

Spelling Workshop Teacher Guides

Spelling Workshop

Teacher Guides - First through Fifth Grade (optional Kinder)

Research reports that reading and writing are reciprocal processes (Pinnell, 1994). Readers decode (put together sounds to form words in text) and writers encode ("spell...a word [by mapping] a spelling onto each sound heard in the word.") (Blevins 2001). Furthermore, "knowledge of common syllable patterns and structural analysis improves the ability to read, spell, and learn the meanings of multisyllabic words (Blevins, 2001)." To accomplish this, "the most effective type of instruction...is explicit (direct) instruction" that controls the amount of information being taught to the learner (Adams, 1990; Chall, 1996; Evans and Carr, 1985).



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Overview

The Need

She sat down in a way that advised me she was not to be approached. The look in her eyes said this workshop had not been a choice and she resented the air I was breathing. I was the target and she was the self-appointed bomb. How would I reach her? Could she be reached? Was she living permanently as the spelling queen? Was she the one who had all the answers and exhausted the human potential of learning on this subject? As I timorously walked to the overhead I made a conscious decision to meet the issue head-on.

Opening statement: "Anyone still continuing to debate if we should teach spelling is not considering the research! It must be taught!" A breakthrough! She smiled and nodded affirmatively. Oh, my goodness. Could it be? Had I begun to build a bridge? With renewed confidence: "However, most of us do not teach spelling, we assign it." She gave a glance of pondering; a look of debate as if she was wondering if she should come over to my side.

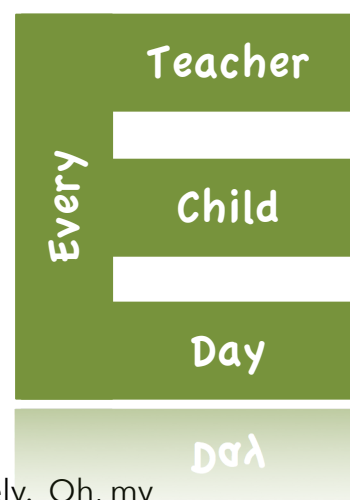
As the moments continued: "We should not do away with spelling lists." She was smiling and participating now.

"Spelling tests are also important." Did her eyes just smile?

"Direct spelling instruction should happen daily." A scowl preceded the hoisting of her angry hand.

"I cannot, and I repeat, **cannot** plan for yet another subject! We are being overwhelmed with too much to do. How will I find time?" There it was, the truth. I knew I couldn't debate her honesty. I know of many teachers who feel this way. The truth is, there are just not enough hours in the day to teach, assess, reflect, refine, plan, or rework a lesson.

This teacher is expressing the thoughts of so many educators around the country. Who hasn't read books by "spelling gurus" who talk as though spelling is the only curriculum that should be taught? They spend every waking hour studying



words! The suggestions given by these well-meaning experts are unrealistic due to real time constraints from an overburdened schedule. Just to make the “stuff” takes hours and hours of preparation, not to mention managing all the materials during “the lesson.”

Spelling Workshop is an attempt to answer that dilemma. How do we provide daily word work without further stressing teachers? Is there a “format” we can follow weekly that assists in developing good spellers? How can we ensure that students are mastering concepts and strategies and not merely memorizing lists?

The Research

Most teachers have some sort of spelling workshop. Most of them consist of a one or two day overview of the words, assigned homework, and a spelling test at the end of the week. The problem is that this does not transfer into writing and reading.

Phonics research reports that reading and writing are reciprocal processes (Pinnell, 1994). Readers decode (put together sounds to form words in text) and writers encode (“spell...a word [by mapping] a spelling onto each sound heard in the word.”) (Blevins 2001). Furthermore, “knowledge of common syllable patterns and structural analysis improves the ability to read, spell, and learn the meanings of multisyllabic words (Blevins, 2001).” To accomplish this, “the most effective type of instruction...is explicit (direct) instruction” that controls the amount of information being taught to the learner (Adams, 1990; Chall, 1996; Evans and Carr, 1985).

