

Weekly Spelling Routine and Home Expectations

In September, the students completed a spelling assessment to help me determine their developmental spelling level. Students have been grouped according to similar spelling levels, using Words Their Way (Donald Bear). Each group will receive a list of 24 words that highlight a pattern in spelling.

Part of the success of this program will include involvement from home. Let me explain the routine that needs to be followed each week at home. Every Friday students receive a new group of words and in their small groups complete a Word Sort of these words, identifying a pattern among the words and grouping them accordingly. Students then take home this same list of words and are to complete their own Word Sort Study each week. The tasks to be completed at home include:

1) **Sort the words.** Record the words on the Weekly Word Sort Sheet (handed out in class each week and available for download on my website if misplaced). (*Tactile and visual skill*)

2) **Identify pattern(s) in the categories and record on sheet**--it may be a sound/symbol pattern involving long/short vowels in relationship to consonants, it may be a pattern involving syllables, beginning sounds, ending sounds, changing root words to add endings, etc. Students record patterns they discover on the Word Sort Sheet. (*generalizing rules and incorporating into current spelling pattern understanding*)

2) **Complete a blind sort, also known as a no-peek sort, and check-off on sheet.** Someone at home says the words out loud and the student indicates which category it belongs to without the student looking at the word. (Auditory skill) Student or parent places the word in correct category. (*Tactile, visual skill*)

3) **Complete a writing sort and record on sheet.** Someone at home says the words out loud and the student writes the word in the correct category on the back of the Word Sort Sheet. Go over any words spelled incorrectly and make a plan for re-visiting these tricky words over the week. (*Tactile, visual, and auditory*)

4) **Search for other words that fit the same pattern and record on back of sheet in correct category under writing sort.** Students may use books they are reading, newspaper, dictionary, etc to add to these patterns/categories.

5) **Parent signature** at bottom of sheet to indicate that word sort activities have been completed.

In class, I discussed my expectations of completing these tasks and establishing routines for studying at home. I emphasized the goal of not completing the tasks just to "have them done," but rather to use the activities to help them grow in their understanding of spelling patterns in the English language so that their overall spelling abilities improve. I encouraged them to view this as more than memorizing a set of 24 words each week to pass a test, but rather an exploration of patterns in the English language that they can apply to spelling in all their writing tasks.

Tests are taken on Fridays and new word sort lists are introduced after the tests.