

# Helping Your Child To Spell

## A Guide For Parents



## How do children learn and remember spellings?

There are four main ways in which children process the spelling of words.

Visual  
***Does it look right?***



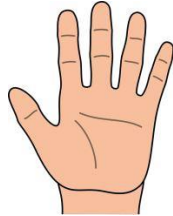
Writer responds to the shapes of words and the patterns of the letter-strings within words.

Auditory  
***Sound it out!***



Writer recognises the relationship between sounds and letters or groups of letters, and analyses words in these terms..

Kinesthetic  
***Let the spelling come out of the end of your pencil!***



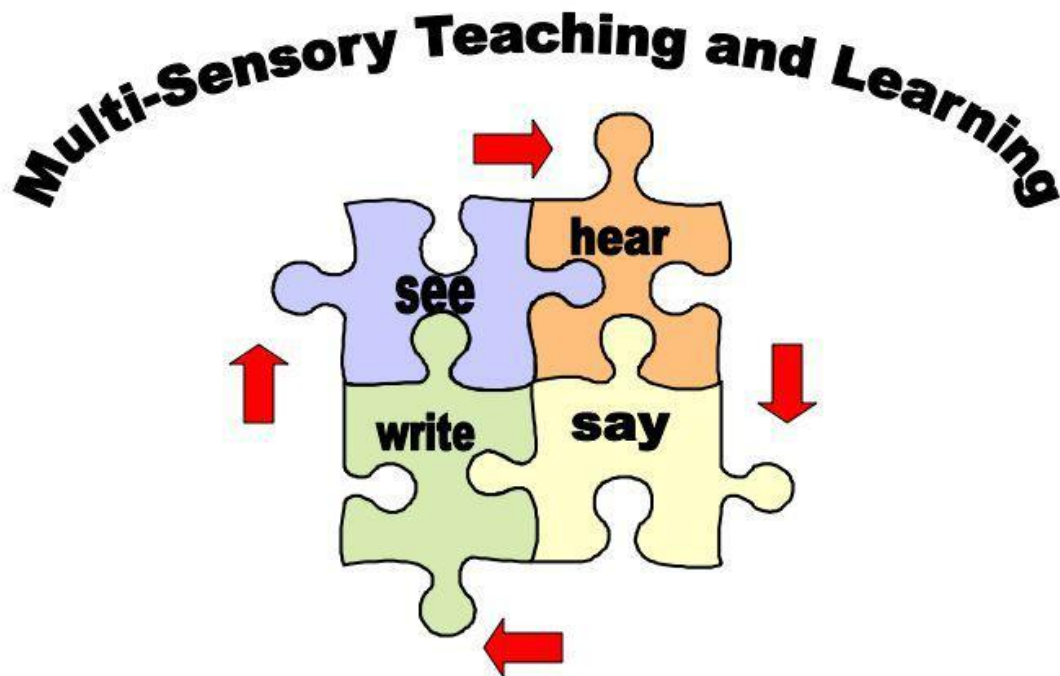
Spelling as a grapho-motor skill: writer is accustomed to making specific hand-movements to produce particular words or letter strings.

Linguistic  
***Why is it spelt like that?***



Writer is aware of relationships between words or parts of words, based on meanings, syntax, derivations, etc.

All children have a preferred learning style and by offering them activities which suit this, they can learn more quickly and effectively.



By **looking at the letter/word** as it is said or written, a visual link is created to the manual, oral and auditory channels.

By **listening to the phoneme/word** as it is said and written, an aural link is created to the manual visual and oral channels.

By **saying the letter/word** as it is viewed or written, an oral link is created to the manual, visual and auditory channels.

By **writing/creating/modeling/tracing the letter/word** as it is viewed or spoken, a manual link is created to the oral, visual and auditory channels.

Many discussions with parents regarding spelling are often centred around the fact that their child seems to forget how to spell words, even when they have spelt them correctly during their homework, spelling lesson or assessment dictation at school. This booklet contains spelling activities that aim to not only help your child to remember the spelling rules and patterns they are being taught each week, but will hopefully be fun to do too.

