January 2020

THE
CONTENT
KIT

Produced by the Barnet Leading Edge Group for Literacy Difficulties

Contents

1. Aims & Rationale

Aims

• The aim of the Content Kit is to highlight some of the most useful early skills and knowledge needed for literacy.

• It is aimed at those people supporting pupils who are struggling to learn to read and write, in Key Stage 2 and above.

• It can be used as a starting point for identifying and working on relevant goals for kick starting progress with literacy for pupils who have very few literacy skills, or significant gaps in their literacy skills.

• Moving on to becoming a skilled reader and writer will hopefully be addressed in a future publication.

Rationale

The Content Kit came about because of discussions with staff in a number of Barnet schools about what to teach children in Key Stages 2 and 3 who were struggling to learn to read and write.

Having collaborated on borough wide Guidelines for Literacy Difficulties (see https://5f2fe3253cd1dfa0d089-bf8b2cdb6a1dc2999fecbc372702016c.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/uploads/ckeditor/attachments/3490/EP_and_HIST_-_Literacy_Difficulties_Guidelines_May_2017.pdf), we have now worked as a team to highlight priorities for teaching and learning, drawing on experiences in schools, relevant research and Government strategy.

The ideas presented can be incorporated into a tailor-made intervention, drawing on the wide range of materials available within schools and beyond.

It may be that the contents are used to inform decision making about the choice of an evidence-based intervention (e.g. see Brooks, 2018, and also examples of good and outstanding practice via the NASEN (National Association of Special Educational Needs) site: https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources.sen-support-research-evidence-on-effective-approaches-and-examples-of-current-practice-in-good-and-outstanding-schools-and-colleges.html).

Research into teaching early literacy skills

Research indicates that teaching of high frequency words that occur in texts, alongside systematic teaching of phonics is an effective approach to teaching early literacy skills. Children who have the most difficulty in learning to read and spell have been found to have a weakness in phonological processing, rapid automatized naming (translating visual information into a phonological code) or both of these. There is very limited research regarding interventions successfully directly targeting rapid automatized naming (see Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014). There is an ongoing debate regarding methods of phonics instruction, concerning whether a "synthetic" approach (teaching grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) individually and in sequence, and focusing on blending sounds) is preferable to an "analytic" one (beginning with whole words and GPCs, and breaking those words down into their component parts). Castles et al (2018) suggest that there is not yet sufficient evidence to draw a firm conclusion. They have also concluded that there is not yet sufficient evidence to indicate the optimal number of GPCs which should be taught. The Content Kit will therefore be reviewed as more evidence becomes available.

We have drawn on Solity and his colleagues' Early Reading Research (ERR) work (e.g. see Solity and Vousden, 2009) to enable us to highlight the 100 words that have been found to occur most frequently in a large sample of children's and adult's

literature (accounting for 53% of the words), and the most common GPC mappings (the representations that lead to the correct pronunciation in 90% of the monosyllabic words – see Diagram 1[1]). We have then mapped these onto the GPCs and high frequency words (HFWs) in Letters and Sounds (DfE, 2008).

Diagram 1: Helping pupils to prioritise the most useful information when developing early literacy skills

When reading, if you see a grapheme, which phoneme is it most likely to correspond to?

ou

uh as in r**ou**gh
ow as in b**ou**gh
owe as in th**ou**gh
oo as in thr**ou**gh
ou as in ab**ou**t

When spelling, if you hear a phoneme, which grapheme is it most likely to correspond to?

sh

ss as in mi**ss**ion
s as in **s**ure
ch as in **ch**arade
ci as in spe**ci**al
sh as in **sh**ip

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[1] As noted in the "Aims" section, moving on to becoming a skilled reader and writer will hopefully be addressed in a future publication. Research indicates that although very hard for some to grasp, by securely learning the most commonly occurring phoneme for each grapheme (Solity, 2003), pupils are better placed to continue on their journey of self-teaching as they continue to be exposed to a variety of texts (Rastle, 2017). As well as developing more sophisticated phonic skills, factors such as learning of vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies are important, including by exposure to a wide variety of texts. Fluency is promoted through the neurological links that are made between sounds, meanings and spellings (Rastle, 2019).

