



Spelling Strategies

A Guide for Parents

Helping your child with spelling

When we write we have to consider a number of aspects:

- the purpose and the audience
- the content and format, for example, is it a shopping list, a report or a letter?
- the structure and form of our writing – the use of sentences, paragraphs and punctuation
- the vocabulary that will best convey our meaning
- how to spell the words we write

Children can find writing a real challenge; they need encouragement, support and praise for their efforts. You can best support them by encouraging them to write on every possible occasion, praising their efforts and, importantly, by letting them see you writing whenever possible.

You can play word games with them (eg I Spy or find the word puzzles), you can point to interesting or new words as you read to your child (without interrupting the flow of the story) and you can compose emails together.

Most of us, even if we consider ourselves to be good spellers, make spelling mistakes at some point. What is important is that we know what to do when we get stuck and we know how to correct our mistakes.

The English language is rich and complex but, despite its complexity, 85% of the English spelling system is predictable. Your child will learn the rules and conventions of the system

and the spelling strategies needed to become a confident speller.

Here are some strategies to will help your child become a confident and accurate speller:

- sounding words out by breaking the word down into phonemes (eg *c-a-t*, *sh-e-ll*)
- dividing the word into syllables and saying each syllable as they write the word (eg *re-mem-ber*)
- using the **look, say, cover, write, check** strategy: look at the word and say it out loud, then cover it, write it and check to see if it is correct; if necessary highlight or underline the incorrect part and repeat the process
- using mnemonics as an aid to memorising a tricky word (eg *people eat orange peel like elephants*)
- finding words within words (eg *a rat* in *separate*)
- making links between the meaning of words and their spelling (eg *sign, signal, signature*) – this strategy is used at a later stage than others
- working out spelling rules for themselves – a later strategy
- using a dictionary as soon as they know how to

Encourage your child to have a go at spelling words they are unsure of. This will give them the opportunity to try out strategies and find those that they find useful. You can help them to use the strategies outlined above and praise their efforts.