

BARASSIE



PRIMARY

Making Sense of Literacy & English at Home

Inclusion

Respect Ambition

Responsibility Nurture

Spelling



Words taught in spelling lessons are grouped according to a rule or a letter pattern. It is important that children understand how the word is constructed, understand what it means and can use it correctly in their independent written work.

If you have concerns about your child's spelling please contact the class teacher who will be pleased to provide further advice.

Hearing, speech and eyesight all have a part to play in the development of spelling. Always have these medically checked to eliminate any problems.

Tackling Tricky Words

You can help your children gain confidence in trying to spell new words by trying these ideas:

- Ask them to break the word into chunks or syllables. To begin, clap as you say each syllable, for example: birthday is *birth/day* which is two claps; holidays is *hol/i/days* which is three claps.
- Get them to look for little words in bigger words, for example: *believe* is made up of *be*, *lie* and *eve*; *soldier* is made up of *so*, *sold*, *old* and *die*.
- Ask them to sound out words. Talk about rules that help them remember the spelling, such as *E* goes away when *ing* comes to stay, for example *hope* becomes *hoping*.
- When they have tried a word, rather than telling them where they went wrong, write the correct word on a piece of paper for them to see.

Difficulties That You May Notice

- Long time learning letters and sounds
- Difficulty in identifying the same letter sound when at the beginning/middle/end of a word
- Letters are reversed or upside down
- Mirror writing
- Words are reversed
- Struggles learning alphabetical order
- Strange spelling (not as word sounds)
- Spelling according to sound rather than rule
- Spelling at three letter level only e.g. dog, pet
- Learns homework spelling but does not retain words learned
- Inaccurate copying

Children develop at different rates. Difficulties with any of the above may disappear as your child gets older. However there are simple ways that can help.

Ways to Help

- Encourage your child to identify the letter by sound rather than name e.g. d-duh rather than dee
- Finger trace over wooden or magnetic letter while saying the sound
- Look for letters in other places e.g. street signs, car registrations etc
- Write letters with coloured pencils, chalks, paint, water
- When starting spelling looking for word families e.g. cat, mat, rat
- Make sure the child knows the vowels are a e i o u
- Look for little words in big words

Overlearning is the key to overcoming difficulties.

Spelling Games to Play at Home

1. Spelling bingo

The old ones are the best! Playing games that help them to recognise the spelling words on sight can really help. The more they see a word the more familiar it becomes and the more likely they are to remember it; if they can visualise it, they are more likely to spell it correctly.

Print and cut out the words your child has to learn. Draw out a bingo board and write some of the spellings in the boxes. This works best with more than one player, so see if you can convince someone else to play. Every time your child 'gets' a spelling word, go through the spelling together and then cover it and ask them to spell it again.

2. Spelling pairs

This classic memory game is a great way to get them recognising and remembering words. Draw or print a word grid and write each spelling word in a new box. You will need to write each word twice (each in a separate box). Cut them out, making sure you have two of each spelling word. Then turn them over and mix them up, ensuring they are organised randomly. Challenge your child to turn over two pieces of paper and then read each word. Are they a pair? If not, turn them back over and repeat this until they find matching pairs. Once they have found a pair, look at the spelling together and then ask your child to spell the word without looking.

3. Mnemonic – that’s a memory device to you and me

There is a classic mnemonic to help children remember how to spell ‘because’: *big elephants can always understand small elephants*. Make up your own silly mnemonics together to help your child remember tricky words they struggle with.

4. Play it back

Record your child spelling out each word on your smartphone or tablet. When you practise them, ask your child to write down each spelling word and then play their own voice reading it back to them. It’s amazing how much this amuses and motivates them.

5. Race against the clock

If your child is competitive, see if you can motivate them by introducing an element of challenge to the world of practising spellings. Using your stopwatch on your phone, time your child as you call out the spelling words and they write them. Make a note of their time and score and then on the following day, challenge them to smash their personal best.

