

# How can I support my child's writing?

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are often asked about how to help support children with their writing at home. Below we have listed some great ways to best support your child's development in this area. We want to give you some quick and easy tips that will enable your child to become a confident writer.

## 1. Reading with your child

No matter their age, reading regularly to your child, often books that they can't yet read independently, is a great way of supporting their writing. Listening to books being read aloud introduces them to different ideas that they can borrow and adapt for their own writing, as well as hearing different ways of using language that are often different from the types of sentences that we use when we speak.

Try to make sure your child gets to access a range of different types of books, including fiction and non-fiction. This is useful for their writing, as it allows them to encounter a wide variety of different types of language and different purposes for writing.

## 2. Giving your child opportunities to write

Writing for a real-life purpose can be a great way of practising writing. Writing cards, shopping lists, or letters and emails to relatives can all be motivating real life reasons for writing. Children might also keep a diary or be encouraged to write short stories based on books they have read or toys they enjoy playing with.

Older children could produce their own version of a book for a younger child – The Rhino Who Came to Tea or The Very Hungry Angler Fish, for example. Books with a distinctive format such as The Day the Crayons Quit or The Last Polar Bears are perfect for this. Another idea is for children to write the book of a film (or TV programme). If children have watched something they've really enjoyed, they could try and tell the same story in writing.

While writing using a pen and pencil is useful practice, writing on the computer counts too. You might want to turn the spelling and grammar check off to help children to learn to use their own knowledge. The grammar check can be wrong too, so this can be confusing for children.

## 3. Helping your child with spelling

While there's obviously much more to good writing than correct spelling, if children are worrying about spelling a particular word or having to stop frequently to think about spelling it can prevent them from concentrating on the other aspects of writing, including communicating their ideas. Help your child to learn their weekly spellings, display the year group spelling list and play games such as scrabble or hangman to support with spelling at home. There are also lots of great online games to help build confidence and accuracy.

These strategies may support you in helping your child to learn their weekly spellings:

**Look, say, cover,  
write, check**

This is probably the most common strategy used to learn spellings.

**Look:** first look at the whole word carefully and if there is one part of the word that is difficult, look at that part in more detail.

**Say:** say the word as you look at it, using different ways of pronouncing it if that will make it more memorable.

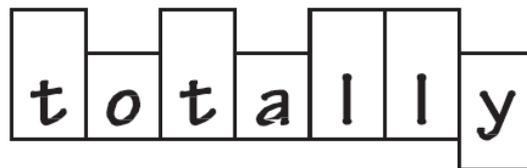
**Cover:** cover the word.

**Write:** write the word from memory, saying the word as you do so.

**Check:** Have you got it right? If yes, try writing it again and again! If not, start again – look, say, cover, write, check.

**Drawing around  
the word to show  
the shape**

Draw around the words making a clear distinction in size where there are ascenders and descenders. Look carefully at the shape of the word and the letters in each box. Now try to write the word making sure that you get the same shape.



**Drawing an image  
around the word**

This strategy is all about making a word memorable. It links to meaning in order to try to make the spelling noticeable.



You can't use this method as your main method of learning spellings, but it might work on those that are just a little more difficult to remember.

### Pyramid words

This method of learning words forces you to think of each letter separately.

p  
py  
pyr  
pyra  
pyram  
pyrami  
pyramid

You can then reverse the process so that you end up with a diamond.

### Other strategies

Other methods can include:

- Rainbow writing. Using coloured pencils in different ways can help to make parts of words memorable. You could highlight the tricky parts of the word or write the tricky part in a different colour. You could also write each letter in a different colour, or write the word in red, then overlay in orange, yellow and so on.
- Making up memorable 'silly sentences' containing the word
- Saying the word in a funny way – for example, pronouncing the 'silent' letters in a word
- Clapping and counting to identify the syllables in a word.

## 4. Helping your child with grammar and punctuation

The curriculum in England puts a lot of emphasis on children learning to use grammar and punctuation. Regular reading helps children to understand and visualise the different components of writing, making them more confident with the tricky elements of grammar and punctuation.

For more information on the different components of grammar taught in school, please visit the following sites:

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/primary-grammar-glossary-for-parents>

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/13-ways-to-make-grammar-fun-for-children>

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/topics/zhrd2p>

## 5. Helping your child with handwriting

Different children develop control over their handwriting at different points, and there is certainly a lot more to being a good writer than having neat handwriting. That said, learning to form letters correctly at the start of school can be very useful for later on as it is much harder to unlearn habits once they have been formed. Fluent, neat handwriting is useful to ensure that a reader can understand what a child is trying to communicate in their writing, as well as helping a child to feel confident about their writing.

For information on supporting your child with their handwriting, please visit:

<https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/more-activities-help-develop-handwriting-skills.html>