

# Spelling

This publication for secondary teachers is published by Ask-Sue-Selwold Pty Ltd and is copyright. It has as its focus the ways in which Spelling, in its many related parts, can become a part of the life of the secondary classroom. This edition is written specifically for Secondary Teachers and includes ways of incorporating spelling in meaningful ways into your daily classroom practices. All of the questions in this publication have come from Secondary Teachers during workshops and in-service days and in after school workshop sessions.



## Shouldn't the students already have learnt to spell?

Be honest now, there are probably lots of words that you can't spell yet so it's reasonable to expect those you teach don't know all the words yet. Furthermore, it probably took years for you to master the strategies that enabled you to become an independent speller. Maybe you have yet to master them all? For many children already in high school and for those still moving into it, they have yet to learn 'how to spell'. They may have successfully mastered hundreds of spellings, but do they have the strategies to enable them to attempt any word they want or need to spell, check it using a range of strategies, and ultimately learn how to spell that word?

Learning how to spell is one aspect of written language and, like all language learning, is a developmental process. When we learn to speak, we do so by making a series of approximations that allow us to move closer and closer to accepted forms. Ideally, we make these approximations in penalty-free settings in which we are hearing and engaging with many demonstrations of spoken language. Those of you who are parents (or who remember younger siblings learning to talk) will remember the first attempts to speak - 'la', 'Mumma', 'Dada'. All these utterances were greeted positively, with high praise and great excitement. As we learn 'new' languages of communication, such as how to balance chemical equations and formulae, we also make mistakes - that is, we have a go at using the correct language using all the information we have mastered yet, as beginners we will probably make mistakes. Sadly, these attempts are not greeted with the same positive enthusiasm and encouragement.

Learning how to spell is one part of learning how to write, a process of communicating effectively in writing. Just as good parents guide us by talking about what we are doing and modeling how to make it better: 'Nana! Yes, that's a banana.' So can good teachers: 'I know chlorophyll sounds weird, but let's look at it. "Chlorites" is Greek and it means 'green stone' and 'phyl' is also Greek and is a noun ending meaning 'leaf'. Write it on the board, discuss it, consult dictionaries - they don't only belong in English class!

Like learning to talk, we learn to spell by making a series of approximations of written language models around us. Therefore the use of charts and other graphic reminders around the room is very important. We also learn to consult appropriate resources. Ask yourself, 'is it important that they know how to spell this word correctly?' If the answer is yes, then you need to teach the word to them: 'isosceles - Greek again - meaning 2 equal legs - draw a triangle with two equal legs.'

Guides for Secondary Schools:

# Spelling for Secondary Teachers



Cost: \$4.40 (incl. GST) + Postage

This 10 page publication may be purchased as a single item or in a bulk set. It comes as a complementary resource for teachers attending a workshop on this topic. This booklet addresses the following topics in detail:

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## Why teach spelling?

- The written word is an important form of communication. It is a permanent means of conveying information. For the author's meaning to have maximum impact, the surface features ...

## What if I can't spell?

- No one expects any person to be able to spell every word. Remember you are writing for an audience and you *will* be judged ...

## How can we encourage a positive attitude towards spelling?

- If students are encouraged to adopt the process that independent spellers use ...

## Are there any links between reading, oral language, vocabulary knowledge and spelling?

- People who read often and widely tend to use a more interesting vocabulary and are often ...

## What if they ask me how to spell a word?

- First encourage use of a dictionary.

## What about lists?

- Lists of subject specific words that are required to be known should be provided ...

## Strategies for Teaching and Learning How to Spell

Teachers should use the same strategies that they want the students to use for independent learning.

## Seven Steps to Spelling Independence

and much more ...