

About the KS1 Spelling Resources on SaveTeachersSundays.com

The new curriculum has statutory requirements for which graphemes (spelling patterns) need to be taught in each year group. The Spelling Resources on www.SaveTeachersSundays.com (STS) cover all of these graphemes.

Who developed the Spelling Resources?

As with all of the resources on [STS](http://www.SaveTeachersSundays.com), I (Raymond Rodgers, owner of STS) developed the spelling resources. In addition to working in an outstanding primary school in London, I have also completed a Postgraduate Diploma (a Masters without the dissertation) in Dyslexia and Literacy.

Symbols / Conventions used

Phonemes (sounds) are given in brackets e.g. long (a) or (ā) for the sound in 'train'.

Graphemes (spelling patterns) are just given in letters or are underlined e.g. ai or ai

Resources for each lesson

The spelling resources for each lesson follow the same format. [Click here](#) to see a [sample of the resources for each lesson](#). These sample resources are for teaching the ee grapheme.

How the Spelling Resources can be used

- as a stand-alone way to teach children spelling
- to complement an existing scheme e.g. as homework or for additional practice
- as (or as part) of a catch-up programme for older / EAL children

Rationale for teaching sequence

The graphemes covered are based on the statutory requirements of the new primary curriculum.

The teaching sequence (the order in which the graphemes are taught) is based on a combination of the following factors:

- the need to give children at least one way to represent each phoneme in their writing e.g. although the grapheme 'air' occurs in words much less frequently than 'i-e', it is introduced earlier than i-e, so that children have a way to represent the (air) phoneme in their writing
- how often a grapheme is used e.g. the grapheme 'ee' is taught early in the scheme because it is one of the most frequently used graphemes
- how difficult a grapheme is for a child to learn or understand e.g. a-e, i-e, o-e and u-e are taught last, because understanding this pattern is often challenging for children

Structure of each lesson

- use Directed Discovery Teaching (DDT) to introduce the grapheme for the lesson. DDT is a method recommended by Dyslexia Action. It means that children are allowed to 'discover' the phoneme and the grapheme for themselves, rather than simply being told the phoneme or the grapheme for the lesson
- children complete a 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' worksheet with 9 words containing the grapheme for the lesson
- extension activity – children write sentences of their own, with each sentence containing a word from the lesson
- dictation sentences for children to listen to and spell. After they have written each sentence, they are shown the sentence and asked to check their version of it begins with a capital letter, has finger spaces between words and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.

Structure of each worksheet

- space for child's name, the date and the title of the lesson
- teaching tip on the grapheme / spelling pattern for the lesson
- table with 4 columns: an image representing the word (where possible), the word in print and 3 columns for the children to practice spelling / writing the word

Principles behind the scheme and the rationale for these principles

The principles that the scheme is based on arise from specialist dyslexia teaching, however as with most things, what benefits children with Special Educational Needs can be of benefit to all children. The following are the key principles of the scheme, with the rationale behind each of them:

- Multisensory – dyslexic children often find learning sequences difficult (e.g. the sequence of letters to spell a word) and the auditory channel to their brain is often weaker than the visual or kinaesthetic channels. Regardless of whether all children do in fact have different learning styles, it would seem logical that teaching in a multi-sensory manner would be more effective. The children see the word (visual), say it aloud as they spell it (auditory) and join up the letters (kinaesthetic).
- Rules explicitly taught – although English can seem to be random when it comes to spelling, the majority of words are regular i.e. they conform to a given spelling rule e.g. –ll coming after a short vowel sound, as in ‘spill’ and ‘bell’.
- Using letter names, not sounds - the significant number of words in English (especially high frequency / common words) that are spelt irregularly e.g. ‘their’, ‘said’ etc mean that letter names need to be used. Repetition of incorrect spelling of these high-frequency words e.g. ‘sed’ for ‘said’ can lead to this spelling becoming engrained; hence children can benefit from being taught these high-frequency, irregular words relatively early on.
- Clear distinction between regular and irregular words – this helps to ensure that children do not over-apply irregular spelling patterns e.g. spelling the word ‘air’ as /eir/ because that is how the (air) sound is represented in the word ‘their’.
- Self-checking – allowing children to self-check their spellings means that they discover errors for themselves, hopefully making them less likely to repeat these errors. Self-checking is also less damaging to a child’s self-esteem than having someone else telling them that they are wrong.
- In structure – this means that a word does not introduce a new rule or pattern, unless that is the one rule that is being introduced on that page. For example, the word ‘wrong’ would not be used to teach the pattern (ng) if the spelling pattern of wr- had not been taught previously.

