

fun ways to learn words

... and become spectacular spellers along the way

Most schools give students a list of spelling words to master each week or every other week. Here are some fun ways of playing with those words (or any words, for that matter!) depending on what you've got on hand!

With spelling word flash cards:

- **Spelling Word Memory:** Create a double set of word cards and play a game of Spelling Word Memory by spreading out the cards face down and then taking turns flipping two cards at a time to find a pair!
- **Flip, Read, Letters, and Write:** In just 4 steps, your child can practice reading, spelling, and writing his words. Have him flip over a word card, look at the word, say it out loud, say the letters, then flip it back over, and write the word on paper.
- **Trace, Copy, Recall:** Fold three columns on a piece of paper, and label one column 'trace', the next 'copy' and the last 'recall'. Write the word in the first column, and have your child trace the letters. Next have her copy the word by looking at what she's just written. Finally, have her fold (and hide) the first two columns and recall the spelling on her own as she writes the word independently.
- **Pocket Cards:** Make teeny-tiny flash cards to keep in your student's pocket or backpack. Have him pull them out and go through them at breakfast, on the bus, or waiting in line at school.

With a pen, pencil, marker, & paper:

- **Spelling Word Race:** Create two teams, with a player from each team taking the 'pen' at a time. Teacher (or parent) calls out a word from the list, and players race to write the word.
- **Spelling Puzzle:** Make a home-made puzzle by writing each word in large letters on an index card and then having the child cut each card apart. The fun is in putting the puzzle back together!
- **Stairsteps:** Write the words as if they are stairs, adding one letter at a time.
 - S
 - Sp
 - Spe
 - Spel
 - Spell
- **Tic-Tac-Toe:** There are a ton of cool ways to play with this old game! Create a larger-sized board and play tic-tac-toe where each player uses a spelling word. OR, have each player use an 'X' or 'O' but in order to place a mark on the board, she has to spell a word correctly.
- **Flip and Rainbow Write:** Flip a word card and have your child go through the rainbow, painting or writing each word flipped in rainbow colors. Make the first word red, second orange, third yellow, etc. OR write each letter in a color of the rainbow.
- **Water Paint:** Use water and a paintbrush to water paint the spelling words. On a hot, sunny day, words disappear quickly—so spellers have to move fast!





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With a computer and other fun electronics:

- **Type it Out:** Open up a Word document and have your child type the spelling words on the screen as you call them out. Enlarge the font, make it a cool color, and he'll have a ball.
- **Spell on Tape:** Have your child spell the words into a tape recorder or using the voice recorder on your phone or computer.
- **Video Record:** Pull out the ole video camera or flip cam and take a video of your child spelling the words. Have him put on a funny hat, dress-up, or use a silly prop to add to the fun.
- **Karaoke:** That karaoke machine can double as a super-fun spelling machine if you turn it on and allow your child to spell her words into it!
- **Use Puzzlemaker:** Have your child type in all of the week's spelling words and then let her search for them using this cool resource from Discovery! (Puzzlemaker: <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/WordSearchSetupForm.asp>)
- **Use Let them Sing it:** Type in a spelling word on this site, and the word is sung back to your student. (This one is bound to get giggles!) (Let Them Sing it: <http://sverigesradio.se/cgi-bin/Src/sing/sing.asp?key=undefined>)
- **Use Spelling City:** Head over to Spelling City, have your child type in the spelling words, and then he can learn the words, play games with them, and be tested. This site is a gem! (Spelling City: <http://www.spellingcity.com/>)

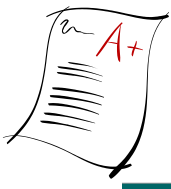
With space to run, jump, and play:

- **Chalkboard Race:** Form two teams, with one player from each team holding a piece of chalk and standing at a designated spot about 10 feet from a chalkboard. Teacher calls out a word, and players run to the board and write the word correctly as quickly as possible. The winner finishes the word first and spells it correctly.
- **Ball Toss:** Players stand in a circle with a Nerf ball or something else safe to toss. Teacher calls out a word, tosses the ball to a student, and that student spells the word. If the word isn't spelled correctly, the student tosses the ball to another person who will try to spell it; if it is spelled correctly, the player tosses object to another student and teacher gives her a new word to spell.
- **Swing and Spell:** Teacher gives the student a word to spell, and the student says a letter of the word with each back and forth movement of the swing.
- **Run the Bases:** Student starts at home plate, gets a word to spell and for every word correctly spelled gets to make a move around the bases, beginning with hitting the ball, then running from first base, second, third, and home.

With anything and everything else:

- **Spelling Word Hunt:** Look for those spelling list words in the newspaper or in another book, magazine, or text! Circle them or use a highlighter to highlight them.





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- **Scrabble, Boggle:** Use these cool game pieces to 'build' spelling words on the on a cookie tray, on the table, or on the floor.
- **Crazy Words:** Put something 'crazy' (like jell-o mix, shaving cream, sand, or rice) on a cookie sheet, and have your child use his finger to 'write' spelling words on the tray.
- **Paint bag Writing:** Put poster paint in a gallon-sized ziplock bag and seal it tightly! Then have your child use her fingertip to write the letters of each word on the paint bag.
- **Stamp It:** Use alphabet letter stamps to 'stamp' the spelling words, first by looking at the words and then on your own!

With magnetic letters or letter cards:

- **Word Scramble:** Scramble up the letters of each word and have student put them in the correct order. (Don't forget to point out patterns and families!)
- **Word Train:** Use the letters to have your child create a 'word train' by using the last letter of the first word to begin the second word and so on: cat / tap / pan .

No prep, no materials:

- **Spell in Turn:** Choose a word from the list and take turns each saying each letter of a word until the whole word is spelled. After the last letter is added, the next person spells the word completely and independently.
- **Remember the List:** (Best used after some practice with the list.) Try to see if your child can remember all of the words on the list. Go through the alphabet, letter by letter, and as a word is remembered, have her spell it!
- **Spell and Eat:** While making breakfast, lunch, or dinner, have your child spell a word, and after each word is spelled correctly, reward her with a small, healthy "treat" from your meal prep.
- **Examine the Word:** Really look at the words, talking about the tough parts and analyzing patterns. Make up silly ways of remembering the 'tough' parts: *'president' has an 'l' in the middle because one day I'll be president, OR 'setting' has two t's in the middle just like two tall trees in a fairyland forest.*

Tip: Use sight words or word study words!

Resources:

- A very, very big thanks to the incredible folks at MCPS--in our particular cluster of schools--for creating their own 'spelling ideas' document and for handing it to students this fall. It is a HUGE help, and it's much appreciated.
- Elrod School: Spelling Ideas <http://www.sd5.k12.mt.us/elrod/multiage/Spelling.html>
- Resource Room: <http://www.resourceroom.net/readspell/6waysspelling.pdf>
- Many other sites, pamphlets, books, articles, and resources I have here at home!

another resource from <http://teachmama.com> to help our little ones learn while they play. . .

