

Spelling Programs, Resources and Apps for Use at Home

For spelling intervention to be effective it should be explicit, cumulative, and structured with numerous opportunities for practise and revision. Programs should engage multiple core areas focusing on the development of both reading and spelling skills.

These core areas include:

- Phonological awareness: an individual's awareness of the sound structure of words on all levels including word boundaries, stress patterns, syllables, onset-rime units, and phonemes (individual speech sounds). Students with spelling difficulties can have difficulties with their phonological awareness and in particular their phonemic awareness (PA). PA is the ability to perceive and manipulate phonemes in spoken words. An inability to distinguish individual phoneme in a word can lead to difficulties matching letters to sounds resulting in spelling and reading difficulties.
- Phonics: Understanding that English speech sounds (phonemes) are represented by one or more letters (graphemes) is known as the alphabetic principle. Phonics is where spoken words are broken down into individual phonemes and are matched and represented by graphemes (letter or letters) in the written form. Around half of English words can be spelt using letter sound correspondence. A further 30% of English words can be spelt using letter sound correspondence, however one of the correspondences does not have the usual grapheme spelling for that phoneme.
- Spelling conventions and patterns: English has accepted letter conventions and patterns, and rules for how speech is represented in writing. Most phonemes in English can be spelt several ways, and many spellings can have more than one pronunciation, so students need explicit systematic instruction to develop their literacy skills. Orthography is the system of writing used to represent spoken English and includes spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, and spacing.
- Morphology and syntax: Morphology is the study of words, how they are formed and their relationship to other words. Understanding that words can be built using bases, roots, prefixes, and suffixes helps a student develop a deeper understanding of the English language. Knowing that, for example by adding a suffix can alter the spelling of a base word, or that knowing the meaning of a morpheme (smallest unit of meaning e.g. base, root, prefix, suffix) can help with understanding

the meanings of unfamiliar words. Students need explicit instruction in identifying and analysing how words are constructed.

- Semantic knowledge and etymology: The English language has evolved from several languages with each language having its own letter sound and morphological conventions. As a result, knowing the etymology (a word's origins and history) can assist with correct letter choices and understanding a word's meaning.
- Metacognition and memory skills: Teaching students to spell using a combination of phonological, orthographic, morphological, and etymological activities and using the rules for syntax will not only assist students to learn how to spell, but it will provide them with a deeper understanding of the English language. Strategies like over articulation of tricky parts in a word, mnemonics, associations formed from word families, or recognising incorrect letter patterns can assist when spelling irregular words.

As a student's spelling and reading skills develop their reliance on the individual core areas change. Beginner spellers rely on phonological awareness and phonic knowledge while older students use more of the other core areas for reading and spelling. [The DSF Spelling Wheel](#) provides further information on the six core areas and which areas are utilised by age.

Finding Support to help your child with spelling

SPELD NSW recommends, if possible, that students with dyslexia, dysgraphia or difficulties with spelling, work with experienced learning support teachers and/or specialist literacy tutors.

SPELD NSW maintains a Referral Database of specialist tutors and professionals. These experts have the training and experience in learning difficulties and evidence-based literacy instruction to enable them to provide tailored instructions that meet the complex needs of individual students. Please contact SPELD NSW if you would like referrals to tutors and/ or professionals from the Referral Database.

There are a number of spelling and reading programs that can be used by parents or family members in the home environment if access to specialist support is not available. These programs do not require specialist training and can come with explicit instructions or are straight-forward on how to use them. Examples of some of these programs are included below.

Please be aware that not all programs will work for all students and no one program will cover all aspects of spelling instruction.

Spelling Programs to Use at Home

[Barton Reading and Spelling System](#)

This reading and spelling program is designed to be implemented at home by parents (it is also used by schools and tutors). Barton has multiple levels and students use pencil and paper and the provided letter tiles to complete each lesson. It is comprehensive and structured and is based on an Orton-Gillingham approach. Lessons are fully scripted and parents are provided with training videos to assist with the delivery of the program. (Can be purchased second-hand. The program is American so some spelling needs to be adapted.)

[Dandelion Beginner and Catch-Up Readers and Workbooks](#)

The Dandelion Phonic Readers and Workbooks can be used for reading and spelling intervention.

The Beginner Readers are aimed at students aged four to eight and are designed to introduce students to the process of reading and the English Phonic Code. There are three beginner series:

- Dandelion Launchers: These readers introduce students to reading or provides extra reading practise.
- Dandelion Readers: These readers follow the same phonic progression as the Launchers; however they introduce initial sounds with more text per page.
- Dandelion Extended Code Readers: These readers introduce more complex parts of the English Phonic Code including alternate vowel and constant spellings.

The Catch-Up Readers are designed for students aged from eight to fourteen who require intervention due to gaps in their phonic knowledge and skills.

All readers have an accompanying workbook containing reading, spelling, comprehension, and writing activities for practicing concepts before, during and after reading. Readers and workbooks include activity instructions and games.

A downloadable [reading placement test](#) is available on the SPELD NSW website to assist with which series and reader is an appropriate place to start.

