

The Phonetic Zoo

question or comment by email. We are committed to your success with this program, and we will do everything in our power to assist you in implementing it effectively. Periodic updates will be emailed or published in our newsletter, and if you have an idea, experience, problem or question to share, send it in!

As we correct errors and make updates to the printed material, we will keep you informed, sending replacement material as it may be appropriate. If you purchased this program from a retailer other than I.E.W., drop us a line with your address, phone and email so that we can keep in touch directly. Our goal is continued support.

Guarantee

If you use this program and your children do not dramatically improve their spelling, we will happily refund your purchase price. If you just don't like these materials, for any reason whatsoever, you may of course return them for a full refund. Your satisfaction is our guarantee.

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and all Blended Sound-Sight staff and teachers everywhere.

Excellence in Spelling

The Phonetic Zoo

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The Phonetic Zoo?

Welcome to Excellence in Spelling: The Phonetic Zoo! Why do we call it "The Phonetic Zoo?" Well, a couple of reasons. When you have a room full of crazy and unpredictable people, you might say "it's a zoo in there." Our English spelling rules are about as crazy and unpredictable as any language on earth, and in trying to master them, one might feel that they are like wild animals, crazy, illogical and challenging. Thus, "The Phonetic Zoo."

On a more practical side, however, children love animals -- the stranger the better. Although it was a stretch, we finally found, for each lesson, a few animals whose names match the rule, jingle or hint, thus making the program even more multi-sensory by locking an image to a word and a word to a rule.

Good spelling shows literacy, education and intelligence. It is important. These days, spell checkers on our computers can save many an embarrassment, but a computer is not always available, nor is it a replacement for true knowledge. Consequently, spelling remains an important skill. How can we best teach it?

A Brief Review of Basic Neurophysiology:

The brain acquires information through the sensory pathways: sight, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. Once information gets to the brain, it is stored when brain cells (neurons) send electrochemical impulses to other brain cells. Connections are made and "circuits" then reinforced by three variables: frequency, intensity and duration. In simpler terms, humans learn best by seeing, hearing or feeling things that are either very frequent, very intense or very long-lasting. There is no other way.

How does this relate to spelling?

Spelling is: The correct retrieval of sequentially stored, virtually random bits of information. Therefore, there are two activities involved in spelling: correctly storing information in the brain, and correctly retrieving that information. Those who teach spelling should not only understand how the brain works, but must also use that understanding to create an optimal learning approach for children who may have very different learning styles.

A child who is strong visually will be more able to learn spelling from textbooks and worksheets, since his visual pathway may be the most reliable and visual input will be the most accurate for him. A child who is strong auditorily will be more able to learn spelling from hearing the rules and words, something that a textbook is unable to do for him. A child who is strong kinesthetically wants to feel and move, anchoring information to the brain through the body. Most toddlers are primarily kinesthetic, secondarily auditory and lastly visual in learning style. Most older people are exactly the opposite. For young children just learning to read, write, spell and do arithmetic, auditory input is still extremely important, and must not be neglected by the teacher. Unfortunately, textbooks and worksheets are exclusively visual, and often do not provide the most efficient method of study.

Spelling is Sequential

Words consist of letters, but if you do not have your letters in the correct order, your spelling is incorrect. Virtually every teacher or parent has seen children who will write a word like:

waer or gril or turtel

in which they did get all the letters, but because the order was wrong, the word is hard to decipher. Spelling is sequential because the order of letters (not just getting the right ones) determines the word. How can sequence be taught most effectively?

When you see a word, for example:

special

ear and to the brain. There are no distractions or auditory interferences. It is a personal and intimate activity, and greatly assists in making the goal of mastering a spelling lesson even more of a individual challenge. Children who use this program with headphones will reap the greatest benefits. They will develop a strong sense of “ownership” of the program, and enjoy the change in routine it provides. The investment in a good pair of headphones cannot be understated. Use them!

How long will it take to complete all 47 lessons?

This will vary greatly from child to child. We do not suggest any specific time line for completion, but we do insist on a goal of complete mastery. Therefore, the student should continue to repeat the same lesson everyday until a score of 100% is achieved (twice is suggested for best results). Some lessons are harder than others. While one child may achieve the 100% score twice in three or four days, others may take five, seven, even ten or more days. This is not a problem. Simply do a lesson every day and you will see progress. With one lesson every week, the program would last an entire year. For slower children, it may last even longer.

The Final Exam

There is a Final Exam at the end of each level. It is quite long, using words from each rule. The scoring guide indicates whether the student has accomplished the goals of the program and is ready to progress to the next level, or should repeat this same level again. It would not be harmful to repeat the same level, and of course, progress through the lessons would be much faster. In preparation for the final exam, the teacher or parent may want to “spot check” the child with words from different lessons, using the flash cards to help. The instructions for the final exam are included below with various transcriptions from the CDs.

Support

If you have any problems or questions as you begin to use “The Phonetic Zoo” materials, don’t hesitate to give us a call or send a

with frequency, intensity and duration. As the the same type of stimulation is given again and again, the neural connections which store that information are strengthened and with enough frequency, the connections become permanent and learning is complete. In teaching spelling, the real trick involves the accurate transmission (and reception) of the information with enough frequency to make the knowledge permanent and second nature. However, consistency is difficult to attain.

Thus, the use of audio recordings, combined with flashcards and visual, dramatic images, provides for a consistent and organized presentation of information, in a format that allows individual study and an individualized rate of progress through the materials. Children can listen repeatedly, hear the same thing consistently, do the same test each day and continue until a perfect score has been achieved. For the best possible effect, require that the score of 100% be achieved twice! This will ensure that each child, through maximized frequency, learns the lessons thoroughly.

