

Fun with Reading and Writing

A Resource Pack for
Primary School Pupils

Psychological Services Section
Education Department
HKSAR Government
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by
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for the
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Acknowledgements

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Ian Smythe, Ph. D.
Consultant to the project

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Fun with Reading and Writing

This resource pack is available in paper version as well as in CD Rom. For the CD Rom, just click on the hyperlink below to go straight to the page you want, either in this document, or in the other resources.

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Please note that throughout this resource the term “their” has been used as a singular personal pronoun to replace the more cumbersome “his/her”. This is in line with modern usage (e.g. in the UK government’s Special Educational Needs Code of Practice).

Introduction

As the name of this resource suggests, learning to read and write can be fun. However, for some children these tasks are very difficult. They may not learn from the teaching methods used in their classroom, even though their classmates do. This does not mean they cannot learn - it just means that the teacher needs to find a way to teach that will help them to learn.

This may sound like extra work for the teacher, but it needs not be. Through careful application of some key principles, backed up by the materials in this resource, children with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) will begin to learn; furthermore, they will understand what they are learning, will become more active in the classroom and will start to enjoy learning.

The two key principles to remember when teaching children with SpLD are:

1. Differentiate where appropriate.
2. Use structured, sequential, multisensory techniques.

These principles will be discussed in more details later. For now, they remind us that children learn in different ways, and there is no reason why a child should not be allowed to learn in their own way. While some children learn patterns and rules implicitly, without the need for explanation and reinforcement, others need a more formal structure or framework within which to work.

Learning styles

The way we learn best will depend upon the way our brain works. The three main senses used for learning are seeing, hearing and touching. Everybody has personal preferences, and it is not an either/or situation but the combination of these which form the major component of what is referred to as the learning style. For example, some individuals like to receive instructions verbally, others prefer them written down. Some people can put together furniture from a simple diagram, while others need elaborate written instructions. That is, the ability of the writer to communicate with the reader will depend upon many factors, including the ability of the writer to express themselves in a manner the reader will understand.

This means that, while most children in a class will learn by a certain set of instructions, it does not mean this is the easiest way for everybody. Furthermore, the way a child likes to learn Chinese may not be the most appropriate way to learn English.

The principle of multisensory teaching is to use all the senses to reinforce the teaching. The most important part of this is to involve the child in the process, to make them an active rather than a passive learner. The activities included in this

resource are those which have been found to be very successful in teaching children with specific learning difficulties. The activities start by asking what is to be learnt in this lesson, has the child already failed to learn with one teaching method, and what other methods can be used to help that child learn. Thus the question for the teacher becomes “Can I teach the way the child learns?”

Differentiated teaching

The purpose of this resource is to provide materials which promote the involvement of every child in classroom literacy activities. This can be achieved by ensuring that the target for each individual is achievable. Many of the resources may appear to be similar to those generally available. However, these have been designed to allow the teacher to use the worksheets in different ways which may make them more suited to children with specific learning difficulties, who normally feel demotivated as they do not even know where to start the activity, let alone how to complete it.

There are many ways to differentiate within the classroom; the teacher needs to ask what is the objective of this exercise, and how they can involve the child in the work, at least at some level. Here are just some examples:

- 1) In dictation, try counting the words that are correct rather than take away points every time an error is made. That way the results become positive and motivating, and targets can be set, such as “try to spell as many of the three letter words as you can.”

- 2) If the task is to write a short story, why not let them draw a mind map. This will demonstrate their ability to think without limiting the work by poor spelling or grammar.

Understand what they know – not what they do not know

It is very important to find out at what level the child is functioning. This means concentrating on what they know, not what they do not know. This resource is set out to provide support in all the key areas that are important for the Chinese child with specific learning difficulties learning English.

Oral vocabulary is very important, and so are conversations that draw on a small set of words. In this pack is a list of words which have been chosen as a basis for teaching English, providing the necessary vocabulary for these children to express themselves clearly. They have been chosen from a variety of sources, with reference to the word frequency, the functionality in the local context, and, as much as possible, the length of the words. As suggested throughout this resource, make the task suit the child. While you may accept from the child with SpLD a simple sentence with a subject, verb and object; from the more literate child you may ask for adjectives and adverbs. Thus the task is differentiated, and children can build upon what they know.

Many children with SpLD are moved on from understanding the alphabet to reading and writing words before they have understood the relationship between sounds and letters. When children start to learn to read and write, they remember words as a whole, and not on a letter by letter basis. Most children move on to understanding the relationship between sound and letter without difficulties. But those with SpLD will have greater problems learning these skills. They will not be able to read or spell these words unless they understand the sound to letter correspondence.

The resources as an introduction

It is impossible in just a few pages to cater for the diversity of styles and differences that may be encountered in the classroom. However, it is hoped that in providing a basic set of activities, it will be understood how classroom differentiation is possible, and how the teacher can cater for diversity.

In providing a framework and the basic building blocks it should be possible not only to work on the cornerstones of writing English, but also to use the resources as a basis for more extended exercises.

Do not be afraid to try new things, and take an activity suggested in one section over to another area. In producing this resource, we have been careful to include on the CD the original Microsoft Word documents, which you may use as templates to create other activities that may advance as your ideas develop, and the knowledge of the children you teach grows.

Make it colourful

One of the most important things to remember when using this pack is that children will learn more if it means something to them. This means using each resource in a way that allows them to remember each part. One way to do this is to encourage the use of colour. Let them draw things, encourage them to use colour codes wherever possible, and let them personalise everything. Some of the most ordinary pages can be transformed by the simple use of colour. For example, the SpLD child is more likely to remember how to write “a yellow banana” if they are asked to draw a picture of it, than if they just repeatedly write the words. Remember that this also provides a way for these children to demonstrate that they can be good at some activities, as often they can express themselves in drawings where words fail them.

Classroom management for primary school teachers

Below is a series of tips for primary school teachers on classroom management, and how to provide a better learning environment for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

1. SpLD pupils should always be sat facing the front, in a place you pass, or can see easily, so you may watch their progress and difficulties, including stress. These children find any copying from the board very difficult, so minimise that activity, or make appropriate provision.

2. When work is to be copied from the board, make sure they have done it correctly. Also ensure that the work stays on the board long enough for them to copy it down. Try to sit them directly in front of the board, not at an angle. Make sure there are no shiny reflections which make it difficult to see.

3. Over-teach things they are learning this week or last week, by writing a clue onto the back of their hand or on a memory card taped to their table (every time you pass remind and revise that point). See the memory cards in this resource.

4. Use a portable tape recorder (“Walkman”) to tape short messages and instructions which they will be able to replay when needed. (See tips on using tape recorders.)

5. Gather as many interested adult helpers as you can; teach them together in a small group how to support children with SpLD (using blind-folds, sand trays, cursive handwriting, practice memory cards etc).

6. Make a short ‘special’ time as often as possible to see the child alone (five minutes before school, after school, before or after lunch can usually be arranged; mothers will usually cooperate with this sort of strategy and can often find that daily moment reassuring too, if they feel free to join in sometimes).

7. Ensure you have regular (at least every term) meetings with the parents. Involve them as much as possible as they can be a useful ally. Do not forget that the parents may also have SpLD.

8. Keep a record book that goes home each night and is signed by the parents.

9. Provide charts, memory cards and flash cards for items they are likely to forget, from homework to sports kit to vocabulary. Use colour to help the children’s memories.

10. Arrange the class so that during lessons, the child with SpLD can sit near the front, preferably alongside well-motivated children or a 'study buddy' who can clarify instructions for them.

11. Equip the classroom with clearly marked and neatly arranged resources so that they can be found easily.

12. Avoid putting children in awkward or embarrassing situations, such as asking them to read aloud to the whole class, or enact a word they are unlikely to know.

13. Where appropriate, take time to talk to the entire class about individual differences. Many teachers will take the time to explain about those with physical differences, but not those with learning differences. Be careful to use appropriate terminology, and explain about role models, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Einstein.

Helping pupils with SpLD at school

1. Make expectations high for their intellectual stimulation but reasonable for their written response.
2. Try using two colours in marking - one for content and another for spelling and presentation.
3. Try to understand the reasons for their mistakes and give them the chance to explain their difficulties to you.
4. Watch out for signs of tiredness and fatigue - these children have to try harder than other pupils, which can be exhausting.
5. Be slow, quiet and deliberate when giving instructions, allowing time for the meaning of the words to 'sink in'. Consider giving instructions verbally and in writing.
6. Where possible, use multi-sensory methods of learning.
7. Give guidance about how to tackle all tasks systematically.
8. Watch out for signs of falling confidence and low self-esteem. Try to stimulate motivation by constant praise of progress and achievement, no matter how small.
9. Enable children to show their interest, knowledge and skills, despite their difficulties with writing. Often they will be able to 'shine' orally and teachers should encourage this.
10. Encourage the child by setting an appropriate level of difficulty so that they can finish in the allotted time.
11. However slow the child's progress, every day they must be able to see that they know something or can do something they could not do last week.
12. Try to challenge the child, remembering their intellectual ability may be far more than their literacy skills.
13. If the task in question is about demonstrating knowledge, and time is not the test, then allow more time for the task.
14. Encourage and promote strengths.

15. Mark positively and praise any progress, no matter how small.
16. Never assume that they know today what they knew yesterday.
17. Look to find different ways for them to learn, but also encourage them to find other ways to help themselves.
18. Encourage proofreading, and choose only a few items to concentrate on for any one exercise, such as capitals and full stops.
19. Wherever possible explain a few of the most important errors. Never highlight them all, and always praise what has been completed correctly.
20. Try to avoid setting work that is well beyond their capabilities.
21. These children tire easily, so give frequent breaks.
22. Help the child organise themselves, such as ensuring pencils are sharp at the beginning of the lesson, making sure they have an eraser, and that nothing needs to be borrowed from friends around the room.
23. Avoid having the child finish work in breaktime, as this becomes a punishment.
24. Make eye contact as often as possible, as that will give you a good idea if they have understood.

Multisensory teaching

Multisensory teaching involves using as many of the senses as possible to reinforce learning. This resource pack involves many of them, and gives ideas how they can be used in different ways. On the multimedia CD you will see some of the ideas in action, in photographs and in short videos.

Here are just a few of the ways in which multisensory techniques are used at different levels:

Use Plasticine or Playdoh to make letter shapes.

Do finger drawing, in sand trays, in salt, on carpet tiles and in the air.

Use songs to remember sequences.

Use nursery rhymes to develop rhyming skills.

Use wooden letters, which the child may feel with their eyes closed.

Let the child feel the puff of air that comes when saying 'p', but not 'b'.

Count syllables using clapping, tapping and stamping of the feet.

Use tape recorders for practising tasks that require memory, such as the alphabet.

Allow the child to enact a concept such as 'anger' to explain it, rather than use words.

Use drama with several children to act out ideas, concepts and stories.

These techniques can be combined to make a truly multisensory learning experience, such as singing songs while making letter shapes in the air, and allow different senses and actions to complement and reinforce each other.

Tips on using tape recorders

A tape recorder can be a very useful aid for the child with SpLD. Many of these children have short term memory problems, and will not be able to carry more than one or two instructions in their head at one time. Furthermore, they will find it difficult to write to help their memory. Therefore a tape recorder may be a very useful tool.

There are three ways the recorder may be used: 1) as a memory aid, 2) as a communication device and 3) as an activity which may help literacy skills. Examples of these are as follows:

1) As a memory aid

- a) To record homework instructions.
- b) To remember word lists.
- c) To record and play back complicated instructions.

2) As a communication device

- a) To allow the teacher to pass information to the parents.
- b) To allow the parents to communicate with the teachers.

3) As an activity which may help literacy skills

- a) Listen to word lists. Make them very short, perhaps only three words.
- b) Let the child listen to the word lists, then let the child tape their own voice and compare the two.
- c) Let the child say their story into the recorder, instead of writing it.
- d) Let the child read short stories into the recorder which the teacher can check later.
- e) Create paired activities, such as a news reporter and interview an Olympic sportsman.

There are many activities for which the recorder can be used, depending upon the level of the child. Be creative in your idea, and allow the child to use it to demonstrate that they can at least do part of the activity, either at home or in school, even if the written part may be beyond them.

Helping the child with specific learning difficulties – a review

Do

- Be enthusiastic about what you do
- Try to maintain the child's interest by varying resources
- Be flexible and willing to change your plans
- Keep each activity short and have variety in each session
- Have some extra activities in reserve
- Remember to talk over what you have done in previous sessions
- Repeat what has been learnt, perhaps in a different way
- Allow time to work out strategies
- Remember some people do not like to read aloud
- Give praise and encouragement
- Think about trying to set achievable targets with the child for one or more sessions
- Let the child feel in control and that you value his/her ideas
- Try to correct and criticise in a positive way
- Try to finish each lesson with the child feeling successful
- Be a good listener
- Take a break - everyone needs it
- Relax and enjoy

Don't

- Be too ambitious
- Try to rush
- Ignore the child's interests, hobbies and pastimes
- Compare your students to others
- Show surprise at what your student can't do
- Interrupt too quickly to correct reading
- Show your frustration if s/he gets it wrong
- Overload with too many activities in one session
- Pick out all errors - only the important ones
- Panic if things go wrong - change the activity and return later

Alphabet

How to use the CD Rom:

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Introduction

The alphabet consists of 26 letters which are the fundamental building blocks of reading and writing in English. From just these few symbols it is possible to represent all the sounds and words in the English language. However, although there are so few 'characters' compared to Chinese, they can still cause confusion.

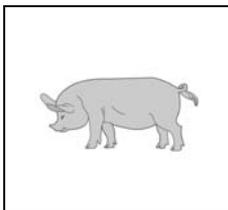
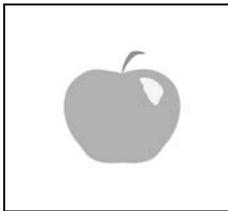
One of the principal problems is the confusion between letter sound and letter name. To minimise confusion, concentrate on the letter sounds. However, remember that letters can represent different sounds in different context. As an example, the sound of 'a' is short in cat, and in cake is long, due to the final 'e'. Always ensure that children are giving the correct response, and explain possible confusions.

While many children learn the alphabet easily, children with specific learning difficulties frequently have problems in remembering the relationship between sounds and letters, and as a consequence when the rest of the class moves on, decoding words on a letter by letter basis, the SpLD child is having to remember the word as a whole unit.

In this section there is a checklist which can be used to verify that the child can recognise each letter name and letter sound. Try to ensure that the children know these before they advance to more complex exercises.

Alphabet matching 1

There are many games you can play with this worksheet. But make sure that the child knows how to name the objects in English. Game 1: First, ask the child to name the objects. Then ask them to name the letters, and the letter sounds. Once they have all those, then they can start to match the picture with the letter. Game 2: Cut out the pictures and the letters, and play a matching game. Game 3: You could stick the pictures onto one side of a small card and the letter on the reverse side, to create a flash card. Then you can hold up one side and ask the child to identify what is on the other side.



v

n

h

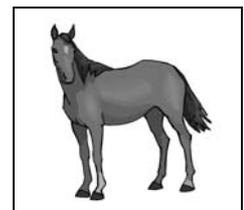
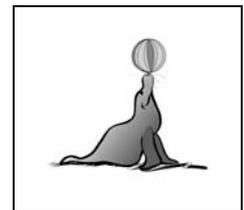
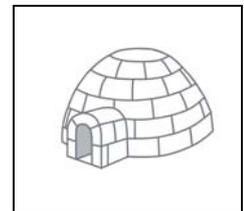
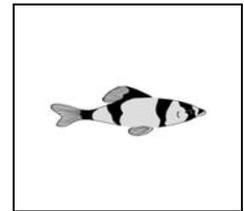
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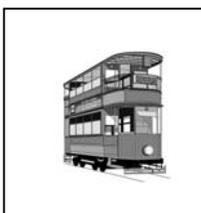
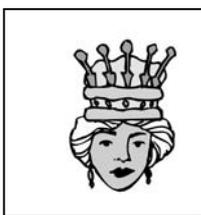
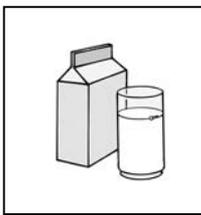
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a



Alphabet matching 2

There are many games you can play with this worksheet. But make sure that the child knows how to name the objects in English. Game 1: First, ask the child to name the objects. Then ask them to name the letters, and the letter sounds. Once they have all those, then they can start to match the picture with the letter. Game 2: Cut out the pictures and the letters, and play a matching game. Game 3: You could stick the pictures onto one side of a small card and the letter on the reverse side, to create a flash card. Then you can hold up one side and ask the child to identify what is on the other side.



