

# Spelling

Grade 4

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# Table of Contents

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<b>Section 1:</b>	Teacher Guide	
	• Instructional Approach .....	3
	• Implementation of the Program .....	3
	• Teaching Tip .....	3
	• Word List .....	3
	• Introducing the Skill Activities .....	4
	• Applying the Skill Exercises .....	4
	• Independent Practice Exercises .....	4
	• Challenge Words: Syllabication Skills .....	5
	• Review Activities .....	6
	• Spelling Through Writing: Cue Cards, “Have a Go” Book, Spelling Journal, Proofreading Checklist .....	6
	• Modified Programming - Remediation and Enrichment .....	7
	• Assessment: Self-Corrected Testing Procedure; Scoring Student Spelling; Recognizing Individual Progress; Error Analysis; Writing Records .....	9
	• Recording Student Development .....	11
	• Expected Learning Outcomes; Placement and Review Tests .....	12
	• Tracking and Assessment Forms .....	13
	• Scope and Sequence of Skills, Test Scores .....	18
<b>Section 2:</b>	Thirty Six Unit Teaching Plans .....	19
<b>Section 3:</b>	Introductory Activities .....	69
<b>Section 4:</b>	Independent Practice Exercises .....	73
<b>Section 5:</b>	Review Activities .....	83
<b>Section 6:</b>	Take Home Lists .....	87
<b>Section 7:</b>	Forms for Activities and Games .....	93









### Instructional Approach:

Recent analysis of the English language has determined that approximately 50% of words have perfect sound/symbol correspondence and 37% are predictable based on recurring structural patterns and rules. The remaining 13% of our words do not have complete phonetic correspondence and must be learned through visual memory as well. This program applies an integrated, phonetic, structural analysis and visual approach to spelling. Emphasis is placed upon recognition of patterns and classification of words according to their auditory and semantic features. Word lists have been chosen that support these spelling patterns, in addition to words that are frequently used in the written vocabulary of Grade Four students. To meet the diverse needs of students in any one classroom, extensive remediation and enrichment activities are provided to facilitate individual programming. Assessment tools include error analysis forms for the teacher and student, in addition to cumulative records of spelling development.

### Implementation of the Program:

The instructional contexts include teacher directed discussion, whole group, small group and independent applications. To build upon individual learning styles, the students' attention is focused on the use of visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile strategies that are designed to ensure retention of modeled skills and vocabulary. The Unit Teaching Plan for each of the thirty-six units illustrates this in a concise format. This format may be adapted to a five, four or three day plan to suit timetabling requirements. A full description and pictorial representation of each introductory, independent and review spelling exercise is in Sections 3, 4 and 5.

Each Weekly Teaching Plan consists of the:

- |   |                                    |  |                                  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
|  | • Teaching Tip                     |  | • Independent Practice Exercises |
|  | • Word List                        |  | • Challenge Words                |
|   | • Introducing the Skill Activities |  | • Review Activities              |
|   | • Applying the Skills Exercises    |  | • Assessment                     |

#### 1. Teaching Tip:

Information regarding the phonetic, grapho-visual and semantic features is provided for the teacher under Teaching Tip. This allows the spelling pattern or principle to be modeled and explained to the students. Examples are provided for whole group teaching.

## 2. Word List:

The vocabulary used in the lists represents spelling patterns and principles that may be categorized by the students according to their key features, in addition to high frequency vocabulary. These high utility words are indicated with a star (\*). Many of these words cannot be completely encoded phonetically and need to be remembered through visual memory. By selecting Independent Practice Activities that address the visual modality, such as Word Pyramids, teachers will assist students in the long term retention of these irregular spellings. To meet the diverse needs of the students in any one classroom, several levels of vocabulary may be presented for study. The first being the core list, the second the challenge words and the third optional format outlined in the Remediation section of the Teacher Guide. The **Placement Tests** in this section are designed to assist teachers in determining the appropriate level of word study for each student.

## 3. Introducing the Skill Activities:

Appropriate teaching strategies to introduce the skill are described in each unit. These include activities that specifically target the unit skill, as well as general introductory exercises that are described in full in Section 3. The teacher may follow the suggested unit activities or choose from any one of the general introductory activities provided in Section 3 of the program. An inductive or deductive approach is used to introduce the new concept, followed by activities that provide students with an opportunity to explore sound/symbol, structure and meaning relationships.