Key teaching principles

The ERR work is based on principles which we endorse, including:

- **Optimisation** (identifying the optimal number of HFWs and GPCs to teach)

- **Distributed practice** (e.g. three sessions of 15 minutes is preferable to one session of 45 minutes)

- **Interleaved learning** (mixing new material with older, more familiar material to aid retention)

- **Promoting generalisation** (small units of knowledge (GPCs) are easier to generalise than bigger units)

- **Representation and contextual distinctiveness are valued** (children are: (i) taught to read through texts which represent the written structures they will encounter as their reading improves and (ii) see new words in as many different contexts as possible)

- **Teach to high fluency levels**

- **Teach the skills which are explicitly used when reading, writing and spelling**

- **Pupil involvement** (e.g. giving pupils feedback on their progress)

- **Response to Intervention** (includes various principles including creating teaching targets based on monitoring progress – see Elliott and Grigorenko, 2014)

Reading, Spelling and Writing

In line with this approach, we are suggesting that there is an emphasis on blending phonemes when learning to read, and segmenting words when learning to spell. Building up enough trust so that pupils are willing to try and write independently, using the knowledge they are acquiring, will help to reinforce learning. A range of strategies to enable this can be found in the "Supporting Development" sections. Although ultimately almost half of the most frequently occurring words are phonically regular, initially learning them by sight can present the fastest route into literacy. Castles et al (2018) note that the most successful methods of teaching sight vocabulary "are likely to involve engaging children in detailed study of the letters in the word and their sequence—with a focus on the difficult parts—and linking this with the word's pronunciation". Interleaving learning of these words with GPCs is described within the Letters and Sounds approach.

Solity suggests an emphasis on the use of real books rather than reading scheme books, and has shown a good evidence base for the success of this approach (see https://optimapsychology.com/). Rastle's analysis (2019) suggests that there is good evidence for using decodable readers in the very early stages of reading instruction. She suggests that beyond the initial stages of reading, however, the case for decodable books weakens. Grant (2016) highlights that the overall "aim is to establish a love of books and literature and to increase confidence and enjoyment", particularly significant aims for pupils who have already experienced difficulties with learning literacy skills.

Once pupils have a grasp of frequently occurring GPCs and words, attention can be given to learning the letter names and the order of the alphabet. Knowledge of letter names has been shown to support letter sound acquisition (Piasta and Wagner, 2009). Letter names provide a common language to discuss letters and are often used when spellings are dictated e.g. when a teacher spells out a word or a person gives their contact details. Letter sounds

would be associated with younger children in these contexts. As well as for traditional reasons such as looking up a dictionary definition, being able to use the alphabet remains relevant in the digital age e.g. when looking up a contact on a mobile phone. Functional Skills English exams include a discreet dictionary-based question on each level of the reading paper.

Motivation

Castles et al (2018) emphasize the importance of motivating pupils to read. They draw attention to effective strategies suggested by Willingham: maximizing the value of reading and making the choice to do so easy. "Children will value the activity of reading more if they have opportunities to read texts that they are interested in, that their friends are reading, or that are of some practical use to them. For example, comics, books of song lyrics, movie novelizations, or sporting skill manuals are all texts that—although they do not fall into the category of great literature—may be intrinsically motivating to a child.

In relation to making the choice easy, Willingham notes that the amount of personal time that children spend reading depends not just on whether they want to read but also on whether they want to do it more than all the other available options. He refers to a recent survey in which 30% of teenagers reported that they enjoyed reading "a lot" but also reported that they enjoyed other activities such as watching videos and gaming more (Rideout, 2015).