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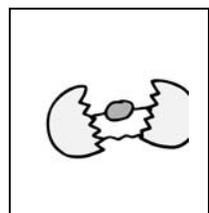
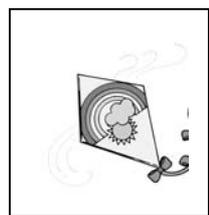
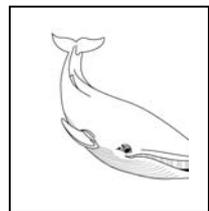
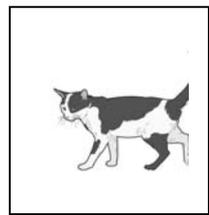
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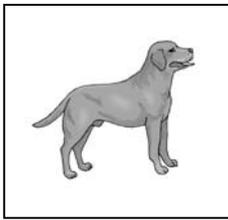
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Alphabet matching 3

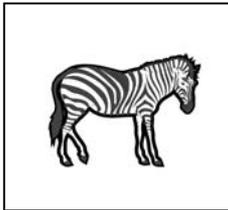
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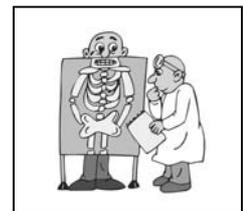
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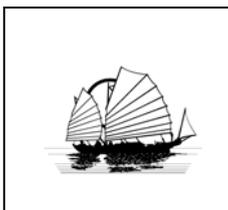
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d



g



b



z

Identifying letters 1

Many children have difficulty telling the difference between letters of similar shape, but different orientation. The four letters 'b', 'd', 'p' and 'q' are frequently confused because of their letter shapes, but also because the sounds can sometimes appear to be the same. In this exercise, the child practises recognising the letter shapes. The easiest task is to ask the child to ring all the same letters in the same colour pencil. But you may also try other tasks, such as asking them to say them as quickly as possible. Try this yourself first, as it is not easy! You may like to try similar activities with 'u', 'n', 'm', and 'w' for example.

p d b q p d b d q p d
d b p b d q d q b p d
b p q d b p b q d b d
b q p d b q d p b q d
q p d b d p q b p b d
d b q p b d p q b d p
q p d b d p d b p q p

Identifying letters 2

Letters such as a, e, o and c have similarities, as they are all about the same size, and appear to be of very similar shape. Ask the child to identify the different letters by circling them with different colours, one for each letter. This exercise is designed to be difficult, since a typeface has been chosen (Comic Sans) in which the letter 'a' looks similar to the other letters. However, there are also some letters in another font (Arial). Another task could be to identify the number of a's of each type style.

a e o c e c a o a c e
 o a o a c e o a c e o
 o e c e a o a c a e o
 a o c e a o a c a o e
 e a s o e c a c e o a
 e a o c a e o a c a o
 a o c e a c a o e c a

Kinaesthetic input

Multisensory techniques may be used to help the child remember spellings. However, they are also useful exercises to improve kinaesthetic control. The following exercises are useful for both, and work well for both Chinese and English.

Playdoh

This will help strengthen small hands, and may be used to reinforce shapes, such as components of characters or whole characters. Think about how you could use different colours for different parts of the character.

Salt/sand trays

A shallow sand tray is a very cheap but effective way of building kinaesthetic skills, as the child simply draws characters and letters in the sand.

Wooden letters

Useful for the child to explore shape. Games can include 'guess the letter with your eyes shut'.

Writing practice

Just practising writing letter shapes can be very helpful. Start by using tracing methods. Although it may seem boring, have the child practise simple shapes, such as a line of letter 'c', all joined up. Try to use paper with 4 lines, getting the child to write letters such as 'a' and 'c' between the middle lines, using the upper line to show the top for 'd' and 'l', and the lower line for letters such as 'p' and 'g'.

Manipulation of objects

Play bricks (eg Lego) can be useful for developing thinking and planning skills, as well as hand control.

Exploring text

Below is a short extract from “Alice in Wonderland”, but you can use any text for this exercise. Check that the child knows where the text starts, direction of reading and what to do when they get to the end of a line, as well as the significance of the punctuation. This text is too advanced for many children with specific learning difficulties to read. But they may understand the concepts. Try some simple exercises, such as circling all the vowels, or counting how many b’s and p’s there are.

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, “and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”

Alphabet Rainbow

Children need to know the alphabet in order to find words in a dictionary. If you do not know where in the dictionary the letter occurs, even roughly, then the search can take a long time. Try using letters on card or wooden letters, and ask the child to build a 'rainbow' of the letters. You may want to invent a system using colours. For example, each quarter of the alphabet could be coloured differently. This could be reinforced, if they have a personal dictionary, by colouring the pages in the same colour, reducing the time spent in searching for words.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Alphabet sequence

Here is a sentence that contains all the letters of the alphabet. There are several activities which can be used with all levels of children.

Ask the child to identify each letter in order.

Have them draw a line that loops from one letter to the next letter of the alphabet.

Ask them to make their own short story, paragraph or sentence which contains every letter. This can be modified for the child's ability.

Draw the fox jumping over the dog.

The quick brown fox jumps over
the lazy dog.

My alphabet sentence

Use the alphabet here to check you have used every letter.

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

Alphabet trace

Letter formation is very important, as is letter recognition. Below are some exercises for the child to practise recognising the letters and making the shapes.

The exercises start with a simple colouring in of each letter. Parts of the letter are then removed, to make it more difficult. Letters are then shown out of alphabetic sequence, and finally some simple questions are asked, which they will need to fill in. Other exercises include colouring the vowels in one colour and everything else in different colours. Colour each quarter of the alphabet in a different colour to help remember the order.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

How many colours in a rainbow?

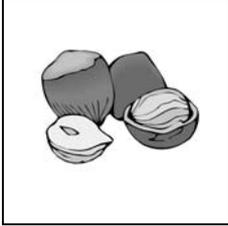
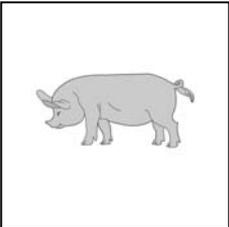
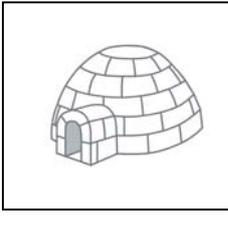
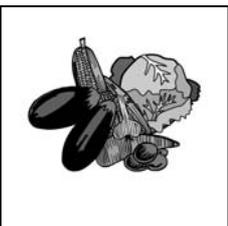
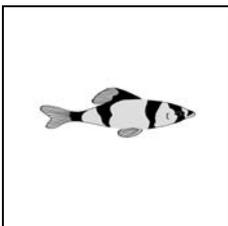
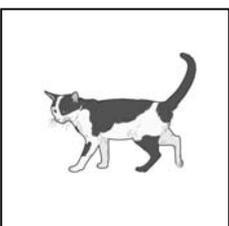
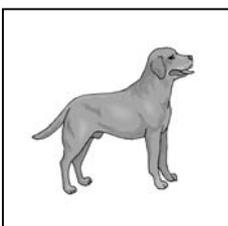
How many stars in the sky?

How many mountains in the world?

How many seas in the world?

First letter

This activity may be used in different ways. You could name the object, and the child has to find the picture, and fill in the first letter. So if you say fish, they would have to write the letter 'f' in the box alongside fish. An alternative is to ask the child to name the object, and then fill in the missing letter.

	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>

Alphabet Assessment

Use this page to confirm the child's knowledge. The five parts are as follows:

- 1) Show the child a card with the letter on it, and ask them to say the letter name.
- 2) Then ask them to say the letter sound.
- 3) Show the child a word, and ask them to say the first sound.
- 4) Ask them to name some other words that start with that letter sound.
- 5) Show them a picture from the alphabet series at random, and ask them to identify the sound of the first letter. You may want to check this ability using the other vocabulary pictures to be found in this resource.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Can the child say the letter name?	Can the child say the letter sound?	Can the child say the first sound in a printed word?	Can the child name a word starting with...?	Can the child sound out the first letter?
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					

Alphabet matching template

Use this page to create new exercises that will allow the child to build relationships between letters and words with the same first letter.



Alphabet trace template

Use this template to produce more worksheets. Below are letters made using Comic Sans script, in outline. You may make your own words and sentence which the child can fill in.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Dogs go woof,
And cows go moo!



First letter template

This activity may be used in several ways. You could name the object, and the child has to find the picture, and fill in the first letter. So if you say fish, they would have to write the letter 'f' in the box alongside fish.

<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					

Grammar and comprehension

How to use the CD Rom:

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Introduction

When teaching the child with specific learning difficulties (SpLD), it is important to remember what makes them different from other children. Many of the exercises in this resource will help most children, but it is the manner in which they are used that is important. Remember that it is curriculum differentiation – by task and by outcome - that will give the greatest opportunities to individuals with SpLD and help them to perform to the best of their ability. Differentiation by task means setting different activities for some children, while differentiation by outcome means setting the same task for all, but with different expectations/requirements. For example you may choose to accept work in different forms (bullet points, mind maps etc) or you may only mark certain spellings, rather than all errors.

This section deals with the principles of constructing and understanding written prose. Understanding individual words is only part of the process; just because a child can read all the words does not mean they can make sense of it. In the same way, being able to spell words does not mean the child can construct a sentence correctly.

One of the greatest difficulties for the child with SpLD is not that they fail to see a single pattern, but that they see too many patterns and cannot decide which one to use. The role of the teacher is to help them see the most important one, and guide them through the process.

Although these exercises will help all children, the exercises on the following pages are particularly useful for children with SpLD. In particular, these techniques will help them appreciate, practise and remember the principles which are often implicitly learnt by other children.

The guiding principles are:

- Overlearning

- Constant review opportunities to check retention of skills/information

- Small, clearly structured steps

- Multisensory, using as many different approaches as necessary.

The principal parts in this section are:

- Basic structure
- Parts of the sentence
- Rules
- Tenses
- Punctuation

Children with SpLD frequently miss out on the foundations of what is required, and therefore never have a base on which to build. The worksheets in this section will concentrate on the foundations which will provide a basis for building a wider understanding, and extending their knowledge base.

Basic structure

English has certain rules which are fairly clear and easy to understand. It is therefore a good idea to teach children the basic structure of English. This will help both comprehension and writing skills. Knowing about the basic structure means they should be able to put ideas into the right order, and provide meaningful sentences. In reading they will start to relate words to each other, rather than seeing them as a string of independent words. In exercises like dictation, they will begin to use more sophisticated linguistic guessing games to work out the components they missed.

Remember that the key to successful teaching is to establish what these children already know, and build on that. This means great care has to be taken in assessing what knowledge they already have. Whilst many children acquire new knowledge and skills with ease, children with SpLD may fail at the lowest level, and frequently it is important to go right back to basics.

Sentence construction

Many sentences, particularly those used in the early stages of literacy acquisition, have a simple structure. Put in terms the child may understand, many sentences may be seen as

Who? or what?	Is doing what?	To whom/ with what/ where/ when/ how?
--------------------------	---------------------------	--

An understanding of this basic structure will make it easier to understand what they are reading, and what they are trying to write. Here is a simple exercise to practise this structure. Cut out the words, and ask the child to separate out the action words (the verbs). Then they can arrange them into sentences which make sense. Point out that each sentence will start with a capital letter, so they have some clues. Ask the child to say what each sentence means. For fun, you could ask them to make silly sentences. Eg “Tom swam along the road.”

The ball	to the shop	walked
sat	the cat	the car
hit	swam	in the river
Tom	bounced	along the road
chased	goes	over the fence
stopped	The dog	A policeman
The man	The fish	the girl
The boy	The car	on the chair

Understanding the sentence

The child does not need to know the correct terms for each part of the sentence, but an understanding of them and how they are used can help improve comprehension and writing skills.

Nouns	Things, persons or places
Verbs	Action words
Adjectives	Describing words
Articles	'A' or 'the'
Pronouns	Words that replace nouns
Adverbs	Words that describe action words
Prepositions	Position words
Conjunctions	Joining words

Try the following activities to help reinforce these.

1. Building sentences

This is an oral activity. Provide a starting point, and then ask for more words.

Example:

"Yesterday I" Now ask for an action word.

"Yesterday I went to" Now ask for a thing.

"Yesterday I went to Lantau to" Now ask for another verb.

"Yesterday I went to Lantau to walk." etc.

2. Questions

This activity is about making the child think about the construction of the sentence.

Who is the sentence about? – "*The man.*"

What is the man doing? – "*The man is walking.*"

Describe how the man is walking. – "*The man is walking slowly.*"

Where is the man walking slowly? – "*The man is walking slowly down the street.*"

Why is the man walking slowly down the street? – "*The man is walking slowly down the street to catch a bus.*"

Remember that if this is a group activity, you can make this activity easy for the child with specific learning difficulties by priming them, or only asking them questions when you know they know the answer.

Understanding the sentence – Nouns

Children will often learn words or text without knowing what they mean. This activity helps to develop a deeper understanding of words and how they are used. It uses words listed in the vocabulary section, and allows the child to explore their environment and expand their vocabulary for their specific needs.

Activities

Many of these activities could be written activities as well as oral activities.

1. Name as many things as you can around the classroom.
2. Think of a thing beginning with each letter of the alphabet.
3. Choose a category, such as animals or transport, and ask the children to name as many things in that category as possible.
4. Arrange groups of children to play “I went to market”. This involves starting with a single noun and adding more items to the list. This becomes a naming task and a test of auditory short term memory. Example: “I went to market and bought a banana.” “I went to market and bought a banana and a chair.” “I went to market and bought a banana, a chair and a dog.”
5. Make word chains, where the last letter of one word becomes the first letter of the next. For example: apple, elephant, tap, pin, nut.
Some children with greater difficulties could be allowed to repeat previously used words, whilst others may have to find a new word.
6. Play the alphabet sequence game using proper nouns, that is the names of people and places. There is no reason why you should start at the letter ‘A’ every time. For example: Kowloon, Lantau, Manchester, New York, Oliver. Make sure they realise that proper names always start with a capital letter.
7. Try to find an abstract noun for each of the letters of the alphabet. You may explain abstract nouns as things you cannot hold in your hand, such as love, hate, happiness, sadness, hunger, thirst, pleasure and pain.

Understanding the sentence – Verbs

The following activities are designed to help children understand the role of the verb and to make better use of them.

Find the verb

In each of these sentences, put a circle around the verb.

The dog chased the cat.

The boy walked quickly.

The teacher read the book.

He went home to bed.

Add the verb

Insert the appropriate word in each of the following sentences.

He his car. walks, drives, sings

The lion fast. reads, runs, throws

My tea hot. is, drinks, sit

Fish slowly see, walk, swim

Remember that each activity should concentrate on one thing only, particularly for children with SpLD. Note that this exercise is about verbs, and not about getting the right form of the verb (eg ran/runs, is/are). That can be a separate exercise.

Replace the verb – what else could they do?

Many children will use the first word that comes into their head, making the activities simple. However, with a bigger vocabulary, they may be more adventurous. Here are a few sentences where the verb could be replaced by other verbs. This will help develop the verb store.

The boy ran to school. walked, cycled, hopped

The bird sits on the branch. sings, sleeps

I like my brother. hate, hit, feed

Tigers run quickly. eat, walk, drink

List all the verbs you have done today

All the child has to do is write down (or say aloud) what they have done today, such as sit, stand, swim, write, read, eat, drink etc. More able children can write short sentences around these words.

Understanding the sentence – Adjectives

Using adjectives can make a story more colourful, as well as allowing the child to make the story longer. It allows the writer to tell the reader exactly what sort of things they are talking about. You may like to remind the child that reading and writing are about communicating ideas from the person who does the writing to the person who does the reading. Only by using the right words to describe each part will the reader understand what the writer is trying to convey.

Character of an object can be conveyed by using the following categories:

Size	big, small, long, tall, as big as an elephant
Shape	square, round, thin, crumpled
Smell	horrible, sweet, fresh, sour
Texture	rough, smooth, crunchy, silky
Taste	sweet, bitter, smooth, yucky
Colour	red, green, sky blue, black as the night

Encourage the use of comparatives, such as big as an elephant, and as black as the night.

Here are some sentences with blanks for adjectives. Fill in an appropriate word.

