

# What type of speller are you?

## 1. Your thoughts about spelling

- What is a good speller?
- Are you a good speller?
- If yes, why do you think you are?
- If no, why do you think you are not?
- What do you think helps to make a good speller?
- What do you think might make you become a good speller?

## 2. How do you try to spell?

- I listen to the sounds of the words in my head.
- I write a list of possible spellings and choose the one I think looks right.
- I try to think of a spelling rule.
- I break the words into bits and say their sound.
- I see the word inside my head.
- I link to other words that are related to it.
- I say the word aloud.
- I find it just comes.
- I look up the word in a dictionary.

V - Visual

A - Auditory

L - Learning

## Visual strategies involving the eye and hand

- Try writing the word down in two or three different ways, in joined handwriting. This will fix the spelling in the hand.
- Use a highlighter pen to draw your attention to the part of the word you need to learn.
- Look for words within words (e.g. *get* in *vegetable*, *lie* in *believe*).
- Use the **Look, say, cover, write, check** strategy.
- Group together words that may not sound alike but have a shared pattern.

## **Auditory strategies involving the ear and mouth**

The English language has 42 sounds but only 26 letters in the alphabet, so the sound a letter makes depends on other letters around it. Therefore it is important to think about using other strategies. There are ways in which you can use sound to help you spell.

- Listen to the word. Break it into syllables and then identify the phonemes in each syllable (e.g. *Sep-tem-ber*).
- When letters or parts of words are silent, say the words in an exaggerated way (e.g. *k-nife, bus-i-ness*).
- Giving a word a rhythm helps.
- Analogy is using words already known (e.g. *could, would, should*).
- Discuss the aural strategies with the children and then ask them to try using an aural strategy to learn to spell a few words. Did the strategy help?

## Learning strategies based on mind and method

- Learning about the structure of words can help spelling. For example, find the root of a word and check whether it changes when prefixes or suffixes are added (e.g. *smiling*: root = *smile* + **ing**).
- Mnemonics are a useful memory aid (e.g. **B**ig **e**lephants **c**an **a**lways **u**se **s**mall **e**lephants).
- Word origins (etymology) are useful in learning spellings. Etymological dictionaries give the origins of groups of words. This information will help to identify the letter or combination of letters to use.
- Homophones often cause difficulties. Learn them with other words that look the same rather than sound the same (e.g. *there, here, where*).
- Think of a spelling rule (e.g. *short vowel and single consonant, double the consonant when adding **ing***).
- Discuss learning strategies with the children and give a few words for them to try learning and spelling. Did any strategy help?