ESSENTIALspelling
Year 6

Herts for Learning

Welcome to ESSENTIALspelling, a teaching resource from Herts for Learning.

This resource can be used as a scheme for spelling on its own, or in conjunction with the school's existing scheme to give supplementary teaching guidance. The complete resource features a suite of teaching sequences for each year group; these are designed to be taught in order, as they track back to each other and follow on in logical progression. There are around 30 sequences in each year group and each sequence represents a series of lessons, rather than one lesson. The length of time needed to deliver a sequence will depend on the needs of your class and the amount of time given to the teaching of spelling each week. Roughly speaking, each sequence is designed to be a week's work if you have the equivalent of four x 15-20 minute sessions of spelling teaching per week.

What is different about ESSENTIALspelling?

This spelling resource is different to other spelling schemes. It focuses more on the teaching of spelling so that children understand how to apply patterns, strategies and knowledge to other words and not just a list of words given for that week. It also provides links to prior knowledge and tracks back to related objectives so that teachers can give targeted support to children who are not yet able to spell words from their year group programme of study. Throughout the document, the extended titles: *"Revisit, Explain, Use; Teach, Model, Define; Practise, Explore, Investigate; Apply, Assess, Reflect"* have been used to indicate the full purpose of each section.

Unlike other resources, **ESSENTIALspelling** places an emphasis on the *Review* stage of the teaching sequence. This is not 'what did we learn last week?' but instead: "What do we already know that might help us to spell words in this sequence?" The *Review* session is essential because it gives teachers an opportunity for assessment for learning and gives pupils the chance to build connections between existing knowledge and new knowledge.

Similarly, the *Teach* part of the sequence has a huge focus in this resource. **ESSENTIALspelling** provides essential knowledge that will support teachers to explain and unpick the learning behind the lesson.

Wherever possible, all children should take part in these parts of the sequence regardless of prior spelling attainment. The review section always tracks back to prior learning and the teach section introduces new learning as well as strategies for tackling spelling. Unless children are supported towards age-related spellings, their learning gap will grow wider.

However, this resource does then offer a teacher the chance to tailor learning more specifically to the current needs and spelling attainment of the children. The *Practise* and *Apply* sections give children the opportunity to rehearse spelling patterns and use them in context. Below these sections are two further sections: *Minor Gaps* and *Major Gaps*. During the review section, you may feel that some children have small gaps in their knowledge and would benefit from shoring up the prior learning. Furthermore, you may have noticed that this is an area of weakness in their independent writing. If this is the case, you may prefer children to work on the activities described in the *Minor Gaps* section. There may also be one or two children who have little spelling confidence. They may have large gaps in certain areas, such as choosing the appropriate vowel, or how to add suffixes to words. They may be in the early stages of language acquisition or have cognitive difficulties.

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In these cases, you might like to focus on the *Major Gaps* section during the *Practise* and *Apply* parts of the lesson. In rare cases, you may feel that it is more appropriate for certain children to tackle this work during the *Teach* section.

The *Practise* sections are generally straightforward and resource light so that teachers do not have to spend time copying and cutting, or explaining rules of games. However, several example resources are included and these could be adapted to work with other sequences. Homework is not mentioned but could be given to fit the sequence.

Likewise, the *Apply* sections follow a regular pattern of children discussing their learning and spelling words in the context of short dictations. Occasionally, an *Apply* section will contain an extended writing activity to challenge the children to choose and use words independently and in context. Spelling tests are not mentioned, but dictations will show whether learning has been assimilated. If single word tests are given, spaced recall is more helpful than testing children on lists of words from that week. In other words, throwing in words from previous weeks will help children bring words from short term into long term memory. A low stakes, manageable way of creating spaced recall opportunities is 'spelling tennis'. This is where children work in pairs to select 10 words from their partner's personal list of spellings and words from previous weeks. They then take it in turns to 'test' each other on these words and can mark these between themselves. This makes spelling tests more relevant to individuals. After any kind of dictation or test, it is imperative that children talk through successes and mistakes with a partner: "I remembered to double the consonant here, but I forgot to include an 'e' there."

It is important that children are able to articulate their learning throughout the sequence and that teachers address any difficulties or misconceptions along the way. This resource is designed so that children can build on prior learning, make connections with existing knowledge and learn strategies that will help them develop their spelling competence. It is through explaining what they have learnt about the patterns and processes of spelling that they will improve their ability to spell accurately.

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International Phonetic Alphabet (non-statutory)

The table below shows each symbol of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and provides examples of the associated grapheme(s). The table is not a comprehensive alphabetic code chart; it is intended simply as guidance for teachers in understanding the IPA symbols used in this document. The pronunciations in the table are, by convention, based on Received Pronunciation and could be significantly different in other accents.

