

A guide to writing in Reception

As we learn more sounds throughout the school year, the spelling of words may change.

For example, 'with'

Until we have learnt the 'th' sound, children may spell it 'wiv'

Early Learning Goal: Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds.

They also write some irregular common words.

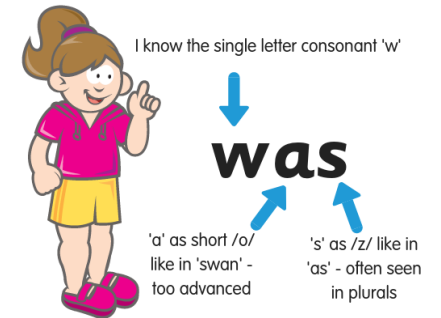
They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others.

Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

These are our tricky words. They are indeed tricky because children cannot use their phonics knowledge to read them.

Children have to be able to recognise them by sight and know how they are spelt.

Here is an example:



Other examples,

'said' may be spelt as 'sed'

When writing sentences with sounds and tricky words we have taught, we would expect them to be spelt correctly. We call these 'fully decodable words.'

For example,

The cat is black. She has a pet rat. The man is on a hill.

As we learn more sounds and tricky words, sentences, which are fully decodable, will be spelt correctly.

Examples of phonetically plausible sentences:

The giybred man is cwic. (The gingerbread man is quick)

I sii a pan. (I see a pan)

We are at scole. (We are at school)

How etun my porig? (Whose eaten my porridge?)

Ways to support writing at home

Letter formation and sentence structure

Providing your child with a sentence to copy as a handwriting exercise.

Features in a sentence to focus on and discuss:

- Capital letters at the start of a sentence and for a name or name of a place.
- Full stop at the end.
- Finger spaces between words.
- Writing on a line.
- Correct letter formation.

Dictated sentences

In school, children have a go at writing a dictated sentence. This sentence would be fully decodable (the children have been taught all the sounds and tricky words in the sentence).

1. The teacher would tell them the sentence and the children would join in saying it aloud multiple times.
2. Then we would say it in different voices such as squeaky or deep voice.
3. We would then count how many words are in the sentence.
4. The children would then have a go at writing it independently.
5. The teacher would then write the sentence and the children would check their sentence against the teacher's.

Spelling single words

When children first start to write, they may only be able to hear the initial sound in a word. This is perfectly normal.

The next step is then to hear the final sound.

Finally, children will start to hear sounds within the middle of a word. If the word has only 3 sounds, the children will eventually be able to hear all 3. Longer words will take more time. For example, 'Goldilocks'. The children may write 'Godelx'. The children may write 'gx' initially before moving onto hearing more sounds and writing 'Godelx'.

In school, we would use Fred Fingers or / and Fred Talk to support them. We would also put a dash under sounds to show how many sounds are within the word.

c a t

Digraphs are two letters that make one sound. For example, th / sh / ch.

These would only be represented with one dash, even though to write it we need two letters.

sh e d

Trigraphs are three letters that make one sound. For example, ear / igh.

Again, you would represent these by one dash only.

h ear

Use of sound mat and tricky mat

In school, the children would have access to a sound mat and tricky word mat which we encourage them to use while writing. If the child is able to tell us the sound that they can hear but are unable to find it on the sound mat, we would narrow it down by saying, "Have a look in this row."