Studies clearly indicate that all children can benefit from studying words. This includes children that are good spellers and have a good visual memory (Moats, 1995). As children reach the upper grades, “spelling by analogy becomes increasingly important ...” (Moats, 1995) “In short, knowledge about patterns within single syllables, and syllable patterns within words, will be of considerable value to students in both their reading and their spelling.” (Bear, 1996).

Further research suggests that a word study curriculum should accomplish how to look at words, high-frequency words, letter-sound relationships, patterns, and the ability to use multiple strategies (Pinnell, 1994). Spelling should emphasize the most reliable and most useful patterns, not patterns that occur infrequently. Patterns should never be taught as absolutes, but rather as generalizations that can have exceptions (Blevins, 2001).

Spelling Workshop

When teaching spelling, research suggests that teachers (Moats, 1995; Blevins, 2001):

- use a logical order in the teaching of patterns and words
- provide daily lessons for approximately 15 minutes
- keep the lessons focused and fast-paced using spelling patterns and frequency of use
- create an environment in which students become actively engaged in observing words and patterns
- provide review and build upon what students know
- adjust pace or scope according to students' assessed needs

Spelling Workshop is a program designed to meet the above-mentioned criteria. Direct instruction guides students in studying and analyzing words and patterns. It is a plan based upon the latest research. Beginning with onset and rime, the *Spelling Workshop* builds students' knowledge of orthography in a logical sequence including plurals, inflectional endings, cross-checking spelling with meaning, contractions, compound words, the six highly reliable vowel patterns, positional vowel teams, prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin derivatives.

Lessons in *Spelling Workshop* are constructed in daily 15-20 minute blocks to include:

Day 1 ***Introduce the pattern through think aloud or teacher guided observation/context clue strategies***
Strategize how you will remember one high frequency word

Day 2 ***Emphasis on decoding/context clues and rest of spelling pattern using Dot and Spot for syllabication***

Day 3 ***Emphasis on encoding through Say, Syllabicate and Stretch***

Day 4 ***Word Activities or complete encoding***

Day 5 ***Spelling Text using Extend and Apply to test strategy mastery***

Furthermore, it develops from unit to unit and from list to list. It builds upon previously taught patterns so students do not “lose” knowledge they have attained in previous units. Designed to be flexible, teachers can use the level that best meets the students’ assessed needs.

To begin implementation and ensure that children have the background to meet success, determine what students already know and can apply to spelling. If need be, a three-year phase-in is suggested below.

Implementation Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Year 1	List A	List B	List C	List C	List C
Year 2	List A	List B	List C	List D	List D
Year 3	List A	List B	List C	List D	List E

In order for teachers to use the lists in a flexible manner that meets the needs of their classrooms, I have not used a grade level for each list. This also allows for accommodations for special needs students and English as second language students. In order to “benchmark” where a student is performing, a grade level equivalency chart has been supplied below:

<i>List</i>	<i>Grade Level Equivalency</i>
<i>List K (Optional)</i>	<i>Kindergarten</i>
<i>List A</i>	<i>Grade 1</i>
<i>List B</i>	<i>Grade 2</i>
<i>List C</i>	<i>Grade 3</i>
<i>List D</i>	<i>Grade 4</i>
<i>List E</i>	<i>Grade 5</i>

Spelling Workshop

List Layout

Core Words

Core Words are the words that the students will receive on day one of the spelling week. These will be the words they will do for homework and will receive on the spelling test on day five.

High Frequency Words

Three **High Frequency Words** have been supplied each week. The teacher will pick the other two words based on student writing and write them in each week.

Extend/Apply Words

Extend/Apply Words are words the students have not seen that are given on the spelling test. This helps us determine if the children understood the pattern.