### **Key points to remember when helping your child with spellings**

- Practice makes perfect
- Encourage your child to use words that fit the spelling pattern or rule they've practised as often as possible
- Write together as often as possible - shopping lists, notes, letters, stories, thank you cards etc
- Use the list of spelling rules that are sent home for each year group and keep track in a notebook of all the words they've learned to spell so far that fit with each one. Refer to it when needed.
- Review words they can spell. Have them practise them once or twice each before looking at new words as this will boost their confidence. Confidence to 'have a go' at a spelling is crucial!
- Discourage your child from learning whole lists of spellings at once without looking at the pattern or rule they come from as they should always be aiming for understanding of why words are spelled the way they are. This will mean they can tackle unknown words with knowledge they have to make a thoughtful guess

### **Important approaches**

- Encourage your child to attempt to spell new words and praise their efforts
- Never spell words for them - tell your child what he/she got right in their attempt and point out and discuss mistakes
- Encourage your child to try spelling the word in parts, by breaking it up into syllables and sounding it out
- Try to focus on prefixes ( e.g. un - unhappy), suffixes (e.g.ment- enjoyment), compound words, (e.g. flower/pot) and root words, (e.g. bene – . beneficial)
- When studying a spelling list that goes with a spelling rule, try to focus on the 'look, say, cover, write, check' method. Encourage your child to look at the word and say it out loud. Then cover the word and ask your child to write it down from memory. Lastly, check to see if they have spelled the word correctly

# The Journey to Becoming a Speller

## Exploring sounds, words and spelling in Reception

In Reception we introduce the children to the letter sounds and shapes and show them how these are linked together to create words. Children are encouraged to 'have a go' at writing the words they want to say and they are praised highly for their efforts. Initially their writing is often unreadable to the adult eye (and may resemble 'scribble') although the child will know what he/she means. At this stage it is vital to value and praise their efforts and to resist correcting spelling or writing words for them to copy or write over the top of. The danger here is that children learn that only correctly spelt words are acceptable, become reliant on adult support and limit their writing to include only words that they know they can spell accurately. As children's awareness of letter sounds increases, more recognisable words will appear in their writing.

## Becoming a writer

In order to write, children need to develop various skills, including oral language skills, gross and fine motor skills and phonic skills. They also need to understand that writing is a form of communication and that what they write is for someone to read. They should therefore write for a purpose that is clear to them and stems from their own interests.

## Oral Language skills

'If a child can't say it, a child can't write it'

Take everyday opportunities to develop your child's imagination and vocabulary through talking about what you see, feel and experience together e.g. whilst walking through leaves in the park or splashing in the puddles. · Read and re-tell stories together, talking about the pictures and the story, and explaining any new or unfamiliar words. · Use puppets to retell stories, or become characters and act out the story. · Sing songs and rhymes together. · Engage with children in play and role play. · Allow family time for talk e.g. dinner time.

## Gross and fine motor skills

Children need to develop the muscles in their arms and fingers before they can hold a pencil to write. There are many fun activities that will help your child develop strength, dexterity and control: ·

- Painting (with big brushes and water for gross motor skills)
- Threading beads onto laces
- Peg boards
- Finger rhymes
- Play dough ·
- Cutting ·
- writing and doing big movements in the air e.g. with ribbons ·
- Squeezing sponge balls, stress balls or a small ball of paper ·
- Bat and ball games ·
- Pegging things onto a line.
- Using tweezers or sugar tongs to pick up beads, raisins or dried beans. ·

- Undoing and doing up buttons, poppers etc.
- Transferring small objects from one pot to another.

### **Writing for a purpose**

Help your child become aware of the writing that surrounds them e.g. signs in the environment, and ensure that children see you writing.

Daily activities can all be a stimulus for writing:

- shopping lists
- Invitations
- Cards
- Letters
- Notes
- Signs and messages
- Dates on a calendar

### **Emergent Writing**

Always praise attempts at writing, and respond positively to your child's mark making. Show interest and ask them what they have written. Encourage them to point at the marks as they talk. As they begin to learn their letter sounds, encourage them to use their sounds in their writing. Do not correct their spellings, but celebrate their efforts.

## **Growing confidence with writing and spelling In Key Stage 1**

We encourage parents to help the children learn to spell a range of high frequency (most common) words and to use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to help them with more challenging words. The expectation is that children will have learnt most of these 300 spellings by the end of Year 2 alongside the spelling rules that come from phonics lessons for Year 1 and Year 2. You can help by having fun helping your child choose two or three words at a time from the lists sent home to learn. These words are sent home in small groups as part of homework in Key Stage 1. The following activities are suggestions for enjoyable and effective ways for children at this stage to practice spelling. Remember that writing words time and time again is often only successful in the short term and fun, meaningful activities are more likely to lead to correct spelling being stored in the long term memory.

