Multisensory Spelling Support

Encourage children to discover their best strategy from a range of strategies

VISUAL APPROACHES

Visual patterns within words

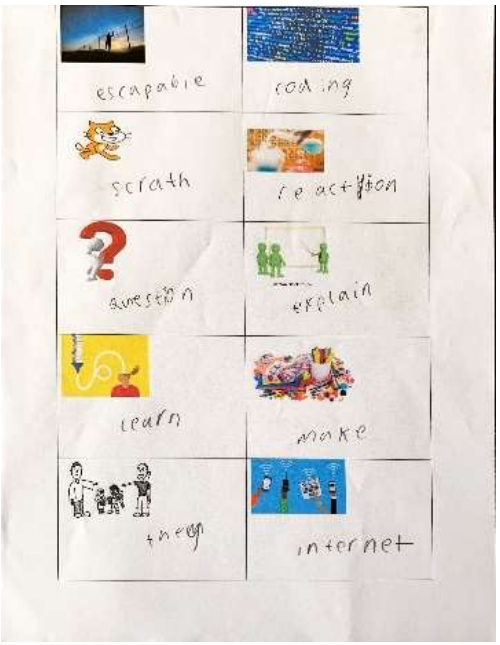
- **Repeated patterns**: **remember – em em**
- **Words within words**: **There is an ache in every teacher**
- **Drawing and spelling**

b **rthday**

- **Building/creating art models using different textures and mediums** – paper/card/tissue paper, plasticine, pipe-cleaners, cubes, blocks magnet letters or connectors.

In this example, the pupil has broken up the word ‘again’ and drawn a picture of someone making ‘a gain’ in the gym, then modelled the segmented word using magnets and connectors before writing it. You ould model different syllables or word parts in different materials.

- Practice writing spelling words using images on **precision probes or flashcards as prompts**. You can time this with the aim to beat their time. *Free literacy resources and precision teaching grids for practicing spelling irregular words are available at http://www.johnandgwyn.co.uk/literacy.html*

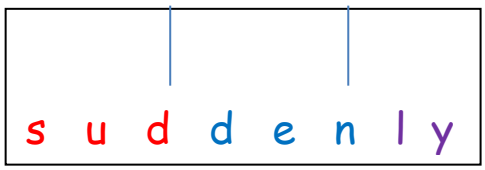


Visualising/mental imagery

- **Memorise the spelling word closing your eyes**.
  Put the word to be learnt in a picture or symbol on the post it note. Hold the note to the top left-hand corner of your head and say the letters by name – repeating them up to 6 times. Take a 'picture' of the post it note with your eyes for your mind. Cover the word and try to visualize the picture with the word in it in your head. The picture you take must be a still photograph, not a moving image. Then try to spell the word. If you need to repeat the word again, do so until it is learnt. If they are having difficulty with a part of the word, highlight it, e.g. the double letter, or vowel digraph etc. Once you think they know the word, try spelling it backwards.

- **Long word jigsaws (Reason & Boote, 1986) fold it, cut it!**
  This is useful for longer words.
  Take a rectangle of thin card or paper and fold it lengthwise. Write the word along the bottom half of the card and ask the child to split it up into chunks, lightly marking the break points with a vertical pencil line on the top half of the card and cut through the lines on the top half of the card to make flaps. The chunks can then be revealed from left to right, one at a time. Or you can cover up different parts of the word to see how it is put together or to remember what is under the flap.

e.g. If you cover up the 'ly' you have the base word' sudden'



Breaking longer words into chunks like this makes the spelling more manageable. They can also see words within words (see above). This method can also be used for shorter words using the phonemes:

tr	ai	n

This method should be used 4 times a week for a few minutes, to help the child to remember the spelling. Once they think they know the word, you can try spelling it syllable by syllable in a mixed up order to reinforce the word.

- **Old way, new way (Baxter et al, 2004)**

<u>This strategy is useful for words which are consistently spelt wrong, where the wrong spelling needs to be 'un-leant' and replaced by the correct spelling.</u>

The child writes down their usual way of spelling a word e.g. 'sed', this is the 'old way'. The adult then writes down the correct spelling, the 'new way', and the child and adult together identify the parts of the 'old way' word which need to be changed. The child then writes out the 'new way' several times; writing it big, small, with eyes closed, until it feels secure. The child then makes up a sentence with that word in it to help to remember it.

AUDITORY APPROACHES

<u>Using voice</u>

- Saying **spelling pronunciations** out loud:
  - scissors: "skissors"
  - friend: "fry-end"

- Putting the letters of the spelling word into the **rhythm of a song**:
  - Mrs D, Mrs I, Mrs F F I, Mrs C, Mrs U, Mrs LTY

- **Voice recording**:
  Child audio-records themselves reading a whole word aloud, then saying the letters and saying the word again. Play back and write while listening. (ARROW spelling – see Brooks, *What Works for children & young people with literacy difficulties* for this and other evidence-based spelling intervention methods).