To shift the decision in favour of reading, Willingham suggests making that option as available as possible, noting that even small increases in availability have been shown to affect choices in other contexts; for example, moving the salad bar closer to restaurant diners by just 10 inches is enough to make them more likely to select food from it (Rozin et al., 2011; see Halpern, 2015). Therefore, Willingham recommends making sure that reading material is highly visible—in every classroom, in multiple rooms in the house, in the car, and so on—to maximize the chance that children will pick something up and read it.

A final point to notehere is that the desire to read Is integrally linked with reading ability itself: Children Are more motivated to read, and engage in it more, When they are good at it (Mol & Bus, 2011; Willingham, 2017a). Therefore, the question of how to best motivate children to read should not be seen as divorced from the question of how best to teach them. On the contrary, one clear and achievable means of maximizing motivation is to ensure that children have solid basic skills and consider being "a reader" a key part of their identities."

2. Using the Content Kit

The first step in deciding what to teach is to establish what a pupil already knows. The idea of this kit is that formative assessment should be used; future goals will be based largely on monitoring pupils' learning through teaching and moving on when the pupils are ready.

A baseline of which common sounds and words a pupil can read and spell should be established, as well as knowledge of letter names and the alphabet (see following pages). A sample of free writing will also help indicate their level of competency with independent writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

In addition to general targets for literacy, it is suggested that pupil's knowledge of the following is also checked:

Information	Read (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Written (date and proficiency)
First name			
Surname			
Address			
Date of birth			
Sample of free writing taken (dated)			

Proficiency Rating

When assessing what a pupil can read and spell, it may be useful to rate skills using a scale. The 1 – 5 scale already used in many Barnet can be employed.

The Barnet 5 Point Scale:

1. **Child not yet able to achieve – adult is introducing target**

2. **Child is beginning to respond to target, but only with a high level of adult support and not able to yet achieve independently**

3. **Child achieves target intermittently with some difficulty and adult support**

4. **Child achieves fairly consistently, only occasional difficulty/occasional adult support**

5. **Child achieves target consistently, without significant difficulty or need for adult support**

Any subsequent programme of work planned should incorporate goals for reading, spelling and writing, with small, manageable steps. Filling in gaps in early knowledge will enable a secure foundation for building subsequent skills. For example, if a pupil is not able to read two of the graphemes in List 2, and 2 from List 3, these would make a useful and manageable target. The other graphemes in Lists 2 and 3 would not need to be focused on for reading. Letter names and the alphabet may be taught once letter sounds and frequently occurring GPCs are secure, probably grouping the letters into sections to make goals manageable.

3. Frequently Occurring Graphemes and Phonemes

In line with the principles set out in the Rationale section, below are lists of 61 of the most frequently occurring Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs), along with double identical consonants (e.g. "ff"), the past tense suffix "ed" and the plural suffix "s" (Solity & Vousden, 2009). They have been organised into lists including according to where they appear in Letters & Sounds (The National Strategies, 2008).

List 1: The sound of each alphabet letter
List 2: Other most frequently occurring GPCs from Phases 2 & 3 (Sets 1-7)
List 3: Split Digraphs, Phase 5
List 4: Other most frequently occurring GPCs from Phase 5

When assessing what a pupil knows, you may wish to note down the pupil's reading errors. Spelling successes and errors are recorded by the pupil during assessment and may be retained for reference.

Example of recording:

List 1

Sound	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
"a" as in apple	10.07.19 1 "uh"	X	10.07.19 5
"b" as in ball	10.07.19 5	√	10.07.19 5

List 1

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h
i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p
q	r	s	t
u	v	w	x
y	z		

List 2

kick	cuff	tell	mass
chop	bark	ship	cord
thin	burn	wait	soil
weep	ear	high	hair
boot	fern		

List 3

make	these	time	bone
flute	bake	eve	ripe
woke	tube		

List 4

day	boy	when	about
girl	photo	blew	sea
paw	launch	money	coat
door	know	quick	looked
peas			