Extra Words with same Pattern

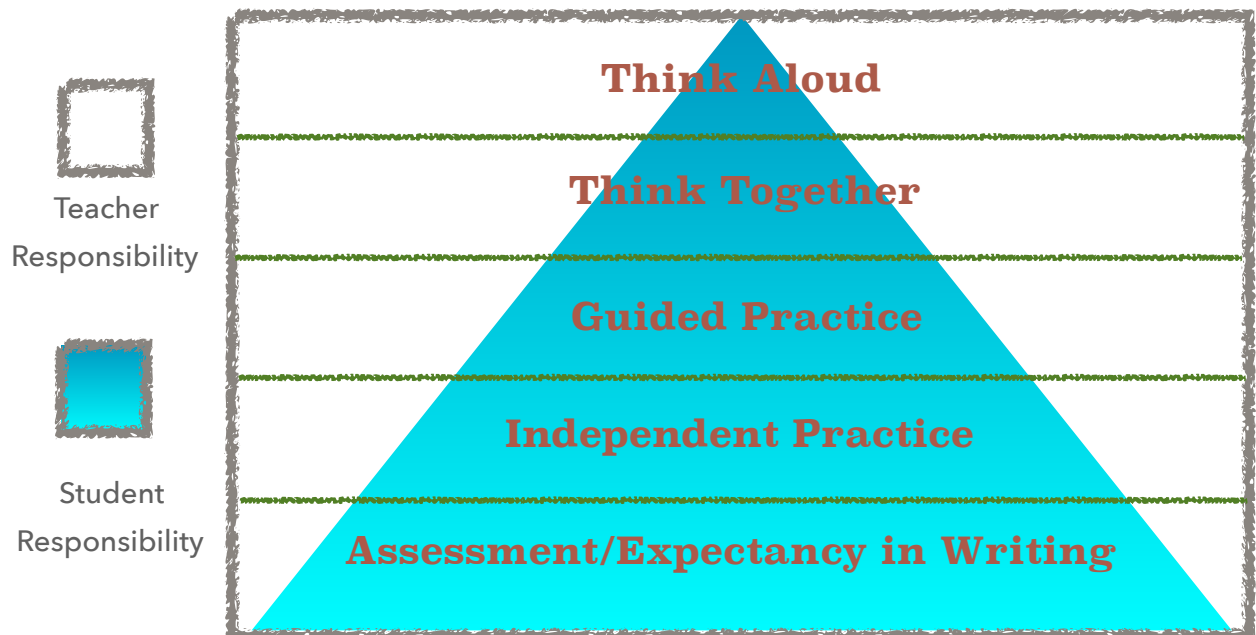
These words reflect the pattern for the unit. They are to be used during the week to help children make the connection to the pattern.

The Foundation of the Program

Gradual Release of Responsibility

The foundation of all focus lessons, small group lessons, and one-to-one conferences is based upon the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1993). In this writing program, the same skill or strategy is often taught in continuous focus lessons over one, two, or three weeks, depending upon the complexity level. Daily, repetitive, intentional focus lessons will accelerate writing development during the elementary years. Materials are included to give adequate demonstration and practice for teachers and students.

