



Lyn Anderson

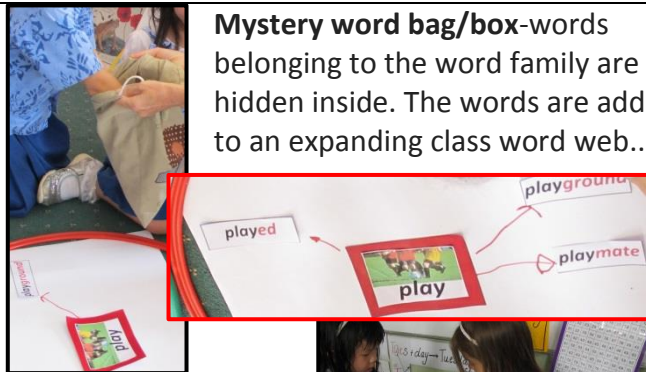

Starting the learning journey...

This is a possible sequence of learning experiences to introduce the essential understandings of orthography, in early elementary. However, I strongly believe that however we introduce these understandings, first and foremost, the children need to develop a solid foundation of **morphology**: developing a

deep understanding that English words are related in meaning and spelling; that English spelling has a clear structure and is well ordered.

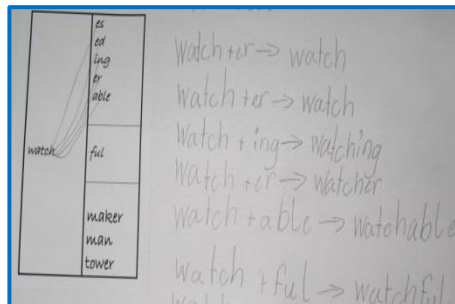
To support this initial foundation there are two aspects that should be included early on in the year: **1) Building 'word webs' to illustrate how words are related in meaning and spelling and 2) the introduction of the morphological word sum with the explicit demonstration and modelling of the 'spelling out' strategy, indicating the underlying structure of words.**

All words investigated need to be explicitly embedded in authentic, everyday language usage; through daily modelled and shared oral, writing and reading experiences to demonstrate the priority of meaning, connectedness and context. As with all learning, children's prior knowledge, understanding, needs and age need to be taken into consideration.

Essential Understandings	Learning experiences	Resources
<p>Morphology/Etyomology</p> <p>1. Understand and apply the key morphological concepts and terms: base, prefix, suffix, word sum, grapheme, phoneme.</p> <p>2. Understand the meaning of the base holds the key to the spelling.</p>	<p>Developing a bank of word webs (word families) using free starter bases (starter bases in which there are no changes). These word webs would form the core of a class word wall and would be 'work in progress' charts added to throughout the year.</p> <p>These are a few classic starter bases I have used at the beginning of the school year with different age/class groupings:</p> <p><do>, <go>: demonstrates how pronunciation can change but spelling remains constant <does> <gone> <done>.</p> <p><fri>: analyzing this starter base explicitly demonstrates the connections to the words <Friday> and <friend> from the Norse goddess <Frigga>.</p>	<p>Mystery word bag/box-words belonging to the word family are hidden inside. The words are added to an expanding class word web...</p>  <p>...and then illustrated by the students.</p> 

	<p><play>: demonstrates how the main job of alphabet letters is to work in 'teams of 1,2 & 3 letters', called graphemes. The vowel digraph <-ay> is only one way of representing the long /a/ phoneme, in the final position of a base.</p> <p>Introduce significant vocabulary <base> <suffix> <prefix> <word sum>, orally and written, using a kineasthetic approach with hand signals.</p> <p>Establish a class chart for reference throughout the year.</p> <div data-bbox="667 654 1296 754"> <div>prefix</div> <div>+</div> <div>base</div> <div>+</div> <div>suffix</div> </div> <p>Introduce the class 'Wonder Wall?' establishing a discovery/investigative approach to learning and understanding, within the classroom learning community.</p>	<p>Create a large variety of class word webs at the beginning of the year. These word webs will be an invaluable resource for many other interrelated concepts to be introduced. Click on this link for a range of learning experiences: Round Table Word Web Activity for creating and building word webs.</p>  <p>First Steps Literacy (reading/ writing resource books) is an excellent resource that provides a wide range of authentic learning experiences , using modelled/shared reading and writing as powerful learning tools for language learning.</p>
<p>3.Understand the underlying structure of words through the orthographic word sum.</p> <p>play + ing → playing</p> <p>do + es → does</p>	<p>Introduce the construction of the orthographic word sum. Use words created through word webs to model the orthographic word sum.</p> <p>Model the 'spelling out' strategy-announcing the letter names and graphemes while simultaneously writing them.</p> <p>p-l-ay + ing → p-l-ay-ing</p>	<p>Pete has written numerous articles about the importance of the spelling out word sums strategy and, in working with children, I have found this to be one of the most successful learning strategies in my teaching career.</p>

4. Understand and apply the principles of the the spelling memory, for critical long term learning.



Model and create word sums on large charts with children. These charts can be manipulated and changed in a variety of ways.



Create 'people word sums'.

