

Words Their Way



**WORD STUDY FOR PHONICS, VOCABULARY AND
SPELLING INSTRUCTION
PRESENTATION BY: JAN FERRARO**

Word Study Using *Words Their Way*



- Occurs in hands-on activities that mimic basic cognitive learning processes: comparing and contrasting categories of word features and discovering similarities and differences within and between categories.
 - Example: Students often misspell words that end with the /k/ sound, spelling the word snake as snack or even snacke. By sorting words that end in ck and ke into two groups, students discover the pattern that goes with each (ck only follows a short vowel).

Word Study Cont....



- Students sort words and pictures in routines that require them to examine, discriminate, and make decisions about speech sounds, spelling patterns, and meanings.
- Words and pictures (depends on the stage) are used to illustrate the principles of similarity and difference.
- Teaches students how to look at words so that they can construct an understanding of how spelling works to represent sound and meaning.

Three Layers of English Orthography (Spelling)



- Alphabet – beginning spellers use this layer quite literally. They rely on the sounds in the names of the letters to represent sounds they are trying to write/spell. This works well for some consonants, but less well for letters that have more than one sound. Short vowels become problematic because there is no single letter that “says” the short-vowel sound.
- Patterns – this is the second layer of spelling. This is when students rely less on single letter-sound match-ups and search for patterns. Example: CVCe pattern that usually indicates a long vowel.

Three Layers Cont.....



- Meaning – Third layer - students learn that groups of letters can represent meaning directly. Examples: prefixes, suffixes, Greek roots and Latin.
- Students learn the three layers of spelling when they are provided with explicit, systematic word study instruction.

Word Study is Developmental



- The study of word features must match the level of word knowledge of the student.
- Students must be at their instructional level in spelling as they are in reading. We must teach spelling where the child “is at.”
- For each stage, students spelling knowledge is defined by the following:
 - **Independent** level – what students do correctly
 - **Instructional** level – what students use but confuse
 - **Frustration** level – the spelling concepts are too difficult for the students

Five Stages of Spelling Development

A decorative white circle with a teal outline is positioned below the title and above a horizontal dashed line.

- Stage 1 Early Emergent
- Stage 2 Alphabetic
- Stage 3 Within Word
- Stage 4 Syllables and Affixes
- Stage 5 Derivational

Stages of Spelling Development



- **Stage 1 - Emergent Spelling**
 - Encompasses the writing efforts of children who are not yet reading conventionally and in most cases have not been exposed to formal reading instruction.
 - Typically range in age from 0-5 years, although anyone not yet reading conventionally is in this stage of development.
 - Most toddlers, preschoolers and most kindergartners and some first graders are at this stage.

Early Stage of Emergent Spelling



- May produce large scribbles that are basically drawings.
- Movement may be circular and children may tell a story while they draw.
- No designs look like letters, and the writing is undecipherable from the drawing.

Middle of the Emergent Stage



- Pretend writing is separate from the picture, although there is still no relationship between letters and sounds.
- Writing may occur in any direction but is generally linear.

End of the Emergent Stage



- Children begin to learn letters, especially the letters in their own names.
- Writing begins to include the most prominent sounds in a word.
- Ability to make some letter-sound matches becomes evident.
- Movement from this stage to the next depends upon learning the alphabetic principle: letters represent sounds and word can be segmented into sequences of sound from left to right.
- Students start to memorize some words: Mom, Dad, cat , love.

Stages of Spelling Development



- **Stage II Letter Name – Alphabetic Spelling**
 - Most letter name spellers are between the ages of 5 and 8.
 - Usually encompasses the time period during which students are formally taught to read – typically in kindergarten, first grade and extending into second grade.
 - Students use the names of the letters as cues to the sound they want to represent.
 - Throughout the alphabetic spelling, students learn to segment the phonemes (sounds) within words and to match the appropriate letters or letter pairs to those sequences.

Early letter name – alphabetic spelling



- Often students at this early stage apply the alphabetic principle primarily to consonants.
- Often spell the first sound and the last sound in a one syllable word.
- Vowels are often omitted.
- Often lacks space between words in writing.

Middle letter name – alphabetic spelling



- At the middle of this stage, children show mastery of beginning and ending sounds in words.
- Many high frequency words are used correctly such as will, love, have, you, I, me
- What really separates the middle from the early alphabetic speller is the use of vowels.
- Silent e is not evident, but the child may write “tim” for time and “hop” for hope.”
- Short vowels are used but sometimes confused.
- Middle level spellers in this stage are beginning to segment both sounds in a consonant blend.
- Their spelling is referred to phonetic.