Record Sheets

List 1

Sound	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
"a" as in apple			
"b" as in ball			
"c" as in cat			
"d" as in dog			
"e" as in egg			
"f" as in fish			
"g" as in got			
"h" as in horse			
"i" as in sit			
"j" as in jump			
"k" as in kite			
"l" as in lion			
"m" as in man			
"n" as in nip			
"o" as in log			
"p" as in pig			
"q" as in quiet			
"r" as in rat			
"s" as in sun			
"t" as in top			
"u" as in sun			
"v" as in van			
"w" as in win			
"x" as in fox			
"y" as in yo yo			
"z" as in zip			

List 2

Sound	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
"ck" as in kick			
"ff" as in cuff			
"ll" as in tell			
"ss" as in mass			
"ch" as in chop			
"ar" as in bark			
"sh" as in ship			
"or" as in cord			
"th" as in thin			
"ur" as in burn			
"ai" as in wait			
"oi" as in soil			
"ee" as in weep			
"ea" as in ear			
"igh" as in high			
"ai" as in hair			
"oo" as in boot			
"er" as in fern			

List 3

Sound	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
"a_e" as in make			
"e_e" as in these			
"i_e" as in time			
"o_e" as in bone			
"u_e" as in flute			
"a_e" as in bake			
"e_e" as in Eve			
"i_e" as in ripe			
"o_e" as in woke			
"u_e" as in tube			

List 4

Sound	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
"ay" as in day			
"oy" as in boy			
"wh" as in when			
"ou" as in about			
"ir" as in girl			
"ph" as in photo			
"ew" as in blew			
"ea" as in sea			
"aw" as in paw			
"au" as in launch			
"ey" as in money			
"oa" as in coat			
"oor" as in door			
"kn" as in know			
"qu" as in quick			
"ed" pronounced "t" as in looked			
"s" pronounced "z" as in peas			

4. Frequently Occurring Words

In line with the principles set out in the Rationale section, below are lists of the 100 most frequently occurring words in a range of adult and children's literature (Solity & Vousden, 2009). They have been organised into lists including according to where they appear in Letters & Sounds (The National Strategies, 2008).

List 5: The 16 most frequently occurring words
List 6: The most frequently occurring words appearing in the Phase 2 checklist
List 7: The most frequently occurring words appearing in the Phase 3 checklist
List 8: The most frequently occurring words appearing in the Phase 4 checklist
List 9: The most frequently occurring words appearing in the Phase 5 checklist
List 10: The most frequently occurring words appearing in the Next 200 common words checklist

When assessing what a pupil knows, you may wish to note down the pupil's reading errors. Spelling successes and errors are recorded by the pupil during assessment and may be retained for reference.
Example of recording:

List 5

Word	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
a	10.07.19 5	√	10.07.19 5
and	10.07.19 1 "in"	x	10.07.19 1

List 5

a	and	he	I
in	is	it	my
of	that	the	then
to	was	went	with

List 6

an	as	at	off
on	can	had	back
get	big	him	not
got	up	but	go
into	his		

List 7

will	this	them	see
for	now	down	look
too	he	she	we
me	be	you	they
all	are	her	call

List 8

from	said	have	like
so	do	some	come
were	there	little	one
when	out	what	

List 9

old	by	time	about
made	came	make	here
saw	very	put	their
could	today	take	

List 10

away	over	did	new
after	our	two	has
us	other	next	live
three	last	because	am
once			

Record Sheets

List 5

Word	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
a			
and			
he			
I			
in			
is			
it			
my			
of			
that			
the			
then			
to			
was			
went			
with			

List 6

Word	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
an			
As			
At			
off			
on			
can			
had			
back			
get			
big			
him			
not			
got			
up			
but			
go			
into			
his			

List 7

Word	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
will			
this			
them			
see			
for			
now			
down			
look			
too			
he			
she			
we			
me			
be			
you			
they			
all			
are			
her			
call			

List 8

Word	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
from			
said			
have			
like			
so			
do			
some			
come			
were			
there			
little			
one			
when			
out			
what			

List 9

Word	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
old			
by			
time			
about			
made			
came			
make			
here			
saw			
very			
put			
their			
could			
today			
take			

List 10

Word	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
away			
over			
did			
new			
after			
our			
two			
has			
us			
other			
next			
live			
three			
last			
because			
am			
once			

5. Letter Names and the Alphabet

In line with the principles set out in the Rationale section, below are lists of the letters and sequence of the alphabet. They have been organised into lists to promote the setting of manageable goals for learning, but as with other lists, these may need to be broken down further during teaching.