Active Literacy

At Barassie Primary School we follow a programme called North Lanarkshire Active Literacy in P1-3 for the teaching of phonics, spelling, reading and writing.

Phonics

Children are taught to work with a partner to consolidate the taught lesson. This is called reciprocal teaching. They take turns to guide each other through the word building reading and writing process. This involves using the diagram below:



The child encourages their partner to say, make/break, blend read and write each word. The activity alternates between partners and they then check their partner’s work for correct formation and accurate spelling.

Spelling Strategies

The strategies the children are taught are:

- ✓ Using Phoneme Knowledge (sounding out)
- ✓ Syllabification – breaking words down into syllables. The children can clap out words to identify syllables e.g. go-ing/An-drew
- ✓ Word Shape – Look at letter shape, size, ascending and descending letters.
- ✓ Tricky Letters – Looking at the position of tricky letters as an aid to spelling.
- ✓ Compound Words – Breaking the compound word into simple words e.g. into makes in and to.
- ✓ *Mnemonic – using an aide memoire e.g. because – Big Elephants Can Add Up Sums Easily*
- ✓ *Using Analogy – If you know how to spell one word you can spell similar words.*

Reading

Children are taught to read using the Guided Reading approach. The teacher provides an overview of the text. This is known as a ‘walkthrough’. At the start of the lesson, the teacher is the only person with a copy of the book. The teacher has read the book prior to teaching and has identified any challenging vocabulary to be introduced. The teacher helps the children to read the topic words in the book by drawing their attention to the picture clues. Time is taken to teach the children various comprehension strategies to help them gain a better understanding of the text.

They also learn word attack strategies to enable them to decode words that they find difficult. After the initial walkthrough, the children have opportunities to read aloud. This happens in a group setting/with a partner. The teacher circulates to listen and provide feedback.

Word Attack Strategies:

- ✓ Look at the first letter
- ✓ Sound out the first few letters
- ✓ Break the word into syllables
- ✓ Look at the last letters
- ✓ Read the sentence again
- ✓ Look at the picture
- ✓ Look at the shape of the word

Starting to Read

Reading with children starts at pre-school when parents should develop the habit of sharing a book with their child and discuss the pictures and the story. Page turning and reading from left to right are not automatic and should be shown to children.

What is Phonics?

If you have a child in their first year of primary school, there is a good chance you will have come across the word 'Phonics'. Phonics is a method of learning to read words that is taught right from the start of P1.

Children are taught to read letters or groups of letters by saying the sound(s) they represent – so, they are taught that the letter *l* sounds like *llll* when we say it. Children can then start to read words by blending the sounds together to make a word.

Developing Reading

How can you help?

Find a quiet time and place for your child to share reading with you.

- Stay positive and praise effort.
- Look first at the title and discuss what the story might be about.
- Next look at the captions or anything in bold which catches the eye.
- Then look at the pictures for clues about the story.
- Now your child should be ready to read the story.
- Allow your child time to sound out words.

Worries that may occur

Your child may:

- Frequently lose the place when reading
- Re-read words
- Omit lines of text
- Confuse similar letters or words
- Have a slow grasp of sight vocabulary

How to help:

- Encourage your child to point to each word as they read it
- After reading, point to words randomly and check if they can read the word out of context
- Make sure that your child understands the meaning of any difficult words
- Encourage your child to re-tell the story in their own words.

Tips for Encouraging your Child to Read at Home

Read with expression

Read with expression when reading to your child. Use different voices and vary the volume for effect or for different bits of information such as, *Did you know that the Tyrannosaurus Rex...? Wow!* You'll soon see that your child will then try these skills when reading to you!

Talk about books, words and pictures

Before reading a book together, always talk about the title, the pictures and the information on the cover (front and back). If it's new, ask what your child thinks the book might be about. If it's an old favourite then talk about the bits you love most! Don't worry if some books get chosen again and again!

Encourage an opinion

Talk about books when you've finished reading together. Talk about the characters and what happens in a story, or what specific bit of information was most useful, but also get them to give you their opinions too. Let them tell you if they don't like a book, and why. Part of growing as a reader is learning that it's OK not to like some books or to prefer reading on-screen sometimes!