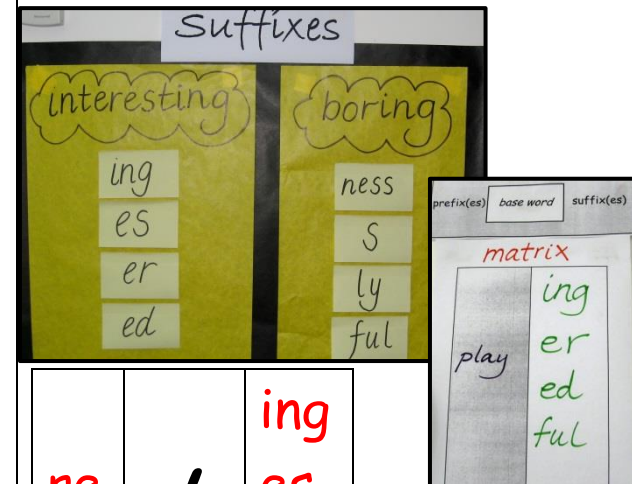
Introduce some of the more common affixes: <-ed> <-ing> <-s> <-ly> <-ful> <pre-> <un->, using words from the established class word webs. Create suffix charts and add these to the growing orthographic 'word wall'.

Investigate the difference between 'interesting' and 'boring' suffixes using a concept attainment strategy.

Create basic **matrices** from the established class word webs to model how to build words using the orthographic word sum, as a class and individually (recording on whiteboards initially and then in workbooks).

do + es → does

Also refer to Skot's blog: smallhumansthinkbig where he has posted a video demonstrating how this strategy is used in reading...it is really a very critical step, as it provides the reader with a clear understanding of the sequence of important graphemes in preparation for reading the word from left to right.




re	<u>do</u>	ing
un		es
		ne

Basic matrices used with younger children.

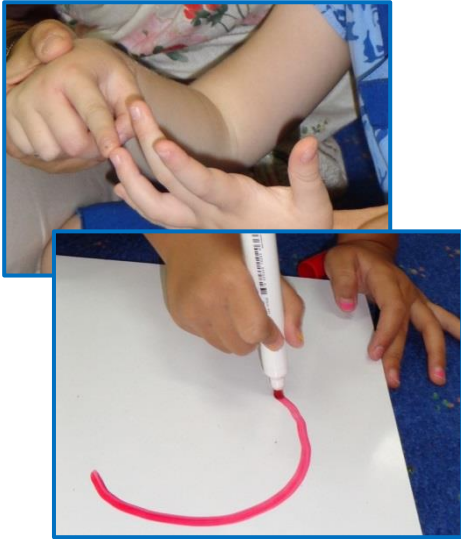
N.B. These matrices are

examples of the very basic versions of the more complete versions. When working with young children learning needs to be carefully scaffolded. As learners begin to understand the function and concept of the matrix, the matrices can be extended and added to. Here is a link to a video of Pete teaching with this matrix [hot-link the video](http://hot-link-the-video).

<p>5. Understand the spelling of function/content words and homophones are primarily based on meaning.</p>	<p>Choose frequently used or so-called ‘tricky’ words and investigate the morphology and etymology of these words.</p> <p>Establish weekly questions to investigate the reason for the spelling.</p> <p>Why is <my> spelled with a <y> not an <i>?</p> <p><my>: avoid using <i> in the final position; learn about the <i>/ <y> connection.</p> <p><was>: historical shift in pronunciation.</p> <p><is>: <s> can also represent the phoneme /z/ in the final position.</p> <p><one>: demonstrates connectedness to <only> <alone>.</p> <p><two>: <tw> indicates “twoness” in words like <twine>, <twenty>, <between>.</p> <p><love>: avoid using u + v (=w); learn about the <o>/ <u> connection.</p> <p>Build a chart, through the concept attainment strategy, showing the difference between content and function words.</p>	<p>Understanding the spelling of <was> leads to an additional investigation of other words with a similar history and spelling: <watch> <wash> <want>.</p>  <p>This link includes a <i>Real Spelling</i> video about this concept with images and tools for teaching content and function words.</p>
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Phonology:

1. Develop a deep understanding of the alphabet letter **names**, with a specific focus on the six vowel letters.



*Learning to scribe the vowel letters with the correct pen hold and script. *Please see note regarding 'Real Script'.*

2. Develop an understanding of the different functions of the vowel letters.

Teach the names of the six vowel letters through a kinaesthetic approach, using fingers and hand.

Learn to scribe the vowels letters correctly, using the palm of the hand to learn the starting point and formation of the letter. See [Real Script](#).

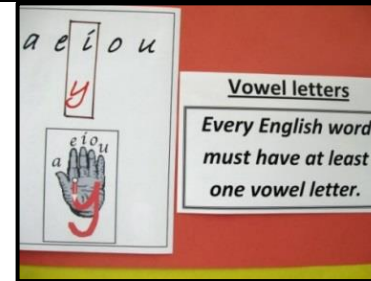
Create an ongoing investigation with the class discovering why the vowel letters are so important.