List 11: a – h

List 12: i – p

List 13: q – z

List 14: Alphabet order

When assessing what a pupil knows, you may wish to note down the pupil's reading errors. Spelling successes and errors are recorded by the pupil during assessment and may be retained for reference.

Example of recording:

List 11

Letter	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
a	10.07.19 5	√	10.07.19 5
b	10.07.19 1 "p"	x	10.07.19 1

When assessing alphabet order, pupils can recite or sing it. To explore their ability to order the graphemes, wooden or magnetic letters can be used.

List 11

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h

List 12

i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p

List 13

q	r	s	t
u	v	w	x
y	z		

Record Sheets

List 11

Name	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
a			
b			
c			
d			
e			
f			
g			
h			

List 12

Name	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
i			
j			
k			
l			
m			
n			
o			
p			

List 13

Name	Reading (date and proficiency)	Reading Speed under 3 seconds?	Writing (date and proficiency)
q			
r			
s			
t			
u			
v			
w			
x			
y			
z			

Name:

Date:

Alphabet Ordering (note down speed and errors):

Accuracy when recited / sung:

a b c d e f g h I j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Time taken:

Accuracy when ordered e.g. with magnetic letters:

a b c d e f g h I j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Time taken:

6. Supporting Reading Development

Pupils need to be taught to read grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and frequently occurring words, learning to fluently recognise the GPCs and words on their own and recall them when reading books. Each session should therefore include practicing rapid recall of GPCs (e.g. through Precision Teaching) and reading with others (e.g. through Paired Reading) to enable them to be supported to synthesise words with the GPCs they are learning. For struggling readers, the principles of good teaching referred to in the Rationale are critical. Maintaining pupils' motivation alongside ensuring they experience success through setting manageable goals; tiny steps may be necessary. Allowing sufficient practice to ensure mastery is critical.

Order of Teaching Reading

Taking account of the working memory required for tasks (Solity, 2003), but also considering Letters & Sounds, the following order of teaching is suggested:

- Individual letter sounds, List 1
- VC [Vowel – Consonant] words that blend at letter level (e.g. an)
- CVC words that blend at letter level (e.g. cat)
- CVCC words that blend at letter level (e.g. bark)
- CCVCC words that blend at letter level (e.g. stamp)
- Digraphs, List 2 (e.g. cord), also "igh", List 2
- CVCe words, List 3 (e.g. make)
- Digraphs, List 4 (e.g. day), also suffixes List 4

Blending of sounds is the most significant reading skill being targeted when teaching GPCs and reading.

Letters & Sounds gives a detailed example of a structure in which GPC and high frequency word learning are interleaved. The GPC and frequently occurring word lists provided have therefore been approximately aligned with the sets and phases described in that document.

(please see
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/up-loads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters_and__Sounds_-_DFES-00281-2007.pdf)

Numerous activities are contained in the document, and further activities can be found in the array of materials available in schools and online e.g. see programmes of activities in
http://www.snip-newsletter.co.uk/pdfs/downloads/literacy_programme_1.pdf

A Metacognitive Approach to Teaching Reading

Teaching children how to think about which strategies they are using when reading

As well as directly teaching phonological skills such as letter sound relationships, sound analysis and blending, children will benefit from help to think systematically about the strategies they can use when reading.

1.   Teaching about the structure of texts helps with the scaffolding that enables prediction and bringing existing knowledge to the forefront of the mind, e.g. Is the purpose to describe or explain? What are the elements of a story?