Make links

As well as talking about the book itself, make links between events or information in the book and your child's own experiences: *'Do you remember when we did that ...?'* Get them to ask questions too: *'Is that how Grandad does it too?'*

Encourage prediction

When reading stories, good readers are always thinking ahead to start to work out what might happen next. You can help your child become better at this by asking key questions such as: *'I wonder if ... will happen? Who do you think will...?'*

Not giving up

As children read more challenging books be aware that there might be times when they struggle and may seem reluctant to continue – so help them through those patches by reading a bit with them to get them started or hooked into the next chapter. Always balance this with sensitivity and valuing their choice – it's got to be fun!

Read between the lines

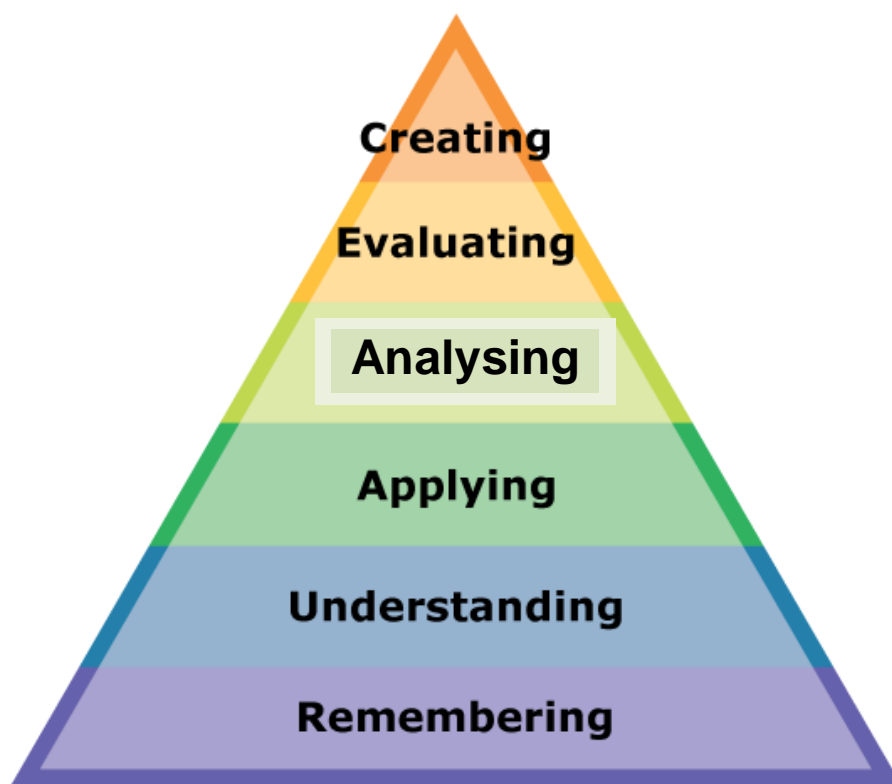
Talking about stories, poems and information books can help your child to understand a book in different ways. It's not just about what's happened or who did what, so talk about the issues, what a book means to your child and whether they think there are any less obvious meanings that the author wants us to spot.



Reading Is Fun!

Bloom's/HOTS

“Bloom’s Taxonomy” is one of those terms that a parent may not necessarily be familiar with, however, it is very important. Use of Bloom’s will help your child develop their critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills allow a child to think independently, find and fix mistakes, solve problems, evaluate alternatives, and reflect on their own beliefs. It’s not something that can be learned from reading a book or completing a worksheet, however the skills are built through hands-on lessons that build beyond memorising facts.



Bloom’s Taxonomy provides learning levels to increase higher order thinking skills (HOTS) for children of all ages. The levels include remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating.

Remember & Understand

The Remember and Understand levels are where most teachers and parents typically ask questions of their children. This includes questions that involve who, what, where, when, and why. Basically, the child just needs to memorise the information and recall it.