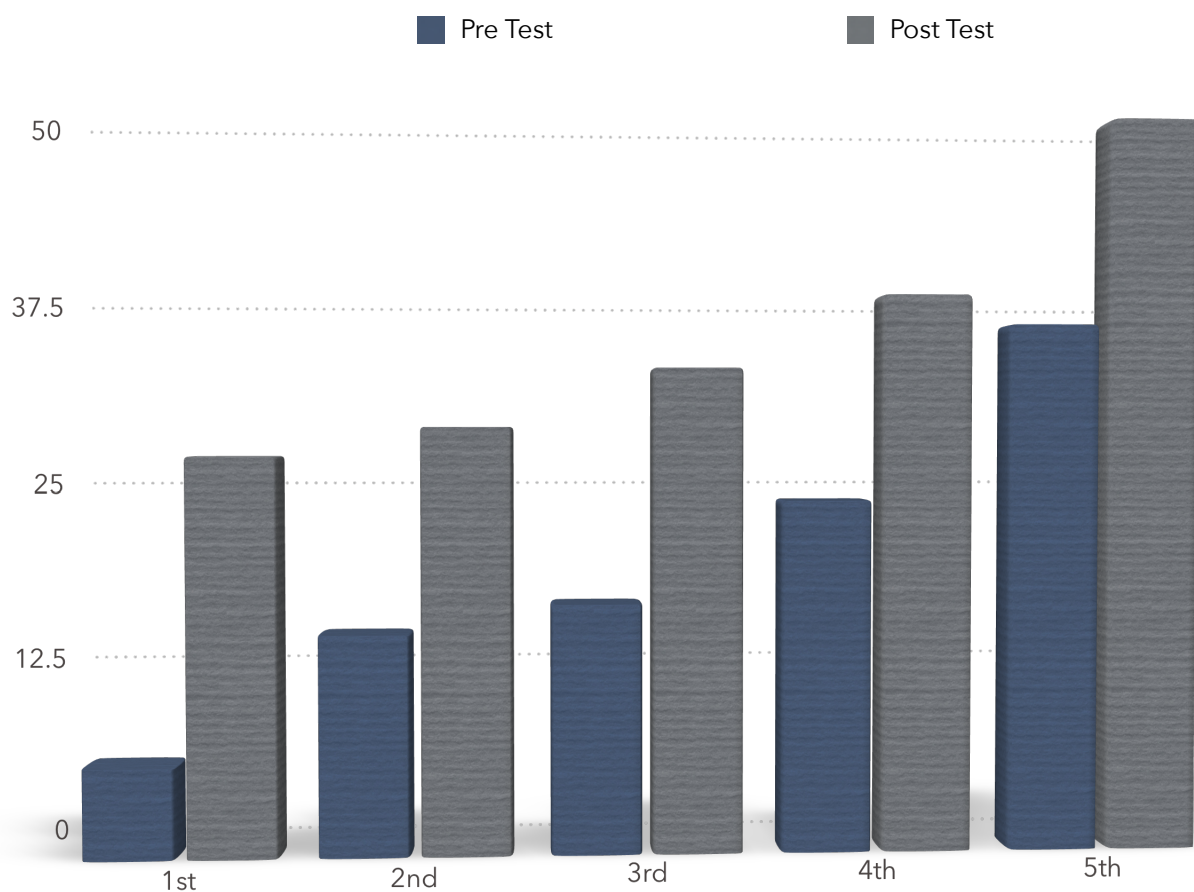
- As instruction begins, the teacher thinks aloud the thinking process and creates an anchor chart to guide further release. Students partner up throughout the demonstration as the teacher listens in on the private responses of partners.
- Think together occurs as students begin to offer their thinking after the pair/share is finished.
- Guided practice is used as teachers turn the process over to pairs. The teacher listens in, recording the names of students who will need small group instruction.
- An assessment is given before students are released and required to use the skill or strategy in their own writing. Assessment helps the teacher group students for future instruction.



Pre/Post Data

Below is an average pre/post data sample. This is replicated in 90% of the schools where Spelling Workshop is used.

This is a low socioeconomic school with 90% free and reduced lunch as well as a high E.L.L. population. These results are typical in schools using Spelling Workshop.



Spelling Workshop Frequently Asked Questions

Schedule

What is the Spelling Workshop calendar schedule for Grades 2-5?

- a. Give the pretest the first week of school. **Do not send it home to parents** as it is to be used for data collecting to measure yearly growth.
- b. Complete a spelling unit/list each 4 and 5 day week of the school year.
- c. Give post-test immediately following the last unit.

How is this calendar different for first grade?

