

Year 3 Spelling: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents

This step-by-step explanation to spelling can help you support your child's learning at home. Each subject is broken down into manageable chunks, providing all the resources you need to understand how the spelling patterns work in each year group along with techniques and resources to help you support your child.

Within this area of the website, you will find a selection of materials and activities intended to help your child learn about each step of this guide. Each step also contains a keyword or phrase that you can use to search the Twinkl site for more resources and activities, designed to support your child in achieving that stage. Simply type the keyword or phrase into the search bar and press enter to explore together.

 

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. The contents of this resource are for general, informational purposes only. This guide is intended to offer parents general guidance on what subject areas tend to be covered in their child's year group and where they could support their children at home. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. There are some subject areas that we have intentionally not covered due to the nature of how they are taught or because a trained professional needs to teach these areas. We try to ensure that the information in our resources is correct but every school teaches the national curriculum in its own way. If you would like further guidance or are unsure in any way, we recommend that you speak to your child's teacher or another suitably qualified professional.

Spelling

How Is Spelling Taught in Year 3?

In years 3 and 4, spelling work follows a set list (often referred to as 'statutory spellings'). This list can be taught in any pattern chosen by each school.

While children still need to practise words that don't follow the spelling rules, most of these 'common exception words' from years 1 and 2 should now be recognisable on sight. Your child will learn to spell new words correctly and should have plenty of opportunity to practise spelling them. At this stage, learning focuses on words that are often misspelt.

How Are Dictionaries Helpful?

Dictionaries can be an important tool for children to use as part of supporting their writing and spelling. Children are expected to use dictionaries effectively and to be able to use the first three letters to locate a word in a dictionary. You may wish to talk to your child's class teacher about which dictionary is used in school, as this will have been chosen for your child's age group; you may also find that the familiarity of the layout helps to make your child more likely to use it at home.

What Are Prefixes and Suffixes?

Prefixes and suffixes are small groups of letters that are added to the beginning or end of words to change their meaning. Your child may begin to learn about spelling patterns for adding these prefixes and suffixes to words, meaning they can read them with more accuracy and fluency. They may also explore the meanings of these prefixes and suffixes and how they change the meaning of the words they are added to, e.g. un- means reverse or opposite of, so unhappy is the reverse or opposite of happy.

What Are Homophones?

Homophones are words that sound the same but have a different meaning, e.g. hoarse and horse. Children will spend a lot of time focusing on rhyming and will be introduced to simple homophones at this stage; however, as a child's vocabulary develops, school will introduce an increasing number of 'difficult to spell' homophones that often crop up in written English.



Picture That Spelling

Mix up spelling practise by incorporating the words into pictures of the things they represent, e.g. your child could draw a hand and write the word 'thumb' where the thumb would be. How else can your child's spellings be mixed into pictures?

Make a Mini Dictionary

Using their spelling list from school, your child could sort the words into alphabetical order and write them out with a definition next to each one. Understanding the how and when a word is used can help your child to contextualise what they're learning. For an extra challenge, can your child also identify whether each word is a noun, verb, adjective, etc.?

Silly Sentences

Use your child's spelling words in silly sentences. The sillier the sentence they can make, the more memorable! For example, 'It is possible that I accidentally ate my eighth calendar.' By underlining the spelling words in each sentence, your child can come back to the sentences they write in the future and know exactly which ones to revise. With this game, you should double-check that your child has spelt the key spelling words correctly.

Missing Letter Games

When practising groups of words your child has learnt, it's important not to forget the earlier words. You can help your child to practise by maintaining a list and playing a missing letter game. You can use a whiteboard or pen and paper to write out words with a gap, e.g. br_a_h_ becomes breathe. Can your child fill in the letters that are missing? Is there more than one option, e.g. hear_ could be heard or heart?



Step 1

Handwriting and Repeated Practice

These helpful sheets allow your child to practise the required (statutory) spellings from year 3 and 4. Bear in mind that your child's school may issue spellings in a different order to the Twinkl activities, so be selective and match as closely as you can. These worksheets are available in a variety of fonts (e.g. precursive, cursive and print).



Practising those Statutory Spellings

Once your child has repeatedly practised these words through games and writing them down in different ways, these colourful activity mats are great to focus on specific words. There are lots of resources and activities to keep the learning going. Try to match the words you focus on with the spellings your child's school sends home.

Step 2

Step 3

Get Marking with Mr Whoops!

At this age, children love to pretend to be the teacher. This pack contains a list of the statutory spellings for year 3 and 4 and a range of activity sheets where Mr Whoops has been terribly clumsy with his spelling; your child will be encouraged to spot the mistakes and correct his work. Encourage your child to improve the spelling errors and to learn the skill of spotting mistakes when rereading and editing work.



Statutory Spellings Word Searches

Word searches can be a great way to help children with spellings by visualising spellings in different directions and to focus on the suffixes (e.g. un- or dis-) and prefixes (e.g. -ment or -ful) that form an important part of spellings in year 3 and 4. Let your children attempt these spellings independently throughout years 3 and 4 to build a recognition of how each word 'looks right'.

Step 4

Explore and Discover More

Twinkl Go! is a digital platform, hosting interactive content such as videos, games, audiobooks and more. Twinkl Go! enables digital content to be streamed to your computer or mobile device.



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Go!



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Book Club

Twinkl Book Club is our book subscription service. Enjoy our original works of fiction in beautiful printed form, delivered to you each half-term and yours to keep!



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Boost

Twinkl Boost is a range of intervention resources, created to support and lift learning with children at every level. These include our easy-to-use SATs and Phonics Screening resources.



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imagine

Imagine resources are designed to help your children to think creatively, question and imagine. Every week, a new topic consisting of five photos, each with related activities, is created.



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ORIGINALS

Twinkl Originals are engaging stories written to inspire pupils from EYFS to KS2. Designed to encourage a love of reading and help curriculum-wide learning through accompanying resources.



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KIDS' TV

Twinkl Kids' TV is our wonderful YouTube channel dedicated to fun and informative video-style resources full of new and creative activities you can try at home!