

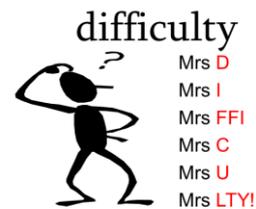
How to support your child with spellings at home

As part of our literacy programme, we will be asking our children from Grade 1 upwards to learn a set of spelling words each week. Children will be tested on these words at the end of the weekly cycle. These words will be presented in a list which all children will receive. However, on the lists there will be three categories of words: words the children **must learn**; words the children **should learn**; and words the children **could learn**. Children will be encouraged to select how many of the three lists they will learn. Everyone must learn the **'must'** words.

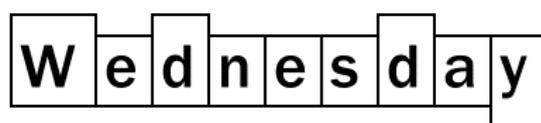
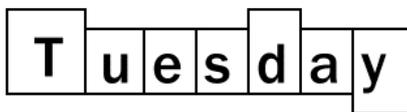
Children will be asked to learn these words every week. Below are a set of techniques your child can use to learn his/her spelling words to work towards using the words correctly every time they are used, even when writing stories or reports.

Strategies:

- 1. Look, cover, say, write, check:** This one is as the title suggests. This method is probably one of the most common ways children learn spellings. The 'check' section can involve parents giving their children mental/oral tests and quizzes.
- 2. Tracing words:** Tracing works helps many children physically learn how to spell. Ask your child to sit next to you so that you can guide his or her hand in writing. Your child should only extend his or her index finger and no other fingers. Help your child print or write the word that is confusing for him/her. Asking your child to close his or her eyes can make the experience easier for him/her.
- 3. Mnemonics:** These are devices used to help people remember things. Mnemonics are often used to help people remember how to spell words (see below). Teach children common ones, or better yet, work with your child to make up some of your own.



- 4. Word shape:** Looking at the shape of a word helps you remember how to spell it. This works well because many of us visualise things in our head to help us remember or recall them.



Other ways you can help your child develop their ability to spell:

- 5. Help your child develop his or her auditory and vocal skills:** Children who spell well are usually children who read a lot and speak well. Talk to children about their day and ask them **what they learned** as opposed to what they did in school today (which generally gets no answer). Discuss your child's homework with them before they complete it. This does not mean do it for them but rather, give them a chance to 'practice' using the language they need before they write it down.
- 6. Encourage your child to 'write naturally':** It can be a wonderful experience for children to maintain a journal, even if they do not write in it every day. Once a week is enough. Your child can write about whatever he or she chooses. Again, speak with your child about what s/he is going to write. Let him or her write the words without assistance. If you are asked for help, encourage your child to 'have a go', or even to pretend that s/he can spell the word. Misspelled words can be used in little games you play with your child.
- 7. Write letters:** The good old 'pen pal' strategy is still highly effective, as it provides a real-life, fun way for children to write purposefully. It also gives him/her many opportunities to spell.