

# A Guide to Spelling



In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teaching of spelling is very much based around phonics - which is using and applying their letters and sounds knowledge. Phonics is taught throughout Key Stage 1.

## **In Year 1 Pupils should be taught to spell:**

- Words containing each of the 40+ phonemes already taught
- Common exception words
- The days of the week
- Name the letters of the alphabet:
- Naming the letters of the alphabet in order
- Using letter names to distinguish between alternative spellings of the same sound
- Add prefixes and suffixes:
- Using the spelling rule for adding –s or –es as the plural marker for nouns and the third person singular marker for verbs
- Using the prefix un–
- Using –ing, –ed, –er and –est where no change is needed in the spelling of root words [for example, helping, helped, helper, eating, quicker, quickest]

It is important to recognise that pupils begin to meet extra challenges in terms of spelling during year 2. Increasingly, they learn that there is not always an obvious connection between the way a word is said and the way it is spelt. Variations include different ways of spelling the same sound, the use of so-called silent letters and groups of letters in some words and, sometimes, spelling that has become separated from the way that words are now pronounced, such as the 'le' ending in table.

## **In Year 2 pupils should be taught to spell by:**

- Segmenting spoken words into phonemes and representing these by graphemes, spelling many correctly.
- Learning new ways of spelling phonemes for which one or more spellings are already known, and learn some words with each spelling, including a few common homophones.
- Learning to spell common exception words.
- Learning to spell more words with contracted forms.
- Learning the possessive apostrophe (singular) [for example, the girl's book].
- Distinguishing between homophones and near-homophones.
- Add suffixes to spell longer words, including –ment, –ness, –ful, –less, –ly

## **In Key Stage 2**

Pupils' spelling of common words should be correct, including common exception words and other words that they have learnt. Pupils should spell words as accurately as possible using their phonic knowledge and other knowledge of spelling, such as morphology (the study of words, how they are formed, and their relationship to other words in the same language) and etymology (the origin and history of words).

### **Year 3 and 4 pupils should be taught to:**

- Use further prefixes and suffixes and understand how to add them (English Appendix 1).
- Spell further homophones.
- Spell words that are often misspelt (English Appendix 1).
- Place the possessive apostrophe accurately in words with regular plurals [for example, girls', boys'] and in words with irregular plurals [for example, children's].
- Use the first two or three letters of a word to check its spelling in a dictionary.
- Write from memory simple sentences, dictated by the teacher, that include words and punctuation taught so far.

### **Year 5 and 6 pupils should be taught to:**

- Use further prefixes and suffixes and understand the guidance for adding them.
- Spell some words with 'silent' letters [for example, knight, psalm, solemn].
- Continue to distinguish between homophones and other words which are often confused.
- Use knowledge of morphology and etymology in spelling and understand that the
- Spelling of some words needs to be learnt specifically, as listed in English Appendix 1.
- Use dictionaries to check the spelling and meaning of words
- Use the first three or four letters of a word to check spelling, meaning or both of these in a dictionary.
- Use a thesaurus.

The following pages will outline some useful strategies to support the learning of spellings at home, as well as spelling passports for Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6). Common exception words for each year group can be found on year group pages, under the 'useful resources' section.



## How are you going to learn your spellings today?

Draw the letter shapes around the word.

bag hot letter plot

Look, say, cover, write, check



Write the words with silly letters.

HAPPY  
LOX

Rainbow write the word 2 times each.



rainbow

Write the word with blue vowels and red consonants.

beautiful

Write the word and a word that rhymes with it.

cake  
bake  
make

SOS:

Simultaneous Oral Spelling

- Say the word.
- Trace over letters with your finger (say each letter name).
- Say word again, then say each letter name (x3).
- Write word saying each letter name as you write.

Write the word in a sentence.

He liked the freshly baked cake.



Rainbow writing no. 2

1. Trace over the word 5 times in different colours. Say its letter each time.
2. Copy the word 3 times and say the letters.
3. Write the word from memory.
4. Write the word with eyes closed.