The house was

Chocolate is, and

His trousers were and

The sea was a

The colour of the lion was

The food tasted like

The singer's hair was and

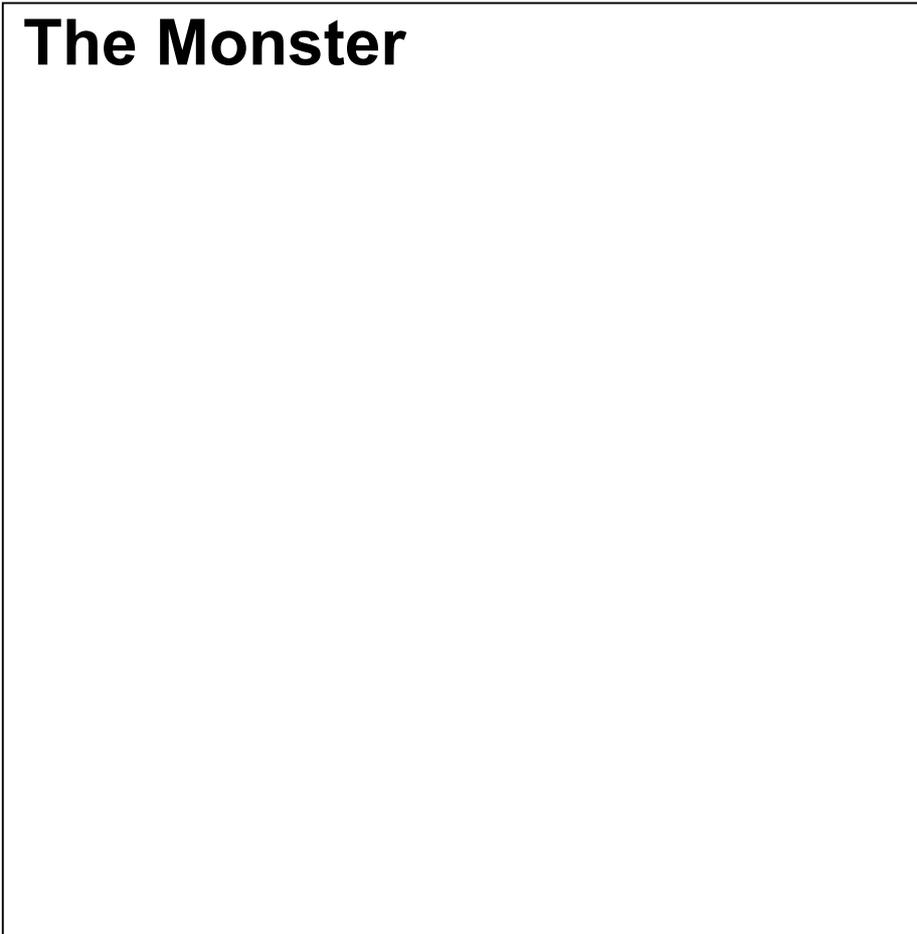
Her eyes were blue like

Understanding the sentence – Adjectives 2

This activity has two parts. Firstly, read (or let the child read) the brief description below. Then they must draw the monster. Afterwards they can draw their own monster, and then write the words to describe it.

Suddenly in front of me was a huge monster. It had two huge eyes, one on either side of its head, and a third one in the middle. It had long thin ears on the top of its head, which were green on the outside and red in the middle. Its nose was a strange shape. Its mouth was round, and the white pointed teeth had bright red blood on them. Its body was green and rough like wood. It was waving its six hairy arms as it walked on its four short, fat legs; and it was coming towards me!

The Monster



Understanding the sentence – Pronouns

Pronouns are used instead of nouns. There are many ways they may be used, and here are some exercises based on the most common ones.

Pronouns can be used to replace nouns, so you do not keep repeating the same word.

Here is an example of a personal pronoun being used:

John likes to swim. John swims every day.

This can be replaced by:

John likes to swim. He swims every day.

For the person or thing that is doing the action (the subject) the pronouns are: I, you (singular), he, she, it, we, you (plural), they.

Example

The book sat on the table. *It* was closed.

But when the person or thing is the one receiving the action (the object) the pronouns are: me, you (singular), him, her, it, us, you (plural), them.

Example

John was given rice for dinner. *He* ate *it*.

The girls looked at Michael. *They* liked *him*.

Possessive pronouns indicate what belongs to whom. For example:

The book belongs to John. *It* is *his*. I thought *it* was *mine*. It is not *hers*.

Discuss the relationship between the parts of the sentence clearly, and how, and then try this exercise. You can also do this as an oral exercise.

Exercise

The cats were fighting, but were only playing.

The girl was wearing a red dress. shoes were blue.

The bike belongs to me. like bike.

He drank the coffee. was hot.

Rebecca's parents like to hear her sing. makes happy.

They gave the ball to We were happy to receive

Understanding the sentence – Articles

There are two kinds of article: definite (the) and indefinite (a, an).

The definite article is used when referring to a specific noun, for example:

The boy played with his friends.

The children enjoyed eating their ice creams.

However, when referring to a noun generally, rather than specifically, the article is omitted, eg:

Children enjoy eating ice cream.

The indefinite article is used to refer to a single, general noun, eg:

He heard a dog bark in the night.

If the next word (noun or adjective) starts with a vowel, “a” becomes “an”, eg:

an elephant

an orange

an open door

Have the child practise which indefinite article to use by writing or saying “a” or “an” in front of each noun:

.... boy

.... girl

.... apple

.... cup

.... egg

.... chair

and in front of each adjective:

.... new toy

.... old man

.... red pen

.... orange drink

.... interesting story

To give practice in using the correct article, try giving some text with the articles missing and ask the child to fill in the blanks.

.... boy woke early. He was happy when he remembered it was Saturday. Today he would be going to football match with his friends. Later they would have meal before going to cinema. boy liked to have ice cream at cinema.

Understanding the sentence – Adverbs

Adverbs describe, or add information, to verbs in a number of different ways, including:

how -

She ran quickly.

He walked slowly.

They played quietly.

where -

His friends live near.

The cat wandered away.

when -

They arrived late.

He caught the bus early.

Give simple sentences containing an adverb and ask the child to identify the adverb in each sentence. Note that adverbs usually follow the verb.

The teacher spoke clearly.

The children ran away.

The bus stopped suddenly.

They arrived late.

Try some more complicated sentences which contain an object. Note that the adverb usually comes after the object:

The grandmother opened the door slowly.

She welcomed her visitor politely.

He drank his tea quickly.

Give a list of adverbs and have the students make up a sentence using each one:

quickly, near, soon, slowly, far, early, often, pretty, gently

Understanding the sentence – Prepositions

A preposition shows the position of a noun, eg:

The shoe is under the bed.

The girl stood behind her brother.

or refers to time:

The boy arrived before his friend.

They left at two o'clock.

Some exercises to recognise and understand the use of prepositions:

Give sentences containing a preposition and ask the child to identify the preposition in each sentence. Use pictures or role play to reinforce the concepts.

The shoe is under the bed.

The girl stood behind her brother.

The boy arrived before his friend.

They left at two o'clock.

Give a list of prepositions and have the child make up a sentence using each one:

under, over, below, above, at, in, on, through

Understanding the sentence – Conjunctions

Conjunctions are used to join two parts of a sentence together; this could be:

two words, eg. rice or fish

two phrases, eg. bright lights and tall buildings

or even two sentences, eg. Jane was tired so she went to bed.

Common conjunctions are: and, or, but, so, yet, nor.

To build an understanding of how to use conjunctions, give pairs of simple sentences and ask the child to join the sentences together, eg:

Jenny likes rice. She ate all her dinner.

The children went to the zoo. They didn't see the lions.

The bus broke down. The children were late for school.

The clown was funny. He made everyone laugh.

The man found his tie. He could not find his jacket.

Another exercise is to get the child to decide which conjunction to use, eg:

The flowers were beautiful (and, so, but) they smelled lovely.

It was John's birthday (and, so, but) he had a party.

More advanced students may be introduced to subordinating conjunctions, which join a simple sentence with further information, eg.

The children were late for school because the bus broke down.

Examples of subordinating conjunctions are:

because, although, however, unless, when, where, if.

The following exercise can be given to practise using subordinating conjunctions:

Give a sentence and ask the child to insert the conjunction:

Keep writing I tell you to stop.

The children sang a song they were waiting.

They were allowed to stay up for the party it was late.

Colour coding parts of the sentence

Colour coding can be used to help the child to understand the parts of a sentence. Here is a suggested colour coding scheme:

Nouns	Blue	car, horse, trousers, girl
Verbs	Red	run, walk, sit, jump
Adjectives	Green	hot, windy, wet, blue
Articles	Light blue	a, the
Pronouns	Orange	he, she, you, it
Adverbs	Pink	quickly, softly, quietly
Prepositions	Purple	at, in, on, with
Conjunctions	Brown	and, but, or

Do not try to do too many tasks at one time, remembering to progress in small steps in line with what the child can manage.

Give as many clues as are necessary, and do not forget to discuss the relationships between words. For example, how the pronoun replaces the noun, and its link to the verb. Also that adjectives are the words used to describe nouns, and that the adverbs describe verbs.

Colour coding passages

With the passage below, you may like to start by asking the child only to mark the verbs (in red). A separate exercise may be to mark the adjectives. Later you could introduce two or more parts in one piece of text. You can use any simple piece of text for this exercise. If this task appears too difficult, try simple sentences, such as “The house is big” ; “He is my brother”.

The story of Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill walked up the hill quickly. Jack carried a bucket. He wore a brown shirt and blue trousers. Jill wore a red dress. The sun shone brightly. It was warm. At the top of the hill was a well full of water. They wanted to get some water. But Jack fell over. He rolled down the hill. He hit his head on a large rock. Jill fell over and rolled down the hill too. At the bottom they got up and ran home quickly. At home their mother put bandages on their heads. They went to bed.

Phonics and spelling

How to use the CD ROM

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Introduction

This section on phonics and spelling is about ability to distinguish one sound from another, to separate words into sounds and to put sounds together to make words. It is also about how to transfer those sounds into a written form.

To teach all of these aspects fully would take a long time. Therefore the purpose of this section is to provide some basic principles, some ideas for activities, and the foundation skills upon which others may be built.

Used in conjunction with the other skills taught in this pack, it should be possible for most children, including those with specific learning difficulties, to start to develop literacy skills which allow them to communicate in English.

The activities provided here have been devised using a limited vocabulary. This takes into consideration the often restricted vocabulary commonly found in children in Hong Kong, who are learning English as a second language. However, by incorporating a careful selection of words and activities, it is possible to find fun learning activities which the child can build upon.

This section concentrates on the following principal issues:

- a) Developing the skills to distinguish sounds.
- b) Breaking the words down into smaller units.
- c) Building the relationship between sounds and letters.
- d) Knowing there are ways to help with spelling.
- e) Knowing that there are some simple rules, but also that there are many exceptions.

Checklist of basic sounds

Many children find it difficult to see the patterns in sounds, especially when the letter combinations make some letter sounds indistinct. However, until they have a firm understanding of the letter to sound and the sound to letter correspondence, they will not be able to advance to the more difficult skills. Here are some activities to help build that sound-letter relationship.

1. In the Alphabet section, use the “Alphabet Assessment” worksheet to check the child’s knowledge of letter sounds.
2. In the Vocabulary section there is a set of pictures. Make cards with the picture on one side and the letter on the other. Show them the picture, and ask them to name the first sound. Also, show them the letter, and ask them to name as many words as they can that start with that letter sound.
3. Choose letter sounds at random, and get the child to identify the letters as quickly as possible in a passage. This activity could also be done in pairs in the classroom.
4. Play “I Spy”, where the child is given the first letter sound of a visible object, and the child has to name that object. This also helps build vocabulary. Example: “I spy with my little eye something beginning with ‘w’ – window.

Consonant blends

Once the single letter sounds are firmly established, try to move onto the blends. Here are the most common ones. Play the same games as used with single letters (see checklist of basic sounds). Be aware that sometimes the sounds of the letter blends will change, such as with 'th' and 'wh'. If using them in a classroom setting, you can choose the easy ones for those with specific learning difficulties (eg bl- and sh-) and the more difficult ones (eg sph- and squ-) for those with more advanced skills.

Double consonant blends	Examples
bl	blue, able
br	brick,
ch	church
-ck	pick
cl	cloud
cr	crack
-ct	act
dr	draw
dw	dwell
fl	flow
fr	front
-ft	lift
gl	glow
gr	grow
-mp	damp
-nd	band
-ng	sing
-nk	sink
-nt	mint
ph	photo
pl	plan
pr	price
sc	score

Double consonant blends	Examples
sh	ship
sk	skin
sm	smell
sn	snake
sp	spade
st	stairs
sw	sweep
th	that, thin
tr	train
tw	twig
wh	what, who
Triple blends	Examples
-nch	branch
sch	school
scr	scrap
shr	shrug
sph	sphere
spl	splash
spr	spring
squ	square
str	string
thr	throw

Phoneme discrimination

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that can affect meaning (within a word). There are 26 letters, but 44 phonemes.

Some children find it easy to distinguish between sounds when presented as separate sounds, but more difficult when they are within words. Only with practice will they be able to master these skills. The easiest way to do this is to find pairs of words which start off very dissimilar, and then which become more difficult to distinguish. Try to find words that are different in the beginning, middle and end of the word. Remember that the task is about sound, and not about spelling, so this means the child can give an oral response.

You can try different versions of these tasks.

- 1) The simplest task is to say two words and ask if they are the same. Say some simple ones just to explain the task, so that everybody can get some right.
- 2) A more difficult version is to ask the child to identify which part of the word is different, and to name the sounds that are different.
- 3) Another form of this is to tell them the meaning of the word.

Example

cat	pig	This helps the child understand the principle. The two words are very different in their sound.
cat	cap	Now the child has to distinguish between 't' and 'p' at the end of the word.
cap	cup	The difference is in the vowel sound, which is in the middle of the word.
cub	cup	This is a difficult word pair, as the difference in sounds is very small.
lip	rip	This is a particularly difficult word pair. Note that it is about sounds, and not spelling.

Although this is an auditory task, you may want to ask the child to write the answers on a piece of paper. Then you will have a record of their abilities. Try setting 50 word pairs, of which fifteen are the same and the rest are different. When marking the papers, look for patterns of errors, such as always confusing the same letters, having problems with middle vowels etc.

Homophones

Homophones are words that sound the same, but have different spellings and meaning. Each of the word pairs shown below should be pronounced the same.

ate	eight
I	eye
be	bee
blew	blue
cell	sell
find	fined
flower	flour
for	four
hear	here
know	no
meet	meat
nose	knows
ours	hours
sun	son
to	two
whole	hole
won	one
wood	would

Some activities include:

- 1) Provide sentences which contain the words and suggest their meanings, and ask if they are pronounced the same. Also use word pairs that are similar, but different, such as 'ship' and 'sheep', and 'top' and 'stop'.
- 2) Ask for suggestions as to how to remember which is which. For example the spelling of "wood" for a part of a tree could be drawn as a 'w' and the ends of three sticks (two 'o's and a 'd'). The 'u' in SUN could be remembered as the SUN is Up in the middle of the day. You can also draw the child's attention to the difference in the shapes of the words in the word pairs.
- 3) Try saying one of the words and its meaning, and ask for the meaning of another word that sounds exactly the same.

The Four Rules of Spelling

Below is The Four Rules of Spelling strategy devised by Neil Mackay, which works for around 80% of English words. By learning these few rules many words can be spelt.

Rule 1

All words are made up of syllables (beats), each containing a vowel (aeiou)

Rule 2

Single vowels in syllables can only make two sounds. They either say their names - as in ace, emu, ice, open, use or their sounds as in at, egg, in, on, ugly

Rule 3

Vowels say their sounds in closed syllables - syllables with a consonant after the vowel e.g. cat, ink, sock, umbrella

Rule 4

Vowels say their names in open syllables - syllables with a vowel on its own or ending in a vowel e.g. o/pen, ra/zor

Teaching the Four Rules

Successful application of the Four Rules implies the following knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge of vowel names and sounds
- Knowledge of the principles of open and closed syllables
- Segmentation/chunking skills

The process is best taught in a multi-sensory way, using letter tiles. In the early stages, choose phonically regular words. Focus on vowel sounds in “closed” syllables. Practise segmentation. Words like ‘hospital’ or ‘fragment’ are easily broken down into their constituent syllables – hos/pit/al, frag/ment - and rebuilt using the letter tiles.

Once the concept of closed syllables is firm, it is appropriate to move onto open syllables, in which vowels say their names. Asking learners to discuss the structure of words like ‘o/pen’ or ‘u/nit’ is a valuable exercise in understanding, and the use of letter tiles serves to reinforce the way the sound of the syllable changes. This will almost inevitably lead to discussions about other phonic conventions, especially “silent e.”

The two principles of open and closed syllables now allow the learner to encode a significant number of complex words. In the early stages it is helpful to give the learner the appropriate letters to make a complex word and also to give certain clues. For example spelling the word “computer” can be supported by the following advice:

- “This is a three syllable word with one open syllable”
- “The ‘ter’ sound at the end rhymes with her”
- “It has eight letters”

This sort of advice sets the learner up to succeed, without trivialising the task, and can be reduced in detail as competence develops.

