

Spelling at Poulton Lancelyn

What is the 'spelling process'?

The spelling process works as follows:	
Input identification	We select the word we want to write. This could be from dictation e.g. a spelling test, our own idea generation e.g. writing a story.
Central orthographic processes	The lexical representation (the meaning) is converted to the graphemic representation (the spelling).
Peripheral orthographic processes	This is the execution of the physical process of spelling - forming letters.
<i>Both orthographic processes affect writing fluency.</i>	

What are the approaches to teaching spelling?

Phonemic	Focuses on regular letter-sound relationships. Pupils who understand these common predictable relationships are more successful at spelling (ensure that these are explicitly taught early on). The processes of decoding and encoding both need to be considered differently and modelled appropriately. Generally consonant sounds are more predictable for spelling than vowel sounds, so these are a good place to start establishing patterns and building fluency. <i>(Looking at letter patterns is helpful to a point but heavily depending on phonic rules is ineffective - many misspellings in children's work are as a result of spelling phonically without applying knowledge of other rules.)</i>
Whole-word	Focuses on irregularly spelled words. Memorisation of irregular spellings can work, but is not always the most efficient, particularly if the approach is to memorise for one spelling test. One whole word approach is to introduce a word in a sentence with predictable letters omitted e.g. thought becomes --ough-.
Morphemic <i>Morphology: 'the study of words, how they are formed, and their relationship to other words in the same language.'</i>	Looks at units of meaning within a word. Because certain morphemes are usually spelled in the same way across a variety of words, we can improve spelling by focusing on these. Even when morphemes change, they change in predictable and regular ways. This approach has some advantages over whole word approaches because there are far fewer morphemes than words. Focus on common root-words, suffixes and prefixes. To build on the example above, after a whole word approach to 'thought', explore ought, bought, fought, sought etc. <i>(Most research agrees on morphemic strategies as being the main focus for spelling instruction. Analysing the structure of words and parts of words, such as stems, root words, prefixes, and suffixes.)</i>


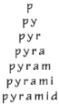
What are the most effective methods for spelling instruction? (Pedagogy)

Explicit instruction	Focus on: phoneme-grapheme correspondences, phonemic patterns in letter sequences or syllables, rules for joining syllables or adding morphemes, elements of morpheme preservation in word formation, and strategies for encoding irregular words. (National Curriculum)
Examining Spelling Patterns	Guide children towards discovering patterns and generalisations among the words they examine. Strong spellers develop insights into how words are spelled based on sound/letter correspondences, meaningful parts of words, and word origins and history (etymology)*. This knowledge, in turn, supports a specialized memory system - memory for letters in words. The technical term for this is "orthographic memory," and it's developed in tandem with awareness of a word's internal structure
<i>*Etymology- (Y5/Y6) advanced stage of development reading and writing. Etymology can be part of vocabulary instruction earlier on, as a stepping stone for using etymology as a spelling strategy.</i>	
Careful selection	Spelling words that capitalise on students' developing knowledge of the underlying structures of words. (Whole school spelling map overview/ repetition of rules/ building on previous knowledge)

Spelling tests

Spelling tests must be a **learning tool** rather than an assessment tool. The more times we try and retrieve something, the stronger the memory gets. This is called 'the retrieval effect' or 'the testing effect' If we reteach content instead of getting children to try and retrieve information, the memory does not get strengthened in the same way. Linking the teaching of spelling to recall of information from the long term memory, it would make sense that during a week children are pre-tested, taught and then tested again.

Methods to support your child at home

Look, say, cover, write, check (The most common strategy used to learn spellings.)	Look: first look at the whole word carefully and if there is one part of the word that is difficult, look at that part in more detail. Say: say the word as you look at it, using different ways of pronouncing it if that will make it more memorable. Cover: cover the word. Write: write the word from memory, saying the word as you do so. Check: Have you got it right? If yes, try writing it again and again! If not, start again.
Segmentation	The splitting of a word into its constituent phonemes in the correct order to support spelling.
Quick-write	Writing the words linked to the teaching focus with speed and fluency. The aim is to write as many words as possible within a time constraint. Pupils can write words provided by the teacher or generate their own examples. For example, in two minutes write as many words as possible with the /i:/ phoneme. This can be turned into a variety of competitive games including working in teams and developing relay race approaches.
Drawing the word shape	Draw around the words making a clear distinction in size where there are ascenders and descenders. Look carefully at the shape of the word and the letters in each box. Now try to write the word making sure that you get the same shape.
Drawing an image around the word	This strategy is all about making a word memorable. It links to meaning in order to try to make the spelling noticeable. It might work on those that are just a little more difficult to remember. 
Words without vowels	This strategy is useful where the vowel choices are the challenge in the words. Write the words without the vowels and pupils have to choose the correct grapheme to put in the space. For example, for the word <i>field</i> : f__ld
Words without predictable letters	One whole word approach is to introduce a word in a sentence with predictable letters omitted e.g. thought becomes --ough-.
Pyramid words	This method of learning words forces you to think of each letter separately. You can then reverse the process so that you end up with a diamond. 
Anagrams/ Word jumble	Anagrams help in learning letter patterns, they are a good way to focus on and remember the order of letters in a spelling.
Identifying correct spellings	From a selection of words the children have to select the correct spelling. Marking other spellings with ticks and dots above letters could also be used during this activity.
Other strategies	Using coloured pencils in different ways can help to make parts of words memorable. You could highlight the tricky parts of the word or write the tricky part in a different colour. Making up memorable 'silly sentences' containing the word. Saying the word in a funny way - for example, pronouncing the 'silent' letters in a word Clapping and counting to identify the syllables in a word.