



Supporting Your Child's Spelling at Home

Learning to spell is a highly complex business. Some children learn to spell effortlessly - most get there in the end, but too many find the process of learning to spell arduous, painstaking and, sadly, boring. At St John's, your child will learn the rules and conventions of the spelling system as well as strategies needed to become confident spellers and hopefully enjoy learning them in a varied and fun way.

In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, the children learn a new spelling pattern every two weeks as well as revising those already taught. Spelling is taught at least four times a week, where children look at phonics, spelling rules, root words, meanings of words and other strategies to help spellings, such as mnemonics. Teachers provide opportunities throughout the week for the children to practise and apply these rules. In addition to this, teachers model good spelling practice through their daily teaching, across all subjects.

Children in Years 3 to 6 also have a fortnightly spelling test. Spelling tests help children to learn the spelling rule or pattern being taught but it is also important that children are able to apply the rule in their writing and spell other words that fit the same rule or pattern. Therefore, spelling is assessed through dictations that incorporate the spelling words in context.

Learning to spell is most effective when it is done in an enjoyable and interesting way. This booklet contains spelling activities, games and strategies that aim to support your child with their spelling at home in a fun way.



Strategies for Spelling

- **Sounding out**
e.g. d-o-g sh-ee-p n-igh-t
Ask the child to sound out the phonemes (sounds) they hear.
- **Syllabification**
e.g. re/mem/ber
Clap out and say each of the syllables.
- **Mnemonics**
e.g. big elephants can always understand small elephants
This is a great strategy for tricky words they find difficult to remember.
- **Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check**
Look at the word and say it out loud, then cover it, write it and check to see if it is correct. If not, highlight or underline the incorrect part and repeat the process.
- **Analogy**
e.g. night, fright, sight, slight
Making families of words.
- **Words within words**
e.g. There is a rat in separate.
- **Etymology (meaning)**
e.g. bi (two) + cycle (circle) = bicycle.
- **Prefixes and suffixes**
e.g. uncontrollable laughing
- **Applying rules**
e.g. When changing a word ending in y from singular to plural you change the y to an i and add es. Fairy + fairies
- **Using a dictionary**

Please note - children will need to be taught how to use and apply these strategies for spelling. Younger children tend to use the first four strategies in the list to support their spelling.

Activities and Games

The following games and activities are suggestions for effective and enjoyable ways for helping your child to practice their spelling.

Cloudy Words

Choose a word from the list which your child is learning to read and write. Give an example of how the word is used in a sentence and support them to think of another example. Write the word for your child and ask them to trace over the letters with a glue stick or a finger dipped in glue. Lay cotton wool over the glue until the entire word is covered. Ask your child to write a sentence on the paper and to draw a picture to go with their sentence. You could do this with other words and make a 'cloudy book.' You could sprinkle sand over the glue instead of cotton wool.

Pipe Cleaner Words

Ask your child to listen carefully while you say a word. Challenge your child to use the pipe cleaners to form all of the letters they hear. Show your child the word card and support them to use their pipe cleaners to add or change the letters they need to spell the word correctly.

Water Words

Write several words on separate pieces of card or paper. Ask your child to write a word two or three times on the patio or path with a paintbrush dipped in water. Repeat with a different word. Challenge: can they write a sentence that includes the word?

Snowman

Write a selection of words from the Word List on a large piece of paper. Choose one of the words. Write one or two letters of the word on another piece of paper, with blank lines for the remaining letters. Ask your child for a missing letter. Write it in if they are correct and if not, draw the head of the snowman. The object of the game is for the child to guess the word before you have completed the drawing of the snowman.

Spelling Aloud

Using flashcards, read a word out loud to your child. Your child then spells out that word. If they spell the word correctly, they 'win' the card. If they are incorrect, the card is put to the bottom of the pile. Take it in turns to read the word or spell out the word.

Guess Who

Write some words on paper. Read the words with your child. Ask them to tape a word to your back. You have to ask a question e.g. does it begin with 'th'? Can I sound it out? Now your child takes a turn to answer your questions.

Magnetic Letters

Say a word out loud. Ask your child to make the word using magnetic letters.

Concentration

Make a set of matching word cards from the word list. Put them on the table face down. Turn two cards over at a time. If they match you or your child can keep them. The winner is the person with the greatest number of words. Make sure your child can read the words they turn over.

Silly Sentences

Ask your child to write ten silly sentences using a spelling word in each sentence. Encourage them to underline their spelling words. Example: My dog wears a blue and purple dress when he takes a bath.

Pyramid Writing

Ask your child to pyramid write 10 of their spelling words. When they are finished, draw a pyramid around their word. e.g. Home

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    h
   h o
  h o m
 h o m e
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ABC Order

Encourage your child to write their spelling words in alphabetical order.

Bubble Letters

Ask your child to write their spelling words in bubble letters, using different colours. They could also use squiggly, zigzag or dotty letters.

Playdough Spelling

Give your child a flat piece of playdough and a sharp pencil. Ask them to carefully write the word in the playdough. Smooth it over and write a different word.

Spelling Scramble

Write one of your child's spelling words with the letters scrambled up. Can your child unscramble the letters to spell the words correctly?

Skeleton Story

For this, children use their spelling words to form the 'skeleton' on which they create a short story, such as; Once upon a time in a gloomy castle there lived a beautiful princess etc etc.