- a. To be mindful of the developmental level of first graders, the pretest should be *given in several sittings* and should be administered in the *first two weeks of school*. **Do not send it home to parents** as it is to be used for data collecting to measure yearly growth.
- b. *Spelling Workshop* in grade one is 23 weeks. In order to complete List A during the academic year, count back 24 weeks (1 extra week for the post-test) and begin accordingly.
- c. Give the post-test immediately following the last unit.

Can we vary the five-day cycle for Spelling Workshop?

The order of the week needs to be implemented as described in the teacher manual. To encourage family support at home, it should be a school wide decision about when the spelling pattern should be introduced (Monday or another day of the week).

Where does Spelling Workshop fit into the school day?

Spelling Workshop fits in the Word Work portion of literacy in grades 3, 4, & 5. If the school has a specified phonics program in grades 1 and 2, *Spelling Workshop* is in addition to that program.

Pre/Post Test

What are the guidelines for the pre and post test?

After giving the test (pre or post), collect it, score it and keep the tests on file. **Do not give these tests back to the students.** They are for data collection only and not to be confused by parents as a test for which students should have studied. Please record the data on the record keeping form in your manual. Be sure to report only students that have been at school for the entire year and participated in the *Spelling Workshop*. On your roster, note subcategories (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, Gifted, etc.).

How do I grade the pre and post test?

Because of variations in scoring phonetically acceptable patterns within words, score the test consistently by marking the word correct or incorrect. Do not give half points unless your school/district agrees on what the acceptable patterns are within a grade level.

On pre/post test there are occasions when 2 words are given (i.e., notify- notified; survey-surveys) in order to test the ending change. Which word is tested?

Example: *notify-notified...*

Give the students the base word *notify* and spell it out loud for them or write it on the board. Ask them to write the word *notified*. You will only score the word *notified*.

Grading

How do we grade extend/apply words?

Please discuss with your students and their parents the purpose of the extend/apply words as well as the system for earning points. One point is given for the accurate spelling. Give half credit if an extend/apply word is phonetically correct, but conventionally incorrect (chiken for chicken, sickle for cycle). When the child receives a half point, **be sure to write the correct spelling beside the word** so they see the correct spelling.

During the first year of implementation, how do we explain the report card grading system when grades 3, 4 and 5 are using the same list?

Explain the purpose for phasing in the curriculum and the importance of teaching the beginning patterns/strategies before moving students into advanced patterns/strategies.

How do we determine report card grades for students in grades 3, 4 and 5?

Determination of grades should be made at the district or school level. **Make sure everyone is using the same criteria** so that students and parents are not confused.

If a child uses capital letters incorrectly, how does this affect the grade?

In first grade, if students are incorrectly using capital letters, mark the word correct, but write the correct spelling next to the word. In 2nd through 5th grade, the word will be marked incorrect. Be sure to write the correct spelling beside the word.

Other:

How can lists be modified to meet the needs of at-risk learners?

Support staff can help to address student needs and support implementation of *Spelling Workshop*. Modifications to weekly spelling lists can be made to address the needs of students enrolled in SpEd and ESL. Potential modifications could include a shortened spelling list that follows a pattern/strategy and the presentation of high frequency words from an earlier list. Teachers are encouraged to select words for which background knowledge could be easily built. For example, List C, Unit 1: select words such as *sad* and *pig* rather than *frank* or *shrub*.

Will the district make posters for “Say, Syllabicate and Stretch”, “Divide and Conquer” and patterns/strategies?

Teachers are encouraged to create these posters with their students to enhance student understanding. This class creation becomes an anchor for student use and future teacher instruction.

In Unit 18, List C,, there are singular and plural forms for each word. Do we test all the words, singular and plural forms alike, or is it teacher discretion?

Give the students the base word and spell it out loud or write it on the board. Read the plural form of the word to them and ask them to write the plural form of the word for the test. This is the word you will score.

Has the term "consonant blends" been replaced by "cluster"?

"Consonant blends" and "cluster" may both be used (see the Phonics Glossary for additional information).