Supplementary strategies:

- *Does it look right?*
- *Is it using familiar letter combinations?*

When asked for a spelling try:

- Say, “You have a go and I’ll help.” Never say, “Look it up in a dictionary.”
- Give words that rhyme - light/right/tight
- Help break the word down into syllables, and then use similar words to spell each syllable.

Identifying syllables - clapping the rhythm

Syllables are the beats in a word. Words are like music, and the beats can be clapped or tapped, and counted. Once you have broken the words down into syllables, spelling becomes much easier, as all you have to do is spell the syllables.

Try starting with common words and work with the child to let them get used to the idea of clapping the beats. Example

Jan-u-ar-y
 Feb-ru-ar-y
 March
 A-pril
 May
 June
 Ju-ly
 Au-gust
 Sep-tem-ber
 Oc-to-ber
 No-vem-ber
 De-cem-ber

Once they have been part of shared activities, let them try the activity themselves. There are several activities.

1. Write up words on the board, and ask them to say the word and write down the number of syllables.
2. Using words written on the board, ask the child to copy down the words, marking the syllable divisions.

Examples of words you can use with these children for syllable counting:

animal	taking
elephant	panda
Saturday	drinking
twenty	noodle
chicken	Monday
football	potato

Rhyming Games

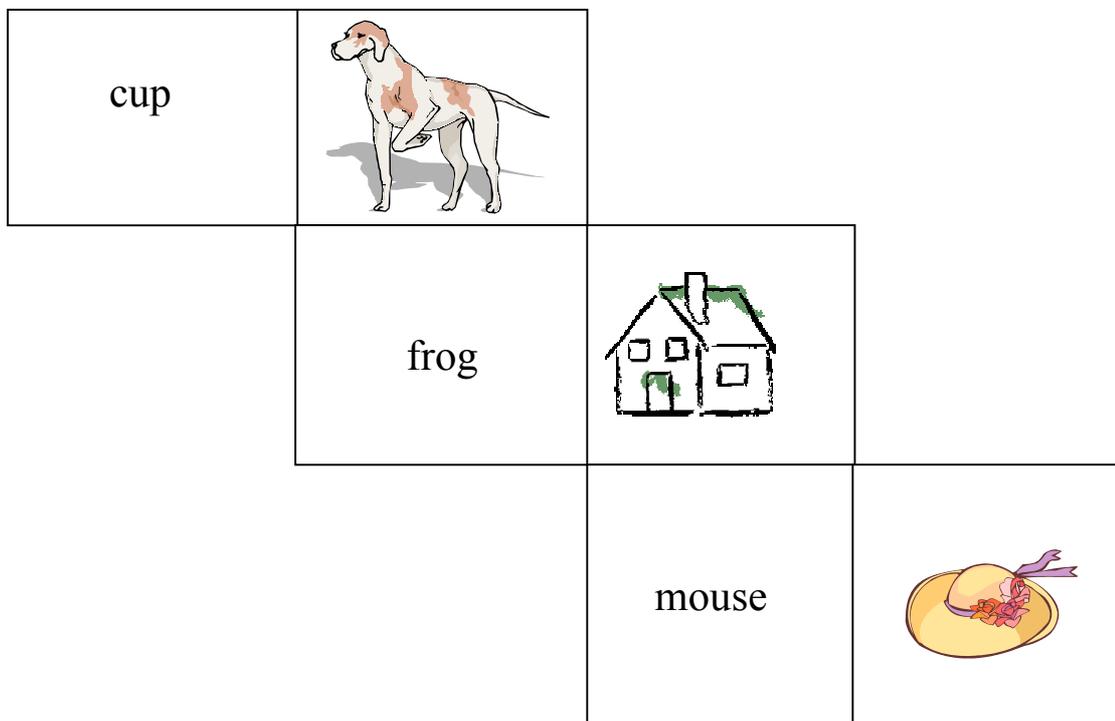
Make a set of cards which have rhyming words on them on one side. Lay them down on the table face down, and ask the child to pick a pair of rhyming words.

Another version of this is to use pictures, and the child has to be able to identify when they match. This becomes more difficult than the first task, since they have to know the name of the objects. Ask them to say the words out loud, and identify the rhyme units.

To make this game more competitive, try making a pack of cards and playing Snap. The cards could be a mixture of words and pictures. Children can play this game in pairs or in small groups.

The “I spy” game can be adapted to use with rhymes. For example, “I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with “where”. In the classroom this could be ‘chair’ or ‘hair’, for example.

Rhyming dominoes can be an activity for a group of children, not only to play but to make. Provide the basic template (a rectangle divided into two squares) into which on one end the children have to draw a picture, and on the other side of the square there should be a word. When a set of (say 20) dominoes have been constructed, they can play the game, with each word or picture being matched to a rhyming word, or a rhyming picture.



The take away game (phoneme deletion)

Ask the child to remove the first phoneme from a word, and say what remains. So if you say 'clap', they have to respond "lap".

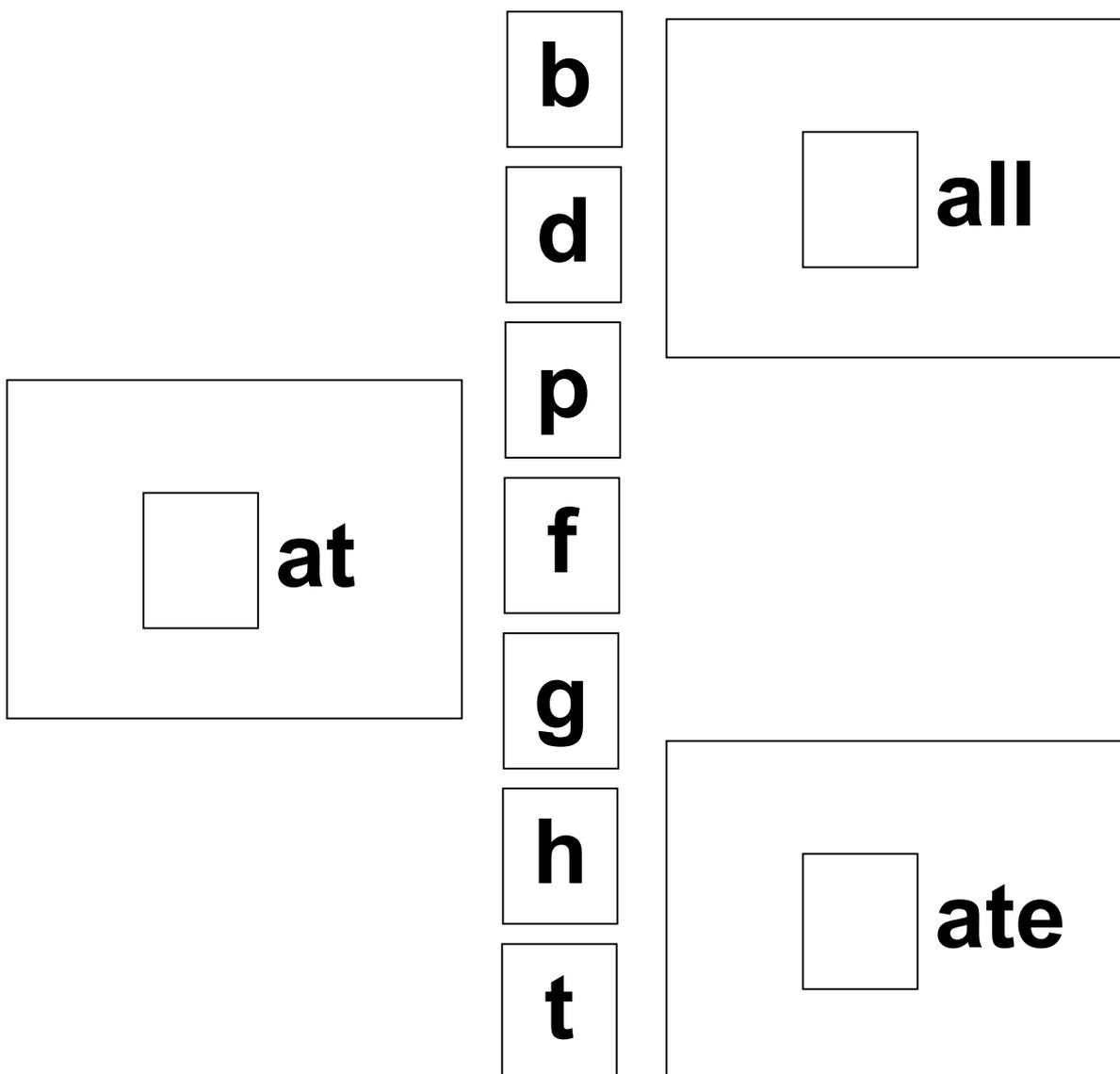
Here are some other words to try, but remember these are for sounds, and not for spelling.

cat (at)
sit (it)
snow (no)
ground (round)
plate (late)
flight (light)
chair (air)
door (or)
bread (read)
flow (low)

Rhyming words

Games that teach rhyming skills can be fun, and can be used with more than one child. Try this game, where the children have to cut out the rectangles. Then they must try to put the letters in the boxes by the word ending, and see if they recognise the word. For example, 'b' in front of '-all' becomes 'ball'.

One variation of this game is to use the first letters, and try to match the endings to make words. This becomes an alliteration rather than a rhyme task. For example, "b-all", "b-at".



at

b

d

p

f

g

h

t

all

ate

Rhyming test

Every child should be able to tell when words rhyme, as this will provide a first clue as to the spelling. Try the following task, which can be used with one child, or the whole class, but remind them this is about listening and not about spelling.

Difficulty with this task may help identify areas which need attention. Just a few examples are given here. Add ones which you think are appropriate. Note that the non-rhyming words should include difficult and easy examples.

Test examples

1. cap tap
2. big dig
3. pill pit
4. sat mat
5. wall war
6. now how
7. bright night
8. wood should
9. cake cape
10. bird heard

Jumbled jungle

Below are a lot of animals, and with them there are a series of small tasks using more than one sense. This task ensures that the child really understands the concept of syllables, from the basic rhythm within words, to the physical breaks within the written word.

1. Read the word, and tap the syllables.
2. Cut out the whole words.
3. Mark the syllables with a line.
4. Cut the words into syllables.
5. Mix up the syllables, and try to put them back together again.

elephant

lion

zebra

giraffe

eagle

snake

crocodile

gorilla

butterfly

antelope

Vocabulary

How to use the CD ROM

Just click on the hyperlink below to go straight to the page you want.

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Introduction

In order for the child to advance their literacy skills it is necessary to have at least a small selection of key words on which to build. These can become the foundation for more advanced skills. Therefore the starting point for any teaching programme for children with specific learning difficulties must be the development of vocabulary.

However, vocabulary should not be seen as a selection of words that are chosen at random as the need arises. By using a structured approach, where words are given a context, the child will maximise the learning. In this resource, which is provided as a starting point to stimulate ideas, a series of exercises is provided. Also, wherever possible, templates have been provided which may be used to develop further worksheets.

These worksheets have been set out in a basic, easy to use format, which will help the child learn. However, remember that multisensory approaches, that is using reinforcement in the form of sounds and pictures, should always be used, and that whilst some of the worksheets may be completed without additional assistance, in most instances the child will be more certain of learning the material if the exercise is discussed with them, and if they expand the exercise. Thus by generating more examples, including those made by the child, they will learn more effectively. By encouraging the child to use colours and add to the drawings, a greater understanding of the content will be ensured. That is, by personalising each page, the child will have a greater chance of remembering the lesson content.

Example: There is a page dedicated to learning parts of the body, and some games to help remember the words. Also ask the child to colour in the pictures, to make sentences with the words, and to point to the parts of the body.

Body parts and clothing

Below is a picture of a boy and a list of words. There are several exercises you can do with this worksheet. These include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words back to you.
2. Ask the child to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate part of the picture.
3. For clothing, ask the child to colour one piece of clothing, and colour the word box the same colour. If necessary, bring some extra items for further illustration and discussion.
4. Have the child say the words, and point to their own parts of the body or clothing.
5. Play "Simon Says", where you give an instance which the child has to follow the instruction, such as "Touch your left leg with your right hand."

head

face

arm

hand

leg

foot

shirt

trousers

shoes

socks

headband

cap



Clothing

Below is a picture of a girl and a list of words. Like the exercise with the boy, there are several lessons that can be used here. These include:

1. Read the words to the child. Then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask the child to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate part of the picture.
3. For clothing, ask the child to colour one piece of clothing, and colour the word box the same colour.

You will also find some additional boxes so you can add extra words.

scarf

sweatshirt

skirt

trainers

socks

hair



The house

When using pictures, try to make them exciting to the learner, or let the learner make them exciting. This picture of a house is used to learn parts of building. But you could also help the child learn other words which could be used in making exciting stories, such as trees, flowers, fence and curtains. Remember, they will not write the story unless they have the vocabulary.

Activities include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words back to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate part of the picture.
3. Colour parts of the picture, and add extra items such as people and pets, as well as those suggested above.
4. Encourage them to use simple sentences to describe the scene, such as "The tree was behind the house" and "The dog was at the window."
5. Where possible, relate the words to the classroom, such as getting the child to point out the door and windows.

Children with more advanced skills could use this as the basis for a free writing exercise.

house

door

window

chimney

roof

steps



Fruit and colours

Names of fruit are important words to learn, and learning them also offers an opportunity to use colour as part of a multisensory approach because fruits are so colourful. Activities include:

1. Read the words to the child. Then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate part of the picture.
3. If real fruits are available, have the child put the labels on the fruit, and say the names of the fruits.
4. Cut out the words and match the fruit to the colours, and the colours to the fruits.
5. Make simple sentences which use describing words to match the fruit. For example, "This banana is yellow."

apple

red

blue

black

orange

banana

cherry

orange

pear

pineapple

grape

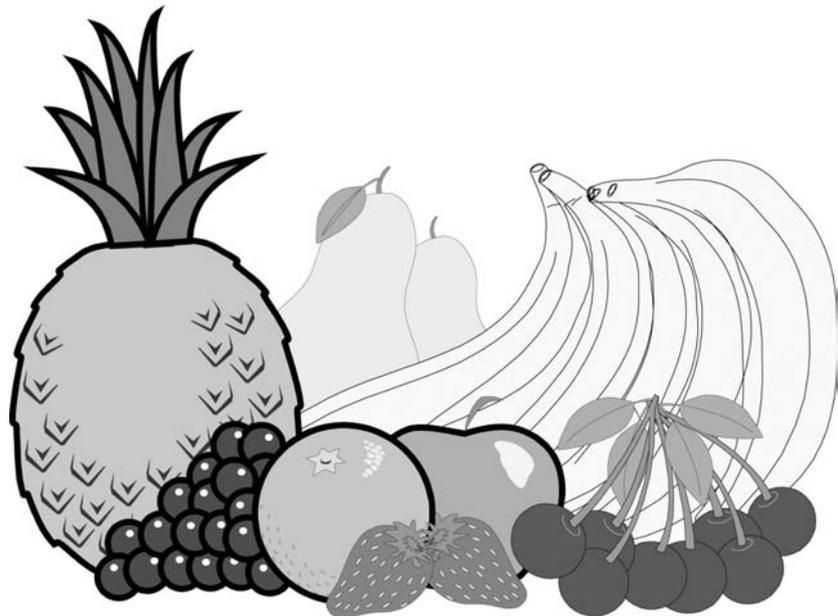
strawberry

yellow

green

white

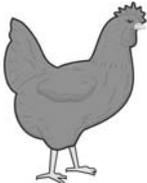
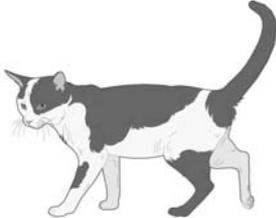
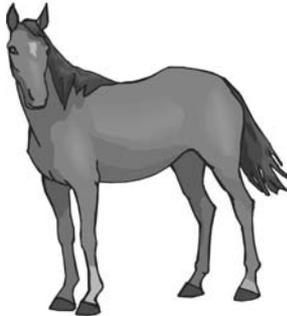
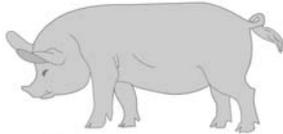
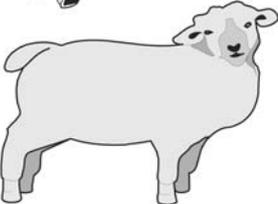
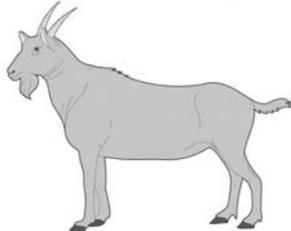
purple