Late letter name – alphabetic spellers



- Children consistently represent most regular short-vowel sounds, digraphs, and consonant blends because they possess full phonemic segmentation.
- Children at this stage will begin to use but confuse silent long-vowel markers such as the silent –e and may spell rain as “rane.”

Stages of Spelling



- Stage 3 - **Within Word Pattern Spelling**
- Students can read and spell many words correctly because of their automatic knowledge of letter sounds and short-vowel patterns.
- This level typically begins as students transition to independent reading toward the end of first grade and expands throughout second and third grades and sometimes into fourth grade.
- Most within word spellers typically range in age from 7-10 years. This stage lasts longer than the previous one due to the extensive vowel pattern system in the English spelling.

Early within word pattern spelling



- Many short-vowel and high-frequency words are spelled correctly.
- Some common long vowel patterns are spelled correctly in CVCe words like time and game. But many times the wrong long vowel pattern is written in words such as “teme” for team, “gowl” for goal, and “throwe” for throw.
- Early within word spellers begin their study with common long vowel patterns.

Middle within word pattern spelling



- Students at this stage in the middle word pattern might be confusing the CVVC and CVCe patterns.
- They way spell fome for foam or sloap for slope.
- Students will study the less common long-vowel patterns at this stage such as long –a (ai and ay), long –o (oa and ow), long –u (ew and ue) and long-i (igh and y).
- Students will begin the r influenced vowel patterns.

Late within word spelling pattern spellers



- Students at this stage will study the r-controlled vowel patterns. Many students spell skirt as skurt or girl as gril.
- Students will also study diphthongs (oi and oy and ou and ow) and other ambiguous vowels such as oo in soon and good and ough as in thought and saw, cause, small, and cross (aw, au, al and o).
- Students will also begin the study of complex consonants such as kn, wr, and gn. Also triple blends like scr, and str, as well as other complex consonants.
- Students also learn the spellings and meanings of one-syllable long vowel homophones.

Stages of Spelling



- Stage 4 - **Syllables and Affixes Spelling**
- Students are spelling words where syllables meet and words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes).
- Students are most often between the ages of 9 and 14.
- Students will learn how consonant and vowel patterns are represented in multi-syllabic words; what occurs when syllables join together (syllable juncture); how stress or lack of stress determines clarity of sounds in syllables and how simple affixes change the usage, meaning, and spelling of words.

Early syllables and affixes spelling



- Students know how to spell both long vowel and other vowels in single-syllable words on the spelling inventory but will make two or more errors when spelling inflected endings.
- Students will explore in depth the generalizations of when to drop a final e or double the final consonant before –ed or –ing.

Middle syllables and affixes spellers



- Students at the middle of this stage are ready to study vowel patterns in two-syllable words, issues of syllable juncture, and accented and unaccented syllables.
- Students will have spelled correctly on the spelling inventory words with inflected endings.

Late syllables and affixes spellers



- Students at the late stage have spelled most words correctly under the syllable juncture and unaccented final syllables – missing no more than two words and are transitioning into the derivational stage of spelling.
- Students will study the most common prefixes and suffixes in words that are easier to spell than in the derivational spelling word sorts.

Stages of Spelling



- Stage 5 - **Derivational Relations Spellers**
- Derivational spelling refers to how words are derived from a single base word or word root through the addition of prefixes and suffixes.
- Students at this stage are generally in upper elementary, but most often, are in middle school, and high school and into adulthood.

Early derivational relations spelling



- Students at this stage in spelling will begin by reviewing common prefixes studied previously but with different words and are introduced to eight more prefixes.
- Students will study suffixes and how they can change the part of speech. Students will also spend time on the suffix –ion and identify base words and the spelling or sound change when the –ion is added.

Middle derivational relations spelling



- Students explore the spelling-meaning connection through the examination of vowel and consonant sound changes that occur across words. Example: sign, signature; nature, natural
- Students will demonstrate a strong understanding of prefixes, suffixes and base words.
- Students learn to identify the Greek and Latin roots in multi-syllabic words.

Late derivational relations spelling



- These sorts are designed for middle school and high school.
- Students continue to study more Greek and Latin roots.
- Students work on advanced spelling-meaning patterns. Example: words from French – brunette, silhouette

Where Do I Begin?



