

## Facilitator Notes

# Teaching Spelling

## Introduction

The facilitator notes are designed to support the delivery of the *Training Toolkit: Teaching Spelling*. The toolkit provides the tools and resources to run an in-school session that will give school staff the opportunity to:

- develop key professional knowledge about the English spelling system
- consider effective practical approaches to teaching spelling

The *Training Toolkit: Teaching Spelling* should be seen as a starting point for developing the teaching of spelling in your school. There are opportunities for staff to reflect on what works well in their classrooms and across the school; to identify the elements from the training that they could use; and to draw together a strategic plan to develop the teaching of spelling in their own classes.

## When should I run the session?

The *Training Toolkit: Teaching Spelling* has been written to cover a single professional development session. You might wish to use the resources as a standalone twilight inset, as part of an inset day, or in a way that best fits your context. The session is likely to work best if the facilitator is familiar with the materials and the concepts and ideas introduced.

## What is in the toolkit?

Teaching Spelling Presentation	PowerPoint
Important Concepts for Understanding Spelling	PDF
A Week of Teaching Spelling	PDF
Frequently Asked Questions	PDF
Staff Questionnaire: Teaching Spelling	Word document
Teaching Spelling Development Plan	Word document
Introduction to Teaching Spelling	Video (2 min 34)
Teaching Spelling in Practice	Video (13 min 55)
Making Sense of Spelling	Video (2 min 30)
Phonics: Spelling and Sounds	Video (1 min 49)
Orthography: Making Sense of the System	Video (2 min 20)
Morphology: Using Meaning to Unlock Spelling	Video (1 min 50)
Etymology: Where Words Began	Video (2 min 18)

## Preparation

### Adapting the presentation to your context

There are a number of resources provided to support this session, but depending on the time available to you, you may want to carry out work before and after the session.

Key slides to focus on are:

- **Slide 1:** ahead of this session, consider whether you want your teaching staff to reflect on a child in their class and the challenges they face with regard spelling.
- **Slides 3, 10, 12 and 15:** these include video content that you may wish to ask your teaching staff to watch before or after the training session.
- **Slides 4–7:** there are also slides with context related content – please select the right slide for your location and delete the others.
- There are a number of additional tasks suggested throughout the facilitator notes that you may or may not wish to include. These are clearly signposted: **Additional task**.
- You may wish to pause to take questions as you go through the session or to wait and take questions at the end. To help you, there is a *Frequently Asked Questions* document as part of the Training Toolkit.

### Before starting the session ensure:

- the presentation is displayed clearly
- videos are working and sound can be heard clearly
- all handouts are copied and ready

## Running the Session

### Slides 1 & 2

**Outcomes for the session**

- Develop key professional knowledge about the English spelling system
- Provide effective practical approaches to teaching spelling
- Reflect on your school's current provision for teaching spelling

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- Welcome everyone and introduce the outcomes of the session.

#### Additional task

- You may want to ask your teaching staff to complete *Staff Questionnaire: Teaching Spelling* ahead of the training session to gauge staff confidence and tailor the session to specific needs.
- You may want to ask each person to reflect on a child in their class and the challenges they face with regard spelling, and then to share this with a colleague.
- Ask each person to keep this child in mind as the session progresses, considering how they could support them further.

### Slide 3

**An introduction to spelling**

**WATCH:** *Introduction to Teaching Spelling*



Introduction to Teaching Spelling

Note: you can find this film in Training Toolkit: Teaching Spelling.

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- To set the scene for the session, watch the introductory film together.
- This introduces the author James Clements and provides an outline of the session.

### Slide 4: England

**Spelling in the National Curriculum 2014**

- A great deal of emphasis on correct spelling
- A mixture of statutory and non-statutory word lists for different year groups
- Spelling is assessed in Year 2 and Year 6
- Strong spelling is also a significant aspect of writing

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- For the next four slides, choose the slide that matches your context, i.e. the country your school is based in, and remove the other slides ahead of the session.
- You may want to ask pairs to summarise the key points within the National Curriculum 2014 before showing the slide.
- You may want to pause for discussion or to take questions, depending on the group.

