

MULTI-SENSORY WAYS TO LEARN SPELLINGS

The following strategies are useful for learning tricky words where the letters in the word do not necessarily match the way the word is spoken (eg said). They can also be used for new and unfamiliar subject words and for those words which you just cannot remember accurately (in these cases, it may just be one letter that is causing the problem).

General principles when using the strategies

Focus on the part of the word which is causing the difficulty – it is not always necessary to apply a strategy (eg a mnemonic) to the whole word.

Layer the memory strategies – you can use more than one strategy at a time and by combining them you will create a stronger memory hook (eg a spoken mnemonic together with a visual image of the mnemonic or matching actions).

In contrast to the use of sounds in phonics, many of these strategies will work better when you use the letter names (eg the problem with using letter sounds with 'said' is that they do not create an accurate auditory memory hook).

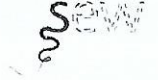
Practise regularly; this is crucial. It only needs to be 2 or 3 minutes a day but the regular practice will help the word go into your long-term memory.

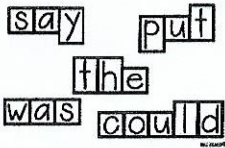
You can use the strategies on your own but you can also work with a partner. This will allow you to be both the learner and the teacher of the spellings. Teaching someone else is a good way of learning something.

When you work with a partner, take it in turns to spell out the word for the other person to write, using your memory hooks. If you do that correctly, write the word while saying your memory hooks to yourself and, finally, write the word at speed.

When checking your spelling, always check it against your original (which you know is correct) rather than against your last attempt which may have an error in it.

Highlight/colour the tricky part	Focus on the difficult part with colour or write that part in capitals; it may only be one letter. Tu E sday sur u pise separ a te – there is a r at in separate
Focus on the vowels	Notice the vowels in the word; remembering them may be enough. s e nt e nc e e e e
Vowel characterisation	Giving each vowel a character can help to remember which one to use especially when the vowel sound is unclear. Here are some examples, but you will have your own ideas. a = Homer Simpson e = happy face i = skinny o = surprised u = weightlifter Then I can remember that 'com e dy' has a happy face.
Say it as it looks / in a funny way	Wed nes day pe o ple con science is land
Syllables Words within words	Breaking longer words into syllables can be really helpful. pho to syn the sis Notice words within the word to the
Notice patterns Use a picture or calligram	Can you see any patterns in the word eg do letters repeat? t e nd e ncy en en

	island  An island is land surrounded by water  b irthday
Visualise it	You don't have to draw a picture – just make a picture in your mind eg a picture of two people getting married wed on a Wednes da y
Mnemonics	Rhymes/phrases to help remember all or part of the word. b e a u t i f u l big eyes and ugly teeth Tues da y is u eat sweets day rhythm – rhythm helps your two hips move
Families	Think of words which have the same onset, rime, prefix, suffix. Can you spell another word in the family and link it to the new word? eg I can spell r ain so I will be able to spell ex p lan
Funny links	Link two words which are different but have some connection. eg b icy cle - fridge Link with visualisation ie picture a b icy cle in the fridge.
Air writing	Write words in the air or on a large piece of paper on a wall. Make the letters big. Looking up can activate visual memory.

Rhyme, rhythm and song	Singing or creating a rhythm can help with remembering spellings. i before e except after c Mrs d, Mrs i, Mrs f f i, Mrs c, Mrs u, Mrs l t y (difficulty)
Rules	Some spelling rules may be helpful although they can be difficult to remember. Remember that there are usually exceptions which break the rules. 1 2 3 rule for /k/ at the end of a word; k is usually the third letter starting with the first vowel. Back bak bank banck 1 2 3 ✓ 1 2 x 1 2 3 ✓ 1 2 3 4 x
Type it out	Practise the word on a computer – your fingers may remember the sequence of letters.
Colour / rainbow writing	Write the word out in different colours to create a rainbow effect. 
Word shapes	Draw boxes around words to show the shape and where there are tall letters, descenders, fat letters, thin letters. 
Fernauld Technique	Write the word in large letters using joined up writing. Trace the word with your finger while saying the letter names out loud at the same time. Keep tracing until you are sure you have created a clear mental image of the word. Write the word and check.

Simultaneous Oral Spelling (SOS)	This is a bit like 'look, say, cover, write, check. Say the letters names of the word rather than the letter sounds out loud. Shut your eyes and say the letter names again, then say the word they spell (eg w-h-e-r-e spells where). Write the word, saying each letter name, then say the whole word.
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