

Introduction

This book gives you the curriculum *content* of spelling lessons for levels 1 to 6. This same content can also be used for various special education, adult education, remedial and ESL classes.

The basic content of these lessons is the 3000 *Instant Word* list, a high-frequency list refined and revised from the American Heritage study of 5 million words used in children's textbooks. To these 3000 *Instant Words* have been added 100 *Picture Nouns*, many phonograms and phonics principles, some content words from school subjects such as society and environment, and variant forms of the Instant Words (such as plurals).

The lessons in this book are not worksheets, though there may be times when a teacher may wish to copy a lesson to give to a class or an individual student as a study sheet. This copied lesson may be used at school or taken home for study or lessons with parent assistance.

Many teachers will also teach spelling using a less formalised curriculum content such as the words an individual student misspells in stories. Keeping a personal spelling list is encouraged – see Appendix 5 for suggestions. The lessons in this book may be viewed as a backup or as a more structured and research-based spelling minimum.

Number of Lessons

Most teachers or tutors will think of a lesson as one week's work, but for some classes and some students, the progress may be slower or faster.

For levels 2 to 6, there are thirty-five lessons – one for almost every week in a school year. However, there are twenty lessons for level 1 because younger students often start spelling lessons later in the year, or, if they start at the beginning of the year, they move at a slower pace. If you want a suggestion on where to start with an individual or a whole class, use the Spelling Test in Appendix 14.

Number of Words

The number of words taught in a level 1 lesson is ten, in level two fifteen, and in upper levels twenty words in each lesson. The following table summarises this information:

Level	Words per Lesson	Number of Lessons	Total Words Taught	Lesson Numbers
1–2	10	20	200	1–20
2–3	15	35	525	21–55
3–4	20	35	700	56–90
4–5	20	35	700	91–125
5–6	20	35	700	126–160
6–7	20	36	720	161–196
TOTALS		196	3545	

Methods of Teaching Spelling

Since this book basically gives you the content, you must use your own methods to teach spelling. However, you might like a few suggestions based on experience and research:

1. **Use the test–study method.** For example, you might give a spelling test of twenty words to all your Year 4 students starting with lesson 91 on Monday at the beginning of the school year.
2. **Have the students correct their own work.** Make sure they properly spell all the words they spelled incorrectly. During the first few weeks you should check their work to see that they have both found the words they misspelled and spelled them correctly. After a few weeks most students can do the self-correcting satisfactorily; however, there may be a few students who need frequent or continual supervision.
3. **Have the students carefully study the words that they missed,** paying careful attention to just the incorrect or missing letters, perhaps by circling the incorrect letters and writing the word correctly from memory several times. See the suggestions to parents in Appendix 13 for homework suggestions. See also the Five-Step Study Method at the end of this introduction.
4. **Give a second spelling test on Wednesday.** Every student who gets either 100% or perhaps 90% (your choice) will not have to take the test again on Friday. They can read or write stories.
5. **A final test should be given on Friday** only for those students who did not do well on the Wednesday test. They should study again, just the words they missed and just the letters they missed. You can help them by pointing out phonics, syllabification, spelling patterns, suffix principles or irregularities.
6. **Each student can keep a chart of final scores** achieved on their final spelling test (Wednesday or Friday). See the chart in Appendix 12.

Supplemental Parts of the Lessons

Phrases and Sentences. Each lesson for levels 1 and 2 (lessons 1 to 55) has some phrases and sentences which use the spelling words in that lesson in context. These are just to give a little practice reading these words in context, which will add a bit of meaning. Some teachers may use these phrases and sentences as part of reading or handwriting lessons. There are no phrases and sentences beyond lesson 55.

Word Study. Each lesson has a Word Study part which is often a phonogram family (make, lake, take, etc.), and some comment on one of the spelling words. The phonogram is taken from one of the spelling words. You can use this section for teaching about words and word patterns. In level 3 and above, more morphemes (like prefixes and suffixes) and other word patterns are introduced. Upper-level word studies often make interesting comments about word origins.

Phonics. All lessons for levels 1 and 2 have phonics lessons that illustrate a common phoneme–grapheme correspondence. Most of the major phonics principles are covered. See the chart in Appendix 7 for an index to phonics skills taught lesson by lesson. Since the phonics correspondence in each lesson is based on one or more words in the lesson, this further explains the phonetic basis for English spelling. Of course, if you don't like to teach phonics, you can skip this part of the lesson. The preface which follows contains a discussion of phonics versus

the whole-word position in selecting spelling words and Appendix 8 has a rather complete set of phonics principles in useful chart form.

Variant Forms. In all lessons above level 2, variant forms of the twenty basic spelling lesson words (the *Instant Words*) are given. For example, the variant forms for the base word 'copy' are 'copied, copies, copying'. Some teachers may wish to teach these variant forms and some may not. This is also a way of differentiating lessons between good spellers and slow spellers. The better students get more variant forms. The most common form of the word is the one in the basic spelling lesson, even though it might be the plural form or the past tense form.