Apply & Analyse

At the Apply and Analyse levels, as a parent, you can take a basic activity that would require a child to learn basic facts and then add a twist. For example, you can ask your child to do things like predict what will happen next in a story or to predict what would happen if you made a change to the story. They could also share, if they had to write a sequel to a story, how would it begin? You can ask them to illustrate a maths word problem or draw a scene from their favourite part of a story they are reading.

Evaluate & Create

At the Evaluate and Create levels a child would be asked to debate, work in groups, write reflective summaries about literature, make decisions and challenge situations. Activities at home that would integrate these skills would be teaching your child how to build a model car or a robot from a kit, have them write and perform a scene based on a topic they are learning in school or to come up with their own creative science investigation.

Word Aware



- Word aware is a focussed vocabulary enrichment programme
- It is taught daily in class using a variety of methods
- The words selected are referred to as 'Goldilocks' words

STAR Select - primary



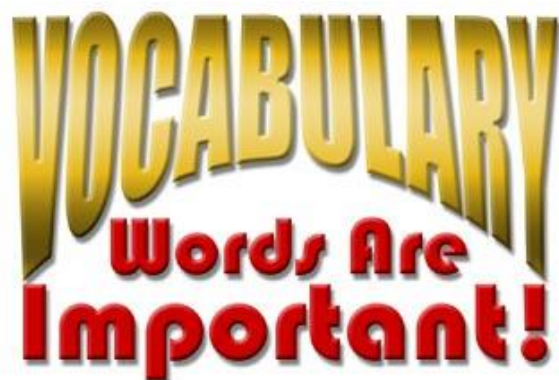
| <u>Anchor words</u> | <u>Goldilocks words</u> | <u>Step on words</u> |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Children have a thorough understanding of these words.</p> <p>Everyday spoken and written language for a child of this age.</p> <p>Used at home and in daily interactions.</p> <p>Children have become familiar with this vocabulary through prior teaching.</p> | <p>Really useful words</p> <p>Likely to be encountered again in reading or oral language.</p> <p>Average adult has a good level of knowledge of the word.</p> <p>Words that are very topic specific but are core to the topic.</p> <p>Age 7+: Desirable for children to use in their writing</p> | <p>Less likely to be encountered again in reading or oral language.</p> <p>Average adult does not have much knowledge of the word.</p> <p>Words that are particularly topic specific, and are not core to the topic.</p> <p>Age 7+: Not a word that children usually need to use in their own writing</p> |

Based on Stahl and Nagy (2005), Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002)

In 'Word Aware' pupils explore their new word in class using some of the following activities. Many of these activities can be used at home when exploring new vocabulary or questioning your child about their word of the day.

- **Symbol:** link it to visual
- **Phonology (sound):** clap, rhyme, initial sound, say to partner
- **Semantics:** meaning, use Anchor to describe Goldilocks, word parts, different contexts
- **Sentence:** put it into a sentence
- **Action:** act it out
- **Song:** song or rap
- **Word wall:** write it to go on the wall and in the word pot

Your child may come home with a sticker inviting you to ask them about their word. Feel free to try out some of the above activities to explore this together!



VOCABULARY
Words Are Important!

Writing

Writing is a terrific way for children to express their thoughts, creativity, and uniqueness. It is also a fundamental way in which children learn to organise ideas. And learning to write well helps children to be better readers.

When engaging in writing, young children often mirror what they see around them: adults and older children writing lists, letters, text messaging. They are observing the way writing is used in our everyday lives.

Handwriting

Tips for handwriting:

- Make sure your child is sitting comfortably.
- Use a sharpened pencil.
- Encourage your child to use two hands to write!
- Children should be encouraged to form letters correctly and where letters should be placed – on, above, or below the line.
- Make writing fun – write lists, birthday cards, thank-you letters and invitations.