- **Begin with the assessment tool for your grade level.**
 - Pre-K and K (if needed)– the assessment is in the Emergent text
 - Primary Spelling Inventory
 - Elementary Spelling Inventory
 - Upper Level Spelling Inventory

Primary Spelling Inventory



- Consists of a list of 26 words that begins with simple CVC words (fan, pet) and ends with inflected endings (clapping, riding).
- Recommended for kindergarten through early third grade – it assesses features found from the emergent stage to the late within word pattern stage.
- For kindergarten, you may need to call out the first five words only.
- In early first grade, you may call out the first 15 words so that you can sample digraphs and blends.
- Use the entire list for late grade one, grade two and grade three (if any students spell more than 20 words correctly, you may choose to use the Elementary Spelling Inventory).

Elementary Spelling Inventory



- A list of 25 words that begins with bed (CVC) and ends with opposition (derivational).
- Can be used from grade 1 and up especially if a school wishes to use the same spelling inventory to track growth over time.
- By second grade, most students can attempt to spell all 25 of the words. (be ready to discontinue if any students are showing frustration or miss five words in a row)

Upper Spelling Inventory



- Can be used in upper elementary, middle school and high school.
- Words in this list were chosen to see how students are doing in the syllables and affixes and derivational stages.
- 31 words in the list that range from switch to irresponsible.
- Stop giving this list to those who misspell five of the first eight words – words that assess spelling in the within word pattern stage.

Scoring Spelling Inventories



- Begin by correcting the list of words.
- Write the correct spelling next to the word that was misspelled – easier for other teachers and parents to understand students' papers.
- Calculate a raw score or power score – number of words spelled correctly.

Scoring the Feature Guides



- Feature guides help analyze student errors and confirm the stage designations.
- See figure 2-3 on page 35 in manual.
- Feature guide helps to determine the instructional level of each student.
- Look across the feature columns from left to right, instruction should begin at the point where a student first makes **two or more errors** on a feature.

Classroom Composite Chart



- After administering an inventory and completing a feature analysis form for each student, transfer the individual scores in the last row of the form to a classroom composite chart. See figure 2-4 on page 41 in the manual.

Looking at Students' Spelling Inventories



- Look at the spelling inventory for your grade level or close to your grade level.
- Score the tests.
- Fill out a feature guide for the students.
- Fill out a class composite chart.
- Form spelling groups for this class.

Monitoring Progress Over Time



- Students may be given the same spelling inventory several times over the year to assess progress and to determine if changes need to be made in groups.
- As students get in upper elementary, you may want to assess only at the beginning and at the end of the year with the same spelling inventory.
- If you use the same inventory too often, students will start to memorize the words and the results will, of course, not be accurate.

Spelling Stage Expectations



- The typical range of development for each grade level is listed in graph on page 44 of your manual.
- This will give you an idea of what is expected at the end of the year for the students to succeed in subsequent grades and to meet state standards in reading and writing.

Share Results with Parents



- The results of the spelling inventory is valuable information to share with parents. It lets them know that you are working at their instructional level and that words the students bring home will look different from other years - if they have not been in *Words Their Way*.
- Parents may be used to children bringing home more difficult words for them to memorize. By sharing the inventory results, parents will understand and appreciate that you are teaching children **how to spell** and not just assigning them words to memorize and forget.

Word Sorting



- Sorting words into categories is the heart of word study.
- When students sort words, they are engaged in the active process of searching, comparing, contrasting and analyzing.
- Students sort by sound, pattern and meaning.
 - In the early stages, students pay attention to sounds at the beginning of words by sorting pictures. As they move into transitional reading, students sort words by vowel patterns. In later grades, they sort by prefixes and suffixes and finally in middle and high school, students sort words by Greek and Latin stems and roots that share common meanings.

Word Sorting Cont....



- In the process of sorting, students have an opportunity to make their own discoveries and form their own generalizations about how the English spelling system works.
- Rather than memorizing 20 or so words a week for a spelling test, students construct their own word knowledge that they can apply to their reading and writing.
- Picture and word sorts are designed to help students learn how and where to look at words.

Types of Sorts



- **Three basic types of sorts:**
 - Sound
 - Pattern
 - Meaning
- **There are also variations of these sorts:**
 - Guess My Category
 - Writing sorts
 - Word hunts
 - Brainstorming
 - Repeated individual and buddy sorts
 - Speed sorts
 - Draw and label/ cut and paste

Sound Sorts



- **Picture Sorts**

- Picture sorting is suited for emergent, alphabetic, and early within word pattern stages.
- Used to develop phonological awareness (rhyme and alliteration).
- Used to teach phonics – sort by initial sounds, consonant blends or digraphs, rhyming families or vowel sounds

- **Word Sorts**

- Also draw attention to sounds

Sound Sorts Cont....