Domestic animals

Here are some common animals to be found in many stories. Activities include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate picture.
3. Ask them to describe the animal using simple language, such as 'a cat has four legs, one head, one tail' etc.
4. Have the child cut out the word boxes, and then cut around the animal pictures. The child must then match the word to the picture. You could also try sticking the words and pictures to cards, put them face down, and the child has to pick up a card, and try to pick up its pair. If they fail, then both cards are put face down again. (See Card Games for a fuller explanation.)

	sheep	
	goat	
	chicken	
	cat	
	cow	
	horse	
	dog	
	pig	

Wild animals

Below are just some of the animals which can be included in stories. Encourage the child to think of others, but be careful to avoid the ones with difficult spellings unless they are for a specific interest. Activities may include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate picture.
3. Make flash cards, with the picture on one side, and the word on the other. Show the word, and ask them to describe the animal on the back of the card.



lion

rabbit

panda



elephant

mouse



snake

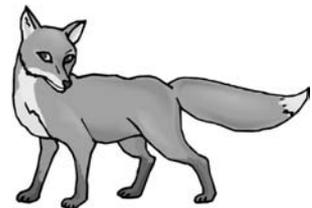
tiger

bear

fox



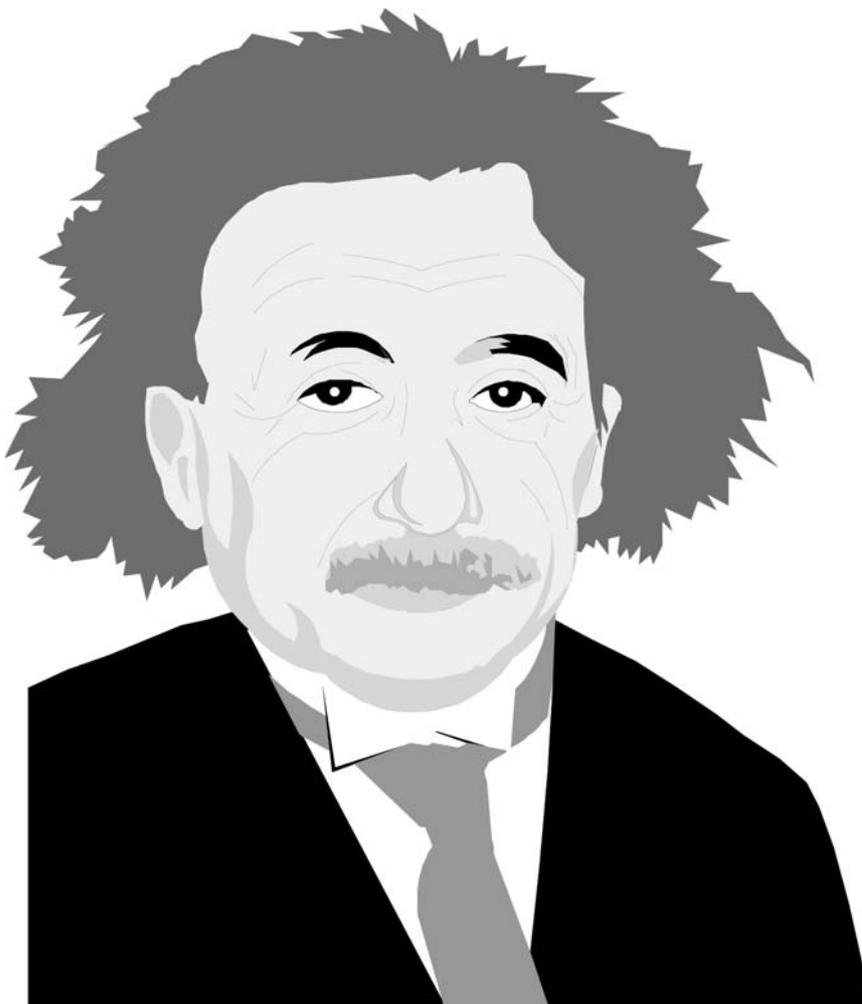
bat



The face

The picture used here is that of Albert Einstein, a very famous scientist. He is chosen because he did not learn to read until he was nine. It is said that he had specific learning difficulties. But that did not stop him showing his strengths in other areas. There are many activities you can try, including:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask them to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate part of the picture.
3. Say one of the words, and get the child to touch that part of their face. Make the task quicker and quicker. Then reverse roles and have them say the word while you touch your face. Make mistakes for them to spot.
4. Depending on the ability of the child, you may wish to develop more sophisticated vocabulary, such as moustache and eyebrow.



eyes

nose

hair

mouth

lips

chin

ears

cheeks

Animals in the water

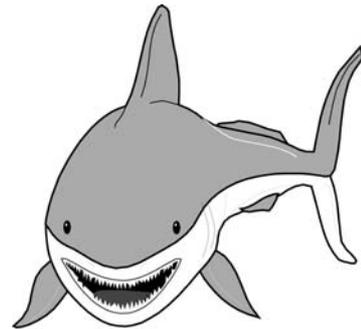
Below are some animals to be found in water. These are common words to be found in children's stories, which will be useful when children try to tell their own stories. Activities could include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate picture.
3. Get them to draw a picture with two or more of the creatures shown. Use it as a discussion point to bring in other common words that you may find in this context, and try activities such as noting that sand, sea, salt and swim all start with the same sound.
4. Explore ways to discuss these, such as which you can eat, and where you can see these creatures.



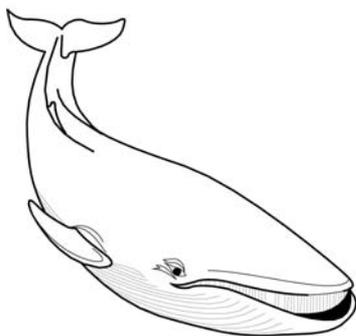
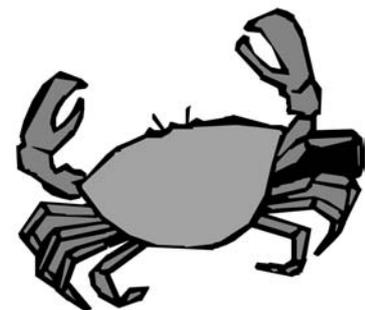
whale

fish



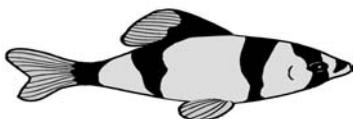
frog

crab



seal

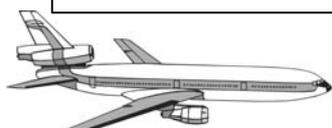
shark



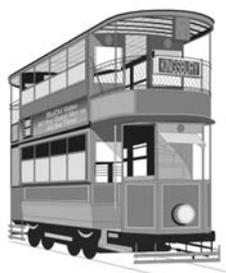
Transport

Transport is part of our everyday lives, and development of the vocabulary of movement allows the child to have the words to move people around in their stories. Activities may include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate picture.
3. Talk about other forms of transport, such as ferry, mini-bus and MTR, and get them to draw pictures to illustrate each type.
4. When out of school, ask them to look around and identify different types of transport.
5. Find magazines with transport pictures, and ask the child to find five pictures of each of the eight categories below. Stick the pictures to pieces of card to make playing cards. Then play 'Snap', where each player has to say out loud the category as they put the cards down.



train



boat



ship



car



bus

plane



tram



Family

It is important to understand the family members, and their relationship to each other. For example, the girl can be described not only as a girl, but also the daughter of her parents, and the sister of her brother. Activities may include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the word to the appropriate part of the picture.
3. For more complex relationships, such as uncle and aunt, ask them to make a family tree of their own family, or have them invent a family with famous characters.



mother

father

man

woman

boy

girl

sister

brother

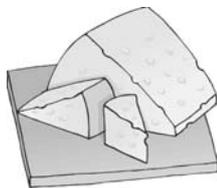
daughter

son

Food

Below are just some of the foods which can be used in conversations about, for example, what the child had for dinner. Activities may include:

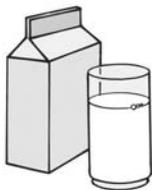
1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the word to the appropriate picture.
3. Make flash cards, with the picture on one side, and the word on the other. Show the word, and ask the child to describe the food on the back of the card.
4. Get them to think of more food, eg noodles, then spell and draw them.



meat



egg



milk



fruit



vegetables



cheese

bread



fish



rice



cake



Utensils

Here are just a few of the household utensils a child may wish to use when telling a story. Try to use them creatively, such as asking how you would set a place for a guest coming to dinner. Talk about the difference between items, such as a cup and a mug. Here are a few activities:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read the words to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line from the written word to the appropriate picture.
3. Name an action, such as drinking coffee or cutting meat, and ask them to identify the utensils used.

cup

knife

bowl

glass

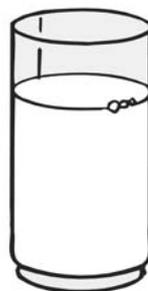
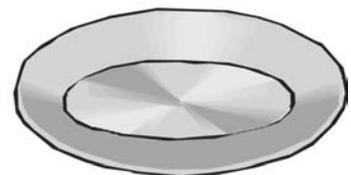
spoon

saucer

fork

plate

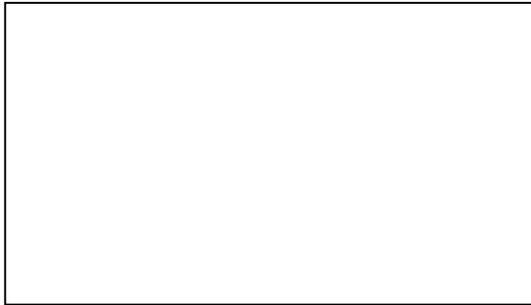
mug



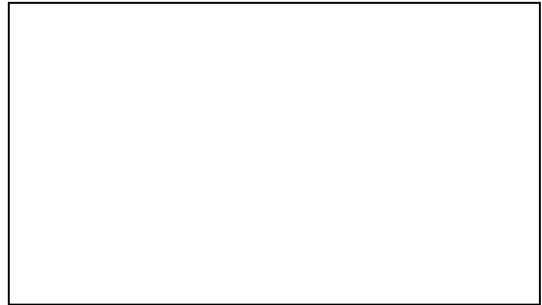
Vocabulary

Drawing – adjectives and nouns

Here are some nouns with a single describing word. Draw the picture in the box.



a yellow banana



a red cup



brown trousers



a blue car



black shoes



a green frog

Action words

Each box contains an action word. Discuss the word, and then the child has to write a sentence using the word, and then illustrate the sentence. This is a multisensory approach which helps reinforce the meaning of words.

run

The boy runs fast.

walk

eat

drink

stand

sit

Vocabulary

Place words

Many children have difficulties with place words, such as up and down, in and out. Below are words carefully arranged in pairs. Having discussed the word pairs, and how they are used, ask the child to write a short sentence for each, eg “He walks up the hill”, and then draw a picture which represents the sentence. Use the template to make more examples.

up

down

in

out

below

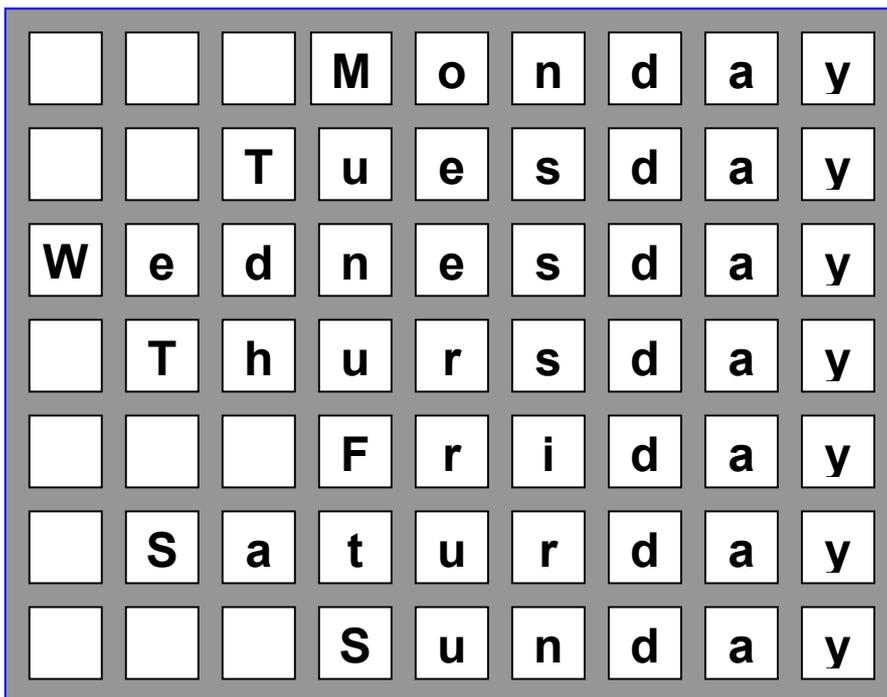
above

Days of the week

The grid below reminds the child that the days of the week always end in “day”. You can also talk about other patterns, such as the weekend days start with an ‘s’. Perhaps you could suggest that the weekend is a time for sun, sand and sea, which start with the same letter as the names of the days at the weekend.

Use colour codes. For example, the child says that Monday is green. Fill in the grid with the word for Monday in green. To reinforce it, every time the child starts their work for the day, when they put the date, they should also write the day in appropriate colour.

As well as remembering the name of the day, the child should also learn the correct sequence. Try cutting up the grid into days, and on the back mark one activity that occurs on that day. For example, swimming on Wednesday.



Opposites

It is often easier to learn words if given in pairs or opposites. The following may be considered opposites, and can be used in many forms of games, including Snap, and Visual Matching games. Other activities include:

1. Read the words to the child, and then ask the child to read them to you.
2. Ask them to draw a line between opposites.
3. Try to use real objects in the classroom to illustrate how to use the words.

black

up

forward

to

in

come

little

slow

full

noisy

fat

light

down

out

from

go

backward

white

quiet

big

dark

thin

empty

fast

Cards for reminding

Here is a handy set of cards that you can cut out for the child to keep in their pencil case. Encourage the child to make some more helpful aids, such as using the other vocabulary exercises. Remember that the purpose is to help inspire creativity, without being limited by a lack of memory skills. Only with frequent use will they learn. These cards will give them the opportunity to use the words and to learn.

Days of the week

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

Numbers

one
two
three
four
five
six
seven
eight
nine
ten

Months

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December

Time

second
minute
hour
day
week
month
year

Story plan

Title?
Where was it?
Who was in it?
What happened?
How did it end?

Getting started

When ...
Last year ...
The first thing ...
A long time ago...
It all began ...
There was a ...
Just as ...

The 'a' quiz

This quiz is based around the letter (and sound) 'a'. All the child has to do is work out the answer to each of the questions. Depending on the level of the child, they may be able to read the questions, or they may have to have the questions read to them. You can use the "Crosswords" template to make more examples, using a fibre tipped pen to fill in the unused squares.

A good follow up exercise is to ask the child to make some similar games, telling them that you want to have similar exercises for other children. Be sure they understand the exercise. *Make sure you discuss the sound of the letter 'a' in the last one, and what causes it to have a different sound.

An animal found in the home

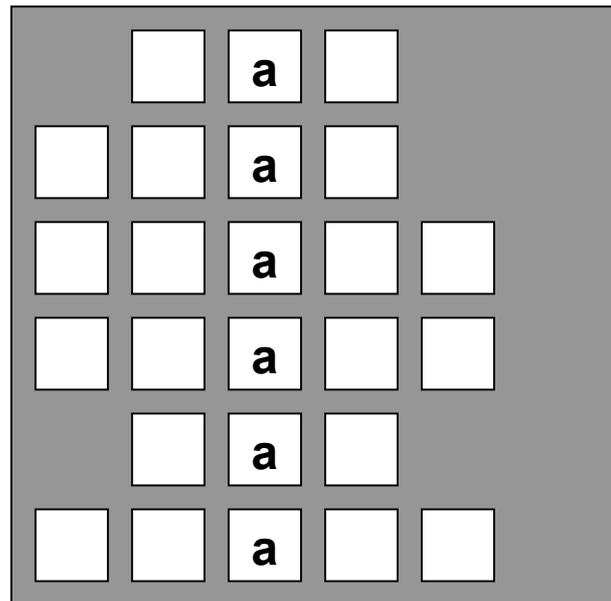
A type of transport

A dark colour

The opposite of sit

You wear it on your head

*You eat from this.



The 'e' quiz

This quiz is based around the letter (and sound) 'e'. All the child has to do is work out the answer to each of the questions. Depending on the level of the child, they may be able to read the questions, or they may have to have the questions read to them. You can use the "Crosswords" template to make more examples, using a fibre tipped pen to fill in the unused squares.

A good follow up exercise is to ask the child to make some similar games, telling them that you want to have similar exercises for other children. Be sure they understand the exercise. *Note that the first four words use a single letter 'e' to represent the vowel sound but the last two words use two letters.

