

SPELLING IS IMPORTANT !!

Spelling can be a real problem for some people. With mobile phone usage and text messaging increasing, it could be argued that we are developing a different language where spelling is the least important issue! But, good spelling makes it easier for teachers and markers to read what you have written in assessments and examination situations, so it is worth trying to improve your spelling skills if they need it.

While many teachers do not actively deduct marks for poor spelling, if it is difficult for a teacher to understand what a student is trying to say, it is hard to assess whether the student “knows” the work being tested, so could cost precious marks that may make the difference between a pass and fail.

Following, is an excerpt from my book “*Can I Help My Child Learn? A Parent Guide Written in Plain English*”, in which I explain a method that can help to learn spelling skills.

“There seems to be a common perception that if a child can read, they should also be able to spell. *This is not the case.* **Reading and spelling are totally different skills.** When we are reading, our brain is looking for letter patterns in the text, which then allows us to work out what the words are. **Reading involves recognition.** When we are spelling, we are copying letter patterns from our brain, which then allows us to correctly spell the word. **Spelling involves visual memory and listening skills.**

To spell correctly, we need to remember:

- what the word looks like
- the letters in the word
- the order of the letters in the word

In order for children to do this successfully, they need to “**get a picture**” of the word in their mind, they need to “listen” to the sounds in the word and also the “order of the sounds” in the words.

*Children do not always “listen” to the sounds in words and in fact don’t know that they **SHOULD** be “listening”, so this needs to be explained to them.*

Children need to understand that many words have “easy” parts and “hard” parts. To explain this, you can point out the “easy” and the “hard” parts in the word “cricket”.

cr/ick/et

- 1) The first part “cr” is “easy” because we can “sound out” the letters separately and then put them together to make the blended sound.
- 2) The second part “ick” is “hard” because it has only two sounds (“i” and “c”) **BUT** it has three letters; “i”, “c”, “k”.
- 3) The third part “et” is “easy” because we can sound out those two letters.
- 4) Once your child has identified the “easy” and the “hard” parts, let them highlight the hard part with a coloured highlighter. This will help them to remember it.”

This method can be used by people of all ages to help them to become better spellers. My book is available at <https://www.irlendyslexia.com/store>