

Dear Parents,

Your child is participating in a spelling program called, "Words Their Way." On Mondays a sheet comes home and your child has written the test date on the top. They can cut the words out and practice in the following ways throughout the week. On Fridays I test them on ten of the words (they don't know which ones) and if they get 8 or more correct, they will be taught a new sort the next Monday. *The words do not have to be spelled completely correct; students are only graded on the word patterns that we are teaching them in the current sort or past sorts they have done.*

Ways to practice "Words Their Way" sorts at home

Regular Sort

Put your header cards (those that have the sound you are working on) in a row. Then sort the other cards in columns under those headers. Read your columns to an adult when you are finished. If you made any mistakes, the adult should give you hints, such as "there is one in this column that needs to move."

Sentences

Write complete sentences using your sort words. They should be interesting sentences that show you understand the meaning of the word. (Not sentences like, "I saw a truck." or "I want a kite.")

Blind Sort

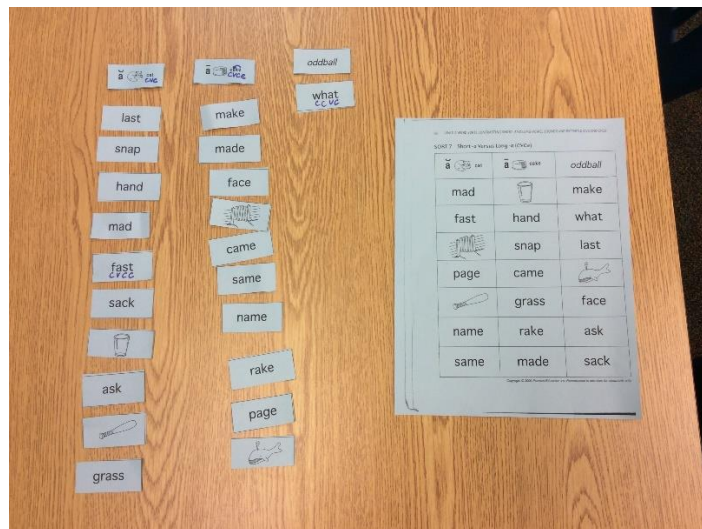
Write your sort headers down on paper. An adult will read words to you. Without looking at the words, write them in the correct category.

Speed Sort

See how quickly you can sort your words into the given categories. Write down your time. Sort them again to see if you can beat your own time!

Ultimate Test Prep

An adult will read a word to you, and you write it! Think about the header patterns as you write.



For more details on how to sort, go to: www.mrsstickling.weebly.com and click on "Words Their Way Videos" in the top right corner.

For those of you who like a very detailed explanation, keep reading...

I am very excited to introduce "Words Their Way" to my students! Spelling has always been a hard subject for many. It can be common for students to memorize their spelling words for their test on a Friday, but then not be able to write the words correctly on the following Monday. "Words Their Way" is designed to teach word patterns so students can begin to recognize and understand how words are spelled, and make connections between words. For example, when a student wants to write a word that has the long "e" sound, they will be able to think, "I know 'ee' says the long 'e' sound, but so does 'ea.' I will write both and see which one looks right." They may then write out "tree" and "trea" and realize that the first one looks right, based on the way they have seen it written in books or other text.

Word patterns are taught through word sorts. Students are given a sheet of words, which includes headers, such as "long a," "short a," and "oddball." They are to cut out the words and then sort them into columns. For example, they will put the word "mad" under "short a" and the word "made" under "long a." The word "what" is put in the "oddball" column because the "a" in "what" does not say long OR short "a."

They will be working on the sorts every day in class, but each time your student moves up to a new sort, I will be sending a second copy of the sort home, so your student can work on it at home. There are many activities you can do besides sort the words in columns. After sorting, your student may write the words under their headings. They can also write sentences using the words. A challenge would be to write two of the words in the same sentence. You could also choose one word, "hide" it from your student, tell them the word, and ask them to spell or write it without looking. They are free to circle patterns they see in the words; the sorts are theirs to keep at home.

It is unlikely that your students will be on the same sort as other students, because it is designed to teach them exactly what they need. The sorts are grouped by categories such as long and short vowels, digraphs (sh, wh, ch, th) or blends (fl, tr, mp, br, dr). Students will keep working on a sort until they have mastered it, so they may be working on the same words for longer than a week. Rather than moving quickly from list to list, the goal is to teach students how to read and write using word patterns.

The assessments that come will look different than spelling tests you have seen in the past. This is because we are only grading students on the word patterns that they have learned or are currently learning. If a student is working on the difference between "s, h," and "sh," they may be asked to spell "shirt" on their assessment. If they spell it "shrt" I will still count it correct because I have not yet taught them the "ir" pattern. **They are only required to know what we have taught them. We are doing this so that instead of memorizing words, they will understand the meaning behind how they are formed. This hopefully will help them "figure out" words throughout their lifetime, rather than memorizing specific words each week.** Please let me know if you have any questions!

Sara Stickling