- **Blind Sorts**

- A key word or picture for each sound is established. Words are called out and the student must indicate the correct category by pointing out or naming the correct word that has the same sound. For example: comparing short -a words and short-u words.

- **Blind Writing Sort**

- .Students must write each word under the correct key word before seeing the word. Students must rely on the sound they hear in the word, as well as their memory for the letters associated with it, cued by the key word at the top of the column. Blind writing sorts should only be used after much practice with word sorts, so students have an opportunity to see the printed form.

Pattern Sorts



- When students use the printed form of the word they can sort by the visual patterns formed by groups of letters or letter sequences.
 - Alphabetic spellers sort their words into groups that share the same word families or rimes (hat, rat, pat,; fan, fan, man).
 - Within word spellers sort their words into groups by vowel patterns (wait, train, mail, pain versus plate, take blame).
 - Syllables and affixes sort their words into groups by the pattern of consonants and vowels at the syllable juncture (button, pillow, ribbon versus window, public, basket).
 - Derivational spellers sort word pairs by patterns that change such as divine-divinity; mental –mentality.

Pattern Sorts Cont....



- Example of pattern sorts:

- CVC

- ✦ Cat
- ✦ Ran
- ✦ Hit
- ✦ Stop

- CVVC

- rain
- coat
- suit
- green

Meaning Sorts



- Two types of meaning sorts are concept sorts and spelling-meaning sorts.
 - Concept Sorts
 - ✦ Sorting pictures or words by concepts or meaning is a good way to link vocabulary instruction to students' understanding.
 - ✦ Used for assessing and building background knowledge before starting a new unit of study.
 - Spelling-meaning sorts
 - ✦ Teaching homophones (words sound alike, but spelled differently) through sorting expands students' vocabularies and they learn about spelling patterns at the same time. (bare, bear)

Closed and Open Sorts



- **Closed Sorts are directed by the teacher**
 - Define the categories and model the sorting procedure
- **Open Sorts are student-centered**
 - Students create their own categories with a set of words.

Word Study Routines



- Demonstrate – Introduce sort, use key words or pictures
- Sort and Check – Individually or with a partner
- Reflect – Share the reason behind your sorting
- Extend – Word Hunts, Word study notebooks, games, word charts

Organizing for Word Study



- Word study groups – separate from reading groups
- Part of their guided reading time (word work)
- In a center (after routines are established) or part of Daily 5 (Word Work)
- Individual work at their table/desk
- Word study as part of balanced literacy = Readers' Workshop, Writers' Workshop, Word Study

Word Study in K and first Grade



- **In the Emergent stage:**
 - See suggested schedule on page five in the emergent text
- **In the Alphabetic stage**
 - See suggested routines on page 3-4 in the alphabetic text
 - ✦ Monday – Picture Sort
 - ✦ Tuesday – Draw and Label
 - ✦ Wednesday – Cut and paste
 - ✦ Thursday – Word and picture hunts
 - ✦ Friday – Game Day and Assessment (this is informal as the teacher watches for automaticity and accuracy during the sorting and how well students label pictures or use initial sounds in writing)

Word Study Block – depending upon grade level



- During this block of time, students will do the following:
 - Sort, check and discuss their words
 - Write their words into columns into their word study notebooks
 - Search and record words in their notebooks, that contain the same feature, in the books they have been reading
 - Speed sorts, blind sorts, word study games
 - Weekly spelling check

Grading Word Study and Communicating with Parents



- A grading form is provided on page 81 in the manual.
 - It's more than the “spelling test” on Friday!
- A parent letter is provided on page 80 that explains what the parents can do at home to help their child in word study.

Format for using *Words Their Way* as Part of the Daily 5



- Model this format the first six weeks of school so students are able to do this independently.
 - Word Sort – by sound, pattern or meaning
 - Record words in word study notebook/binder/folder
 - Word Hunts – search for the words in their reading and record them when they are found (connecting word study to reading)
 - Practice sorts – Speed sorts, blind sorts, games
 - ✦ Speed sorts – students time each other or time themselves; blind sort – work with a partner and write down the word from your sort under the correct category; and many games are provided in the text.
 - Spelling test with a partner who is at the same stage.

Becoming a Better Speller



- Students need to be reminded that by working at their own spelling stage their spelling ability will improve. That is a relief to many students and those students who struggle with spelling have a hope that this will work for them and give them the needed confidence and skill to become a **better speller**. (not memorizing words for a test on Friday and forgetting them by Monday)