2. Teaching reading comprehension strategies helps; What do I already know? What do I predict will happen? What questions can I ask to see what I understand? What do I need to clarify? Can I summarise what I have read so far? (From the Reciprocal Teaching intervention developed by Palincsar and Brown, 1984)

3. Teaching children to use decoding strategies in a systematic way will help:

a. Sound out the word
strand → *sss + t + rrr + aaa + nnn + d*

b. Look for words that rhyme
limerick → *[him] [her] [kick]*

c. Peel off the suffixes / prefixes
unrelenting → *[un] [re] lent [ing]*

d. Try out different vowel sounds
h*ea*d b*ea*d br*ea*k *seam? great? breath?*

e. Spy the words you know within words
dogmatic → *dog mat ic*

4. Helping children change their attributions so that they see that the way they approach reading makes a difference:

> **Take a Breath**
> "When I see ea in a word, first, I'll try ee, then, I'll try e, then I'll try a, and see what gives me a real word. First I'll try ee. I sound out the words and see if it makes a word I know: breeth. It doesn't make a real word, but I don't give up. I go on to the next step. Now I'll try e: breath. Yes, that's a real word! My strategy worked: First I tried one sound, then, I tried another. I was flexible, I stuck at it, and I got it!"
> From the PHAST Reading Program, M.W. Lovett, Learning Disabilities Research Program, Hospital for Sick Children http://www.sickkids.ca/LDRP/

Top Five Handy Ideas for Reading a Word:

- Look at the ideas before you start reading
- Work through them when you're stuck on a word
- Draw them on a hand to help you remember them!

