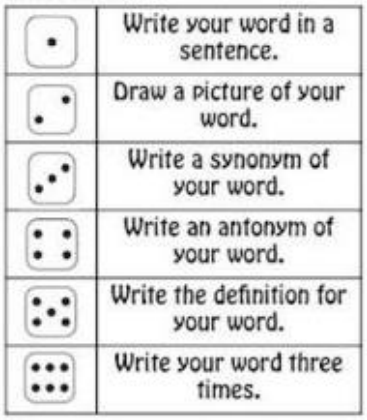
Some useful ideas to support children's investigations and learning of spellings

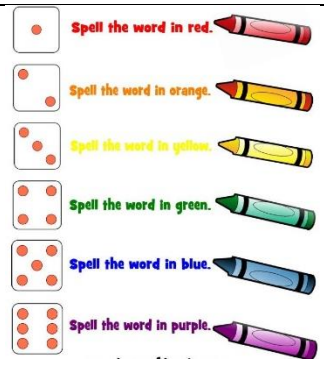
Look, say, cover, write, check

Look at the whole word carefully and if there is one part of the word that is difficult, look at the part in more detail. *Say* the word as you look at it, using different ways of pronouncing it if that will make it more memorable. *Cover* the word up. *Write* the word from memory, saying the word as you do so. *Check* if you have spelt it correctly. If yes, try writing it again and again! If not, start again – look, say, cover, write, check.



Roll and Spell

Roll a die and complete the activity that matches the number you roll. Ideas for activities could be: Spell the word in your 'grumpy voice'. Spell the word in your 'baby voice'; 'low voice'; 'robot voice'; 'monster voice'; 'alien voice'; 'opera voice'; 'whispering voice' etc. Draw a picture of your word; write a synonym of your word; write an antonym; write a definition; write the word 5 times; write in bubble letters; in dotty letters; write two times *really fast*; write two time s l o w l y; write teeny tiny; write the word forwards and backwards; with your other hand; in a fancy way; with your eyes closed; in a sentence; in capital letters; in pyramid style; circle all the consonants; underline all the vowels.

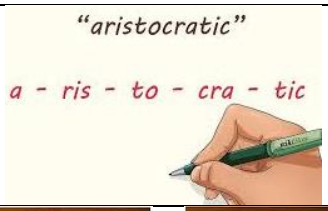


Rolling a Rainbow

Roll a die. Then write one of your spelling words that number of times, using the colour listed next to the number you just rolled. For example, if I roll a two and one of my spelling words is people, I'd write it like this:

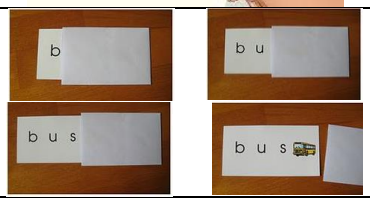
people
people

For even more of a challenge, why not try colouring the vowels (a, e, i, o, u) a different colour each time you spot one!



Make it memorable

Try splitting the word up in to sections, to remember is better. For example conscience can be con-science, bicycle can be bi-cycle, business can be bus-i-ness and Wednesday wed-nes-day.



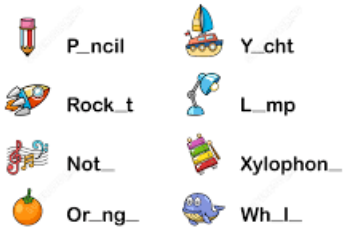
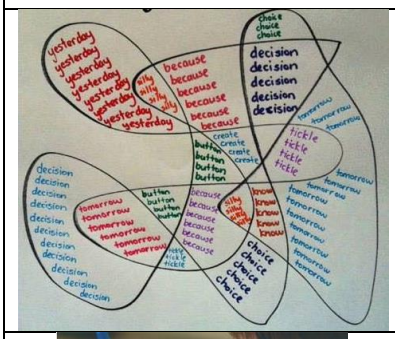
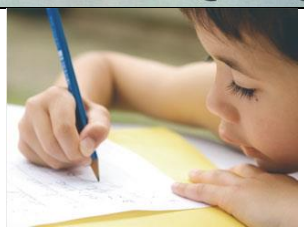
Slide and reveal