### **Tips for Helping Younger Children with Spelling**

- Write words in alphabetical order
- Try splitting the word into parts (syllables). Every syllable must have a vowel in it, e.g. four-teen, tea-cher
- Colour in and illustrate words – write a word in one colour, then go over it again and again in different rainbow colours. Repetition will help your child to learn the shape of the word. Writing words with coloured chalk on black paper is another way of carrying this out.
- Write each spelling word on 2 cards and play a matching game.
- Let your child use their finger to write words on your back – guess what they have written and then reverse the process.
- Have fun writing words in the air, on different textures e.g. sand, condensation. Flatten a piece of plasticine and use a pencil to write the word into it. Note any patterns within the word and then smooth the plasticine and challenge your child to write the word from memory.
- Encourage your child to draw pictures to accompany their spelling words and then write the words underneath.
- See if your child can spot their spelling words in a reading book or comic. Make flashcards to help you when revising spellings with your child.
- Find a picture in a magazine and try using the spelling words to write sentences relating to the picture.
- Count the number of letters each word has. Focus on how many vowels, consonants, double letters etc.
- Jumble up the letters and see if your child can unscramble them correctly to spell the word.

## **Some games and activities for younger children to use when learning spellings**

### **Concentration**

You will need: Paper/card , Pencil, Word List

Make a set of matching word cards from the word list. Put them on the table face down. Turn two cards over at a time. If they match you or your child can keep them. The winner is the person with the greatest number of words. Make sure your child can read the words they turn over.

### **Guess Who**

You will need: Paper Pencil Masking tape Word List Write some words on paper. Read the words with your child. Ask them to tape a word to your back. You have to ask a question e.g. does it begin with „th“? Can I sound it out? (green word) Now your child takes a turn to answers your questions. Tape a word to their back.

### **Shape Word**

You will need: Paper, Pencil, Scissors, Word List

In advance, write several words on paper and cut the words following the shape of each letter. Trace around the shapes and cut out a second set without the words. Practise saying the words with your child. Ask your child to match a word with its shape by writing the correct word in its shape.

### **Extra Extra**

You will need: Word List, Paper, Scissors, Glue, Magazines/newspapers

Write a selection of words from the Word List in random order on a piece of paper. Read the words to your child. Ask your child to find the word in the magazine, cut it out and glue it to the appropriate word. (Give your child one page from a magazine and check that the words they are searching for are on the page.)

### **Gooey Words**

You will need: Re-sealable plastic bags, Hairstyling gel or finger paint, Masking tape

Fill the re-sealable bag with gel or finger paint. Use masking tape to secure each bag to a table or other flat surface. Invite your child to choose a word from the Word List and use one finger to press the letters of their word into the gel or paint. Your child can erase their word by gently rubbing the bag with the palm of their hand until it is evenly distributed inside the bag.



## **Secret Words**

You will need: word List, Large sheet of paper, Pencil, Scissors

Write three words on a large piece of paper from the word list. Write out the same three words and cut them up. Lay them out in front of your child. Tell your child that one of the words is a „secret word“. Choose a word from the paper and say each one of the letters in random order. Support your child to find the letter. Can they rearrange them to find the „secret word“?

## **Snowman**

You will need:

Paper and pencil

Write a selection of words from the Word List on a large piece of paper. Choose one of the words. Write one or two letters of the word on another piece of paper, with blank lines for the remaining letters. Ask your child for a missing letter. Write it in if they are correct and if not, draw the head of the snowman. The object of the game is for the child to guess the word before you have completed the drawing of the snowman.

## **Cloudy Words**

You will need: Word List, Paper, Glue, Cotton wool, Pencil

Choose a word from the list which your child is learning to read and write. Give an example of how the word is used in a sentence and support them to think of another example. Write the word for your child and ask them to trace over the letters with a glue stick or a finger dipped in glue. Lay cotton wool over the glue until the entire word is covered. Ask your child to write a sentence on the paper and to draw a picture to go with their sentence. You could do this with other words and make a „cloudy book“. Sand may be sprinkled over the glue in place of cotton wool.

## **Pipe-cleaner Words**

You will need: Word List, Pipe cleaners, Paper/card, Pencil

In advance write a few words on individual pieces of card or paper. Ask your child to listen carefully while you say a word. Challenge your child to use the pipe cleaners to form all of the letters they hear. Show your child the word card and support them to use their pipe cleaners to add or change the letters they need to spell the word correctly.