Writing at home

Here are some suggestions to engage your child in the writing process:

- Have your child write instructions for taking care of the family pet
- Write a letter or thank you note to a relative. Talk through what your child wants to say before writing begins
- Make a shopping list before going to the supermarket
- Write an online review of a book or an item you recently purchased
- Find a picture in the newspaper and write an article to accompany it
- Start keeping a personal diary or a book for your child to scribble ideas in

Reluctant Writers

If your child avoids writing, use materials and tools that support both the thinking process and the physical act of writing:

- Use wide lined paper which helps children line up and space their letters
- Use a whiteboard, which allows them to easily erase and try again
- Use a keyboard, which also allows children to easily edit

Dyslexia Friendly Home Learning Tips

Home learning is a useful bridge between home and school and allows parents an insight to the work of the class and the skills and abilities of the child. Barassie Primary Schools' Dyslexia Friendly homework policy is to support all children in school.

Homework is provided for a number of different reasons:

- To encourage children to become independent learners.
- To allow children to do homework which is relevant to their needs and help them meet learning targets.
- To provide parents with an opportunity to participate in their child's learning.
- To make parents more aware of their child's work in school.

The amount of home learning will vary from stage to stage but will include planned tasks relating to topics, spontaneous work arising from class work and activities to tie in with their course work. P1-3 will mainly be involved in shared reading, reading and topic work for around 15 minutes per day. In P4-7 activities will be varied and could be spread over a period of time.

Top Tips

- ✓ Keep calm. Dealing with homework can be tricky!
- ✓ Try to provide a quiet time and place for homework.
- ✓ Setting a routine with a visual planner is a good idea, with room for flexibility around after school activities and the need for a “brain break” immediately after school.
- ✓ Choose a time that suits both child and other family members.
- ✓ Make sure your child is clear what homework has been set, when it has to be completed, and how long it should take.
- ✓ Is the homework diary being used?
- ✓ Check your child understands what to do – if not, do what you can to help. A best effort will always be appreciated.
- ✓ Chunk homework into manageable bits with time for a break in between.
- ✓ Use encouragement rather than criticism.
- ✓ Do use reward activities for good attempts.
- ✓ Mistakes are OK – your child’s teacher uses homework results to assess understanding.
- ✓ Encourage using a timer and a checklist to tick off.
- ✓ Don’t do the homework for your child but do give suggestions and support.
- ✓ For written work check with your child’s teacher what formats are acceptable – bullet points, mind maps, story boards.
- ✓ Help your child to edit, self monitor and check their work as they go along.
- ✓ Encourage computer skills.
- ✓ Reading practice is very important – for 5 minutes a day – using any material your child likes. This needn’t be a book – newspapers, comics, instruction leaflets, recipes are all fine as long as the child can recognise some of the words. Use the **5 finger rule** – your child puts a finger on every word he doesn’t know. Once all 5 fingers have been used up on one page, the text may be too hard for individual reading.
- ✓ Keeping a home reading log is a good idea.
- ✓ Use paired reading where you and your child read the words together out loud in a relaxed way – the child can ask to take over, or to have a break while you read.
- ✓ If homework is becoming a battle or your child is distressed, or avoids homework, try to find out why in a calm low key way, and contact your child’s teacher for advice.

Useful Websites

| Website | Useful For |
|---|---|
| https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk | Lots of information, e-books and games. |
| https://www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/7-11-years/reading | This section has a variety of reading games for your child to play. Select a different section from the menu bar at the top. Areas covered are writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation |
| http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/literacy | Woodland's Literacy Zone has lots of activities for your child to explore to develop and consolidate their skills in literacy. It is broken down into specific sections that make it easy to find what you are looking for. |
| http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy | P1-4 games on BBC Bitesize covering various areas of the literacy curriculum. |
| http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english | P5-7 games on BBC Bitesize covering various areas of the literacy curriculum. |
| https://ec1.educationcity.com/ | Your child has their own login details to access a range of curricular based activities on Education City. |
| https://www.activelearnprimary.co.uk/login?c=0 | Bug Club – your child will have their own login to access books assigned to them. |



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