## 4. Applying the Skill Exercises:

These exercises are designed to relate specifically to the skill presented in the introductory activities. The whole group exercises provide opportunity for students to develop understanding and gain proficiency in this skill. Applying the Skill exercises are fully explained in each unit.

## 5. Independent Practice Exercises:

Flexibility for the teacher and motivating choices for the students are provided through multisensory Independent Practice Exercises. These classroom-tested activities are designed to ensure the highest rate of student success and long term retention of skills through incorporating auditory, visual and kinesthetic-tactile experiences. Within each unit, independent activities are listed that provide opportunity to reinforce and extend student application of the target skill. A full description and model of each activity is found in Section 4. The Practice Exercises may be used solely for teacher reference, as activity cards or displayed on a bulletin board as a visual reminder for students. A teacher may also choose some of the practice exercises for small group or language center activities. In this way the program provides for flexibility in implementation. The simple language and illustrations used in the exercises are designed to be student friendly, as well as providing a clear model for teachers. It is expected that students will use a notebook to record their spelling activities. Teachers may model page layout using the example illustrated in each of the practice exercises. Forms required for some of the independent exercises are also included in Section 7.

Once the teacher has modeled a practice exercise, it may be listed by name on the chalkboard for subsequent spelling sessions and independent practice, with a simple sketch beside it as a visual reminder if necessary. For example:

### Spelling Exercises

1. Building a Pyramid
2. Memory Clues
3. Synonyms
4. Dictionary Definitions

#### 6. Challenge Words:

Syllabication skills are modeled and reinforced throughout the program with multisyllable challenge words. The students write syllables in sequence to form a dictated word and are involved in self-monitoring through the immediate correction of errors. Challenge exercises consist of multisyllable words that contain the sound segment and/or require application of the spelling principle. Segmentation and oral blending are two essential phonemic awareness skills. Students who have difficulty with spelling in the upper grades often omit syllables or represent them incorrectly. Through this activity you are developing their phonemic awareness skills and preparing them for a higher developmental stage of spelling. A number of challenge words are provided, so that some may also be used as a word list for students requiring enrichment opportunities.

#### Format for Challenge Words Activity:

1. Orally introduce the challenge word without a written reference in the form of a riddle related to its meaning or structure. This may require several clues before a correct student response.
2. Have students clap the syllables they hear in the word with you as they slowly articulate them. Ask students to identify the number of syllables in the word.
3. Request that students record possible spellings for the word in the **Challenge Word** or **Have a Go** section of their notebooks against the left margin, leaving space for the correct version. Invite the sharing of student spelling attempts and record each one on the chalkboard. Record at least four versions underneath each other, with the syllables aligned in columns if possible.
4. Focus on the easiest syllable first and underline each version of this syllable offered by the students i.e. each representation of that syllable in all of the words. This means you may not proceed in sequential order through the word. Take a class vote or simply identify the correct version of the syllable. Proceed to the next hardest syllable, ending with the most challenging to spell.
5. When the last correct syllable has been identified and the challenge word revealed, focus on more detailed aspects of this word, such as the number of vowels. Point out that each syllable must contain at least one vowel. You may wish to focus on further spelling elements within the word. Complete the activity by having students record the correct version next to their attempt in their notebook.

#### Example:

in cred a ble
in cred i ble
in cred ble
in cred a bel

am in al
an a mal
an i mal
an i mel

## 7. Review Activities:

Review opportunities for each unit include spelling games and activities for the whole class and pairs of students, as well as independent practice. A complete description and examples of these can be found in Section 5. Forms required for some of the review activities, such as spelling games, are found in Section 7. Some examples of review activities include: Proofreading, Wordo Game and Extended Dictation. Regular review of spelling patterns and principles can be introduced through choosing representative vocabulary from each unit to be used for **cumulative review** and testing. For example, every four units you may wish to review the skills taught up to that point by presenting three or four words from each unit in the form of Independent (Section 4) and Review Activities (Section 5), then having a quiz. The Take Home Lists in Section 7 can be used for home study purposes, group work or independent classroom practice.

