

Phonics, Phonemes, and Spelling

Spelling is a skill, which requires a small amount of teaching and abundant meaningful practice within the whole learning classroom, in a non-threatening environment. Learning alphabetic writing provides a foundation to understand patterns easily. Learning phonemes in a logical sequence that develops self awareness through learning and practicing patterns develops confidence and success.



Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic Awareness is an understanding of speech connecting with print. Students need to be aware of language being broken into words and working with similarities among words (sounds and patterns).

Practice comes from:

- Writing at least several times each day including free writing, math logs, pattern writing, original writing, science, and other writing experiences in the classroom.
- Initially practicing letter formation.
- Students are concurrently practicing letters they are learning in spelling.
- Learning to work independently.
- Use of visual maps to discover patterns and for use with different cognitive processes.

The small amount of teaching spelling includes:

- Five to ten minutes (short and intensive in an exciting energetic manner) daily using the small individual whiteboards or chalkboards to teach a skill in small groups (3-10)
- Using transitions (approximately two to four minutes in length) to elicit and visually record highly reoccurring phonetic elements and patterns.
- Students collaboratively recording reoccurring phonetic elements and patterns in their group books (a shared table journal).
- Oral language as a foundation for written language.
- Model letter formation to the whole class and individually as needed during practice.

The Learning Spelling Tools

Chalkboards, surfaces on the ground and/or white boards can be used by the children. The chalkboards can be of various sizes. Chalkboards or whiteboards approximately 30cm x 45cm (12" x 18") are very effective for spelling and other learning experiences. Chalkboards can easily and inexpensively be made by the students creating ownership and pride. The materials are slate and chalkboard paint (brush or spray). After painting and drying, the boards should be rubbed down with chalk, then erased, before using. For erasers, students are asked to bring in old socks, again providing ownership in the process. Slate and chalkboard paint can be found at most hardware stores.



Introducing the Letter

Letters are taught one at a time. In addition to the small groups with whiteboards (or chalkboards), the students will practice in sand, chalk outside, and on paper. The students will practice the name and sound of the letter, how we use our mouth to form the sound, and what the letter represents. The students will write the letters on the whiteboards to build an understanding of the letter. This can be done in whole or small groups. After the students have been introduced to the whiteboards, they will usually work in small groups (4-10 children). The small groups would do their five minutes of spelling while the whole class is doing writing (e.g. pattern writing, journal, original writing, etc.) or working in independent small learning groups.

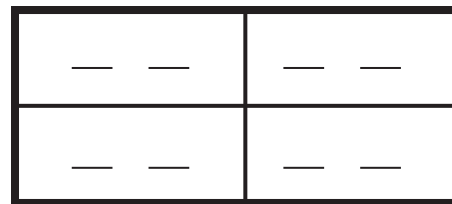


The Sequence of Implementation

These lessons will provide an opportunity for the students to use and understand the letter(s) at the beginning and end of a word. When introducing the letters with words on chalkboards the students will:

- Hear the word (e.g. learning the letter *f* the students hear the word fabulous)
- The students will say the word together
- The students will be modeled how their mouths work
- The students will write the letter (e.g. *f*) in the correct location
- They will self correct if they need to relocate the letter

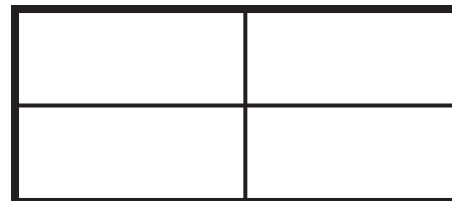
The boards will be divided into four sections with two lines in each quarter section for beginning and ending sounds.



Words

The students will learn six consonants – e.g. *m, s, f, b, t,* and *c*. They will then learn the short *a*. They will now learn to form words (e.g. bat, cast, act, fact, sat, cab, fast, mat, mast, bats). To write words the students will divide their boards into four sections. They will:

- Hear the word
- The students will say the word together
- They will hear a sentence
- They will say the word together
- They will sound and write the word
- They will self correct when needed to correct a spelling



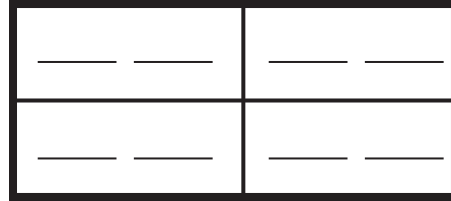
When all four words have been completed, they will be asked to point to any word but the last word. A student will be randomly selected to say their selected word. All students will point to the word, and they will repeat the word. I would suggest that the manner of repeating the word vary in times and delivery to enliven the experience and interest. The teacher will also have a whiteboard as a modeling tool used appropriately when needed.

Multiple Syllable Words

Students will work with multiple syllable words that fit into the foundation of what they have learned (e.g. forget, habit, exit, nutmeg, upset, panic, antic, hotel, etc.). They draw a line under each syllable. This will be modeled.

The children will:

- hear the word
- say the word together
- clap the syllables
- hear a sentence
- say the word together
- clap the syllables
- draw the lines for syllables
- sound and write the word in syllables (clapping and separating as needed)
- write the complete word below the word written in syllables
- self correct when needed to correct a spelling



This will also help students chunk words with their regular writing, especially when they are approximating the word based on the sounds and patterns they know.

It is important for the sequence of introducing and learning the sounds and patterns to be foundational. They need to build on what they know when learning and working with new sounds and patterns. A suggested sequence of teaching letters and patterns is:

Six consonants

Short *a*

Six more consonants

Short *o*

The *s* as a plural

Six more consonants

Short *i*

The remaining consonants except *x* and *qu*

Short *u*

Using *x* and *qu*

Short *e*

The endings *s*, *ing*, *y*, and *er*

Multiple syllable words

The *er*, *ar*, *or*, *ir*, and *ur* sounds

The *ck*, *ic*, *le* sounds

The *g*, *ge*, *dge* sounds

Double consonants including *ll*, *ss*, and *ff*

The *ng* patterns including *ang*, *ing*, *ong*, and *ung*

The *oi* and *oy* patterns

The *ow*, *ou*, and *ous* patterns

The long vowel patterns for all five vowels

The *d* and *ed* patterns

The *oo* patterns

Changing *y* to *ies*

The *tion* pattern

Prefixes and suffixes



Self-Correcting

The student(s) will learn to recognize and self correct their writing and spelling. When a student incorrectly spells a word on their whiteboards they will be asked to say (sound) what they have written. They must be looking at the word and sounding what they see, not what they think they remember hearing. It is important to occasionally ask students what they have written when it is correct to assure students are checking themselves and not only responding because the teacher asked. Some exceptions when assistance should be provided include:

- A student writes a *k* for a *c* and they have not learned about this particular usage. The teacher would positively recognize their proper usage of the 'c' sound and provide them with the correct letter usage.
- A student has the proper sound of (determined when they shared the word) and have reversed the letter (e.g. *d* & *b*). I would quickly model the correct orientation.



Observation

The success with spelling is evaluated through observing real life practice with their pattern writing, journal writing, original free writing, and visual mapping.

Spelling at Home

If the parents wish to work with their children at home on spelling, they should visit the classroom where we — students and teacher — can model how we practice spelling. This assists parents on creating good habits instead of routines that could make spelling more difficult for the child.

Resources

- Marlene and Robert McCracken.
Spelling Through Phonics available on Amazon
40th Anniversary Edition Released
October 2022
- Edward Fry
Reading Teacher's Book of Lists