Consonants	
/b/	**b**ad
/d/	**d**og
/ð/	**th**is
/dʒ/	**g**em, **j**ug
/f/	i**f**, pu**ff**, **ph**oto
/g/	**g**um
/h/	**h**ow
/j/	**y**es
/k/	**c**at, che**ck**, **k**ey, s**ch**ool
/l/	**l**eg, hi**ll**
/m/	**m**an
/n/	ma**n**
/ŋ/	si**ng**
/θ/	bo**th**
/p/	**p**et
/r/	**r**ed
/s/	**s**it, mi**ss**, **c**ell
/ʃ/	**sh**e, **ch**ef
/t/	**t**ea
/tʃ/	**ch**eck
/v/	**v**et
/w/	**w**et, **wh**en
/z/	**z**ip, hen**s**, bu**zz**
/ʒ/	plea**s**ure

Vowels	
/ɑː/	f**a**ther, **ar**m
/ɒ/	h**o**t
/æ/	c**a**t
/aɪ/	m**i**nd, f**i**ne, p**ie**, h**igh**
/aʊ/	**ou**t, c**ow**
/ɛ/	h**e**n, h**ea**d
/eɪ/	s**ay**, c**a**m**e**, b**ai**t
/ɛə/	**air**
/əʊ/	c**o**ld, b**oa**t, c**o**n**e**, bl**ow**
/ɪ/	h**i**t
/ɪə/	b**eer**
/iː/	sh**e**, b**ea**d, s**ee**, sch**e**m**e**, ch**ie**f
/ɔː/	l**au**nch, r**aw**, b**or**n
/ɔɪ/	c**oi**n, b**oy**
/ʊ/	b**oo**k
/ʊə/	t**our**
/uː/	r**oo**m, y**ou**, bl**ue**, br**u**t**e**
/ʌ/	c**u**p
/ɜː/	f**er**n, t**ur**n, g**ir**l
/ə/	farm**er**

This chart is adapted slightly from the version provided on the DfE's website to support the Year 1 phonics screening check.

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Revisit, Explain, Use

Confirm that children can explain the terms "suffix" and "root word".
Invite children to suggest any words that end in the suffixes *-able* or *-ible*.
List these words on the board and discuss this vocabulary. Ask children to look at the list of words and try to notice any patterns or links between the words.

Ask children whether they see any connection between the roots of the words that all have the *-able* suffix, such as *understandable, considerable, suitable, enjoyable*. And what about the roots of those that end with the suffix *-ible*, such as *possible, horrible, terrible, visible*?

What do children notice about these words? Is there a rule?
Revise the convention that we normally add *-able* if the root word is a complete, recognisable word, e.g. *lock > lockable, consider > considerable*.
The *-ible* ending is generally used if a complete root word can not be heard before it, e.g. *poss > possible*. However, it also sometimes occurs when a complete word can be heard, e.g. *sensible, flexible*.

Remind children that the *-able / -ably* endings are far more common than the *-ible / -ibly* endings.

Hide the words and call some out. Invite children to record the spellings on their whiteboards. Discuss any misconceptions.

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Teach, Model, Define

Reteach some guidance to support children with the choice of *-ible, -able*:

As with *-ant* and *-ance / -ancy*, the *-able* ending is also used if there is a related word ending in *-ation*, such as *adorable* (*adore, adoration*), *applicable* (*apply, application*), *considerable* (*consider, consideration*).

Explain that we normally just add the suffix to the root word. However:
- If the word ends in an *e* or consonant +*y*, then the usual rules of dropping the *e* or changing *y* to an i apply, e.g. *excite> excitable, rely> reliable*.
- If the *-able* ending is added to a word ending in *-ce* or *-ge*, the *e* after the *c* or *g* must be kept, as those letters would otherwise have their hard sounds (as in *cap* and *gap*) before the *a* of the *-able* ending, e.g. *change > changeable, notice > noticeable*.

Challenge: teach the children some of the trickier changes that need to be applied to root words: *tolerate (toleration) > tolerable, irritate (irritation) > irritable, apply (application) > applicable, divide (division)> divisible*. These words just need to be learned.

BUFFER ZONE

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Do not move on if children are not secure with this learning

Remind children that words ending in *-able* or *-ible* are adjectives used to describe something, such as *a terrible day or an excitable puppy*. We can turn these adjectives into adverbs by adding *-ly*, in the same way as we have for other adjectives in the past.

Model the addition of *-ibly, -ably* to words:
possible > possibly, reasonable > reasonably, believable > believably

Ask the children what they notice about the addition of the suffix *-ly*, and help children to realise that the final *e* must be removed from the *-able* or *-ible* before adding *-ly*.

Alternatively, they can add *-ably, -ibly* straight onto roots, using the same guidance as for *-able, -ible* words.

