

How Big Spelling Works

In Big Spelling there are 10 or 15 words for each child to learn on a weekly basis. First of all, each child needs to be assessed to work out which list they need. The lists start at A, which is very simple, progressing as far as list Q where there are lots of very challenging words to learn. Look at the Big Spelling Overview to see how the spellings progress in difficulty. Use the assessment lists to work out which list they should start on. (This is useful to show parents if they complain that the lists are too easy!)

Each child will need a folder, their own spelling list sheet, a highlighter, a spelling book and a pack of 'Look, Cover, Write, Check' sheets. They will also need a copy of their spelling sheet list for home.

A letter will go home initially explaining to parents that their child will be doing weekly spelling tests and outline how they can help their children to learn these.

After you give out their spelling sheet check regularly that they still have their list at home and give them another copy if they have lost it-it will be really important to keep checking this! We can also stick a copy in their homework book.

Twice a week for early work, they can get out their folders and use the 'Look, Cover, Write, Check' sheets to learn their spellings. There will be sand trays to trace the letters, magnetic letters and tiles and some magnetic boards for each class for those children to use who find spelling tricky. If time they can test each other on whiteboards as well. They can also learn their spellings once a week after lunch, when not guided reading.

Each Friday, before Big Write, the children will swap lists as soon as they come in in the morning with any other child who is there and test each other. A will hold B's sheet, making sure they can't see it, and read out the spellings, while B writes them in their spelling book. Then they will swap over. They will then carefully mark each others spellings. Tick if the word is correct and dot if it is wrong or they can't read it. If they are not sure what their partner has written they can show the teacher. If they do not write clearly they may not get a tick for that word. There may be children who find it too hard to work with another child so the teacher or TA can do it with them.

If they get 9 or 10 out of 10, or 14 or 15 out of 15, they can move on to the next set of spellings on the sheet which they will be tested on next week. They can highlight all the ones they got right on their spelling list sheet. If they made one mistake they can still move on but they will be tested on this word the following Friday. If they get 10 out of 10 or 15 out of 15 they can have a special sticker. If they get 8 or less out of 10 or 13 or less out of 15 they will not move on to the next set of spellings and have to keep practising these to be retested on them next week.

We will organise a yearly Spelling Bee Competition for the children in order to motivate them further and help raise the status of spelling! Have cups/shields with their names on displayed in a cabinet! Good luck!

