



## Helping Your Child – to read, write, spell and speak

# Helping your child with spelling

## How is spelling taught in school?

Spelling is taught by considering:

- how words sound
- how words look
- how words change form
- where words come from.

Students are shown how to spell words using all of these.

- Learning to spell is closely linked with learning to talk, listen, read and write.
- There is a daily focus on spelling.
- Spelling is taught in all grades and in all subjects.
- Spelling is regarded as a tool for writing. It is important that students spell correctly in their writing and that they are able to check their writing for mistakes.

## How can I help my child with spelling?

- Help your child with those areas of spelling with which you feel confident.
- Remember that not all English words can be spelt correctly by “sounding out”, e.g. the words *you* and *said*.
- Talk about how you spell, and what you do when you don’t know how to spell a word.
- Have your child write at home, e.g. filling in forms, writing notes to family members, writing phone messages and reminder notes, replying to letters, sending cards.
- Provide a dictionary and use it together. Remember that dictionaries are more useful if your child has a knowledge of the alphabet and how a dictionary works.
- Encourage your child to try spelling words, then praise the parts that are correct, and suggest what else is needed. For example, if your child has written *litle* for *little*, you might say, “You have five of the six letters right. One of the letters should be doubled. Can you tell which one it should be?”
- Encourage your child to look at new words, say them, write them from memory, then check them.



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## **What should I do when my child asks how to spell a word?**

- Ask if your child can suggest any parts of the word.
- Make sure he or she has access to a dictionary.
- Simply tell your child how the word is spelt.

## **Should I correct my child's spelling?**

- First, encourage your child to check his or her own work and find any mistakes.
- If your child has made a mistake with a common word, ask him or her to try to fix it without your assistance.

## **What should I do if my child finds spelling difficult?**

- Continue to encourage your child to have a go when writing, to check words he or she is not sure of, and to ask for help.
- If your child seems to be having problems, consult his or her teacher.

## **What if I am not a good speller?**

- No problem. Use the dictionary together. It is good for your child to see you using a dictionary. Talk about what you do when you don't know how to spell a word.

## **Should I let my child use a spell checker?**

Yes. Children need to be made aware that spell checkers can be useful, but that there are times when they are not effective, for example:

- when the word is spelt correctly but it is not the right word, eg *shore* and *sure*
- when the computer gives suggestions but the child still does not know which one is correct
- when the computer uses American spellings.