#### Additional notes

- There are wordlists for different year groups (provided in appendix 1 of the National Curriculum 2014). The words themselves are non-statutory, but they serve to illustrate the statutory requirements.
- In the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test, 20 of a possible 70 marks (29%) are awarded for the spelling element. The test consists of 20 key words to spell, presented within contextualised sentences.
- Spelling in writing is assessed by teachers against the statements in the interim teacher assessment frameworks. By the end of Key Stage 2, a child needs to be able to spell 'most' of the Year 5 and Year 6 words accurately in order to be judged as working at the expected standard. You may want to look at these in more detail:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-interim-frameworks-for-teacher-assessment-at-the-end-of-key-stage-1>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2017-interim-frameworks-for-teacher-assessment-at-the-end-of-key-stage-2>

## Slide 5: Wales

**Spelling in the Curriculum for Wales** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**By the end of Year 2, learners are expected to:**

- use spelling strategies such as segmenting, simple roots and suffixes, e.g. *ing, ed*
- use knowledge of syllables to spell polysyllabic words
- use a dictionary
- spell high-frequency words correctly

**By the end of Year 6, learners are expected to:**

- use strategies to spell correctly polysyllabic, complex and irregular words

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- You may want to ask pairs to summarise the key points before revealing the content on the slide.
- You may want to pause for discussion or to take questions, depending on the needs of the group.

### Additional notes

- Writing accurately is one element of the language, literacy and communication skills area of learning – this includes requirements for spelling.
- Requirements of the revised curriculum for Wales closely mirror the requirements of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework for Wales, statutory from September 2015

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/revised-areas-of-learning-and-programmes-of-study/?lang=en>

<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/key-stages-2-4?lang=en>

## Slide 6: Scotland

**Spelling in the Curriculum for Excellence** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**Expectations at Early level**  
I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read or write.

**Expectations at First level**  
I can spell the most commonly-used words, using my knowledge of letter patterns and spelling rules and use resources to help me spell tricky or unfamiliar words.

**Expectations at Second level**  
I can spell most of the words I need to communicate, using spelling rules, specialist vocabulary, self-correction techniques and a range of resources.

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- You may want to ask pairs to summarise the key points before revealing the content on the slide.

### Additional notes

- Curriculum for Excellence has no statutory requirements though there are expectations outlined with regard spelling both in reading and writing.
- The tools sections of Curriculum for Excellence "include important skills and knowledge: for example, in reading it includes such important matters as reading strategies, spelling and grammar".
- Tools for writing include "using knowledge of technical aspects to help my writing communicate effectively within and beyond my place of learning".
- The Education Scotland website has a section covering knowledge of language. It has guidelines for spelling in Scots 'which has no standard orthography'. This section states that there is no standard written form of Scots, but it allows for flexibility and promotes the use of dialect.

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[file:///C:/Users/walkerja/Downloads/literacy\\_english\\_experiences\\_outcomes\\_tcm4-539867.pdf](file:///C:/Users/walkerja/Downloads/literacy_english_experiences_outcomes_tcm4-539867.pdf)

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/knowledgeoflanguage/scots/writinginscots/scotsspelling/index.asp>

## Slide 7: Northern Ireland

**Spelling in the Northern Ireland Curriculum** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**At key stage 1**  
Children "should be encouraged to develop as independent writers, learning over time to use conventional spelling, punctuation, grammatical organisation and handwriting that is legible".

**Between key stages 1 and 2**  
Pupils should progress "from beginning to write in sentences to showing increasing proficiency in the use of syntax, spelling and punctuation".

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- You may want to ask pairs to summarise the key points before revealing the content on the slide.

### Additional note

- Knowledge of spelling is also included in the levels of progression used to assess the cross-curricular skill of communication.

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## Slide 8

**Reflection Task** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**Working with a partner or in a small group, discuss:**

1. How do children approach spelling in your class?

For example, do they:

- 'have a go' at spelling unfamiliar words?
- make use of dictionaries?
- use their phonic knowledge?
- make links to other words that they know?