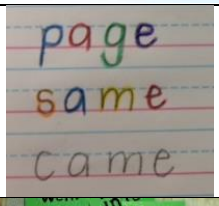
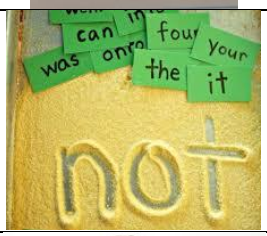
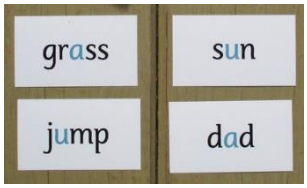
Ask someone to gradually slide a large copy of a word from behind a book or sheet of card. See how long it takes for you to recognise the word.

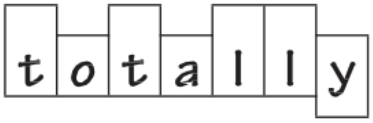
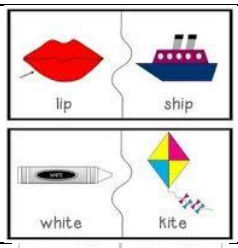
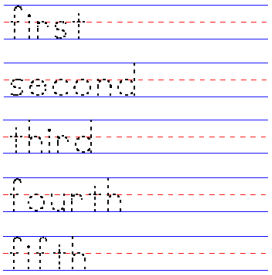
__ o u l d

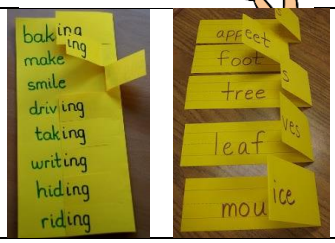
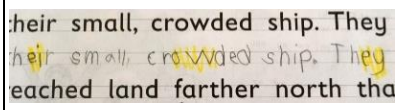
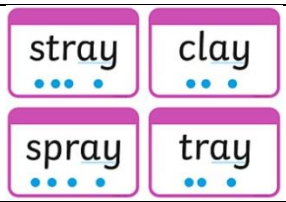
What's my letter?

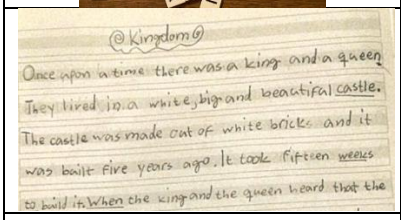
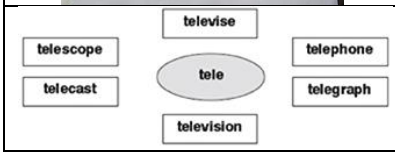
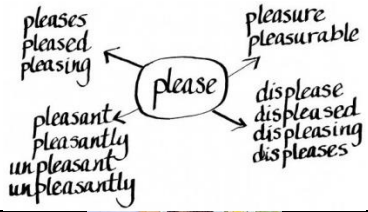
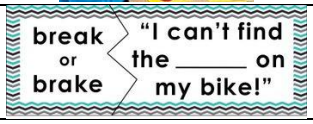
Cover up the first letter on a set of words. Ask what the first letter might be and what the word would then be. Use words which have more than one possibility. As an alternative, cover up the last letter.