You write with this

The colour of blood

Opposite of right

The number after 9

*A food made with flour

*It is on top of your neck

		e				
		e				
		e				
		e				
		e				
		e				

The 'i' quiz

This quiz is based around the letter (and sound) 'i'. All the child has to do is work out the answer to each of the questions. Depending on the level of the child, they may be able to read the questions, or they may have to have the questions read to them. You can use the "Crosswords" template to make more examples, using a fibre tipped pen to fill in the unused squares.

A good follow up exercise is to ask the child to make some similar games, telling them that you want to have similar exercises for other children. Be sure they understand the exercise. Note that sometimes there may be two answers, so always see if the child can provide an alternative. For those who may find this a little difficult, you could give additional clues such as writing in the first letter.

It swims in the sea

You can eat this bird

At home you look out of this

These are around your mouth

You get meat from this animal

Opposite of stand

		i				
		i				
		i				
		i				
		i				
		i				

The 'o' quiz

This quiz is based around the letter (and sound) 'o'. All the child has to do is work out the answer to each of the questions. Depending on the level of the child, they may be able to read the questions, or they may have to have the questions read to them. You can use the "Crosswords" template to make more examples, using a fibre tipped pen to fill in the unused squares.

A good follow up exercise is to ask the child to make some similar games, telling them that you want to have similar exercises for other children. Be sure they understand the exercise. For example, if this was only about letters, then the word 'foot' could be included. However, in this case, the exercise is to use the same sound in each word. Therefore even some simple words such as 'cow' would be excluded.

1.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>					
2.	<input type="text"/>							
3.		<input type="text"/>						
4.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>					
5.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>				
6.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>					

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. An animal found in the home | 4. A wild animal, similar to a dog |
| 2. You wear them on your feet | 5. An animal that likes to jump |
| 3. A fruit | 6. Opposite of cold |

The 'u' quiz

This quiz is based around the letter (and sound) 'u'. All the child has to do is work out the answer to each of the questions. Depending on the level of the child, they may be able to read the questions, or they may have to have the questions read to them. You can use the "Crosswords" template to make more examples, using a fibre tipped pen to fill in the unused squares.

A good follow up exercise is to ask the child to make some similar games, telling them that you want to have similar exercises for other children. Be sure they understand the exercise. For example, if this was only about letters, then the word 'house' could be included. However, in this case, the exercise is to use the same sound in each word. You may also wish to explore the similarities between words, such as 'sun' and 'Sunday'.

You drink from it

You use a knife to do this

It rises every morning

A day of the week

A type of public transport

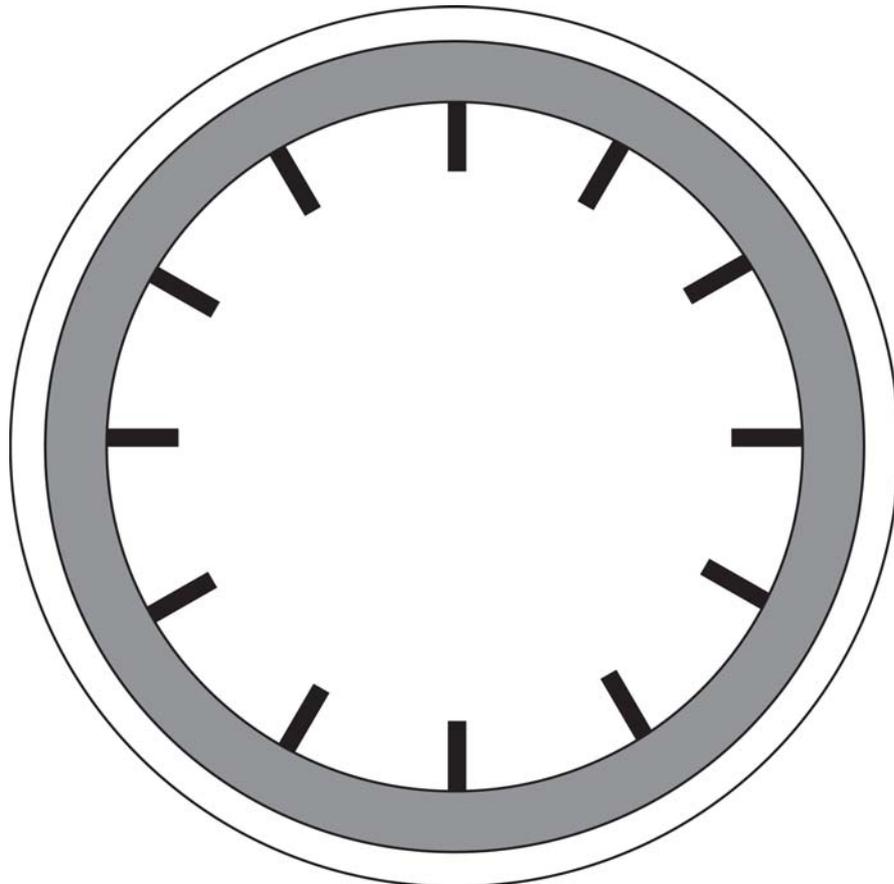
Opposite of down

<input type="text"/>	u	<input type="text"/>						
<input type="text"/>	u	<input type="text"/>						
<input type="text"/>	u	<input type="text"/>						
<input type="text"/>	u	<input type="text"/>				<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	u	<input type="text"/>						
<input type="text"/>	u	<input type="text"/>						
	u	<input type="text"/>						
		<input type="text"/>						

The months – as a clock

You may want to use the clock to practise the sequence of the months, since the twelve months can be represented by the twelve hours. Ask the child to colour the months, and then place them in order around the clock. In this way they will see that not only does November follow October, but also that January follows December. You may like to use different colours for different months, possibly representing seasonal changes. Get them to write special dates, such as birthdays and Christmas on the back of the months.

January	February	March	April
May	June	July	August
September	October	November	December



The diary

Diaries can be a good way to practise the days, but can also be used in other ways. For example, one exercise could be to write what the child had for dinner each day. Another activity, with a new worksheet, could be to write what they did, such as a sport, or what was on television. Accept work in note form. If you ask them to read what they wrote for, say, Tuesday, then check that it was Tuesday they read from.

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

Sunday _____

Crosswords

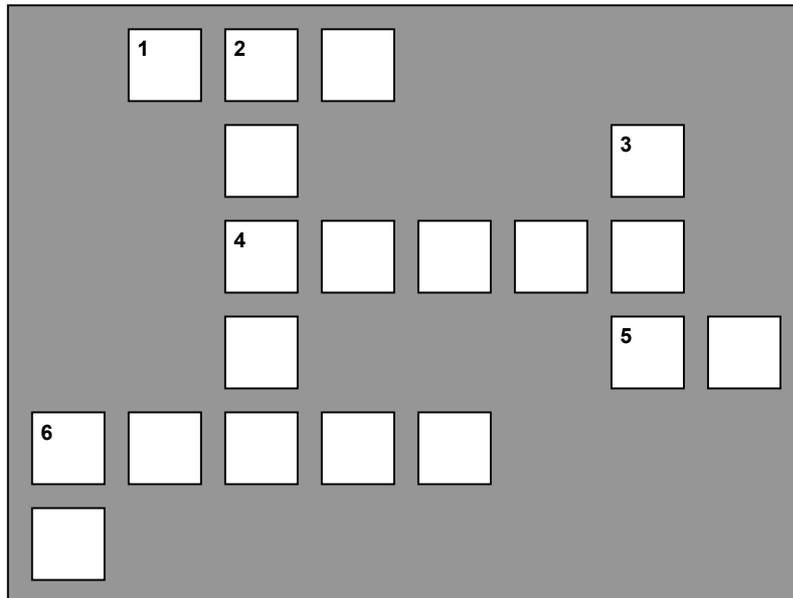
Explain how to do crosswords, including “Across” and “Down”, and ask them to complete this crossword. You can make the task easier by supplying one or two answers. When they have finished, they can make their own, filling in the squares they do not need.

Across

- 1 An animal found in the home
4. What you eat from
5. Opposite of yes
6. The colour of grass

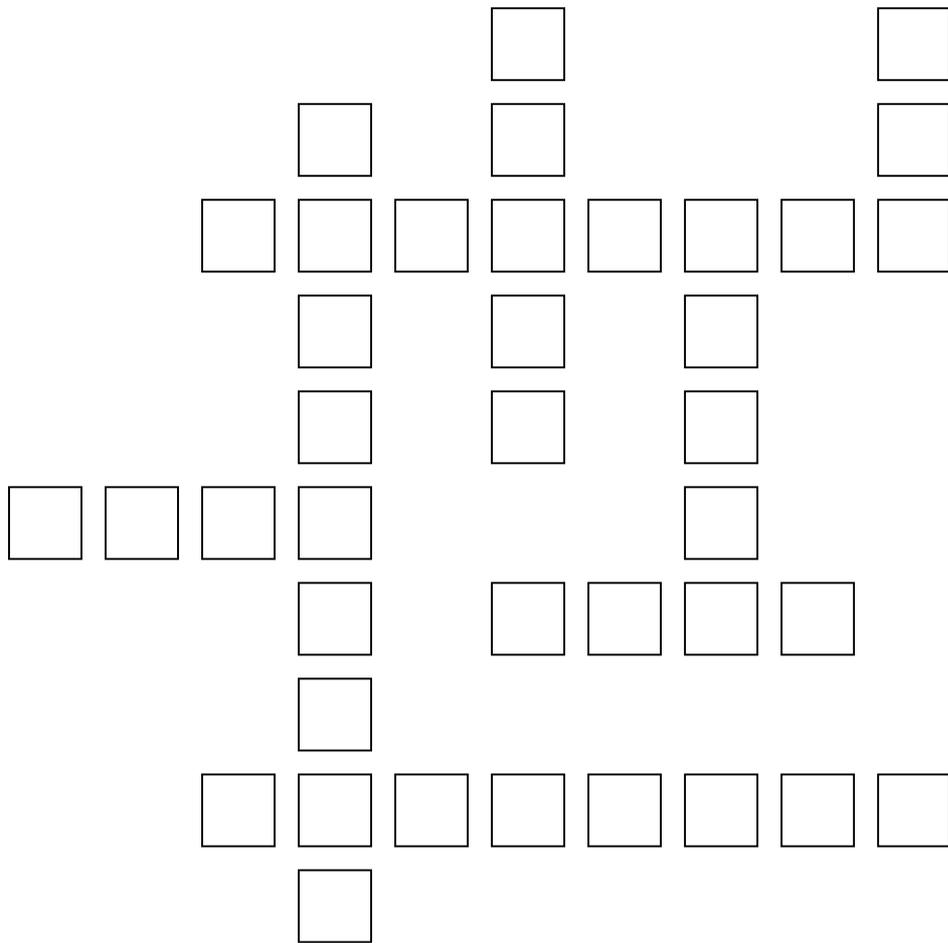
Down

2. A fruit
3. You write with this
6. Opposite of stop.



Crossword quiz for months

Below is a crossword with no clues. Each answer is a month of the year. All you have to do is work out which months goes where.



Directions

Here are some sentences to help with direction. The child has to choose the right word for each sentence. Against each sentence they can make a small diagram to illustrate and reinforce the idea.

up

down

behind

in

out

In the morning the sun came _____.

We went _____ of our home.

We walked _____ to the top of the hill.

Our ball rolled _____ the hill.

At noon the sun went _____ the clouds.

Later, we went _____ the cave.

At night the sun went _____.

Directions – up, down, over, under

Here are some sentences to help understand direction. All the child has to do is to say if the sentence makes sense, and put a big tick or a cross in the box. Try similar exercises for in/out, to/from and similar word pairs. You can make the task easier by providing cues such as pictures or gestures.

In the morning the sun went down.

The lift went from the 6th floor up to the 1st floor.

The boy looked up at the moon.

Whales live over the sea.

The horse jumped under the fence.

The man fell down stairs.

To cross the river we walked over the bridge.

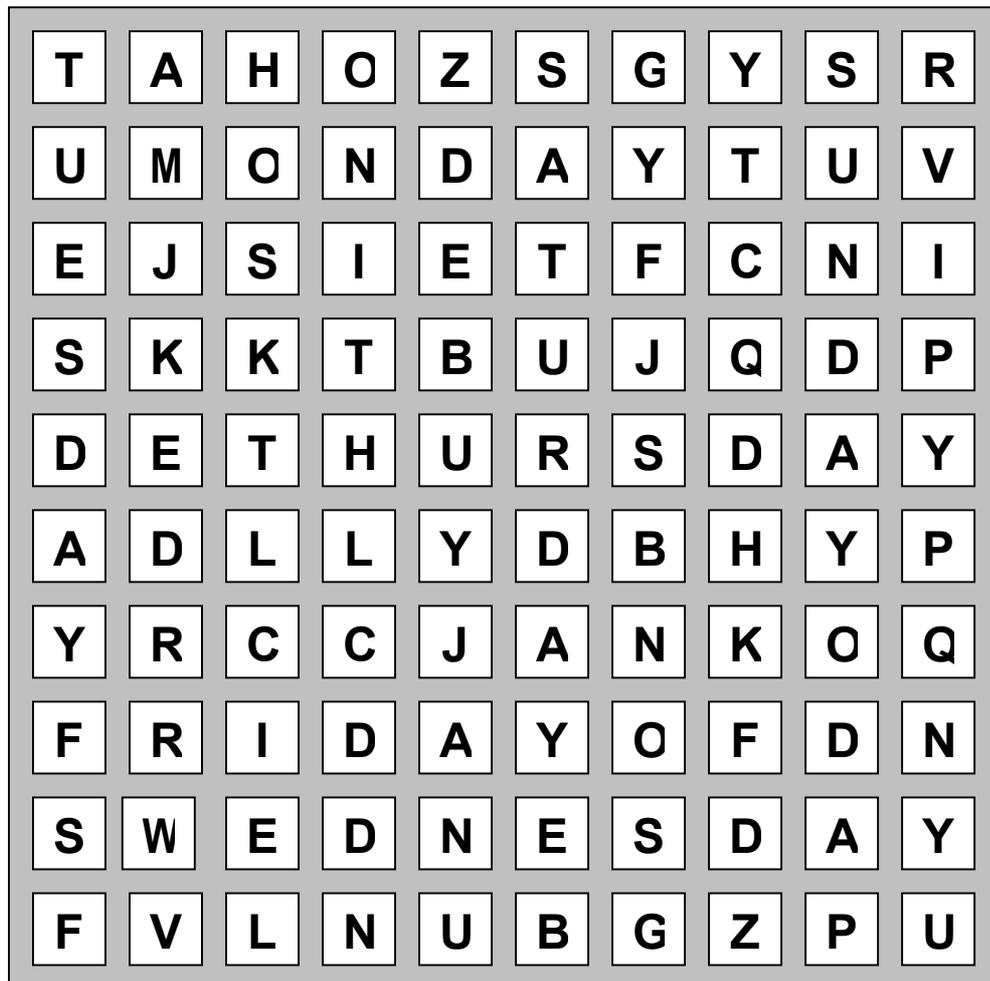
He wore his best shirt under his coat.

His brother will be tall when he grows down.

She fell up and hurt herself.

Word search – days of the week

Below you will find a grid of letters, and buried in the letters are the days of the week. Can you find them, and colour in each day of the week a different colour? If you finish quickly, you may like to find which letter of the alphabet does not appear here.



Flash cards

Flash cards can be used in many ways to help children learn. For vocabulary building, the simplest form of flash card is one which has the word on one side, and the picture on the other.

Making the cards

First, choose what is to be learnt. You could stick to just one set of vocabulary, such as the eight Transport words in this pack, or you could aim to build up a set of cards which gets longer as new exercises are learnt. Stick the pictures on one side of the card, and the words on the other side. (Writing them on may be quicker, but if you ask the child to do this part of the task, then sticking words on the card may be best.)

Playing the game

At random, show the child the picture on the card, and ask them to say the word.

Variations

Try showing them the word, and ask them to describe the object.

Do not hesitate to use hints, in English or Chinese, as it is important that the child feels a sense of achievement.

Visual memory

This is a simple card game designed here for the child to play by themselves.

The task is to match a pair of cards, one with the written word and one with the matching picture, from a set of cards placed face down on the table.

Making the game

First, choose the set of words to be learnt, eg Domestic Animals. There are eight animals and eight words, so you will need 16 pieces of card, about 8 cms by 5 cms. Take the Domestic Animals page, and cut out all the words, and all the animals, so you have 16 pieces of paper with words and animals. Stick one piece of paper to each piece of card, to give you a pack of 16 cards.