Personal Spelling List. Each student can keep their own personal spelling list. On this list might be words missed on a final spelling test and words that the student has asked for, had to look up or spelled incorrectly during story writing. This list can be used for personal study, reference when writing future stories and supplemental games and drills. See Appendix 5 for more suggestions.

Review. Some review definitely helps the permanence of learning anything. At the bottom of each lesson page there is a suggested review schedule. This schedule is based on a four-week cycle. Every fourth week a review of selected main spelling words is suggested, on the next week a review of Word Study in the preceding four lessons is suggested, on the next week a review of the preceding four weeks of Phonics sections is suggested, and on the seventh week the teacher can check to see if each student is keeping up a personal spelling list. These review suggestions given with each lesson can also help the teacher in formulating weekly lesson plans.

General Comments about Teaching Spelling

- Most spelling experts agree that good pronunciation helps when learning to spell. Exaggerate enunciation when giving the spelling words. Some teachers introduce the words by pronouncing them syllable by syllable.
- **Point out trouble parts** of words like silent letters or unusual or non-phonetic parts of words.
- **Point out regular rules** and regular phonic principles in words.
- **Discuss the meaning** and use of each word. Use the word in a sentence when giving the spelling test.
- **Vowels cause more trouble** than consonants. Stress vowel sounds and the way they are spelled.
- **Give students a lot of praise** for good spelling, particularly if they are showing improvement. Look at their spelling progress charts regularly.
- **Don't let spelling get in the way of good story-writing.** Let students use invented spelling on first drafts. Later they can proofread and correct.
- **Have a little fun.** Play some spelling games like *Scrabble* or have a spelling bee. Laugh at some mistakes, both theirs and yours. Remember that the only people who don't make spelling errors are people who don't write anything.

Syllabication Rules

The teaching of syllabication rules is somewhat controversial. Some say you should, and some say it is not worth the effort. Syllables sometimes are part of phonics lessons because syllabication affects vowel sounds (for example, the open syllable rule), and sometimes they are part of spelling or English lessons. There is no close agreement on various lists of syllabication rules, and some of the rules have plenty of exceptions. We are not urging you to teach them, but neither are we urging you to refrain from doing so.

There is a curious interaction between phonics and syllabication: some of the syllable rules work only if you know some phonics, and some phonics rules work only if you know the syllables. See rules 1 and 2.

- Rule 1. VCV A consonant between two vowels tends to go with the second vowel unless the first vowel is accented and short.
Example: bro-ken, wag-on
- Rule 2. VCCV Divide two consonants between vowels unless they are a blend or digraph.
- Rule 3. VCCCV When there are three consonants between two vowels, divide between the blend or the digraph and the other consonant.
Example: an-gler
- Rule 4. Affixes Prefixes always form separate syllables (un-hap-py), and suffixes form separate syllables only in the following cases:
- a. The suffix ‘-y’ tends to pick up the preceding consonant.
Example: fligh-ty
 - b. The suffix ‘-ed’ tends to form a separate syllable only when it follows a root that ends in ‘t’, ‘d’ or -V.
Example: plant-ed
 - c. The suffix ‘-s’ never forms a syllable except when it follows an ‘e’.
Example: at-oms, cours-es
- Rule 5. Compounds Always divide compound words.
Example: black-bird
- Rule 6. Final ‘le’ Final ‘le’ picks up the preceding consonant to form a syllable.
Example: ta-ble

Picture Nouns

These words can be made into flash cards with the word on one side only or cards with the word on one side and the picture on the other. All these Picture Nouns occur in lessons 1–20. They can be used for self-study or review: Students look at the picture, spell the word and turn the card over to see if they were correct. Don't do too many at once. Also, these cards can be used for 'thinking skills' or categorising. Mix up several categories and have students sort out piles of cards that go together.

1. People

boy
girl
man
woman
baby

2. Toys

ball
doll
train
game
toy

3. Numbers

one
two
three
four
five

4. Clothing

shirt
pants
dress
shoes
hat

5. Pets

cat
dog
rabbit
bird
fish

6. Furniture

table
chair
couch
chest
desk

7. Eating Objects

cup
plate
bowl
fork
spoon

8. Transportation

car
truck
bus
plane
boat

9. Food

bread
meat
soup
apple
cereal

10. Drinks

water
milk
juice
tea
coffee

11. Numbers

six
seven
eight
nine
ten

12. Fruit

fruit
orange
grape
pear
banana

13. Plants

bush
flower
grass
plant
tree

14. Sky Things

sun
moon
star
cloud
rain

15. Earth Things

lake
rock
dirt
field
hill

16. Farm Animals

horse
cow
pig
chicken
duck

17. Workers

farmer
police officer
cook
doctor
nurse

18. Entertainment

television
radio
movie
football
band

19. Writing Tools

pen
pencil
crayon
chalk
computer

20. Reading Things

book
newspaper
magazine
sign
letter

