



## 'Need to know' planning unit

HFV - Cross curricular words - Learning words -  
Having a go

# Having a go 1

## Objectives:

- To reflect on how spelling can affect the way people feel about themselves
- To know how to give and ask for spelling help constructively
- To know clear routines for having a go at spelling unfamiliar words
- To know all the expectations for spelling in my classroom

## Revisit, assess and adapt – suggested activities

Look at a selection of discussion cards relating to how the children feel about spelling. Ask children to reflect, discuss and respond in different ways for each question (whole class discussions, small group discussions and feedback, reflect silently for one minute then feedback, respond on whiteboards, thumbs up/thumbs down, marks out of ten (holding fingers up), sorting word cards in order.

### Possible questions

Put these things in order of how important they are when writing (and explain why): spelling, handwriting, interesting ideas, imaginative words, punctuation, making sense.

- Are some people just better at spelling than other people?
- Can everybody learn how to get better at spelling?
- How do you feel when you don't know how to spell a word?
- Is it better to get 10 out of 10 on spelling test of really easy words or 6 out of 10 on a test of hard words?
- What do you think other people think when they see writing with lots of spelling mistakes?
- Does spelling matter? If so, why? If not, why not?
- How confident do you feel about spelling (out of 10)?  
*Children may prefer to be given the -opportunity to feed this back to you privately.*
- What do you do when you don't know how to spell a word?
- How would you feel if a friend told you that you had spelt a word wrong?

**Printable question cards available**

## Teach & Practise – suggested activities

Wearing a glove puppet, do a short piece of writing on the board and make some deliberate spelling mistakes. Explain that the puppet isn't very confident about spelling has had his/her feelings hurt in the past when they have been told unkindly that they have made spelling mistakes. Ask the children for some possible words that they could use to point out the spelling mistakes kindly. Record these possibilities in speech bubbles. Wave a magic wand and ask children to become the glove puppet character. Try reading out some of the speech bubbles and ask children to show you with their faces and bodies how the comments made them feel. Agree as a class on some phrases that everyone is happy with. Display these speech bubbles and make it an expectation that whenever children are helping one another with spelling that they use careful words (such as the ones in the speech bubble) to feedback spelling mistakes. Wave the magic wand to turn children back into children. Discuss the fact that mistakes are not bad. Mistakes should be celebrated as they show we are stretching ourselves and they give us the opportunity to learn new things. Miss Takes is the best teacher in the world.

**Printable speech bubble available**

Show a glove puppet looking sad (if possible) and explain that he/she doesn't know how to spell a word. Model showing him to write the word but then stop and reflect aloud on whether that has actually helped him. The word is now spelt correctly but the puppet hasn't learned anything, probably couldn't spell the word in the future and has just had it reinforced that he can't do something that someone else can (glove puppet looking sad again). Also look at the word and point out some of the simple straightforward GPCs that the glove puppet could have worked easily. Introduce a routine for having a go at spelling words (e.g. **Route to spelling**) that involves soundtalking the word, drawing sound buttons, putting in the obvious GPCs and thinking about any tricky GPCs. Explain that now the glove puppet can have a go at words first and then (and only then) ask for help with the tricky bit. Make it a class expectation that children will only ask for help with a word after they have gone through the **Route to spelling** (or a similar routine). Also make it an expectation that children will only help other children with a spelling if they have gone through the routine first and are asking for specific help with specific bits. Create a speech bubble with an example of asking for help e.g. "Can you help me with the phoneme in the middle?" "Should this be double t or single?"

**Printable question cards available**

Give children a fun writing task e.g. Describe what it feels like to take off in an alien spaceship. Write a menu of disgusting foods for a monster café. Imagine a monster in your head and describe what it looks like. Encourage children to stretch themselves to use words that they don't know for certain how to spell and to follow Route to Spelling to have a go at these words and ask for specific help from another child (or adult) if they need to.

Introduce two characters (soft toys, puppets or pictures). Explain that these characters are just as good as each other at spelling but they think about spelling differently and have very different expectations of themselves. Character one expects himself (could be her obviously) to correctly spell every single word he writes. He hates making mistakes and gets upset when he does (because everybody does make spelling mistakes no matter how old or careful they are). He is really good at thinking up interesting and imaginative words but he often avoids using them in his writing unless he is completely certain how to spell them. Character two doesn't believe that she (could be he obviously) is very good at spelling. Therefore she usually doesn't try to work words out. She thinks she'd get them wrong anyway so she might as well just have a wild guess. She uses some fantastic, imaginative word choices that describe things brilliantly but often no-

one (even herself) can work out these words say when they read them back later. The mistakes make her sad but she doesn't think she can do anything about them or learn anything from them.

Has either of these two characters got an attitude to spelling that is helping them? Discuss how each of them could change the way they think about spelling in a way that might make them happier and help them learn more. Discuss and agree what the class expectations for spelling will be. Write up a list (including the ones from earlier planning sections) and display them.

Based on the school marking policy, ensure that children know how incorrect spellings will be marked in all subjects: How many? All words or just words currently being learned or just words have been previously learned? Ensure that children know what they are supposed to get from this marking. Do they just need to be aware that they have made mistakes? Are they expected to learn from those mistakes? Ensure that children are confident with the peer marking policy (if the school has one) and know what they should be looking for and how to record this.

## Apply and assess – suggested activities

Revisit the questions asked at the beginning of units. Discuss whether any children feel that their attitudes towards spelling have changed at all over the course of the unit.

## Applying across the curriculum

Ensure that children are reminded of the class expectations for spelling. Encourage them to reflect on how they are doing this. If children find it difficult to ask for or give help, remind them of some of the phrases that they could use. In plenaries, ask children to put their finger on words in their writing that they have learned something from – words that they made a mistake on and then corrected or a word that they had to work through Route to spelling to figure out. Celebrate this learning.

Initially, working through the Route to spelling will be a bit of a slow, step by step thing. However, it can quickly become an automatic, speedy process that hardly takes any time. Take opportunities within shared writing to model working out words with this method. Gradually, over time, model speeding up the process.