Playing the game

Now place all the cards face down on the table in a grid, in this case 4 x 4. The child has to pick up one card, and then choose one that they think will be its pair. If they get it wrong, they replace the cards face down from where they came. Obviously the first one will be random choice. But as the game progresses the child should be able to remember where the pairs are.

This game is an excellent task for improving memory skills as well as vocabulary, as the child not only has to remember where the words and pictures appeared previously, but also to be able to read and understand the meaning of the words.

Variations

To make this truly multisensory, the child should say out loud what is in the picture, or read the word.

Snap

The game of Snap is a simple card game, which can be played with many players. The instructions here are designed for two players, and could be a child with the teacher or a parent, or two children.

Here is one example of how you can make your own games, which can be fun, and have lots of variations. You could even let the child do all the hard work, such as cutting out the shapes and sticking them onto card.

Making the game

First, choose what is to be learnt, eg Wild Animals. There are ten animals and ten words, so you will need 20 pieces of card, about 8 cms by 5 cms. Take the Wild Animals page, and cut out all the words, and all the animals, so you have 20 pieces of paper with words and animals. Stick one piece of paper to each piece of card, to give you a pack of 20 cards.

Playing the game

One player has all the words, while the other has all the pictures. They take it in turns to reveal their cards, saying the word out loud as each card is turned over. Whoever puts down the matching word or picture gets to keep all the cards and put them in their "Win Box". Often there will be many cards still in the stack. You can try to share these cards again, with the player who had words before now getting the pictures. The winner is the one with the most cards in their "Win Box" at the end.

Variations

If the children are reasonably matched, the "winner" as each pair is found could be the one who says "Snap" first. You could use the vocabulary provided here, or generate your own words.



Template 1

Use this template to write the words and have the child draw appropriate pictures. This could be used for a lesson, or as part of a test. You can also draw pictures and write words in the boxes, and have the child match them. Once made, you could also mount them on cards to use as flashcards.

Vocabulary

Action words - template

In each large box write an action word (eg sleep). The child has to write a sentence using the word, and then illustrate the sentence. This is a multisensory approach which helps reinforce the meaning of words. For example, with “drink” the sentence may be “The boy drinks milk.” with an appropriate picture. Make sure the right form of the verb (action word) is used.

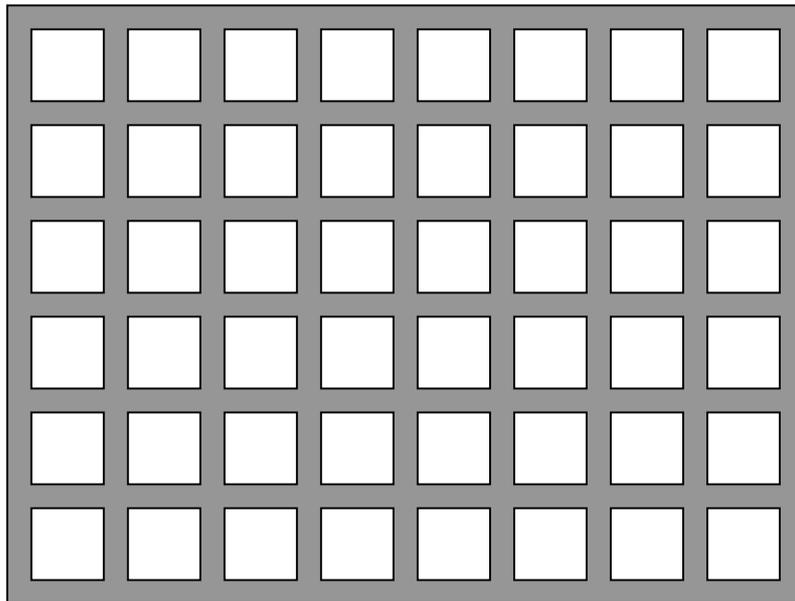


Crosswords template

Use the grid below to create more crosswords. Colour in black the squares that are not used.

Across

Down



Vocabulary

Cards for reminding - template
Here is the template for making more reminder cards.

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Writing at length

How to use the CD Rom :

Just click on the hyperlink below to go straight to the page you want.

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Introduction

Many children with specific learning difficulties have great difficulty writing at length, even if they have the vocabulary to tell a good story. This is because organisational difficulties are often present, as well as difficulties with spelling, vocabulary and grammar. That is, they need help in the planning, from the concepts that are necessary, to the execution.

This section will provide a series of exercises that have been proven to help these children to develop the necessary skills. It provides a step by step plan to move from the first idea, to supplying the words, and finally putting the story together.

Try always to look for improvement no matter how slight. See if there are alternative ways to present materials. For example, stories planned using visual organisers can be far more informative than a few lines on a piece of paper. Once they have confidence in building and submitting the idea, encourage them to start to write with the help of the visual organisers.

The six W's

The principles of writing can often be approached by answering the “6W” questions. In English there are six words with W in them that may be used to formulate the story. They are:

Who?
What?
Where?
When?
Why?
How?

Example:

Who was involved in the plot?
Who is the central character?
Who are the other characters?

What are they doing?
What happened to cause them to do this?
What will be the consequence?

Where does the main action take place? (e.g. house, town, country?)

When does it happen? (e.g. time, date, future, past?)

Why are they doing it? (e.g. revenge, financial gain?)

How did they do it?
How did they decide to do it?
How did they achieve it?

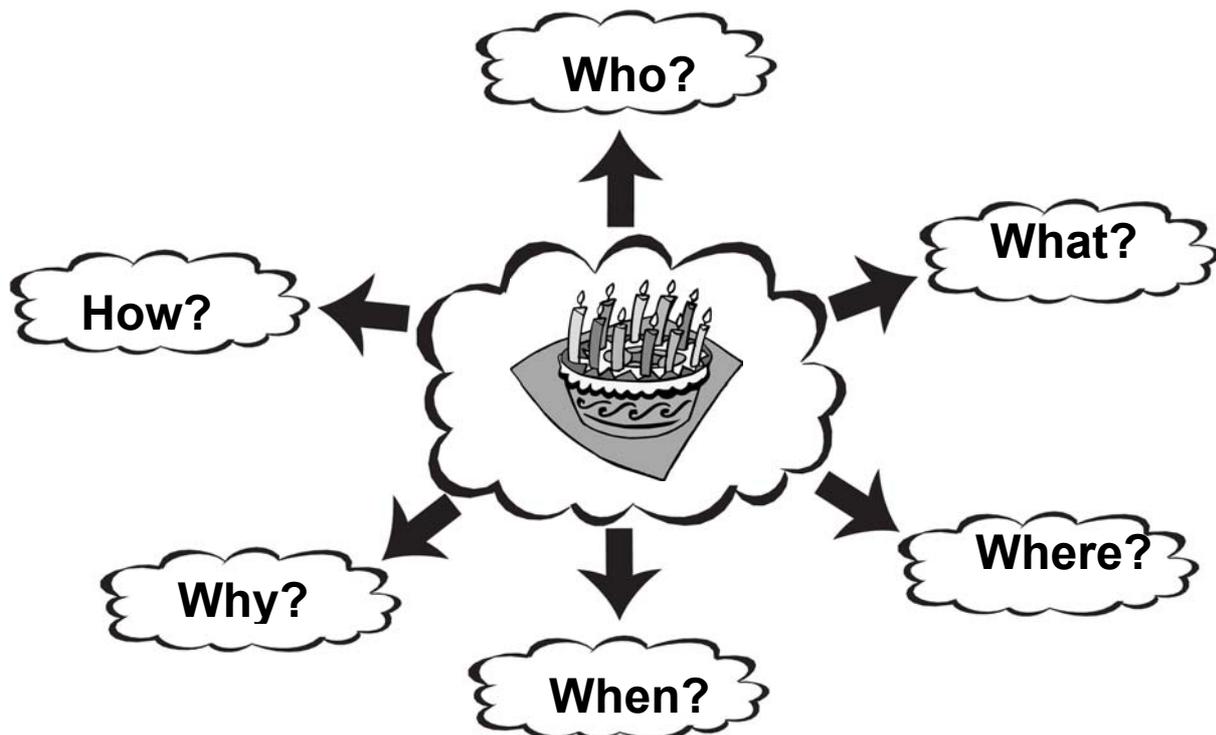
In the following pages, one scenario, “The Birthday Party”, is worked out to show how the “6W”s can help to develop a simple idea into a short story.

The Birthday Party

Good writing can often be achieved by using the “6W” questions. In English there are six words with “W” in them that may be used to formulate the story. Answer these questions, and the major parts of the story will fall into place.

The questions are:

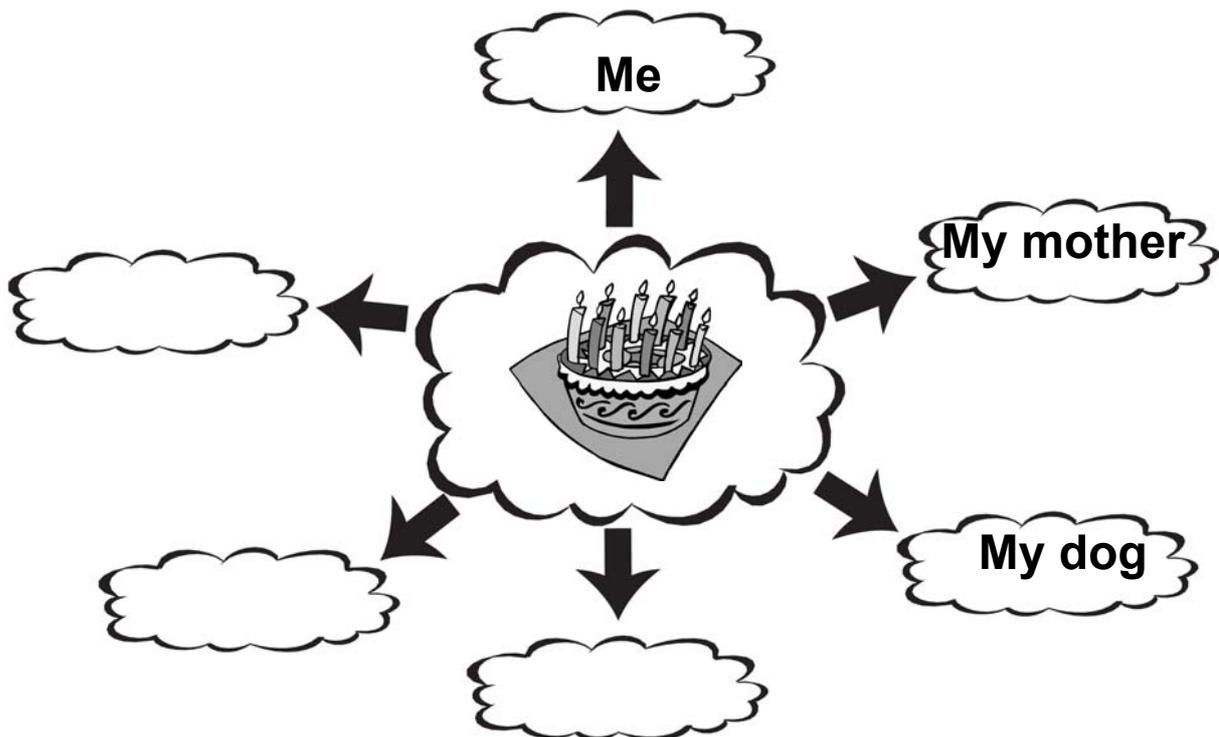
- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?



The Birthday Party – Who?

The story must have characters, and by using these visual organisers you can help develop the story. These worksheets are based around the idea of The Birthday Party, with each developing a certain aspect. Three of the “thought bubbles” are filled. The exercise is to fill in the other three. If the child finds it difficult, they can fill in just one or two words. Use the exercise to discuss the difference between fiction and non-fiction. If the purpose of the task is to write fiction, explain that they can have a dog in the story even if they do not have one at home.

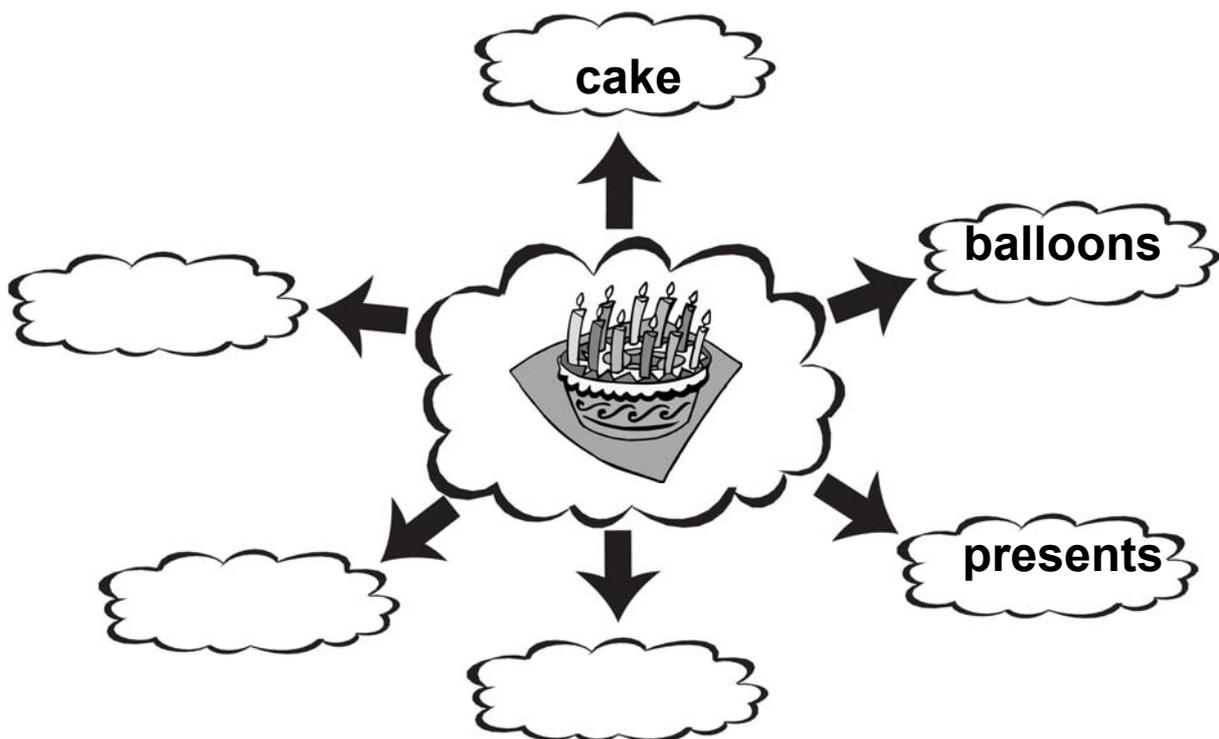
Who was at my birthday party?



The Birthday Party – What?

There are many “What” questions which could be asked, such as what each person is wearing, what they are doing etc. Here the “What” question is “What do I have with me?” Ask them to try to fill in the “thought bubbles” as you explain this example.

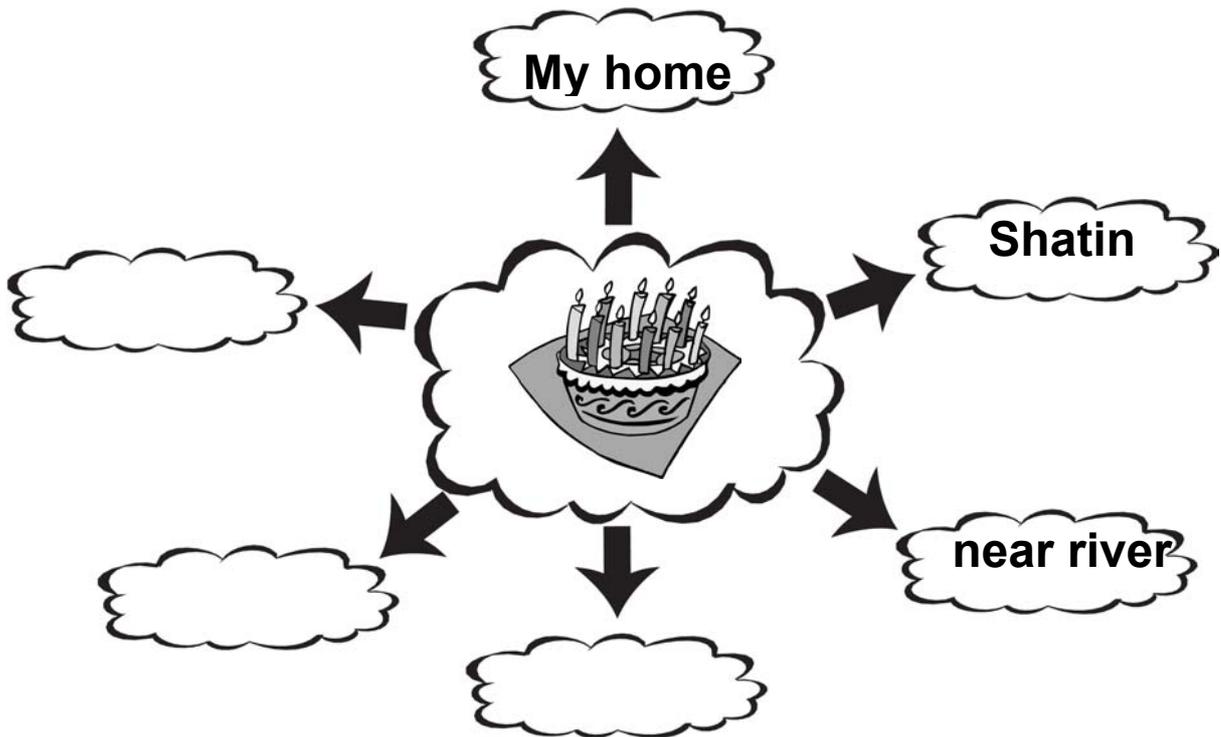
What special things were at my party?