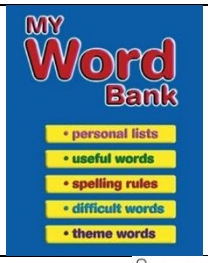
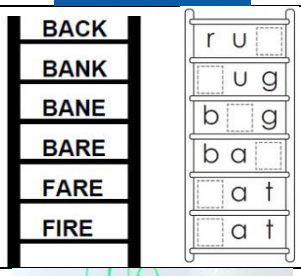
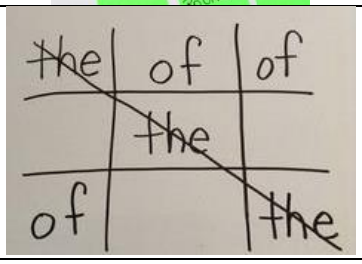
	**What word am I?** Write parts of a word, e.g. ab_ _ e. Then try to complete the word (The example is above).
proffessor profesor poffesor professor	**Right and wrong** Which word is spelt correctly? Write 3-4 versions of a word (e.g. woz, was, wos) and decide which is correct. How can you recognise the correct spelling and what will help you remember it?
	Spot and say Lay a set of spellings out. Ask someone to read one of the spellings. You look for the word and then when found, put your finger on it. Now say the spelling.
	Spot and draw Lay a set of spelling out and images related to the words. Now match the image to the spelling. Alternatively, choose a spelling and draw an image to explain the meaning of the word.
take while skirt nose lead slide rage came	**Sort and say** Sort words according to how many letters they have got and then read and say them.
tick grew scan ____	**Memory game** Ask someone to lay a small number of words on a table. Have a look for a while before turning around and closing your eyes. The person removes a card and asks if you can tell them which card they removed. (This can also be played using a whiteboard and rubbing the word away).
	**Spelling Scribble** Create a scribble shape and fill it with words. Try different colours. Try different directions. How many words can you fit in the space?
	**Speed write** The aim is to write one of your spelling words as many times as possible in 1 minute. Begin by carefully copying the spelling once at the top of your page. Then off you go! How many times did you write in 1 minute? If you can't read the word, it doesn't count!

	Mnemonic Explore strategies which can help you remember words, e.g. mnemonics, such as *because* - big elephants can always understand small elephants and *what* – what has a hat in it.
	**Rainbow Write** First, write the words in pencil. Then trace over them in different colours. Use colours to pick out patterns in the way the words are spelt.
	**Sand spelling** Look at your spelling. Carefully copy it as you write it in sand. Rub it out and try again, this time without looking.
	Spot the spelling When you read, how many of your focus spellings can you spot?
	Draw an image To help make the word more memorable, thing of a pictures that links to the meaning of the word, one that might make the spelling more recognisable. This isn't a main method for learning all spellings, but can be good for tricky words that are proving difficult to remember.
p py pyr pyra pyram pyrami pyramid	**Pyramid words** Create a pyramid of a word, building the pyramid shape from the first letter, then one letter at a time until the whole world is completed.
c ca cat catc catch	**Waterfall words** Create a cascading waterfall of the word, adding one letter at a time until the whole word is written.
	**Spot the vowels** Write the vowels in a different colour to the rest of the word.
accidentaccidentallyactualactuallyaddressanswerapp ear	**Choo Choo words** Write a long list of your spelling words end-to-end as one long word. Write each new word in a different colour.
f _ _ l d	**Words without vowels** Ask someone to write a word without the vowels and tell you the word. Choose the correct grapheme to put in the space. (The example is field).

_ th _ r _ n s w _ r	**What's the vowel?** Write all of your words replacing vowels with a line. Go back and see if you can fill in the vowels. (Examples are other and answer).
	**Word shape** Draw around the words making a clear distinction in size where they are ascenders and descenders. Look carefully at the shape of the word and the letters in each box. Now try to write making sure you get the same shape.
	Word search Create a word search containing focus spelling words. Alternative – create a crossword.
d l c u o	**Unjumble the jumbled** Ask a friend to say the letters you need, but jumbled up, e.g. dlcuo, then they say the spelling you need to create, e.g. 'could'. You then unjumble the letters and put them in the correct order.
	**Rhyming spellings** Which of your spellings rhyme? If you know how to spell 'could', can you write 'would' and 'should'? Other examples include 'other', 'brother' and 'another', quiver, river, shiver and light, fright, fight, might, sight. Can you think of more?
	Rhyming words Write each of your spelling words with a rhyming word next to them, e.g. cut shut
	**Trace and copy** Write the word ensuring that it is spelt correctly and it is large enough to trace over. Trace over the word and say it as the same time. Move next to the word you have just written and write it out as you say it. Turn the page over and write the word as you say it and then check that you've spelt it correctly. If this is easy, do the same process for two different words at the same time. Once you have written all the word this way and feel confident, miss out the tracing and copying or the tracing alone and just write the words.
	Hangman letters Play Shannon's game (a version of hangman) where the letters have to be guessed in the right order, developing a sense of which letter/letter combination is most likely next. Draw a set of dashes to represent the letters in the word. Take it in turns to suggest the next letter. As the word emerges, letter-by-letter, the number of choices narrows. (To help the first letter can be given).

