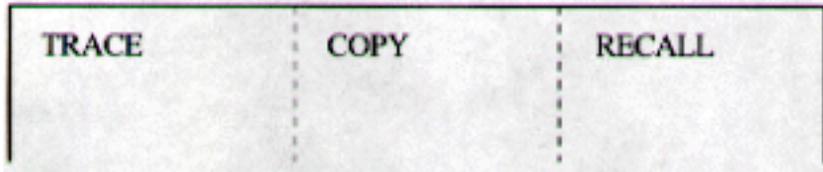


Six Ways to Practice Spelling

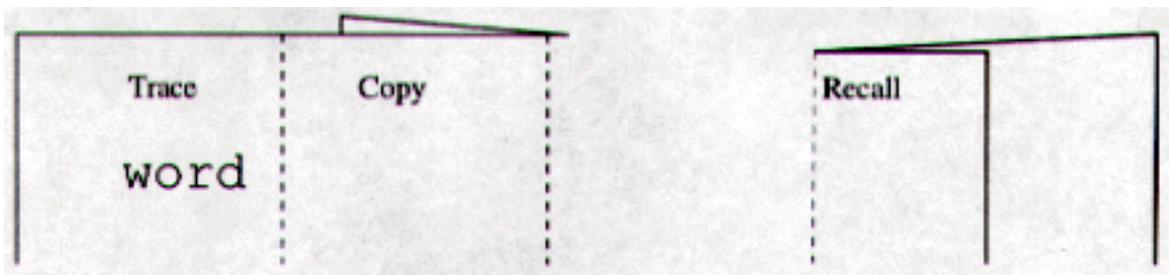
Susan Jones, M. Ed. rev. 1/02

1. "Trace, Copy and Recall"

Make a chart like this with 3 or four spelling words you want to learn:



Fold over the "recall" part so that only the first two columns show:



Then:

Say the word to yourself.

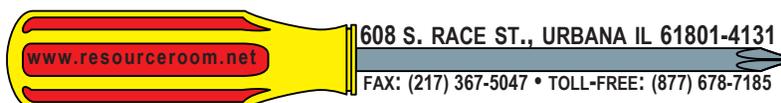
Trace it in the first column, saying the letters as you trace, and say the word again. You might put a little rhythm into it. ("WORD . W - pause - O - pause R-D - WORD!). (Remember, the goal here is to remember how to spell the words, not to successfully follow these directions.)

Go to the second column, say the word, and write it the same way.

While the rhythm and the sound and the feeling are fresh in your mind, flip the paper over and say the word and spell it out -- the same way, saying each letter (because, after all, practice makes permanent).

If it's a hard word, put it on the list more than once. If you're feeling particularly smart, trace and copy TWO words, and try to remember them both before you flip the page over. However, if your short-term memory isn't big enough to hold all that, do one at a time because you want to practice the words RIGHT, not make guesses.

After you've done a small group of words this way a few times, start doing them two or three at a time, and when you feel like you know them, practice the list again -- but skip the tracing. And if you're feeling VERY confident, skip the tracing and the copying both.



2. Reverse chaining by letter

1. Say the word. Then write it, saying each letter (be enthusiastic and expressive!)
W - O - R - D
2. Skip a line and say it and write it again -- minus the last letter. Say the last letter, but don't write it.
W - O - R - _____
3. Skip a line and say it and write it again - minus the last two letters. Say them, but don't write them.
W - O - ____ _____
4. Do that until you're only writing one letter.
5. Go back to the top. Read the word, then spell it out loud.

6. Fold the page over so you can't see the whole word. Say the word, spell it, and add that last letter.
7. Fold the page back again. Say the word, spell it, and add the last two letters.
8. Keep going until you spell the whole word.
9. GO BACK AND CHECK -- make sure you didn't leave out a letter!

3. Reverse chaining by syllable (this is harder, for longer words)

1. Say the word. Then write it, saying each letter (be enthusiastic and expressive!)
S-E-P-A-R-A-T-E
2. Skip a line and say it and write it again -- minus the last syllable. Say the last syllable and spell it out loud, but don't write it.
S-E-P-A-_____
3. Continue until you aren't writing anything -- but still say the spelling out loud.
4. Go back to the top. Read the word, then spell it out loud.
5. Fold the page over so you can't see the whole word. Say the word, spell it, and add the last syllable.
6. Fold the page back again. Say the word, spell it, and add the last two syllables.
7. Continue until you spell the whole word.
8. GO BACK AND CHECK -- make sure you didn't leave out any letters!

should
shoul___
shou___ __
sho ___ __ __
sh ___ __ __ __
s ___ __ __ __ __
___ __ __ __ __



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4. Highlight the Hard Parts

This is a good strategy for learning rules and patterns. If you want to learn a bunch of IE words -- that "I before E" rule that so many people find so hard to use -- this is a good way to do it. It's also good for those words with a letter that's hard to remember, such as separate. (Some people can remember it by thinking "There's a rat in separate.") You don't want to guess - if you guess wrong, you're practicing it wrong, and practice makes permanent, after all. Here's something to help you focus on the troublesome part.

Get different color pens or pencils or markers, and index cards. Write the words vividly, boldly on the cards -- and make the 'hard part' a different color than the rest... maybe with stripes on the letters. Make a mental picture of that card, read the word aloud and spell it aloud, and change the way you *say* the "hard part," maybe saying it louder, maybe putting on a British accent.

sep**A**rate belie**ve**
relie**ve** grie**ve** achie**ve**

When you write the whole word, think about the hard part, what it looks like or sounds like. So, while you're writing "separate," you might be thinking "sep AY rate" and/or that bold, red A.

Don't overwhelm your brain -- don't try to learn 5 words at a time like this unless you've got an amazing visual memory. Better to do one word 5 times -- and start spelling it right in your writing.

5. Use a Tape Recorder to test yourself, and to practice using them.

Read the words -- be sure you're pronouncing them right -- into a tape recorder. Record it like it's a spelling test -- word, example sentence, word. (For example, you'd say "Separate. Put the papers in separate piles. Separate. Spelled s - e - p - a - r - a - t - e.") Play it back - and try to say the spelling before the tape plays it.

6. Use the words creatively.

If separate is the word, think of 5 different phrases with the word and write them down. Let's see... separate rooms, separate cars, separate houses, A Separate Peace... Or, try to use 20 of your words in the same story. Get silly -- have fun with the words!

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