Can we say "magic e" for "silent e"?

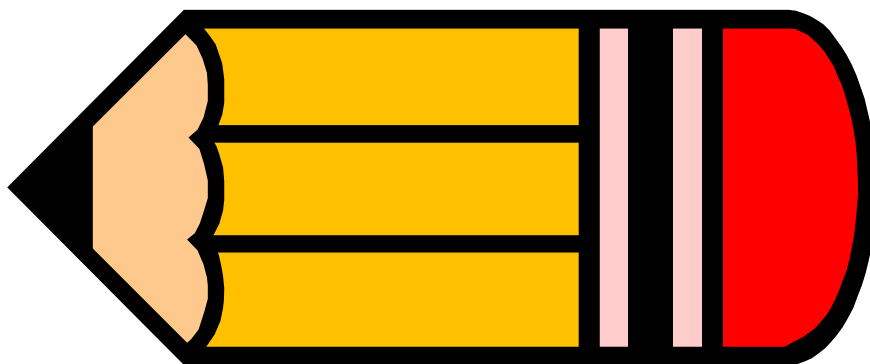
In order to be consistent, “silent e” is to be used.

What prior learning are students bringing to 5th grade?

As we phase in the *Spelling Workshop* curriculum, students will have experienced more strategies and thus be better prepared for each new list. The implementation process is designed to enhance intermediate grade students’ understanding of the patterns/strategies presented to early primary grade students.

Can other resources be used during Spelling Workshop?

Absolutely. **However, please make sure days one through three are followed carefully as this is the direct instruction of the pattern.** Use additional resources on day four when appropriate.



What the Program Includes

Each manual includes:

- License Agreement
- Overview of all patterns taught during the year
- Reproducible Parent Letter
- Research Overview of Spelling Workshop
- List of Words used throughout the year
- Data Collecting Guidelines
- Pre/Post Test of words based upon patterns
- Phonics Glossary
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Principal Observation Form
- Lesson Plan for new pattern that includes definition, consistency of pattern, examples of pattern, and sample think aloud script
- Teacher list of Core Words, High Frequency Words (with teachers selecting 2 based upon need), Extend/Apply Words, and Extra Words with Same Pattern
- Reproducible student list

In order to fully implement this curriculum , professional development needs to accompany all manual purchases. A yearly license fee is charged with the Spelling Workshop. Teacher manuals are reproduced at no cost by the district.

Scope & Sequence

	Kinder	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
High Frequency Words	x	x	x	x	x	x
Onset & Rime	x	x	x			
Plurals & -ing ending		x				
Multiple Meaning			x			
Contractions			x			
Compound Words			x			
Doubling the consonant			x			
-ed ending that says /d/ /ed/ /t/			x			
Sentence Fluency	x	x	x	x	x	x
Say, Syllabicate & Stretch			x	x	x	x
Divide & Conquer using Syllables			x	x	x	x
Context Clues	x	x	x	x	x	x
Word Wall Words	x	x	x			
Trigger Word Word Wall	x	x	x			
Spelling Word Wall			x	x	x	x
Closed Vowel			x	x	x	x
Open Vowel			x	x	x	x
Cross-Checking			x	x		
Silent /e/			x	x	x	x
Controlling /r/			x	x	x	x
Changing y to i				x		x

	Kinder	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Long /a/ Vowel Teams				x	x	x
Long /o/ Vowel Teams				x	x	x
Long /e/ Vowel Teams				x	x	x
Long /u/ Vowel Teams				x	x	x
Long /i/ Vowel Teams				x	x	x
/oo/				x	x	x
Deviant Vowel Teams				x	x	x
/i/ before e					x	
-tion & -sion					x	x
Words ending in /v/ or /j/					x	x
Prefixes				x	x	x
Suffixes				x	x	x
Greek & Latin Derivatives						x
Portmanteau Words						x
Soft/Hard /c/ & /g/						x