

The Building Blocks for Spelling High Frequency Words

Basic Building Blocks

Students bring different levels of knowledge and ability to their first years of learning to read and spell. The lessons in this book assume that students have some basic building blocks as noted below. However, these building blocks are not prerequisites to learning to spell. The lessons in this book will help to develop, reinforce, and enrich these skills.

A vocabulary of basic concepts in spelling

- words; letters—first, last, and middle; consonants; and vowels

Early reading skills

- tracking
- left-to-right eye movements
- recognition of a few sight words
- beginning skills at “sounding out” words

Confidence in Printing Skills

- ability to form the letters of the alphabet.
- confidence in printing allows students to focus on the correct spelling of a word instead of how to form the letters.

Capital Letters and Lower-Case Letters

- students sometimes use both capital and lower-case letters in one word, frequently when the lower-case letter can be “reversed” (as with **b** for **d**, or **p** for **q**).
- do not mark words with both capital and lower-case letters “wrong” in the early grades.
- students will learn to incorporate capitals and lower-case letters correctly later on as a part of learning grammar.

Basic phonics skills

- a few basic phonics skills are helpful, but are not required for the lessons.
- include common consonants and blends such as **sh**, **ch**, and **th**.

Frequently used words in early reading

- basic words in early reading materials
 - a an at
 - go no so
 - he me she we
 - I
 - is it
 - the
 - to up

A Word About Reading Skills

Teachers probably know many students who are good readers with weak spelling skills. But, how many students with good spelling skills are weak readers?

Learning to spell these tricky, high frequency words improves word recognition and fluency in a child's reading. Students who can spell a particular word can also read it. Students can apply the strategies they learn during spelling to all the other words they read in their books.

A Word About Phonics Skills

Phonics skills are one important strategy of many that help children develop good spelling skills. Phonics skills have a role in many of the spelling lessons in this book, but teachers should be aware that some students have great difficulty in understanding or recognizing the **sounds** in English. This spelling program was first developed for children who had difficulty hearing some sounds in English because of a disability or because their first language was not English.

Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of strategies to help students rather than rely on phonics alone. Note that there are several English words in which phonics skills are of no help (e.g., **one**, **does**).

Using Auditory and Visual Learning Styles as Building Blocks for Spelling

There is a distinct difference between an auditory learning style and a visual learning style. This difference is often most noticeable during spelling lessons. Auditory learners acquire knowledge through listening and remembering what they heard. Visual learners learn through seeing and remembering what they saw. Most students demonstrate a combination of auditory and visual learning styles, but every classroom will have a range of students, some who will be primarily auditory learners, and others who will be primarily visual learners.

Auditory Learners	Visual Learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• begin to spell at a younger age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• begin to spell a later age because they need more opportunities to see a word
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• are more comfortable using invented spellings when they write stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• are not comfortable using invented spellings when they write stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will guess at the spelling of a word	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• dislike guessing at the spelling of a word
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• phonics make sense to them• phonics provide an important strategy for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• phonics are often difficult for them• rely more on configuration, visual cues, and visualization (than on phonics)

There is often an interesting pattern in the spelling errors of visual and auditory learners. Visual learners tend to use the correct letters, but mix up the order. Auditory learners tend to use letters that represent the sounds they hear in a word.

Correct Spellings	Common Errors of Visual Learners	Common Errors of Auditory Learners
said	siad	sed
help	hlep	halp
does	dose	duz
funny	funy	funne

A Word About the Lesson Plans

Our society views good spelling skills as a sign of intelligence and competence. People with good spelling skills get higher marks, higher education, and better jobs. Helping children to develop a positive attitude towards spelling in the early years has a long-term impact on their lives. Poor spelling skills can result in underestimating a student's true potential, which can translate into missed opportunities.

The lesson plans in this book were developed to encourage children to become active, imaginative, and playful participants in learning to spell. The lesson plans demonstrate the variety of direct instruction methods and the interactions between the teacher and students. Many of the ideas for remembering how to spell certain words come from personal classroom experience — including ideas generated by the children.

The material is presented in a manner that allows teachers to observe how the lessons can be delivered in a relaxed and novel way. The methods employed in the lessons encourage student participation in discussions and problem solving.