Model turning *consider* into *considerably*, *enjoy* into *enjoyably* and *flex* into *flexibly*.
Invite the children to do the same with *comfort, terr* and *excite*.

Ensure the vocabulary is discussed, as some of these words will be unfamiliar to children.

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Practise, Explore, Investigate

Give children sentences with blanks where the *-able / -ible / -ably / -ibly* words would be. Children try to find the word that goes in each gap, using their understanding of the word meaning to support their answer, e.g. *It is not _____ to breathe underwater. (possible) This is a _____ scary film. (terribly)*

Challenge: give out root words below and ask children use the rule to complete the words, adding any of the *-able / -ible / -ably / -ibly* suffixes. There are some challenge words here – what are the conventions?

Minor gaps

Working on syllabification to segment multisyllabic words, to support children who sometimes miss out letters or syllables in words. Support children to sound out words and clap the syllables of the root word, e.g. *de-pend / en-joy / con-sid-er,* before ending *-ably / -ibly*. Focus on words that need no change to the root.

Major gaps

Focus on single-syllable words, plus any version of the suffixes, e.g. *lock+able, poss+ible*. Focus on words that need no change to the root.

Apply, Assess, Reflect

Revisit learning and discuss any misconceptions.

Children write a diary entry entitled *A changeable day*, using as many *-ible / -able* words as they can.

sense	horr	inflate	unmiss
consider	lock	rely	adore
drive	irritate	suit	terr
believe	flex	poss	live
response	laugh	excite	comfort
change	enjoy	divide	notice

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Affix:
an addition to the base form or root of a word in order to modify its meaning or create a new word (i.e. a prefix or a suffix).

Antonym:
a word opposite in meaning to another (e.g. bad and good).

Common Exception Words (CEWs):
Many **high frequency words** are decodable using **phonics**, but some will initially present difficulties as they contains rarer GPCs that the children will not learn straight away. Once children have progressed through the school's phonics scheme, the **high frequency words** that do not fit any of the **GPCs** studied so far -or have very rare GPCs- are called **Common Exception Words**. Some words may or may not become CEWs depending on regional accent. For example, in the south of England, the words bath, path and grass all sound as if they have an 'ar' sound but in northern accents, the spelling of these words is predictable.

Consonant: a basic speech sound in which the breath is at least partly obstructed, and which
can be combined with a vowel to form a syllable. In the alphabet, 21 letters are consonants: *b,c,d,f,g,h,j,k,l,m,n,p,q,r,s,t,v,w,x,y,z* but *y* also acts as a vowel when found in the middle or end of a word. However, in total, there are 24 consonant sounds in the English language as we also have the digraphs *ch, sh* and *th* that each represent single sounds.

Etymology:
the (study of the) origin of a word and the historical development of its meaning.

Digraph:
see **grapheme**

Grapheme:
the smallest unit of writing in a language i.e. the letter or letters representing a single **phoneme** (sound) e.g. m, p, a, ai or ch. Where two letters represent one phoneme, they are known as a digraph (ai or ch). Three letters making one phoneme are known as a trigraph (igh or tch). Similarly, a quadgraph is the term for four letters making one sound (ough or eigh). A **vowel** digraph is made up of two letters making one vowel sound (ay/ou) and a consonant digraph consists of two **consonant** letters making one sound (sh or ng). Consonant digraphs should not be confused with consonant clusters or letter strings that make two or more separate sounds (e.g. spl, tr or cl). A split vowel digraph consists of two vowel letters making one phoneme but straddled around a consonant (c**a**m**e** or l**i**k**e**). The second vowel in the digraph is always an e but it is silent. It acts to turn a **short vowel** sound into a **long vowel** sound and makes the first vowel letter say its name (e.g. ah to ay).

Grapheme- phoneme correspondence (GPC):
the letters that represent sounds in a word. If a word has 3 (phonemes) sounds, it will have the corresponding number of graphemes i.e. 3. This does not necessarily mean 3 letters. For example, the word cup has 3 phonemes and 3 graphemes (c-u-p), but so does the word rain (r-ai-n). The word church also has 3 phonemes and graphemes (ch-ur-ch). Each grapheme corresponds to the phoneme. If the letters representing a sound are rare or unusual, the words can be tricky to spell. The word fruit has 4 phonemes and graphemes (f-r-ui-t) and it has an unusual GPC in the middle- ui making an 'oo' sound. This word is said to contain a 'rare GPC'.

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High frequency words (HFW):
Words that occur most often in the written language. These are often identified as the first 100 most common words and the next 200 medium frequency words. Many are decodable using phonics, but some will present difficulties as they contains rarer **GPCs** that the children will not learn straight away. Once children have progressed through their phonics scheme, the high frequency words that do not fit any of the GPCs studied so far are called **Common Exception Words** (see linked glossary entry).