- **Break words into syllables** - orally while clapping/tapping knee, then in writing (remind that each syllable needs a vowel sound).

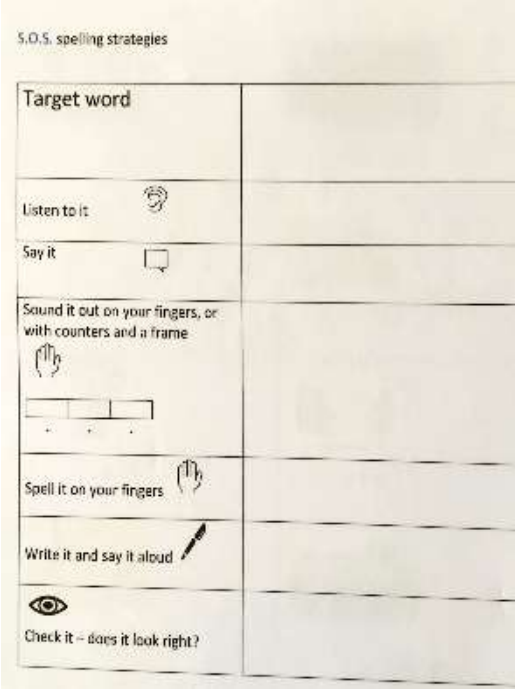
<u>Mnemonics</u>

Useful for irregular words

- Best if the **first word is the word to be learned or target word is used within the mnemonic**: **Police** - Police Only Let Invisible Criminals Escape
- **Limit number of mnemonics** or too much strain on memory
  :
  - **Could** O U Lucky Duck
  - **Because** Big Elephants Can't All Use Small Exits

Simultaneous Oral Spelling

- Have the word written correctly or made with plastic letters
- The adult says the word and explains meaning
- The child says the word then sounds it out loud using their fingers or counters and a frame
- The child spells each letter out loud using a finger for each letter
- The child writes the word saying each letter as it is written. Check letter by letter with target word. Can use art materials, e.g. coloured pens, large paper, whiteboards, post-its.
- Look at what is written and say whole word
- Child receives visual, kinaesthetic and auditory feedback (eyes, ears and movement)
- Cover the word and repeat the process. Practise three times a day for a week
- Categorise the word with other words that look and sound alike e.g sound, ground, round, pound, bound. Then add endings pounded, rounded etc.


S.O.S. spelling strategies

Target word	
Listen to it	
Say it	
Sound it out on your fingers, or with counters and a frame	
Spell it on your fingers	
Write it and say it aloud	
Check it – does it look right?	

MOVEMENT APPROACHES

- Play **movement games** for learning spellings with another child/adult or in Choose a spelling word. Say the first letter and throw the ball. The person who catches the ball says the next letter.

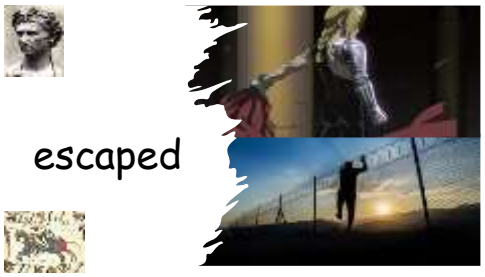
- **Fill in missing letters** - e.g. ques_ _ _ n

- **Write words in the air**

- **Write in different media** - with your finger in an astroturf square, shaving foam in a tray, drawing or painting big letters.

MORPHOLOGY APPROACH

- **Learning about the origins of English root words**, prefixes and suffixes – including Latin, Anglo-Saxon and Greek – to support understanding of phonetically irregular spelling patterns. *The Oxford School Dictionary of Word Origins* by John Ayto can help children understand irregular spellings.



For example, the verb 'escape' comes from Latin 'excappare' meaning to throw off your cape and have a good time. This imagery can be used to reinforce spelling knowledge. *es**cape**d*

- **Build word matrices to separate root word from prefixes and suffixes**. Then use word sorts, word sums and morpheme tiles to help pupils work out spelling rules when adding suffixes. Make abstract nouns with different endings (ness, ion, ity). Eg. Create + ion = ?

Matrices are great for older children (8+), including for learning to read and write difficult maths and curriculum vocabulary such as 2D and 3D shape names.

To find words in a morphological family:
http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/searcher/

To create your own matrix: http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/matrix

To find out about the etymology of a word: http://etymonline.com

TECHNOLOGY/APPS & GAMES

Using technology can be a way of celebrating dyslexic children's strengths and making learning less effortful. Boys often engage well with technology and gaming for learning.

- ICT games - **Word Shark 5** and **Wordwall**
- There are many free and low-cost apps available, e.g. **Squeebles, Nessy Learning**, offering fun ways to learn spellings

- **Wordsearches** can appeal to visual problem-solving abilities.

- Apps like **Scribblify** are good for learning digraphs and letter clusters. The pupil can design a visually memorable colour and brush style.