The Birthday Party – Where?

The “Where” questions provide the details on location, and help set the scene. Explore the words with them, and explain how the location may be successively refined. Ask them to try to fill in the “thought bubbles” as you explain this example.

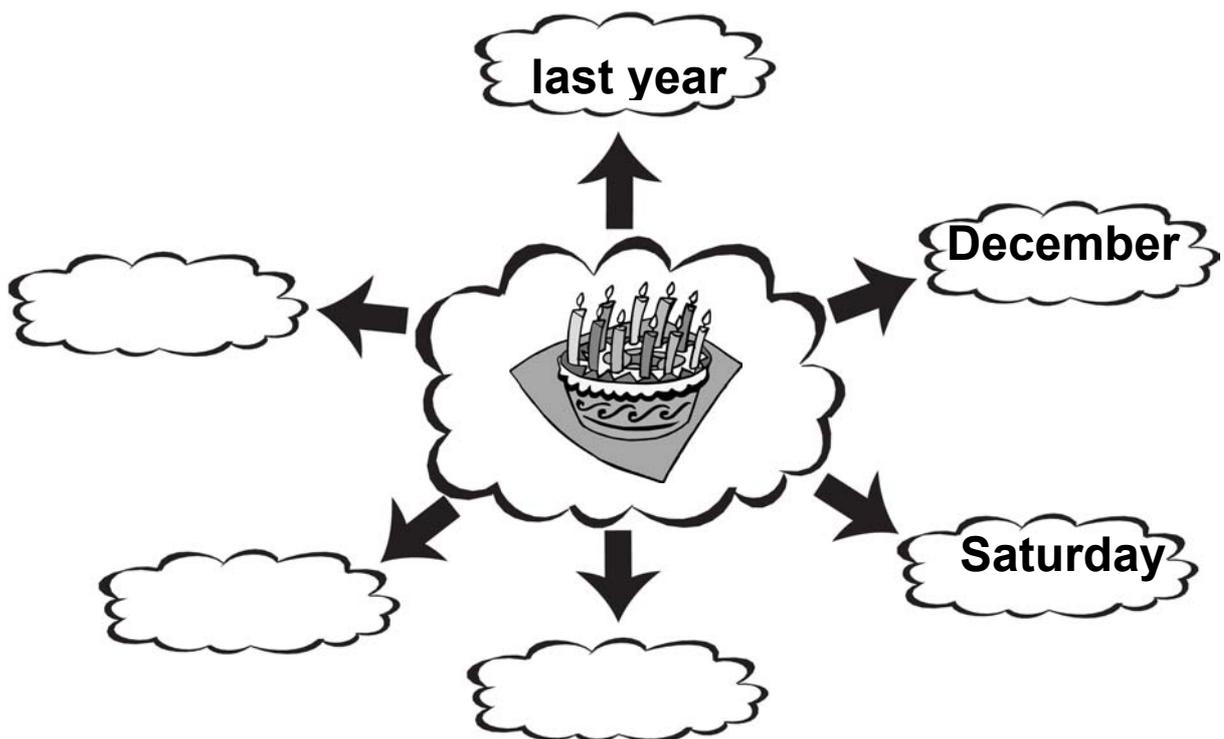
Where did the party take place?



The Birthday Party – When?

The “When” questions provide the details on time. Explore the words with them. Help them understand that each word carries with it something that helps our imagination, and to understand the feelings that they are trying to convey. Suggest how some words may give special meaning, such as ‘late at night’, or ‘many years ago’. Ask them to try to fill in the “thought bubbles” as you explain this example.

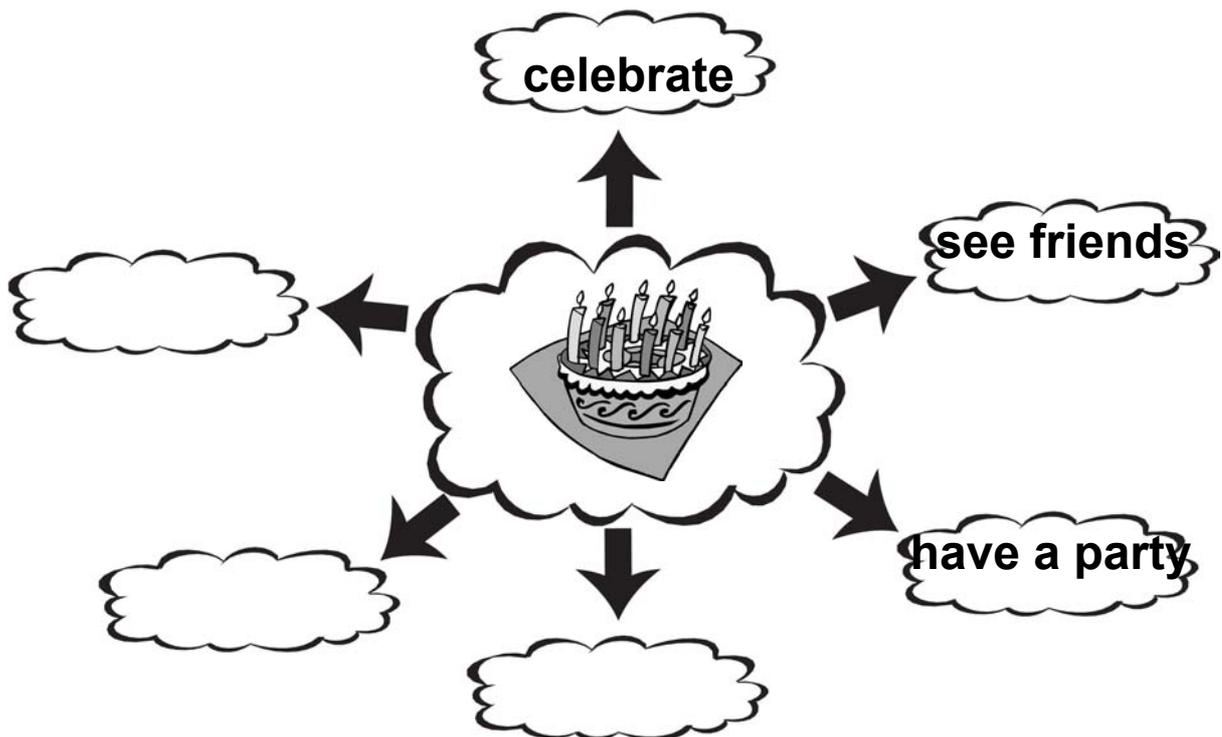
When did the party take place?



The Birthday Party – Why?

The “Why” questions provide the details on background of why something is happening. Explore the words with them. Help them realise that understanding why it is happening is crucial to the development of the story. Ask them to try to fill in the “thought bubbles” as you explain this example. Encourage pupils to use big words if they want to. Give them words as soon as they ask for them to keep the story flowing.

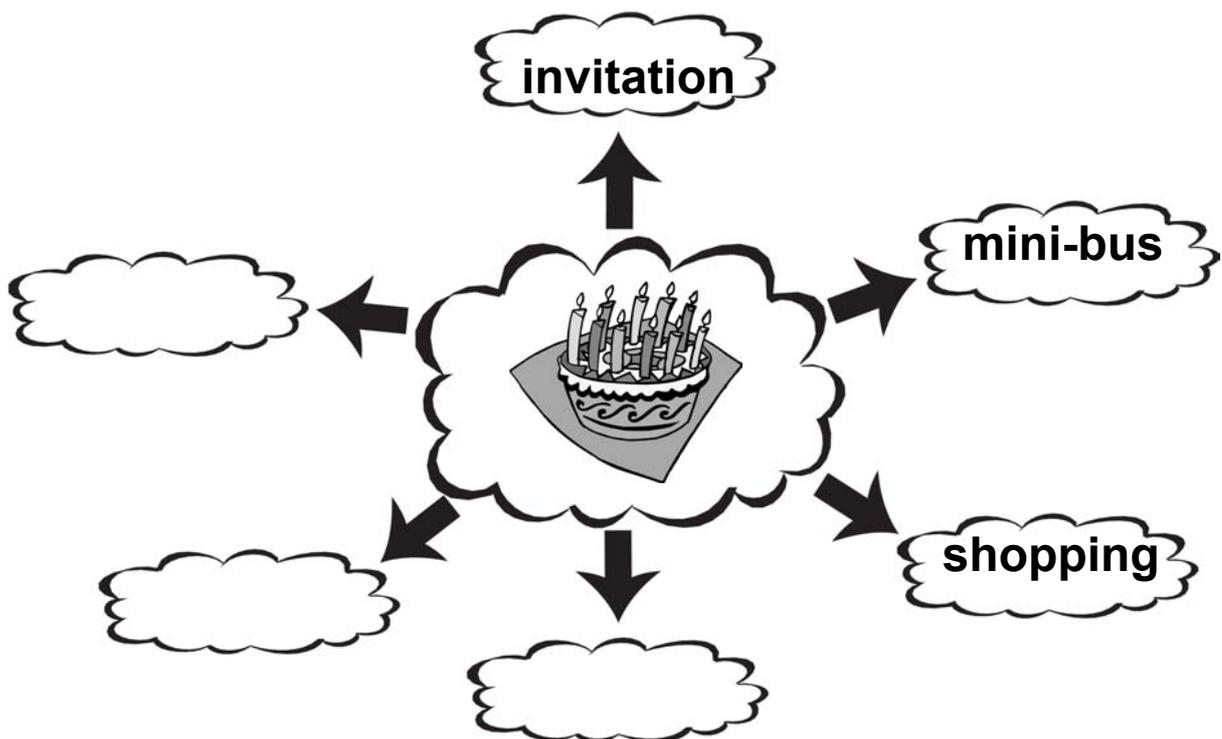
Why did I want to do this?



The Birthday Party – How?

The “How” questions provide the details on what happened in order for the main event to occur. Explore the words with them. If they want to use big words that they cannot spell, help them spell them, breaking the words into syllables to aid their understanding of the spelling.

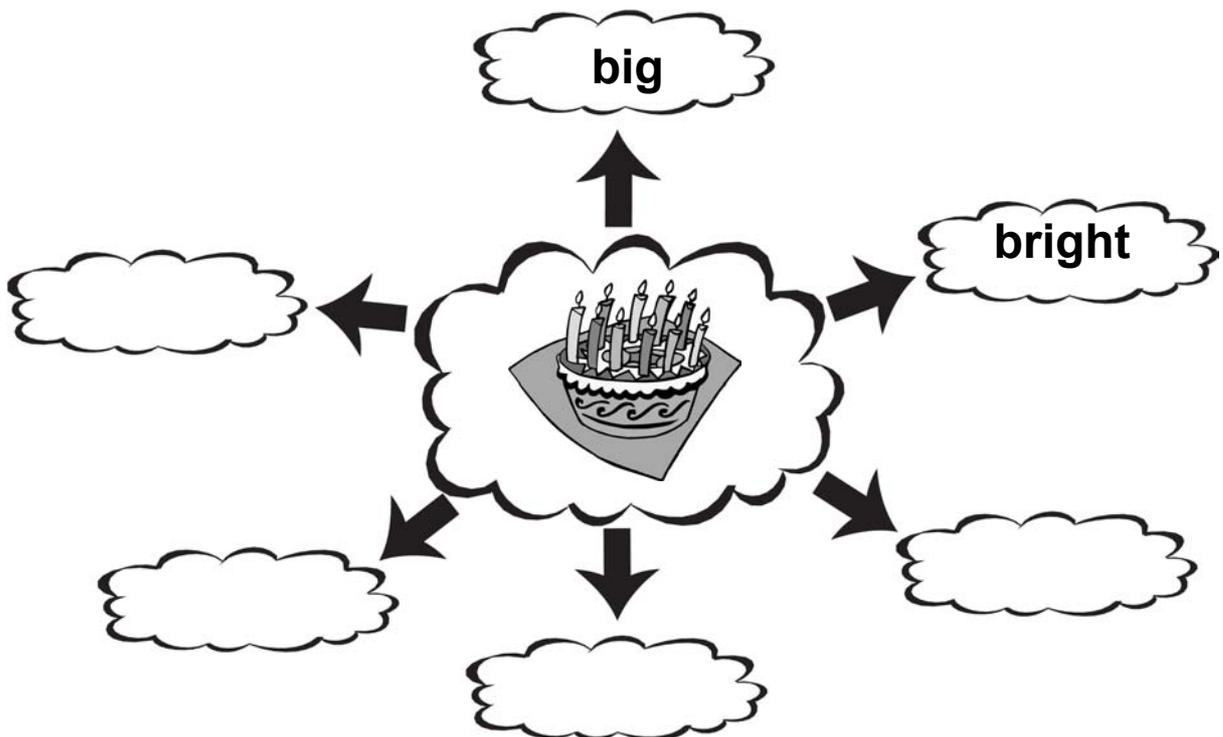
How did we arrange everything?



The Birthday Party – Adjectives

Visual organisers can also be used to help extend the describing words that can be used in a story. When children start to write, they will tend to use just nouns. Explain how adjectives are used to give a sense of feeling to an object, place or person. Also, adding adjectives provides a clearer picture of what they are talking about, as well as making their writing longer without having to add more ideas!

What was the cake like?



Starting the story

Starting a story can often be one of the most difficult parts. So a little help on the first line will often get them going.

Remind the child that to create a story they will need a beginning, a middle and an end. Set realistic targets; for example, you may ask them just to write three sentences for each of three paragraphs. For some that would be very easy, but for others it would be a major achievement.

Here are some suggestions that you can use with *The Haunted House* to explain how stories could start. Make sure they understand all the words, and how the words set the scene, and create feelings.

The Haunted House

It was a dark and windy night

There was no moon that night

Suddenly the torch went out

Something touched my arm

Suddenly there was a loud bang

Who would believe us when we tell them

Now ask them how they would start such a story. Ask them to draw pictures to develop their ideas and supply keywords where necessary. Encourage the use of describing words, and remind them of the “6W”s principle.

Proof reading

Many errors can be found by the children themselves if they proofread their own materials. Below is a short passage with a number of mistakes. The child has to read the passage carefully, and find as many errors as possible. One of the most common mistakes is to read what you think is there. To overcome this, one method is to read each sentence backwards. That way you take out the context, and are checking the spelling only. To make things easier, you could say how many errors there are, or tell those with literacy difficulties how many errors you expect them to find. You may want to remind some children that there may be errors in both spelling and punctuation. You may use the mnemonics COPS to remind the child to proofread different aspects, that is, Capital letter, Organization, Punctuation and Spelling.

The beech was crouded that day. the sun was hot, and all we wanted to do was swam. But their were to many people, and we could not fiind somewear to sit down Final we found a plase to put down our towels food basket. We quick changed and ran imto the see. it was very cool and we swim for a long time. Finaly we returned to things on a beach, and had your lunch.

Writing frames 1

Many children have difficulty writing because they do not know where to start. Using a writing framework such as this one allows them to use a structure to build a story. For some children, the task may be just to answer the questions provided, while for more advanced students they can use this as a starting point.

Title:

How did the story begin?

Who was in the story?

Where and when did it take place?

What happened?

Why did it happen?

How did the story end?

Writing frames 2

There are many questions that could help to build a story. Here are a number that will help to form the basis of a good story.

What is the title?

Who are the most important people in this story?

Where does the story start?

What is happening at the beginning?

Where does the action take place?

What changes?

What caused the change?

How did it affect the people?

Did they expect it to happen?

How did they feel about it?

How did it all end?

Writing at length

Building a story

A story should have a start, a middle and an end. The picture here can be the central theme. The child should understand what is happening in the picture, and work out how they arrived to that position, and what happened afterwards. Having drawn the pictures, they should write one or two sentences to explain what happened.

1

The beginning

2



The middle

3

The end