Introduce **some** of the functions of the long vowel phonemes and graphemes, using the starter bases from the established word webs.

If the class is studying the meaning and spelling of the base <play> this would naturally lead into an investigation of the use of the vowel digraph <-ay> as one way of representing the long /a/ phoneme in writing.

A chart can then be started and added to as the students discover more graphemes during their day to day literacy work or during a dedicated phonological lesson.

Place phonology charts in different positions around the room so that the information contained in the charts is not in 'visual competition' with other written information or grapheme/phoneme charts.



This vowel chart was created after working with the students on the concept of the importance of the six vowel letters.

N.B. This chart only

gives the basic explanation of the role of the vowel letters, leading to the more complete explanation at a later time.

*I cannot underestimate the importance of explicitly teaching the life-long pen-hold and script with young children, right from the beginning. Here is a link to the ["Real Script"](#) resource for further information on how to implement this vital learning strategy.

/a/	<-ay>	<play>
	<ai>	<plain>

A basic chart which is added to throughout the year (in addition to investigating the circumstances-*initial, medial or final position*).

3. Understand the function of graphemes and phonemes.

Connecting **morphology** and **phonology**.



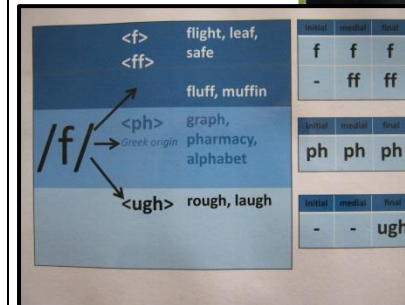
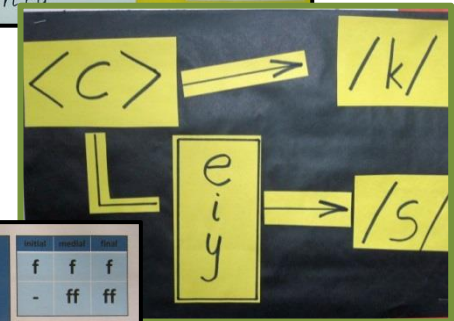
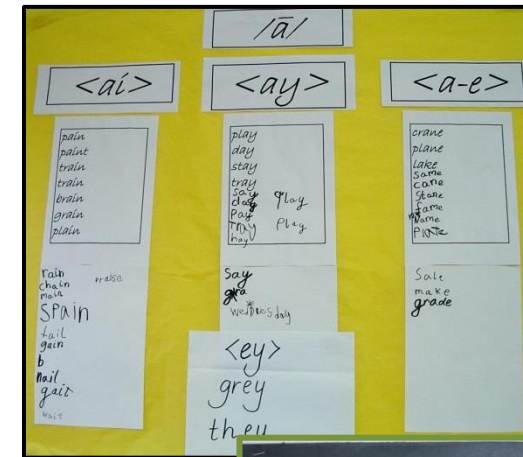
Model how graphemes (teams of 1,2, 3 alphabet letters) can represent different phonemes and how phonemes can be written by different graphemes, depending on the circumstances within a word.

Start with a grapheme, like <c>, to demonstrate how this grapheme represents two different phonemes, /k/ and /s/, in writing. Establish an interactive Venn diagram with the students, to investigate and discover the two distinct jobs of the letter <c>...

Gradually add to the chart, eventually creating a full explanation of the phonology of <c>.

... or start with a phoneme, like /f/, and investigate the different ways it can be represented in writing.

A sequence of lessons of how to guide young children through this process will follow shortly.



4. Understand some of the functions of the final, single silent <e> and the suffixing pattern.

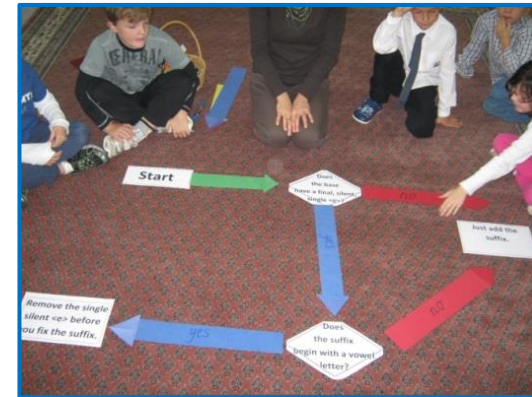


Investigate and discover some of the different functions of the final, single, silent <e>:

- To indicate a long vowel phoneme: <like>
- To avoid the use of a final <v>: <have>
- To indicate <s> is part of the base and not a suffix: <please>

Build class flowcharts, with puzzle pieces, to reinforce/consolidate learning about the suffixing pattern with the final, single, silent <e>.

A sequence of lessons of how to guide young children through the process of building flowcharts will follow shortly.



The [Real Spelling Toolkit 2](#) provides a valuable resource for indepth information about English orthography. Refer to the [Real Spelling Toolkit 2](#) overview to determine which kits are relevant for the aspect you are teaching.

A note:

All the learning experiences, strategies and activities, mentioned in this article, have been used by the author with children ranging in ages from 3-8 years. The activities were adapted and modified according to the children's learning needs and experiences.