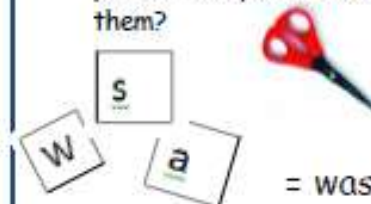
that

Ask a friend to test you.



Jumbled word!

Write the word out (quite big), cut up each letter (or sound). Get a friend to jumble up the pieces. Can you unscramble them?



Say words in a funny way!

Friend—fri (fry) end

Scissors—sci (sk i ssors)

Wednesday—wed (think of a wedding) nes day

### Read and understand

Go through the words again and check you can read and understand the meaning.



### Patterns

Spellings are usually based on patterns: phonemes (sounds) and word structure - i.e. plurals or suffixes, word endings and rules. What patterns can you spot?

Happy—unhappy—happiness—  
happily

### Sound it out

Break the word down into smaller chunks - try using coloured highlighters to see the separate parts.

important

### Writing it out

Type it out on the computer using different size text, fonts or colours.

because



### Magnetic/plastic letters

Re-arrange plastic letters/ phoneme cubes into the correct word.



### Make the word!

For certain tricky words get some play dough and make the word.



### Imagination and sparklers

As you spell out the word, close your eyes and with your finger write it out in the air in front of you, imagining you are writing with a fancy sparkler.



### Speed write

Write the word correctly at the top of the page, then see how many times they can write the word in 30 seconds. Can you beat your score?



### Words in words

What can you see within a word? Are there other smaller words within it?

father

fat—her—the

### Decorate the word

Draw illustrations to help remember the order of the letters.

b and d



### Build it up - word pyramid

argument

a

ar

arg

argu

argum

argume

argumen

argument

### Mnemonics

Use rhymes to help remember the spelling of the word.

said

sally ann is delightful.

# Key Stage 1 Spelling Passport



## MY FIRST SPELLING PASSPORT



My name: .....

My school: .....

### PLURALS

Often we just add -s

eg. boy-boys girl-girls book-books teacher-teachers

Add -es if the word ends in a hissing sound (x, ch, s, ss, sh)

eg. box-boxes church-churches bus-buses dish-dishes  
guess-guesses match-matches

If the word ends vowel + y, just add -s

eg. day-days monkey-monkeys toy-toys

If the word ends consonant + y, change the y to i and add -es

eg. baby-babies puppy-puppies fly-flies story-stories

Words ending in -f or -fe, change f to v and add -es

eg. shelf-shelves knife-knives thief-thieves

Words ending in -ff, and some -f words, just add -s

eg. cliff-cliffs roof-roofs chief-chiefs

### ADDING -ED, -ING, -ER, -EST, -Y

If there is a short vowel sound in the middle you need to double the final consonant before adding the ending.

eg. hop-hopped cut-cutting fat-fatter  
hat-hottest flop-floppy



big bigger biggest

If there is a vowel digraph, drop the e.

eg. hope-hopped make-making use-using  
tame-tamer fine-finest bone-bony



bony

### WORDS WITH APOSTROPHES

When we shorten a word, an apostrophe is used to show where letters have been taken out.

eg. it is - it's      is not - isn't

did not - didn't      cannot - can't

I will - I'll      she will - she'll

he had - he'd      who had - who'd

we have - we've      they have - they've

I am - I'm      you are - you're

Two tricky shortened forms are:

will not - won't      shall not - shan't

### ADDING TO WORDS ENDING IN -Y

Change the y to i when you add -ness, -er, -est, -ly

eg. happy-happiness pretty-prettier  
silly-silliest lazy-lazily

Keep the y when adding -ing

eg. marry-marrying try-trying play-playing



marry

### 'WH' QUESTION WORDS

what why when where which who



### SOME TRICKY WORDS

again any some once because

could does friend love beautiful

people said school should some

would once use laugh thought

### SOME CONFUSING WORDS

there - a place, like here

their - belongs to them (think about an heir)

they're - short for 'they are'

where - a place, like there and here

wear - clothing (think wear earrings)

we're - short for 'we are'

two - the number 2

too - also; very eg. It's too big.

