**Spelling Program**

This year grade 2/3, along with a few other classes, will be using word study instead of traditional spelling you may be used to. I have attached a great article written by Becky Spence, who has a Masters of Education degree in Reading. Basically, she agrees with me that traditional spelling can be not very engaging by doing pretests, worksheets then a final test on Friday. I also feel that that may or may not lead to knowing how to spell words. Word study, however, has the students figuring out patterns in words and then using those patterns to spell words. Once they learn a pattern, they should then be able to spell more words, not just the few that were on the spelling test. Therefore when they come across a new word, they should be able to spell it and read it. Word study grows with the student’s development, it **“emphasizes active exploration of words and the application of word knowledge to spelling, vocabulary development, and the analysis of unknown words encountered in reading.”** -[Words Their Way](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0137035101/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0137035101&linkCode=as2&tag=thireamam-20), page 250. I have copied her post below if you would like more information.

My program will look like this:

I will be assessing the students regularly to ensure they are doing word study with words that are at their level, and there will be a spelling test every Friday. During the week they will be working with a group of approximately 20 words that they will work with, doing word sorts, patterning, games, spellingcity.com, and other activities. There will also be words that don’t follow the pattern, or rules, and they will be included as well. (For example “said”- following the rules it should be pronounced by rhyming with raid or paid). We will also be incorporating high frequency words(that I will be putting on the word wall) and words that they personally have been working with in their daily writing. The test on Friday will include some words we have worked with, and some might be new words that fit that pattern that they have learned. The test will be usually 10 words. I will alternate between word wall words and word sorts. Word wall words will be written in their agendas at the bottom of the first page for the week, word sorts will be sent home to cut up and sort at home.

The next page has activities to do at home with the word sorts that will be sent home every other week, you can do some of these also with the word wall words, I suggest no more than 10 minutes a day working on spelling, and at least 10 minutes a day of reading.

Word Study Sort Activities

The activities below explain the procedures of several different sorts your child should do in her/his spelling homework. Word Study is the spelling program from Words Their Way that we use. Students learn patterns in words, and they do this by using auditory and visual senses. I’m also providing you with Words Their Way Language so you understand what some of the notations are. Then I will list some activities to do at home. Cut and sort to start with, then choose other activities for the rest of the week. I will choose 7 words from the sort, plus 3 more that fit the pattern that were not on the list for the test on Friday.

Sorting – Organizing words into groups based on similarities in their patterns or meaning.

Oddball – Words that cannot be grouped into any of the identified categories of a sort. Students are taught that there are always words that break the rules of the pattern and do not follow the rule.

Sound Marks / / - Sound marks around a letter or pattern tell the student to focus only on the sound rather than the actual letters.

Vowel – (represented by V) – one of 6 letters causing the mouth to open when vocalized (a, e, I, o, u, and sometimes y). A single vowel is heard in every syllable of a word.

Consonants – (represented by C)- All letters other than vowels. Consonant sounds are blocked by the lips, tongue, or teeth during articulation. So, the letter B does NOT sound like /buuuu/; instead, it is the smallest sound /b/

**Introduce the Sort** – Students cut out the words and/or pictures and sort the cards by the header cards. For the sake of simplicity and consistency, I will call them all words.

**Practice the Sort and Write It** – Students sort and copy down the words in the correct column under the correct rule. Some sorts do not have words, so this is not done for those sorts.

**Draw and Label** – Students draw pictures that represent some of their words to show their meanings.

**Blind Sort**/No-Peeking Sort (same thing) – Students work with a partner (or parent or sibling if at home). The headers are placed at the top of the page. The partner picks up a word card and reads the word (or names the picture) without showing it to the student. The student listens to the sounds in the word and points to the category in which the word belongs. After EACH word card is named by the partner, the card is revealed to the student to check the category. The student can change their decision and move the card. The emphasis here is on the sound, not the spelling.

**Blind Sort Writing** – The same procedure as above except this time, the student writes the word in the correct category and checks the spelling after each card is called. Students do this sort after several exposures to the word. If the sort has blends/digraphs and not words, the student just writes the blend and does NOT attempt to spell the word. The emphasis is on the sound of the blend.

**Word Hunts** – Have students hunt for words in their sorts in other texts, such as books, magazines, newspapers, signs, etc.

**Speed Sort** – Sort the words as fast as you can. Beat the teacher, or beat the parent!

**Onset/Rime** – The onset is the beginning consonant or blend sound. The rime is the vowel and everything else. Students identify the onset and rime in word families. They can brainstorm more words to fit the word family by changing the onset.