Pen-lifts at syllable splits with longer words

Children should be encouraged to use pen lifts (lift the pen from the page so that not all letters are joined) with longer words. Not doing this will probably make writing longer words uncomfortable and cause letters to become increasingly squashed. Encouraging children to take a pen-lift where words break in to syllables will encourage them to use the strategy of syllabification, which is a crucial skill for spelling longer words.

Note: When creating the pages I have tried not to join letters either side of a syllable split. Unfortunately the programme that I used to create the pages does not seem to always make this break between letters apparent, so teachers may need to point this out to children.

Why I recommend teaching children joined / cursive writing in Reception / Year 1

I would suggest that a child should be taught to form letters in a joined / cursive style as soon as they are learning to form letters for the following reasons:

1. If they become fast and comfortable with a printing-style of writing, and then later have to switch to a cursive / joined-up style they can be reluctant to move away from what they know and are comfortable with i.e. writing in print, rather than joining up.
2. Children will have to unlearn how to form some letters e.g. f and k.
3. A key principle of specialist dyslexia teaching is that learning to spell needs to be made multisensory. Joining letters up helps a child's 'muscle memory' to remember a word and is a kinaesthetic way of learning. Given that 4 to 8% of children are thought to be dyslexic (Rose Report, 2009), there is likely to be at least one dyslexic child in most classes.

Using lead-in strokes or not

There are arguments for and against using lead-in strokes when forming letters. People who are in favour of using lead-in strokes argue that they make it easier for a child, because the child knows that they always start 'on the line'.

Personally I prefer not to teach children to use lead-in strokes for the following reasons:

1. It makes letter formation more complicated; therefore it can put children off writing, slow them down and cause them to have messy 'spider-writing'.
2. The letters o, r, v and w join 'through the grass (in the middle of the upper and lower lines)'. Teaching letters with an entry stroke from 'the ground' (the bottom line) causes problems when joining from these letters e.g. it can make an r look like an n.

Two versions of the joined / cursive worksheets are provided for each lesson: one with lead-in strokes and one without lead-in strokes. Ultimately it is up to each individual school to decide on their preference. The most important thing is that the decision is made as a whole school and all teachers are teaching letter formation and handwriting in the same way.

Choice of style for each letter

The choice of how to form each letter was based on two main factors:

1. Keeping the letters as close to their print form as possible.
2. Using letter formations that allow a flowing, fluent cursive style e.g. for the letter k, the looped version allows for greater flow and fluency than the version without a loop.

Why is little emphasis placed on capital letter formation?

How a child forms a capital letter is not as important because they will not join capital letters to other letters. Capital letters are also more straightforward in that they all reach the top line, but do not go below the ground.

Symbols for phonemes

Symbols for phonemes – The appendices in the new primary curriculum use phonetic transcription symbols e.g. (/ɜ:/) for the sound made by the 'er' grapheme in verb. The spelling resources on STS use a simpler system:

- phonemes are shown in brackets e.g. (ir) for the er grapheme in verb
- long vowels are shown with a 'macron' (line) above them: (ō) (ā) (ū) (ī) (ē)
- short vowels are shown with a 'breve' (dip) above them: (ö) (ă) (ǔ) (ĭ) (ĕ)
- the 'schwa' (neutral vowel sound) is represented using (ə)
- the long sound made by the oo grapheme: (ōō)
- the short sound made by the oo grapheme: (ōō)
- the sound made by the ur, er and ir graphemes (as in fur, her and sir): (ir)
- where letters are given in capitals in lesson plans, the letters should be pronounced using their names, not the sounds that they usually represent

Why you should print, rather than photocopy, each worksheet

- the pale grey font used on the cursive handwriting sheets will show up poorly on photocopies
- the images will be not be as clear in black and white
- the worksheets look less engaging in black and white

(Of course if you are lucky enough to have a high-quality, colour photocopier this may be less of an issue.)

Why are there no editable versions of the cursive / joined worksheet?

The cursive / joined font is achieved through using a programme called 'Handwriting for Windows'. Unless you have this programme, the font will show up in Microsoft Office as unintelligible characters. If you would like to be able to create this font for yourself, the 'Handwriting for Windows' programme is available from the Dyslexia Action shop for around £30.