to - before a verb or a place (eg. to go to school)

## Key Stage 2 Spelling Passport



### KS2 SPELLING PASSPORT

A quick guide to some key points in supporting the teaching of spelling in the classroom

#### EI OR IE?

The rule is: *i before e except after c when the sound is 'ee'.*

eg. *thief, piece, niece* but *receive, deceit, ceiling*

Most words use *ie*

eg. *fierce, friend, view, shriek, field, chief*

Words where *ei* makes a 'long a' sound

eg. *vein, rein, eight, foreign*

Exceptions to the rule!

eg. *weird, protein, their, either, height*

#### SOME CONFUSING HOMOPHONES

Hear – with your ear

Here – similar to there

There – a place like here

Their – belongs to them (think about an heir)

They're – short for 'They are'

Where – a place like there and here

Wear – clothing (think wear earrings)

We're – short for 'We are'

Two – the number 2

Too – also; very eg. *It's too big.*

To – before a verb or a place (eg. *to go to school*)

Threw – the past tense of throw

Through – a preposition telling where etc.

#### MAKING PLURALS

Add *-es* if the word ends in a hissing sound (x, ch, ss, sh)

eg. *box-boxes, church-churches, dish-dishes, guess-guesses*

If the word ends vowel + y, just add *-s*

eg. *day-days, monkey-monkeys, boy-boys*

If the word ends consonant + y, change the y to i and add *-es*

eg. *baby-babies, puppy-puppies, fly-flies*

Words ending in *-f* or *-fe*, change *f* to *v* and add *-es*

eg. *shelf-shelves, knife-knives, thief-thieves*

Words ending in *-ff*, and some *-f* words, just add *-s*

eg. *cliff-cliffs, roof-roofs, chief-chiefs*

Most words ending in *-o* add *-s*. (musical terms, shortened forms, newer words, *-oo* words) eg. *photos, cuckoos*

Some older words ending in *-o* add *-es*

eg. *echoes, cargoes, tomatoes, heroes, potatoes*

#### ADDING SUFFIXES TO WORDS ENDING IN *-Y*

Change the *y* to *i* when you add *-ness, -er, -est, -ly*

eg. *happy-happiness, pretty-prettier, lazy-lazily*

Keep the *y* when adding *-ing*

eg. *marry-marrying, try-trying*

#### ABLE OR IBLE?

Many more words end in *-able* than *-ible*

eg. *miserable, agreeable, enjoyable, valuable*

If the opposite starts with *un*, it is probably an *-able* word

eg. *uneatable, unreliable, undrinkable, unbreakable*

If the opposite starts with *il, im, in* or *ir* it is probably an *ible* word

eg. *irresistible, impossible, invisible, illegible*

#### ADDING *-ED, -ING, -ER, -EST*

Words ending with a single consonant preceded by a short vowel, double the consonant before adding *-ing, -ed, -er, -est*

eg. *hop-hopping, stop-stopped, win-winner*

Words ending with a single consonant preceded by a double vowel or long vowel sound, just add the ending

eg. *beep-beepped, look-looking, dream-dreamer*

Words ending in *-e*, drop the *-e* before adding the ending

eg. *hope-hoping, ride-rider, fine-finest*

#### ADDING *-Y*

Words ending with a single consonant preceded by a short vowel, double the single consonant to keep the short vowel sound

eg. *sun-sunny, tin-tinny, bog-boggy*

#### SHUN SOUNDS: *-CIAN, -TION, -SION, -SSION?*

Words ending *-cian* are often occupations

eg. *optician, electrician, musician, magician*

Words ending *-sion* often come from a base word ending in *d/de* or *s/se*

eg. *explosion (explode), confusion (confuse)*

Words ending *-ssion* often come from a base word ending *-ss*

eg. *discussion, possession, compression*

The most common 'shun' ending is *-tion*

eg. *direction, attention, fraction, station*

#### ADDING PREFIXES

The rule is: Just add it. Do not change the base word.

eg. *appear-disappear, necessary-unnecessary*