	See the spelling Write a word. Look at the word and chant the letters, trying to remember what the word LOOKS like and how it is spelt. Take a 'photo' in your head of the word by looking then closing your eyes – can you see the word in your mind? Practise a few times before eventually covering the word completely. Then write the word down and check if you've written carefully. Does it look right? Does it read back correctly? If not, which part appears wrong?
catch **cat hat**	**Words within words** Write each spelling word and then look for words within your spelling words. Write at least two words made from the spelling. How many hidden words can you make?
	Spot the syllables Say the word aloud, then break it up into syllables. Clap the syllables as you say them.
	**Pattern post its** Using post-it notes, write down the spellings. Assemble the notes on the wall, grouping any similar patterns/sounds together. Alternatively, create root words and then look at prefixes and suffixes that could be added to change the word.
	**Highlight what's tricky** Use a highlighter to highlight any letters of the main word that you have difficulty remembering.
	Finger spelling Spell out the word, writing it in the air with your hand. As you do this, say the letters out loud. Alternatively, try counting the number of letters in the word. Then hold up that number of fingers as you spell out the word. This will help you check you have included the right number of letters in your spelling.
	Guess the spelling Take it in turns to write the spelling of the word on your partner's back using your finger. Make sure you write slowly and clearly! Your partner has to guess what word you have written.
accident **bicycle** **calender**	**ABC order** Write your spelling words in ABC order. If words start with the same letter, look at the next letter.
	**Segmentation** Split the word into its phonemes, then spell the word aloud as you write it down.

	Let's play letters Play letter based games (such as Scrabble, Boggle, Anagrams and Banagrams) and together explore the words made.
	**Spelling story** Write a story using ALL of your spelling words. Be sure to underline your spelling words in the paragraph.
pressure *assume* *usually*	**Odd one out** Which is the odd one out and why? (Could be linked to suffix, prefix, number of vowels, consonants, letter pattern etc.).
answer answer **answer**	**Three times** First, write each word in pencil. Then, write each word in crayon. Finally, write each word in a marker!
Riddle: I am cute. I am young. I wear nappies. ***Answer:*** baby.	**Riddles** Write a riddle for each of your spelling words. Don't forget to answer them.
	Magazine words Use an old magazine or newspaper and find your words or letters that make up your words. Cut and glue them down.
	**Prefixes and Suffixes** Look at the prefix or suffix and try to change the word. E.g. –igh, -ack, un-. Example: ous- dangerous, courageous, ravenous.
	**Word webs** Build a word web around a word. Generate as many words as possible for the same prefix, suffix or the word meaning. How many words can you make?
	Pairs and Snap Play spelling games such as snap and pairs, using spellings written on card. This is a great way to spot spelling patterns, as well as being fun!
	**Homophones** Which word fits the sentence?
<u>ear–</u> learn near tear <u>ould-</u> could would shoulder <u>-other</u> bother brother another	**Are they alike?** Sort your spellings into which words sound alike and which words look alike, but may sound different. What words can you make from the following? –ate, -ack, -all, -ame, -ook, -ink, -ick.

	**Word bank** Create a spelling log/word bank of words you use a lot. This can be added to week by week. It's particularly helpful for tricky words and for new topic words.
	**Word ladder** Choose one of your spelling words to start with. Then try to change one letter to make a new word. Continue until you can't go any further. Alternatively, fill in the gaps on a word ladder already created.
	Moveable letters Use magnetic letters, letter shapes or letters on individual cards to build words. For example, if you begin with in, you might be able to make sin, then sing, sting, string etc. Or, try to spell one of your spelling words for the letters you have.
	Tricky work post its Make a poster, or display post it notes, of your tricky words. Put them somewhere you will see it regularly, so you can keep practising them.
	**Not noughts and crosses** On the theme of noughts and crosses, choose one of your spelling words and ask a friend to choose one of theirs. Take turns to write your word in a 3x3 grid. The aim is to complete a whole line of your word, vertically, horizontally or diagonally. The winner is the first person to complete a line and spell their word correctly.