Long vowel:
see **vowel**

Morpheme:
the smallest meaningful unit in a language (e.g. wait = one morpheme, waiting= 2: wait+ ing). It is not the same as a word, or a syllable. For example, grandmother is one word with 2 morphemes (grand+mother) and 3 syllables (grand+moth+er). Morphemes can be **'bound'** (only found attached to a root word and cannot operate independenttly e.g. un- or –ed), **'unbound'** or **'free'** (able to stand alone e.g. happy).

Morphology:
In linguistics, morphology analyses the structure of words and parts of words, such as **root words**, **prefixes**, and **suffixes**. It explores how words can change and looks at their relationship to each other.

Phoneme:
the smallest unit of sound in a language. Represented by a corresponding **grapheme**.

Phoneme frame:
A resource used in the teaching of **phonics** and spelling to help children segment words into constituent sounds. The frame is typically a long rectangle divided lengthways into boxes. When children hear a word, they are encouraged to represent each **phoneme** heard by placing a **grapheme** in each box, in sequence and in the order in which the sounds are heard. For example, the word farm would be represented as:

f	ar	m

Phoneme spotter:
A resource designed to support the teaching of target **phonemes/graphemes** within a context. The aim is for the children to read and comprehend the text in the first instance. They can then identify the target words, which have been chosen to support revision, new learning and extension, where appropriate. Teachers may decide to use extracts from the spotter to support assessment through dictation.

Phonics:
is a method of teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) and the symbols that represent them (graphemes, or letter groups).

Prefix:
A prefix is an **affix** that is placed before the root of a word. Adding it to the beginning of one word changes it into another word. For example, when the prefix un- is added to the word happy, it creates the word unhappy. Whilst a prefix carries meaning and will therefore change the meaning of a word, it is a **'bound morpheme'** in that it can only be found attached to a root word and cannot operate on its own.

Root word:
A word stem or base that has no prefix or suffix attached to it. The root is the smallest unit of meaning associated with the word. For example, in the word unhopeful, hope is the root word. A root word carries meaning and is usually an **'unbound** (or **free**) **morpheme'** in that it can stand alone without the addition of other morphemes and still make sense.

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Schwa sound:
see **unstressed vowel**

Silent letters:
In some words, there are letters whose presence cannot be heard in a word such as the g in gnome, the w in two or the b in thumb. The spellings of these words are often the legacy of historic pronunciations and its **etymology.**

Short vowel:
see **vowel**

Suffix:
A suffix is an **affix** that is placed after the root of a word. Adding it to the end of one word changes it into another word. For example, when the suffix -ful is added to the word joy, it creates the word joyful. A consonant suffix begins with a **consonant** letter (e.g. -ment) and a vowel suffix begins with a vowel letter (e.g. -ing). Whilst a suffix carries meaning and
will therefore change the meaning of a word, it is a **'bound morpheme'** in that it can only be found attached to a root word and cannot operate on its own.

Syllable:
a unit of pronunciation having one **vowel** sound, with or without surrounding **consonants**, forming the whole or a part of a word; for example, there are two syllables in danger and three in elephant. Sometimes syllables are referred to as the 'beats' of a word.

Synonym:
a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language, for example *jump* is a synonym of *leap*.

Unstressed vowel:
this is the 'uh' sound we hear in "weak" syllables in English words, like the er in sister or the *i* in *family*. It is found in many words and can be spelt using just about any vowel spelling, so can be difficult for children to distinguish and spell. It is also known as the schwa sound.

Vowel:
a vocal sound made with a relatively open mouth compared to a **consonant**. There are 5 vowel letters in the English language: a,e,i,o,u (with the letter y often acting as a vowel when at the end or beginning of words. There are 20 vowel sounds in the English language, many made by **vowel digraphs**. **Short vowels** are **vowel** sounds that are pronounced in a short form. In English the **short vowel sounds** are those in pat, pet, pit, pot, put, putt. They are often (but not always) represented by a single letter (consider words like bread and hook where the short e and u are represented by two vowel letters. Conversely, a long vowel is a vowel sound that is pronounced the same way as the name of the letter itself in words such as rain, week, light, boat, cube. Long vowels are vowel sounds often (but not always) represented by two or more letters (consider words like unicorn and table where the long vowel sound is represented by the single vowel letter u). **There are other vowel sound classifications such as 'r controlled vowels' (e.g. ar, or, ur, air, eer, ear) and 'vowel diphthongs' (e.g. ow, ou, oy, oi), but it is usually easier to talk about these with children in terms of them also being types of long vowel sounds.**

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With over 520 school shareholders, Herts for Learning is the largest schools' company in the UK, and we are dedicated to improving education for young people in Hertfordshire and beyond.

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