Each level of The Phonetic Zoo spelling program includes:

- Introductory videotape (28 minutes)
- 5 Audio CDs, labeled Disc One through Disc Five
- Set of large flashcards
- Set of small “zoo” cards

How to use the program:

1. First, watch the videotape. This will reinforce the foundational concepts mentioned above and familiarize you with the “how to” of the program described below. Although there would be no reason to prevent your children from watching the tape with you, there is also no particular reason why they should. The video tape is for the parent or teacher.
2. Present the rule of Lesson One to your student(s), using the flash card. Read the rule out loud (from the back of the card), and have the child(ren) read and spell out loud the three words on the front of the card which correspond to the chosen level. Briefly discuss how the animal name shown on the front meets the rule of the lesson.
3. If using this program at home, give the small corresponding

“zoo” card to the child to place on their wall at home, thus beginning their collection of animals in The Phonetic Zoo. If using in a school, the cards will make a nice display on the classroom wall. The “Zoo” cards will serve not only as a reminder of the rule and animals which correspond with it, but also as a motivational tool because as the children progress through the lessons, they will see their animal collection grow.

4. Set up the child with headphones, paper and pen. For an explanation of why headphones are best, see notes below. College Ruled notebook paper will provide approximately 32 lines per page, so the child can double space (leave a blank space between lines) and fit all 15 on one side of the paper. It is helpful for the child to write the Lesson number and the “time” that it has been done (i.e. Lesson 3, 4th time). Have the child place numbers down the side of the paper 1-15 in preparation for doing the recorded lesson. When the student is ready he may start the CD.

5. Disc One of each level has an introduction on track one. As it is not necessary for the child to listen to the introduction more than once, be sure that he knows how to use the CD player to skip to the track he needs for that lesson. Corrections for each lesson are on a separate track. Also be sure that he knows how to pause the CD player should he need to take a short break between words. Each lesson is less than 10 minutes long.

6. At first, the lesson may proceed too rapidly and the child might be frustrated by not being able to keep up. Explain that this is normal and not a problem. Even if he misses many words the first time through, don’t worry. Tell him to relax. Speed will improve with repetition. Place the emphasis on how many are “right,” NOT on how many are “wrong.” Be enthusiastic about his progress.

7. The flash cards can be used for two primary purposes: 1) For you to use as you preview and review the lessons with your child; and 2) for your child to use to study independently if he wishes. All the words for all three levels are contained on the flash cards, so they are useful for working with children of mixed ages and abilities.

8. After the child has tried to write all fifteen words, he should attempt to correct those words himself. He may not correct the words accurately. That is OK. After he has finished with his

corrections, the parent or teacher may like to check as well, and silently write in the correct spelling next to his attempt. But don't feel you have to continuously point out his errors. Frequency will do its job. Gradually his speed and ability to write the words and letters he hears will improve. (Note: Strong visual learners may be happier to correct their lessons by using the list on the back of the card along with the recorded corrections on CD.)

Personal Spelling (Lessons 5,10,15,20,25,30,35,40 & 47)

This is a vitally important part of the Excellence in Spelling program. Every fifth lesson is a Personal Spelling lesson. The flash cards for these lessons have blank spaces, and the verbal instructions on the CD direct the student to collect words during Lessons 1-4 for use with Lesson 5, Personal Spelling. These words are to be gathered from errors in written compositions as well as vocabulary or other language arts curriculum. The most commonly misspelled words are available in almost any dictionary or reference book, and these would also be excellent choices for Personal Spelling lessons.

Of course, the individualized words for these lessons cannot be recorded on CD, and there are no rules (and consequently no animals or "zoo" cards corresponding with these lessons). Therefore, it is incumbent upon the child to ask a parent, teacher or family member to read the words for him during the time he is practicing that lesson. The same rules apply; 100% should be achieved (twice is suggested) before moving on to the next lesson. The teacher or family member who helps should, as much as possible, present the words in the same style as the recorded lessons: Say the word, use it in a sentence and then repeat the word. Corrections also should be done consistently: Say the word, spell it slowly, twice. The Personal Spelling Lessons are an essential component of Excellence in Spelling and enable a further personalization of the program for each child. Do not fail to do it.

Why Headphones?

Headphones are fun. They are effective. Use them! With headphones, the sound and the experience it provides are close to the

you are forced by nature to see it all at once. Since the letters go into your brain simultaneously, there is no sequential storage of the information. Vision is a global sense. There is a spatial storage, but *not* a sequential one. Consequently, if a child has even a mild dyslexia or difficulty in processing abstract visual information, we cannot be assured that the information is being stored properly (i.e. correct sequence) in the brain. All the letters are seen at the same moment.

However, when a word is spelled out loud,

s - p - e - c - i - a - l

the letters go into the brain one at a time, in a precise sequence. In fact, there is no other way to get it, except in sequence. Therefore, since spelling is sequential in nature, auditory input is the best possible way to accurately store spelling information in the brain. Words correctly stored will more likely be correctly retrieved.

A Multi-Sensory Approach

Mrs. Anna Ingham, author of the Blended Sound-Sight Program of Learning, discovered fifty years ago, long before psychologists and educationists began to talk of "auditory learners" vs. "visual learners," that all children learn best when what they see is reinforced by hearing, and when what they hear is reinforced by being seen.

Thus the "blending of sound and sight" is the most effective educational approach to language arts study. With determination and persistence, Mrs. Ingham has fought the great battle against whole language extremists in Canada, almost single-handedly, and schools that have used her program consistently have virtually eliminated reading problems. We have attempted to develop a spelling program which effectively recreates Mrs. Ingham's "Sound City" spelling rules, but using the theme of animals and a zoo to illustrate the spelling rules.

Maximizing Frequency

Information is stored in the brain through sensory stimulation, given