## **Water Words**

You will need: Words on card or paper, Paintbrushes, Water

Write several words on separate pieces of card or paper. Ask your child to write a word two or three times on the patio or path. Repeat with a different word. Challenge: - can they write a sentence that includes the word?

# First 100 High Frequency Words

in frequency order reading down the columns

the	that	not	look	put
and	with	then	don't	could
a	all	were	come	house
to	we	go	will	old
said	can	little	into	too
in	are	as	back	by
he	up	no	from	day
I	had	mum	children	made
of	my	one	him	time
it	her	them	Mr	I'm
was	what	do	get	if
you	there	me	just	help
they	out	down	now	Mrs
on	this	dad	came	called
she	have	big	oh	here
is	went	when	about	off
for	be	it's	got	asked
at	like	see	their	saw
his	some	looked	people	make
but	so	very	your	an

# Next 200 High Frequency Words

in frequency order reading down the columns (water to laughed then let's to grow)

water	bear	find	these	live
away	can't	more	began	say
good	again	I'll	boy	soon
want	cat	round	animals	night
over	long	tree	never	narrator
how	things	magic	next	small
did	new	shouted	first	car
man	after	us	work	couldn't
going	wanted	other	lots	three
where	eat	food	need	head
would	everyone	fox	that's	king
or	our	through	baby	town
took	two	way	fish	I've
school	has	been	gave	around
think	yes	stop	mouse	every
home	play	must	something	garden
who	take	red	bed	fast
didn't	thought	door	may	only
ran	dog	right	still	many
know	well	sea	found	laughed

## **Developing accuracy and a range of strategies for spelling in Key Stage 2**

In Key Stage 2 most children will be taught through the Read Write Inc Spelling Programme. The teachers use this programme to help them tailor spelling development to each child's individual needs. Children will have spelling rules and patterns that they are learning each week. A list of these will come home in a child's homework or spelling folder. Please encourage your child to practice spelling words from the appropriate spelling patterns at home each week. Teachers check that the children are then using these correct spellings in their own writing during lessons. At this stage it is appropriate for teachers to point out when certain words are spelt incorrectly, but more importantly, that children recognise for themselves when they have made an error and know a range of strategies for correcting inaccuracies. By this stage children will have a range of spelling strategies that they will have been taught, to draw on. Children will use the strategy which best suits their learning style and works best for them.

## **Tips for helping older children with their spelling**

### **Dictionary challenge**

Challenge your child to find all their words in the dictionary. You might like to set them a time limit or have a race between you as to who can find each word the fastest.

### **Hidden words**

Write the words on your child's list, hidden in a number of letters. Ask your child to find them within a set time, e.g. nftkkiteingh – kite.

### **Crosswords**

Produce a crossword puzzle together using the words on a spelling list (you will need a blank grid and dictionary for this).

### **Skeleton Story**

For this, children use their spelling words to form the 'skeleton' on which they create a short story, such as; Once upon a time in a gloomy castle there lived a beautiful princess etc, etc

***Please see below for further ideas for games and spelling activities.***

<p><b><u>Spelling Rainbows</u></b></p> <p>Choose your 3 favourite crayons to rainbow write your spelling words. Write each word first in pencil in your literacy log. Then trace over each word three times. Each time you trace, you must use a different colour crayon.</p>	<p><b><u>Silly Sentences</u></b></p> <p>Write ten silly sentences using a spelling word in each sentence. Please underline your spelling words! Write your sentences neatly!</p> <p><b><u>Example</u></b> My dog <u>wears</u> a blue and purple dress when he takes a bath.</p>
<p><b><u>Backwards Words</u></b></p> <p>Write your spelling words forwards and then backwards.</p> <p><b><u>Example</u></b>  where    erehw  Colour    ruoloc</p>	<p><b><u>Pyramid Writing</u></b></p> <p>Pyramid write 10 of your spelling words. When you are finished, draw a pyramid around your word.</p> <p>Home        h                    h o                    h o m                    h o m e</p>
<p><b><u>ABC Order</u></b></p> <p>Write your spelling words in alphabetical order. Be sure to look at the first letter of each word. If the first letter is the same, look at the second letter.</p>	<p><b><u>Spelling Paragraph</u></b></p> <p>Write a paragraph using ALL of your spelling words. Be sure to underline your spelling words in your paragraph.</p> <p><b>Don't forget a topic sentence and a concluding sentence.</b></p>
<p><b><u>Draw and Label</u></b></p> <p>Draw and label ten of your spelling words neatly. You <b>MUST colour</b> your drawings and labels.</p> <p>Don't forget to add a lot of great detail. Do your very best work!</p>	<p><b><u>Squiggly Spelling Words</u></b></p> <p><b>Choose ten spelling words.</b></p> <p>You are going to write them two times. Write them first in <b>squiggly</b> letters. Then write them once more in regular letters.</p>




