

Supporting Spelling



Why do students with dyslexia find spelling so difficult?

- Heavy demands on memory for correct sequencing and visual representation of individual letters
- Difficulties recalling what they have seen or heard (both visually and phonologically)

General Advice

- Follow a multi sensory spelling programme
- Little and often e.g. 2 or 3 words a week
- Be flexible and imaginative - work to the pupil's strength and preferred style of learning
- Vary the method dependant on the pupil and the spelling. Eg a phonic method would not be helpful for 'said'
- Introducing words which have alternative spellings will be confusing for the dyslexic pupil - teach separately eg. There/ their, two/ too, hear/ here
- Allow for repetition and over learning

Specific Strategies using Auditory, Visual and Kinaesthetic Approaches

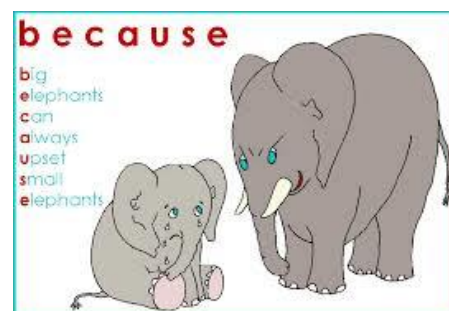
Simultaneous Oral Spelling (SOS)

- 1) Model spelling the word for the pupil, reading the word, then saying the letter names and reading the word again
- 2) Ask the pupil to write over the word repeating the letter names using different colours
- 3) Cover the word and ask the pupil to write the word again saying the letter names
- 4) Pupil to close their eyes and try to spell the word again remembering to say the letter names - check the spelling against the model

Mnemonics

Using the letters from a given word to make up a phrase to help remember the order of the letters e.g. for **said** - "silly ants in dresses"

Using a visual representation for the mnemonic may help too. Also it is a good idea to ask the pupil to make up their own phrase (mnemonic) for difficult words. ([Click here for Mnemonic spelling tips](#))



Phonics

Words are segmented into individual phonemes
(the smallest unit of sound within a word)

f - l - e - ck, p, ai, n

Actions could be used to support the phonics as
in Jolly Phonics.



Letter Patterns

Group words with similar patterns eg could,
would, should and car, far, star. Be careful
however e.g. sea, head

Chunking

Break down words into chunks or syllables to support
working memory

eg fri-end, dys-lex-ic, wed-nes-day

limit the size of each chunk to two or three letters

adapt chunking to suit individual learners, let the
pupil decide how the word should be split up



Exaggerated Pronunciation

This works well for remembering silent letters and also irregular words,
e.g. guh-nome for gnome, Kah-night for knight, skizzers for scissors, sa-id
for said.

Music and Rhythm

Chant the letters to a rhythm or a familiar tune



Visualisation

Write the spelling onto a card using colour to highlight the target word.
Raise above the pupil's eye level and ask the pupil to create a mental
picture of the word and see the word in his 'mind's eye'. Pupil to finger
trace the word on to the desk.

Picture Association

Create aggregate pictures to tell a story and show words with similar spelling patterns eg 'ai' words. Picture could collectively include train, rail, rain, chain, paint.

Video Memory

Make up a story about the characters (letters) in the target word. Allow the pupil to invent the story.

Torch Tracking

Use the torch to write the target word on the wall. The pupil can track the word with their eyes and then with their finger repeating the letter names as they spell it. They could then use the torch themselves to spell the word remembering to use the letter names whilst spelling.



Stepping Stones

Write the letters of the target word onto 'stepping stones'. The pupil jumps from one to the next calling out the letter names e.g. 'S' 'A' 'I' 'D' and on a last stepping stone say the whole word in a short phrase 'I said no!'

Jumping Jacks

Read the target word from a label, name the letters and repeat the word. Do the same again this time carrying out an action (jumping, hopping, clapping, jumping jacks)



Three-dimensional and sensory approaches

Use wooden or plastic letters

Mould letters out of clay or plasticine for the target the word and stand them upright so they can be seen from all angles

Try 'feely' letters, sand trays and shaving foam on table tops for tracing letters and words

Draw spelling words in glue and then sprinkle over glitter. Once dried, feel the letters, see them, say the word out aloud and write them out.



Supporting Spelling using ICT

Word Grids

Some programs have a grid at the bottom of the screen that shows key vocabulary, by just clicking on the word will put them into a word document.

Eg Clicker 6, Communicate SymWriter

Both of these programs have the facility to have the word read out

Word grids can be set up to show pictures with the words

Predictive word processors also show a bank of words which may be appropriate for the pupil to choose from as they are typing.

Although there are some custom grids it is possible to set up grids appropriate for individual children.



Spellcheckers

Some spellcheckers allow for phonic letter substitutions for example if you type 'fo' at the beginning of a word it will also look up words beginning with 'pho'.

Examples - Text Help Read and Write (TextHelp)

- ClaroRead (Claro Software)
- CoWriter (Don Johnston)

The last programme uses fuzzy logic to determine possible spellings. Typing 'fizix' can display the word 'physics'. The letter 'r' will display our, are and hour depending on the context. It can be used with pupils and students whose knowledge of short vowels sounds and adjacent consonants is insecure.

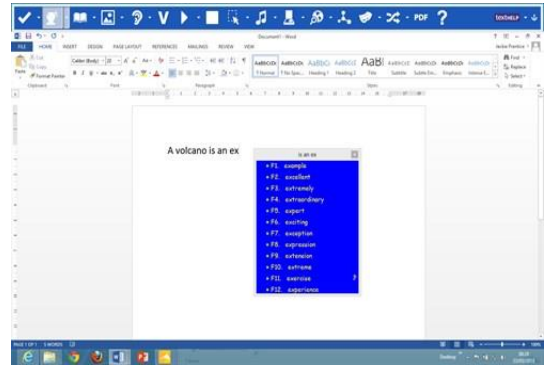
Some programs also have a thesaurus (e.g Text Help Read and Write and ClaroRead)

The 'autocorrect' facility in Microsoft word will correct common mistakes. (This can be personalised)



Word Prediction

A number of programmes have word-prediction tools. For example, Clicker 6, Write On-line, TextHelp Read/Write Gold. Word Prediction anticipates the word you are going to type and a selection of words come up in a box or grid. Words can be read out to you and you just click on the word and it inserts into the text.



Talking Spell Checkers

Some pupils have difficulty using spell checkers because they can't read the words. Some programs have the facility to read the words to the pupil so they can then make a choice of which word is correct.

Examples - Clicker

- Text Help Read and Write (TextHelp)
- ClaroRead

Talking Homophone Checker

Some pupils have difficulty in deciding which spelling is appropriate both Text Help Read and Write Gold and ClaroRead check for homophones



Electronic Dictionary and Thesaurus

These small handheld devices can be useful for some pupils. Some devices will read the words for the pupil.

Programs that support spelling skills are

- Wordshark
- StarSpell
- Nessy
- Spell Track
- Nessy Spelling Shoe
- AcceleRead AcceleWrite

