



A Guide to Learning Spellings for Parents and Carers

Below you will find some of the strategies we use at Thorndown to teach spellings. These can be used to support the learning of spellings at home.

Look, say, cover, write, check

This is probably 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 - look, say, cover, write, check.

Trace, copy and replicate (and then check)

This is a similar learning process to 'look, say, cover, write, check' but is about developing muscle memory.

Write the word out on a sheet of paper ensuring that it is spelt correctly and it is large enough to trace over. Trace over the word and say it at the same time. Move next to the word you have just written and write it out as you say it. Turn the page over and write the word as you say it, and then check that you have spelt it correctly.

If this is easy, do the same process for two different words at the same time. Once you have written all your words this way and feel confident, miss out the tracing and copying or the tracing alone and just write the words.

Segmentation strategy

The splitting of a word into its phonemes (sounds) in the correct order to support spelling.

Quickwrite

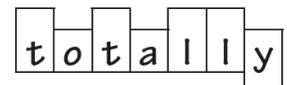
Writing the words linked to the teaching focus with speed and fluency. The aim is to write as many words as possible within a time constraint. Pupils can write words provided by the teacher or generate their own examples. This can be turned into a variety of competitive games including working in teams and developing relay race approaches.



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Drawing around the word to show the 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. You can't use this method as your main method of learning spellings, but 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 field:

f_____ld

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.

p
py
pyr
pyra
pyram
pyrami
pyramid

Rainbow writing

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. You could also write each letter in a different colour, or write the word in red, then overlay in orange, yellow and so on.