<p><b><u>Blue Vowels</u></b></p> <p><b>Write EACH of your spelling words out neatly.</b></p> <p>You will need a <b>BLUE</b> coloured pencil. Trace over ALL the vowels in each word with your blue coloured pencil.</p> <p><b>Vowels= A E I O U</b></p>	<p><b><u>Bubble Letters</u></b></p> <p>Write six or your spelling words in bubble letters neatly. After you write your words in bubble letters, colour your words with a crayon or coloured pencil.</p> <p><b>Bubble Letters Rock!</b></p>
<p><b><u>Acrostic Poem</u></b></p> <p>Choose ONE of your spelling words. Write an acrostic poem for that word.</p> <p>You must also <b>ILLUSTRATE</b> your poem.</p> <p><b>Example</b>      <b>Fun</b> in the sun  <b>Fly</b>              <b>Laps</b> around clouds                        <b>Yes!</b> I'm free!</p>	<p><b><u>Adding My Words</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose ten spelling words.</li> <li>2. Add up each spelling word.</li> <li>3. Write them neatly.</li> </ol> <p><b>*Consonants are worth 10.</b>  <b>*Vowels are worth 5.</b></p> <p><b>Example</b>  Said = 10+5+5+10=30  There =10+10+5+10+5=40</p>
<p><b><u>Spelling Shapes</u></b></p> <p>Write each of your spelling words neatly. Then go back and draw a circle around consonants and draw a square around the vowels.</p>	<p><b><u>Spelling Riddles</u></b></p> <p>Choose 5 spelling words and write riddles for these words. Don't forget to add the answer to your riddle.</p> <p><b>Example</b>  I cry when I am hungry. I am cute and cuddly. I wear nappies.  What am I?  <b>*Answer- Baby</b></p>
<p><b><u>Rhyming Words</u></b></p> <p>Choose <b>eight</b> of your spelling words.</p> <p>First write each spelling neatly. Think of a rhyming word for each spelling word. Write the new rhyming word next to your spelling word.</p> <p><b>*Example: Cries    Tries</b></p>	<p><b><u>Spelling Sort</u></b></p> <p>Think of a way to sort your spelling words. Write your word sort neatly. You may want to sort your words by: syllables, beginning sounds, part of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, other), vowel sounds</p> <p>The possibilities are endless! Have fun!</p>


**Spelling Code**

Think of a code for each letter of the alphabet. Write the code neatly.

Example:

A= 

B= 

C= 

Then write as many of your spelling words as you can in your code. You must write the actual spelling word next to the "code word."

**Upper and Lower**

First write your spelling words neatly. Then rewrite each word, but this time write the vowels in lowercase and the consonants in uppercase.

**Example** lower LoWeR

**Across and Down**

1. Choose ten spelling words.
2. Write each word neatly across and down, sharing the beginning letter.

**Example** when  
h  
e  
n

**Fancy Letters**

Write each of your spelling words neatly using fancy letters. Your letters can have curly-q's or dots, for example. Have fun and be creative!

**Spelling Shapes**

Count your spelling words. If you have 15 words, draw 15 different shapes. Then write your spelling words neatly inside each of the different shapes.

**Silly Spelling Story**

Write a silly spelling story using each of your spelling words. Be sure to underline your words as you use them.

**If you have time, you can illustrate and colour your silly picture to go along with your silly story!**

**Spelling Scramble**

Write your spelling words with the letters scrambled up. Then, unscramble the letters and write the word correctly next to the scrambled word.

**Example** iabsbe= babies

**Three times**

Write each of your spelling words out neatly three times neatly!



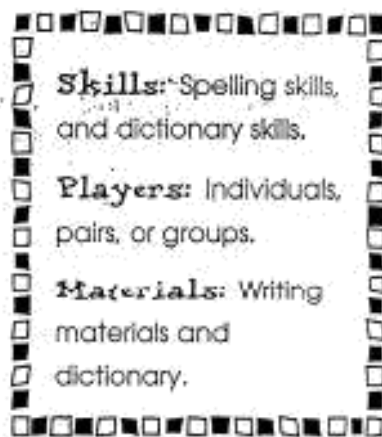
# Word Ladders

## ☆ About the Game

Lewis Carroll is credited with inventing this game. Maybe that's why it seems to take you into an Alice's Wonderland where cats can turn into dogs, work into play, and morning into evening!