Dandelion decodable readers and workbooks are available for purchase from [SPELD NSW](#) and can also be borrowed from the [Jill Sherlock Memorial Library](#). SPELD NSW members can also borrow decodable readers from our library.

Nessy Reading and Spelling

Nessy has a range of fun and engaging online evidence-based literacy programs suitable for students aged four to fourteen. Learning is made fun via game-based structured activities progressing in small manageable steps. The programs include:

- *Nessy Reading and Spelling*- phonics program for ages 6 to 11
- *Hairy Reading*- phonics program for ages 4 to 6 (also available as apps for [iPad](#) or [Android](#))
- *Nessy Fingers*- learn to type while practicing spelling for ages 7 to 12
- *Writing Beach*- Basic grammar concepts including parts of speech and sentences for ages 7 to 14.

All programs have printable resources to support and motivate students.

Sounds Write – Help your Child to Read and Write (Part 1 and 2)

Sounds Write is a linguistic, structured, synthetic phonics program designed for teachers and speech pathologists. Sounds-Write has made the first 14 units of the Sounds-Write course available for parents to use through the UdeMy platform. The UdeMy course includes video tutorials for parents and downloadable resources. The first 14 units address reading and spelling with single letter sounds only (the Initial Code) and so is suitable for students who need to learn early reading skills.

<https://www.udemy.com/course/help-your-child-to-read-and-write/>

<https://www.sounds-write.co.uk/page-69-about.aspx>

There is also a Sounds-Write app available for iPads called “Initial Code” and Sounds-Write Activity Books that can be purchased from the [SPELD NSW Bookstore](#) that can be used by parents.

Spelling Mastery and Spelling Through Morphographs

Spelling Mastery is Direct Instruction spelling program supported by research which includes phonemic, morphemic and whole word spelling instruction. Spelling Mastery can be used as part of classroom instruction or as an intervention.

Spelling Mastery has 6 levels. Lessons scripted and the program addresses spelling skills appropriate for grades 1-6. Lessons should be delivered daily for 15-20 minutes.

Spelling Through Morphographs is a remedial Direct Instruction spelling program designed to support older students to catch up on key spelling skills with a focus on morphology and a small set of spelling rules. Spelling Through Morphographs has 1 level and lessons are scripted. The program addresses

spelling skills appropriate for grade 4 and beyond. Lessons should be delivered daily for 15-20 minutes.

Teacher handbooks and student workbooks are required to provide Spelling Mastery and Spelling through Morphographs. Teacher handbook licences can be purchased digitally for Spelling Mastery, and student workbooks must be purchased in hard copy. Both programs have free placement tests to determine where the student should start.

Both programs have a higher cost than other options included in this InfoSheet but they have been included as both programs are fully scripted and comprehensive spelling programs and will be suitable for some families.

[Word Wasp and The Hornet Literacy Primer](#)

From the writers of Toe by Toe, these two programs have been developed to address both reading and spelling: The Word Wasp and The Hornet Literacy Primer.

Word Wasp is a structured phonics program for teaching more complex reading and spelling to students from age seven to adult, while The Hornet Literacy Primer introduces individual letter-sound relationships and fundamental literacy skills.

Both programs use step-by-step instructions and are designed for one-on-one instruction. A downloadable [Suitability Placement Test](#) is available on The Word Wasp website along with videos and example pages.

The Word Wasp and The Hornet Literacy Primer books can be purchased from [SPELD NSW online store](#).

Spelling Resources to Use at Home

[DSF Resources for Families](#)

DSF has developed a range of downloadable resources to support students from Kindy to grade 7 with their spelling, reading, and writing. Designed for use at home, the resources are easy to use and have accompanying instructional videos.

[Reading Doctor – Apps for teaching kids to read and spell](#)

The Reading Doctor apps are a series of interactive and effective apps (iPad, android and mac) that allow students to practise letter sound knowledge, blending to read, spelling, sight words and word building.

These apps were designed by an Australian speech pathologist. They can be used to support systematic, synthetic phonics instruction and provide students with much needed opportunities for practise.

Sound Check 1 and Sound Check 2 Resource Books

SoundCheck from Little Learners Love Literacy is designed to let students experience success in spelling, by teaching the skill of segmenting words, or breaking words into sounds. The book is easy to use with step-by-step instructions for each lesson and lists of words for each of the 26 units.

The Sound Check resources books are available from the [SPELD NSW Bookstore](#).

SPELD NSW Resources for Members

Through the SPELD NSW members portal, SPELD NSW members are able to access and download a range of resources to support reading and spelling instruction, practice and assessment in the classroom and at home.

[Spelfabet](#)

Spelfabet is a website created by Alison Clarke, who is a highly respected speech pathologist from Melbourne. For students requiring extra phonics instruction and practice, this website has a wealth of information including a range of spelling resources and has an excellent blog on all topics related to spelling, reading, and phonics.

While some resources are free to download, other resources like spelling workbooks, activities and games can be affordably purchased and downloaded from the website.

Spelling For Life

Lyn Stone's Spelling for Life offers an accessible resource to support students with spelling. Spelling for life enables teachers and students to learn about spelling strategies, patterns in regular and less regular spelling and practise successful spelling strategies.

Spelling for life is available from the [SPELD NSW Bookstore](#).