



5 Strategies to Help Struggling Spellers

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Do you have a child that struggles in spelling? You would know based on your child's frustration and agony of practicing each week's spelling words, and the constant struggle to be successful on quizzes and tests. Unfortunately, if left unchecked, poor spelling skills will stick with kids throughout their lives, wreaking havoc on their writing proficiency for years to come. Word processors are handy for accomplished writers, but the ability to correct one's own spelling is an invaluable tool in anyone's educational and professional lives.

If you're looking for ways to support a struggling speller, look no further. The following tips can help your child get back on track learning the skills he or she needs to be a successful speller and writer.



Reinforce Basic Spelling Rules

Have you ever looked at a word your or someone else wrote on paper and said to yourself that it just doesn't "look right"? Most of us have had this experience regularly,

and it's all thanks to the spelling rules that have been long ingrained within us from an early age. Many of us remember the mnemonic rule, "I before E, except after C", among many other rhymes and rules that our teachers have taught us over the years.

If your child is struggling with spelling, perhaps the first step is to go back to the basics to ensure that your child has memorized as many spelling rules as possible. Mnemonic devices and songs help to reinforce memorization of these basic rules. Free printable spelling worksheets might help with the basic memorization of these spelling rules, and the application of the rules they have learned.

Organize Spelling Lists by Word Families

We all tend to learn better if we can see a pattern. Our minds look for patterns to make connections; it's a big factor in how we learn! That said, kids learn spelling better when the words are organized in a logical way. To organize spelling words, make sure that the words you're using are similar to each other in a key way.

Word families are a group of words that have a similar sound or feature. For instance, the words ball, small, and fall, share the "all" sound and letter combination such as:

- L blends: ["fl", "bl", "gl" words](#); ["pl", "cl", "sl" words](#)
- [Consonant blends](#)
- [Words with long vowels "e", "ee", "ea" and "y"](#)

These words are in the same word family. Similarly, organize your child's spelling word lists by word families to help kids learn and memorize words with similar sound and spelling attributes for ease of learning.






L BLENDS FOR KIDS: PL, CL, SL



L Blends: pl, cl, sl

Blends are a collection of two or three different consonant sounds. You can hear each letter when you say the word, but they make a different sound when blended together.

Say the name of the picture on the left. Tick the blend you hear at the beginning of the word. Then in each row, circle the picture with the same beginning sound as the picture on the left.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
|  cl <input type="checkbox"/> |  sl <input type="checkbox"/> |  pl <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  sl <input type="checkbox"/> |  cl <input type="checkbox"/> |  pl <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  pl <input type="checkbox"/> |  sl <input type="checkbox"/> |  cl <input type="checkbox"/> |

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Master Sight Words

Reading and writing goes hand in hand. Most teachers will tell you that the best writers are also skillful readers. Thus, learning to read, and reading often, helps children learn to spell and write because of simple exposure and experience with language in print.

Sight words are all about the memorization of common words so that kids can instantly recognize them when they see them. If kids can instantly recognize sight words in text, they should also remember how to spell sight words. This is because when kids memorize sight words, they are learning to read those words visually, not by sounding them out.

When choosing both sight and spelling lists, make sure that the words are developmentally appropriate to your child's current abilities, not their age. If your child is in the 3rd grade, but reads and writes at only a 1st grade level, your child should be learning 1st grade words, or otherwise your child will become frustrated and unmotivated. Start at your child's level and work up from there. Check out [how to help kids struggling with sight words](#).

Use this interactive Classroom by Kids Academy to practice spelling high frequency words with third graders. [Open the Classroom](#).

The screenshot shows the Kids Academy interactive Classroom interface. At the top, a banner says "3/3 Great! Share the code with your students." Below this, a teacher character is pointing to a green chalkboard. The chalkboard displays the text: "Classrooms list Your students must use this code to enter the Classroom: 4999 kidsacademy.com/go Code expires in: 00:59:48 COPY JOIN LINK". To the left of the chalkboard, a green bar indicates "14:00 min". Below the chalkboard, there are four tabs for different grade levels: "1st 4:00 min", "2nd 3:00 min", "3rd 3:00 min", and "4th 4:00 min". The "3rd" tab is currently selected. Below the tabs, there are four preview cards for the 3rd grade content: "Sight Words Part 3" (Video), "Learn the Sight Words" (Worksheet), "Double the Consonant" (Worksheet), and "Choose the correct spelling for the word when you add -ing" (Quiz).

[Kids Academy Classroom](#) is a simple online tool that allows teachers and parents to share activities from our vast resource library with their kids in just a couple of clicks. After your students complete the lesson, you'll get access to a report about their progress.


Breaking Down Words by Sounds

Finally, if your child continues to struggle with spelling, you might have to take him or her back to the very basics by breaking down words down to their sounds, or phonograms by using these phonics worksheets. A phonogram is an individual letter or combination of letters that represent a common sound.

For example, the word "back" uses a "ck" letter combination, but the sound that is produced sounds only like a "k" sound. By breaking words down to phonograms, kids learn that common letter combinations are used in many words, teaching them to use those common combinations in the words they spell.

GRADE 1: PHONICS

Digraph TH Worksheet



Digraphs: Think about "th"!

A **digraph** is two letters that blend to make a single sound, for example "th".

The digraph "th" can be said with a voiced sound as in **this**.
It can be said with a voiceless sound as in **teeth**.

Read each word out loud. Tick the picture if you hear "the voiced sounding" digraph "th" as in **this**.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> they | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> mother | <input type="checkbox"/> think |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bath | <input type="checkbox"/> weather | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thumb | <input type="checkbox"/> feather |

Read the word out loud. Tick the picture if you hear "the voiceless sounding" digraph "th" as in **teeth**.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Thanksgiving | <input type="checkbox"/> father | <input type="checkbox"/> moth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> thief | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the | <input type="checkbox"/> path | <input type="checkbox"/> math |

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Watch on [YouTube](#)

Using Manipulatives to Practice Spelling

When basic introductory strategies fail to do the trick, it might be time to switch to a different strategy. If mere memorization, reading, and learning sight words don't improve your child's spelling struggles, use manipulatives to help bring spelling to life.

Manipulatives are anything that your child can touch and interact with in a hands-on way. You can use foam or magnetic letters, blocks, puzzle pieces, spelling tiles, or

anything you can find that allows your child a way to interact with letters and words. Using manipulatives can make spelling practice more engaging by allowing for a fun spelling game for kids that is highly motivating and rewarding. A quick internet search will yield all kinds of engaging spelling games and activities that will entice your child to practice spelling in an engaging, hands-on way.

While some kids are just naturally good at spelling, sometimes despite our best efforts, kids falter when it comes to spelling. The best way out is to intervene early and use the above tips, and your child will improve their spelling skills in no time!

Play & Learn