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- In pairs or small groups, take 3–5 minutes to discuss the questions on the slide.
- Then discuss as a whole group:
  - Overall, how strong is the teaching spelling/organisation of spelling at your school?
  - How do you know?

### Additional task

- You may want to discuss the questions in the context of the children chosen at the start of the session.

## Slide 9

**What we know about English spelling** TRAINING TOOLKIT

- Criticism of English spelling focuses on its apparent inconsistent sound-spelling relationships. However, English spelling is much more regular and systematic than is often realised.
- As we saw from the *Introduction to Teaching Spelling* video, teaching English spelling can be tricky, but there are some key concepts that can help children to become confident at spelling.

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- One of the difficulties we have with teaching spelling is that the English spelling system is often seen as irregular or not making sense. While it is certainly complicated, due to its varied and rich history, English actually makes a lot more sense than a surface glance might suggest.

## Slide 10

**English spelling in three minutes** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**WATCH:** *Making Sense of Spelling*



Note: you can find this film in *Training Toolkit: Teaching Spelling*.

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- Watch the *English Spelling in Three Minutes* video that explains some of the key principles of English spelling that will be used in this session.

### Additional task

- Before playing the video, you may want to allow time for pairs to discuss the principles they think support the teaching of spelling.

## Slide 11

**Important Concepts for Understanding Spelling** TRAINING TOOLKIT

These concepts are important for understanding English spelling, and for teaching and learning:

- **Phonics:** sounds and the letters that represent them
- **Orthography:** the coding system of English
- **Morphology:** the structure and meaning of words
- **Etymology:** history and origin of words

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- This slide outlines some of the key concepts that are useful when thinking about (and teaching) English spelling.

### Additional notes

- There are additional support notes in the handout *Important Concepts for Understanding Spelling*. These notes include information from the animations referenced on the next slide.

## Slide 12

**Extension task** TRAINING TOOLKIT

Watch the short films to find out more about **phonics, orthography, morphology and etymology**.

Phonics: Spelling and Sounds    Orthography: Making Sense of the System    Morphology: Using Meaning to Unlock Spelling    Etymology: Where Words Begin

Note: you can find these films in *Training Toolkit: Teaching Spelling*.

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## Additional task

- You could watch each of the short videos as a group or send pairs away to watch them on separate devices. Alternatively, you could ask the group to watch the videos before the session.
- Once the group have watched the films, you might want to recap the four concepts, using the *Key Concepts for Spelling* handout, and consider how they might be useful in teaching spelling.
- You could discuss which concepts people already use and which they think could be useful. Even if staff are unfamiliar with the terminology, it is very possible that they have used them in the classroom

## Slide 13

**Putting the concepts into practice** TRAINING TOOLKIT

In pairs or small groups, look at the words below:

Medicine	Playwright
Beautiful	Handkerchief

1. Why might children find them tricky?  
2. Which of the concepts we've looked at would be useful in explaining how these words are spelled?

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- Consider the words together in pairs of small groups, thinking about how each of the four concepts might be useful to help children remember how to spell the words.
- Depending on the size of the group, you could share the words between you.

## Additional notes

- Medicine –remembering the 'c' can be tricky and showing children it shares a root with medical and medic can help children to remember this.
- Beautiful – from Anglo-French, where 'eau' is a much more common letter string.
- Playwright – tricky as this is someone who *writes* plays. Knowing that a wright is someone who makes things (like a shipwright) can be handy.
- Handkerchief – although the 'd' is often not pronounced, linking the word to its purpose can help children to remember it is there. We also have a chance to think about the 'I before E except after C' rule (which generally works when the 'ie' is making an 'ee' sound).

## Slide 14

**Reflection Task** TRAINING TOOLKIT

Working with a partner or in a small group, discuss:

1. How might these concepts be useful when **improving** the teaching of spelling in your class?  
2. How might they affect the way you approach teaching spelling at your school?

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- In pairs or small groups, take 3–5 minutes to discuss the questions on the slide.
- Then discuss as a whole group.