**Spelling Stairs** spell the word by writing the first letter. Next, on the 2nd line write the first 2 letters, next line first 3 letters, and so on. Ex:

Cake

c

ca

cak

cake

**Rainbow Spelling Words**- Students begin by writing the spelling words in pencil. Next they pick three different colored pencils. Then they take one of the colored pencils and trace each word with that color. The last two colors of pencil are used in the same manner. When the words are done they have written each word 4 times!

**Sentences** – Students write sentences using words from their sort. They underline the spelling word.

**VC**- students write the vowels in pencil, and the consonant in a pencil color or pen

**Type**- type the words on word program or note in a phone or tablet

**Spelling city**- USUALLY I will have their words in spelling city, so if they go to mrsfk.weebly.com and click on spelling city the sort will be there and they can do games and practice there.

Post by Becky Spence:

**Traditional Spelling**

First, I wanted to drudge up what you probably already know about spelling.  Maybe it’s how you experienced spelling as a child.  **Rote memorization.** The equation looks something like this:

SEE Word + WRITE Word = MEMORIZE Word

If we see the word a lot + write (or copy) the word a lot, then the string of letters will stick in our brain.  The typical spelling list will look something like this: *made, years, know, please,* etc.  The words chosen for these **lists are mostly high frequency words that are unrelated to one another** in any way.

We also have our **lists of rules**: “when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking” or “the silent *e* makes the vowel say its name”.  But, it doesn’t take much time before we discover that these rules have many, **many exceptions**.

With traditional spelling, spelling can become rather **dull and boring** for the student (and teacher). Students are mostly **passive learners**; simply empty containers to fill.  Students often memorize the words for the test, but **forget** them after they’ve scored their 100′s.

**Rote memorization \* Unrelated word lists \* Lists of rules \* Many exceptions \* Dull and boring \* Passive \* Forgettable**

**Now, contrast traditional spelling with…**

**The Word Study Approach**

Word Study operates under a different paradigm.  It is “based on the belief that **most words *do* follow spelling generalizations**” or patterns. (Johnston) As a matter of fact, studies show 84 percent of English words are mostly predictable!  (Moats) Instead of memorizing lists of unrelated words, **students are given word lists that are centered around a specific pattern**, like word families. Through studying these patterns, students can begin to “*understand* how words are built and *apply* this knowledge” in their reading and spellings.  (www.spellingscholar.com)

Students are given word sorts and asked to be **active learners** as they **compare**,**contrast**, **sort/manipulate**, and **classify** the words.  They are also encouraged to use and **apply** the word generalizations when they read and write. (Templeton & Pikulski)  Peter Johnston says is best in his book [*Choice Words*](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1571103899/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1571103899&linkCode=as2&tag=thireamam-20), “…there are hidden costs in telling people things.  If students can figure something out for themselves, explicitly providing the information preempts the students’ opportunity to build a sense of agency and independence.”

Based on the patterned word lists, students begin to form **generalizations** that sound something like: “Almost every time I see *a* and *i* together, it makes the long *a* sound.  And I notice that the *a-i* is either at the beginning or in the middle of the word.”  This generalization can help the student **read and spell unknown words** that share the same *ai* pattern.

And a very important difference between traditional spelling and word study: word patterns are **chosen specific to the spelling development of the child**. This means if the child is ready for long vowel patterns, these are the patterns he studies.

**Generalizations \* Patterns \* Active Learners \* Compare \* Contrast \* Sort \* Classify \* Apply \* Specific for Child**

**A Little Theory Behind Word Study**

**Why are Word Patterns Important for Learning to Spell (and Read)?**

I love how Pat Cunningham puts it in her book [*Phonics They Use*](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/013294409X/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=013294409X&linkCode=as2&tag=thireamam-20).  “The brain…is not a rule applier but a pattern decoder.  While we look at single letters, we are looking at them and considering all the letter patterns we know.  Successfully decoding (or encoding) a word occurs when the brain recognizes a familiar spelling pattern…or searches through its store of words with similar patterns.” (pg. 186, 188)

**Applied Knowledge of Words**

“Word study teaches children to focus on patterns and meaning chunks.  In a word study program, children learn to apply their knowledge to a greater number of words than they could learn by memorizing traditional spelling lists.” (Mattmann & Cowan

How many more words? Well, let’s say that a child has 20 spelling words a week.  Now multiply that by 36 weeks for 10 years.  Hmmm, 7200 words…that is, if he can memorize them all perfectly.  But, the average vocabulary of a high school student is around 75,000 words!  7200 is only 10%! (Johnston)  Let’s take the word study approach. The study of the *a\_e* pattern alone can help students learn to spell and read over 100 words (off the top of my head)!