1. Sound Hound

2. Rhyme Time

3. Peel!

4. Vowel Flipper

5. Spy Fly
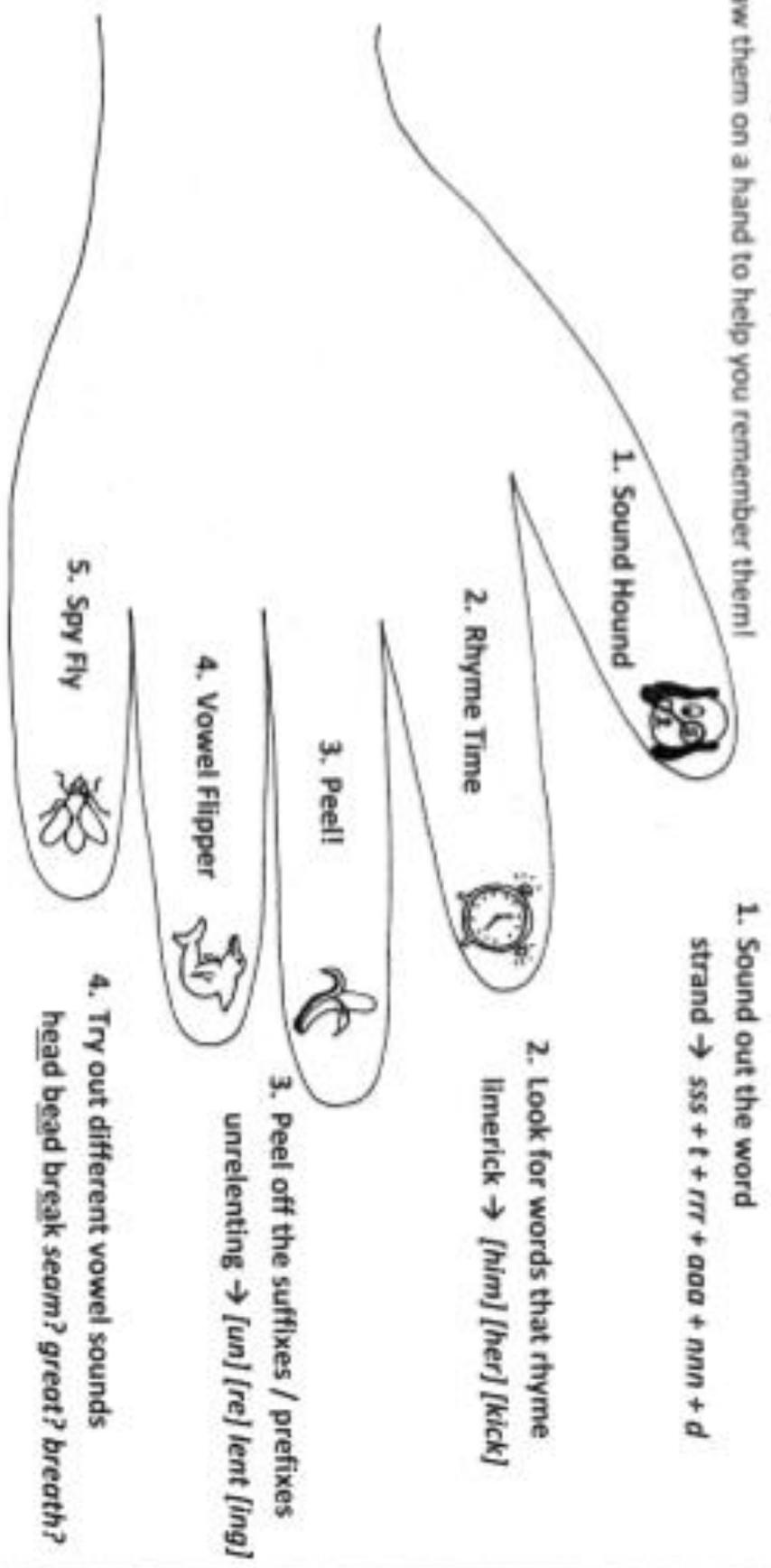
1. Sound out the word
   strand → sss + t + rrr + aaa + nnn + d

2. Look for words that rhyme
   limerick → [him] [her] [kick]

3. Peel off the suffixes / prefixes
   unrelenting → [un] [re] lent [ing]

4. Try out different vowel sounds
   head bead break seam? great? breath?

5. Spy the words you know within words
   dogmatic → dog mat ic

7. Supporting Spelling Development

Spelling practice should be built into each session of a programme of support, ensuring that pupils master spelling the prioritised grapheme phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and high frequency words suggested. Learning to spell phonemes and words are harder skills than learning to read them, and principles of teaching such as sufficient opportunities for practice and generalisation should be considered. Once they have been mastered to fluency, further words can be targeted, with an approach that shows pupils how to seek out patterns in words and highlights meaning. Pupils should be explicitly taught about how root words, beginnings and endings of words carry meaning. Words should be revisited to ensure they are practised until learned securely. The words learned should be relevant to what is being practiced when reading, and then used in a variety of writing tasks. A teacher who models enjoying looking for spelling patterns will hopefully convey that to a pupil. A pupil who experiences success in spelling will find it easier to stay motivated with further spelling challenges. Letter tiles / magnetic / wooden letters enable a pupil to try out arranging letters without committing to writing them down. A graduated approach can be used e.g. starting by supplying all the correct letters for a word, then gradually increasing the choice of letters.

Suggested Strategies when Teaching Spelling

✓ **Teach to say the word and tap out the syllables**

✓ **Teach to segment the grapheme-phoneme correspondents (for ex ample, sh-ou-t)**

✓ **Teach to remember similar sounding words (for example, bat, cat, fat, rat)**

✓ **Teach the origin of the word (for example bi-cycle = two and wheels).**

✓ **Teach roots, prefixes and suffixes (for example, like, lik<u>ed</u>, <u>dis</u>like)**

Further Strategies

✓ Practise: look – say – cover – write – check
✓ Look for a shorter word within the word which will help you remember it (for example, "a rat" in "separate")
✓ Say the word clearly, syllable by syllable (for example, re-mem-ber)
✓ Say the word in your head or out loud, as it is written (for example, wed-nes-day)
✓ Make up rhymes or mnemonics to help you remember.
✓ Take a mental photograph of the word.
✓ Use spelling rules (see following)

Suggested Teaching Priorities for Early Spelling Rules

1. **Silent e**: if the vowel says its name the word ends in e.
   e.g. Kit – kite
   Drop the e before the ending
   e.g. Write – writing

2. **Plurals:** Change y to i when you add an ending.
   e.g. Pretty – prettier.