## Additional task

- You may want to discuss in the context of the children chosen at the start of the session.



## Slide 15

**Effective approaches to teaching spelling** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**WATCH:** *Teaching Spelling in Practice*



Note: you can find this film in *Training Toolkit: Teaching Spelling*.

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## Additional task

- Watch the *Teaching Spelling in Practice* video that explores approaches one school took to improve the teaching of spelling.

## Slide 16

**Reflection Task** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**Working with a partner or in a small group, discuss:**

1. What do you think are the key approaches to teaching spelling that have proved successful at Fox School?
2. How might these strategies work in your own school? Which approaches might you need to adapt to your own situation?

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- In pairs or small groups, take a few minutes to discuss the questions on the slide. You could ask people to consider the school as a whole or their own classroom.
- Then discuss as a whole group. Which elements could be implemented in individual classes and which would need to be part of a whole-school approach?

## Additional task

- You may want to discuss in the context of the children chosen at the start of the session.

## Slide 17

**Planning Task** TRAINING TOOLKIT

**Working with a partner:**

1. Read and discuss the handout *A Week of Teaching Spelling*, summarising the key approaches to organising spelling provision used by the teacher.

**Working as a group:**

2. Discuss three or four things you could do collectively to develop the teaching of spelling at your school, drawing on ideas from *A Week of Teaching Spelling* and *Teaching Spelling in Practice*.

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- As the final task, ask people to work in pairs and then as a group to reflect on the discussion points on the slide.
- You may to look in particular at:
  - how to adopt a consistent approach across the whole school
  - the challenges of building spelling into the teaching week
  - how to build in practice of spellings in context
  - specific foci for the different years
  - how to extend a consistent approach to spelling to parent/carer support
- You could record action points suggested and then look at how these could be implemented. Some might need to be organised into a whole-school development plan, while others could be implemented straight away by the staff team.

## Resources needed

- You will need the handout *A Week of Spelling* for this activity.

## Additional task

- You may want to discuss in the context of the children chosen at the start of the session.
- If you haven't already, you might want to finish the session by discussing any questions the staff team have. The *Frequently Asked Questions* sheet might be helpful here.

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## After the session

- Once you have decided on some priorities for developing spelling, you could use the *Teaching Spelling Development Plan* for staff to plan to develop the teaching of spelling in their own classes. The ideas and knowledge from the session will be most useful if they are taken and applied to your own school's context. Every school is different and faces different challenges, even if the principles of good spelling teaching are the same.
- An effective plan will:
  - build on what already works well in the class
  - draw on the key principles discussed in the session
  - introduce new approaches or activities
  - focus on practical steps to support children
  - be sustainable and ongoing
  - be manageable, without dramatically increasing teachers' workload
- Teachers will need to be given time to write their plans, either together as a group or individually.
- Once this has been done and the individual plans have been shared, set a date to come together again and evaluate progress against the development plans. What impact have the changes had on children's spelling? What learning can be shared? What will your next steps be?

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## Further support

### Useful resources:

Here are some places to find free resources for developing the teaching of spelling in your school:

- Oxford Children's Dictionary downloadable activity sheets, including an *Introduction to Dictionary Skills*, *Oxford Phonics Spelling Dictionary: Which spelling?* and *Roald Dahl Dictionary: Jumpsquiffing Challenge*:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/direct-link/oxford-dictionaries-teaching-assessment-resources>

- Grammar Glossary and Quiz:

<http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/oxed/primary/grammar-quiz/index.html>

- Free support for parents with spelling from Oxford Owl for Home:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/direct-link/grammar-punctuation-and-spelling-made-easy>

## School Improvement Pathways on Oxford Owl

Many of the resources and ideas shared in this professional development session are taken from the Oxford University Press School Improvement Pathway 'Improving Spelling'. This Pathways gives a unique four-step approach to developing the teaching of spelling across the whole school, drawing on research evidence and the work of outstanding case study schools.

To find out more visit [www.oxfordowl.co.uk/school](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/school)