allows student to look at the word while tracing it if needed.)
 6. Student then writes the word on a piece of paper.
 7. Tutor makes corrections as needed and repeats process until mastery.

(Limit exercise to 10 minutes.)

Source: LITSTART, Robson, De Vergilio, DeButts