3. **Plurals:** If a word ends in s, sh, ch, x, or z, add es.
   e.g. church – churches

4. **Doubling:** Double the last consonant for cvc words (short vowel sound) when adding an ending.
   e.g. sit – sitter

5. **V ending:** No English words end in a v, there is always an e after a v.

6. **Every word** always has either a **vowel** or a **y** in it.

7. Supporting the Learning of the Alphabet

Owing to the abstract nature of the alphabet, most people find it easier to learn the order as a song. Many online songs have the advantage of showing each letter separately when singing, but be aware that many focus on letter names and sounds in the same song, and are targeted at young children. It is likely that as with other areas of literacy learning, breaking the task into small sections which are regularly practiced will be necessary to achieve accuracy and automaticity.

In supporting pupils to be able to order the graphemes into alphabetical order, many find it helpful to use a rainbow arc alongside wooden or magnetic letters.

Having assessed what the pupil is able to do independently, a plan can be made of how large a section of the alphabet to tackle. Often pupils need to tackle a section discretely before adding it to a section they are more secure with.

8. Supporting Writing Development

Ideas for Promoting Independent Writing

Writing practice* should be built into each session of a programme of support, and should provide a range of opportunities to practice developing skills that are being targeted e.g. high frequency words. When attempting to write words, pupils may manage to use certain letters to represent some of the phonemes in a word, but miss out others. As skills develop and they attempt to represent more complex sounds, the order of sounds may be confused. Building confidence and motivation must be considered when planning tasks. Appreciating the purpose of a piece of writing can increase the engagement with the task

*Handwriting is an area of difficulty for some students. Professional judgement should be used to inform whether an alternative form of recording should be considered, and under what circumstances.

Encourage the pupil to "Have a go"

Pupils benefit from a supportive environment, created by trusted adults, in which they are encouraged to take risks with their learning and attempt to write. Starting with manageable targets and gradually increasing expectations as skills develop should help promote independence.
- Have a go at writing a list
- Have a go at writing a sentence

Spell key words to enable the pupil to build a sentence

A pupil may be helped by creating a sentence and saying it aloud, and then having key words written down for them to use in their writing. For example:

Pupil says: "There was a loud scream so I ran away really fast."
Adult says: "l-ou-d, scr-ea-m, f-as-t,
Adult writes: "loud   scream   fast"

Use Writing Frames to Support Planning

Giving some structure to a piece of writing can help a pupil manage the expectations of a task. This could be through a sentence starter, a question prompt or even just single words. Helping a pupil learn to plan what they want to write is likely to be significant in supporting their writing development.

Use Cloze Procedure

Giving most of a sentence to a pupil enables them to focus more on the words they are filling in. Missing words can have both the first letter and a line length which represents the word length. (f__) (e_____). For those with few literacy skills, sentences will need to be short and simple, but sentence length and complexity can be built up. As skills increase, missing words may not have first letter or line length as a cue.

Suggested Priorities for Teaching Punctuation

- Capital Letters
- Full Stops
- Commas: for lists; to separate main clauses in a sentence; to indicate a natural pause.
- Question marks
- Exclamation marks

Teaching of correct speech marks and apostrophes may be prioritised if a pupil is already attempting to use them. The order in which the punctuation marks are taught is up to professional judgement.

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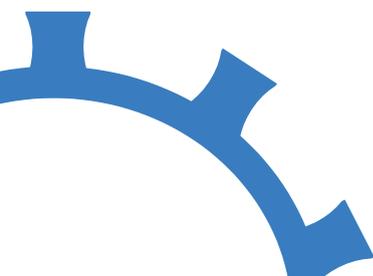
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