## ☆ How-To's

1. If playing on their own, the children start with two words that have the same number of letters. (You may assign the words, or they may choose their own.) One word is the top of the ladder, where they start, and the other is the bottom of the ladder, where they hope to end up. How about *cat* and *dog*?



2. The children try to think of a word that differs by one letter from the top word. If possible, the new letter should be in the bottom-rung word: for example, *cot*. (With some words, especially longer ones, this direct route may not be possible. So it's a good idea to use tested words.)

3. Change one letter at a time. Each change must make a real word:

CAT            COT            COG            DOG

4. Some other examples include turning a HAND into a FOOT:

HAND            HIND            FIND            FOND            FONT            FOOT

5. You can also turn the MOON into a STAR:

MOON            LOON            LOOK            BOOK            BOOT            BOAT  
BOAR            SOAR            STAR

6. For the group version of Word Ladders, assign the same starting and finishing words to all groups. Children in each group work together to see who can be first to complete the word ladder.

- ☆ **Tip:** Start with words of only three or four letters. You don't have to finish a word ladder in one sitting. Set some word ladder pairs as puzzles, and see if the children can solve them in their spare time. A challenging word ladder might take days to complete - or prove impossible! You might let children contribute their word ladders to a class book. Also encourage them to play this game at home with their friends and families. Some examples to start with -

Try turning *flour* into *bread*, or *walker* into *runner*, or *cold* into *heat*.

# Word Starters

## ★ About the Game

This is a great game for developing interest in word study and facility with prefixes. It's an exciting game, too, because the toss of the dice can make for some surprising final results.



## ★ How-To's

1. One player is appointed Ringmaster for the first round. The Ringmaster tosses the dice three times in the round. The first throw determines the prefix for the round.

1	2	3	4	5	6
pre	anti	'non	de	con	im

2. The second throw determines the numbers of words that the players (including the Ringmaster) must find. Each word must start with the given prefix. When a player has written the right number of words, he or she calls out "Ready." All the other players must immediately put down their pens and pencils.
3. The Ringmaster now tosses the dice again. This time the number determines how many points each correctly prefixed word is worth. Players work in pairs to check each other's spelling and also to calculate their scores. For example, if the dice shows a four, then every correct word would be worth four points. A player with six words would have a score of 24.
4. The player with the highest score in that round becomes the Ringmaster for the next round. Players accumulate scores from each round, and the winner is the one with the highest total at the end of the game.

**Skills:** Word study and prefixes.

**Players:** Any number from two to the whole class.

**Materials:** One dice, a dictionary, and a list of six prefixes (see samples below). Each prefix is assigned a number. The following is an example, but you can choose prefixes appropriate for the players.

# Glossary

**Consonant** –any letter of the alphabet which is not a vowel.

**Digraph** –Two letters which together make one unit of sound, e.g. sh. th, ee, oa.

**Grapheme** –The written representation of letters which represent the sounds.

**Homophone**– a word which sounds the same as another word but is spelt differently and has a different meaning, e.g. hear and here

**Phonetics**– system of spelling words by representing sounds with syllables

**Phoneme** –the smallest unit of sound in a word, e.g. c/a/t, sh/o/p, t/ea/ch/er.

**Prefix** –small addition to a word made by joining on one or more letters at the beginning, e.g. pre, anti

**Plural**– a plural word refers to more than one thing, e.g. books

**Segmenting**– means hearing the individual phonemes within a word – for instance the word „crash“ consists of four phonemes: „c-r-a-sh“.In order to spell this word, a child must segment it into its component phonemes and choose a grapheme to represent each phoneme.

**Singular**– the name referring to one thing or a group of things, e.g. man, book, flock

Split digraph – two letters, which work as a pair, split, to represent one sound, e.g. a-e as in cake, or i-e as in kite

**Suffix** –a letter or group of letters added to the end of a word to change the way you use it, e.g. coward – cowardly

**Syllable**– a combination of one or more vowels and consonants which can make one short word or part of a longer word, e.g. won-der-ful

**Trigraph**– three letters which together make one sound but cannot be separated into smaller phonemes, e.g. igh as in light, ear as in fear and tch as in watch

**Vowel** –there are 5 vowels in the alphabet - aeiou