### Spelling Through Writing:

Spelling is a skill that applies throughout the curriculum. By providing opportunities for students to integrate both meaning and structural knowledge, both will develop simultaneously. There are many possible formats for developing spelling skills through writing: menus, riddles, newspaper articles, advertisements, tongue twisters, recipes, tall tales, conversations (dialogues), poetry, letters, questionnaires, play scripts, report, descriptive and narrative writing.

The following strategies are suggested to assist students in transferring their spelling skills to the writing context.

- **Spelling Cue Chart:** To assist students in developing self-monitoring strategies and increase risk taking in spelling, discuss the following list of steps to complete when spelling an unfamiliar word. Provide each student with a copy of the cue card in Section 7 for reference during writing time:
  1. **Say** the word slowly
  2. **Listen** for each syllable and count them
  3. **Think** of other words with the same sounds, letter patterns and meaning
  4. **Try** spelling the word two or three ways and choose the one that looks right
  5. **Check** the spelling with a dictionary
- **“Have a Go Book”:** As a follow up to the cue card, provide students with an exercise book in which they can record their attempts to spell words. These can be recorded in three columns, with the first two being their two attempts and the third the correct spelling. The word can then be added to their personal dictionary. You may wish them to use the back of the book for this purpose and the front as a spelling journal.
- **Spelling Journal:** This is where students will record spelling patterns and connections they have observed in their reading and writing, practice new words and record any problems they encountered. To address “spelling demons”, a format of three columns can be used, where the first one includes the **Words to Learn** (causing difficulty), the second column their **Key Features** and the third a **Memory Aid** or way they can remember the spelling. They may also record words related by meaning, words that are interesting, unusual or theme related. These may be added to the class list for practice. The spelling journal provides a context to practice word analysis and self-monitoring skills, as students record questions they have about spelling for future class discussion. The spelling journal is also an excellent opportunity to review what has been learned and engage students in establishing goals for future learning. Suggested headings for unit reviews include: What I Have Learned (know), What I Want to Learn and What I Am Not Sure About.

- **Magic Line:** To encourage risk taking in writing, encourage students to draw a line or space when they are unsure of the specific letters or sound segment. For example, because could be represented as bec\_\_s. The spaces can then be completed by a peer or teacher when the student has completed their piece of writing. In this way, fluency and creativity is not inhibited and the student is encouraged to extend themselves in their writing.
- **Personal Dictionary:** By recording the words they use often in their daily writing activities, students will build up a word bank of familiar vocabulary that has meaning for them. A reproducible personal dictionary is available from the publisher. Alternatively, a notebook can be alphabetized.
- **Proofreading Errors:** The ability to proofread requires continual modeling of self-monitoring strategies. Teachers need to verbalize this process as they edit a passage on the chalkboard or overhead and pose the following questions:
  - How do I know if it is wrong?
  - What confused me when I spelled this word?
  - How do I correct the spelling?
- **Locating Errors:** Some students will have difficulty locating errors. Provide a series of steps for them to follow. For example:
  - Use a ruler to guide your proofreading for each line of the text.
  - Start at the bottom and proofread line by line up to the top of the page or proofread by checking from right to left (this helps overcome the tendency to “read” from memory and prediction cues rather than attending closely to each word in isolation).
  - Underline words you are not sure of.
  - Check each syllable. Have you recorded each one?
  - Try spelling the word two or three ways and decide on the best one.
  - Use a dictionary or ask someone to proofread your spelling.

### Modified Programming: Remediation and Enrichment

#### Remediation:

#### Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Programming:

Spelling is a developmental process. In any one class there will be students who represent a range of developmental levels. To assist each student to progress to their next developmental stage, it is essential that programming be provided at their instructional or functioning level, rather than grade expectations. The vocabulary presented in lessons needs to correspond to their reading level and address skills they are “using but confusing”, such as a misuse of silent or marker-e. For example, writing bote for boat demonstrates a readiness for the direct teaching of this skill. To meet the needs of students whose spelling represents an earlier stage of development, the teacher may choose to provide the program at an earlier grade level. The consistent format and flexible components of this spelling series enable teachers to achieve this with a minimum of additional preparation.