

Teaching and Learning about Spelling Strategies

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Context for teaching spelling

In any language the major purpose for students to learn how to spell words the conventional way is for others to read their writing. This means that classrooms need to provide students with many opportunities to write all kinds of texts for a range of audiences and there should be many opportunities for students to read each other's writing (including first drafts and revisions, edited and unedited) and provide feedback for the writer.

When students select some of their writing to publish this also provides the authentic purpose for revising and proofreading to ensure that spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct, but of course students' independence in dealing with this will be influenced by the knowledge they have at that time. Beginning writers must firstly be encouraged to write, regardless of their knowledge of conventional spelling and all attempts are to be celebrated. Teachers and others may assist as editors for material to be published but at all times this should be done in a way that values the students' writing. Students' writing should not be limited by their knowledge of conventions and when students attempt to spell unknown words we learn about the strategies they are using, or not using, to write the words.

Within this context, teachers are able to observe students' strengths and needs in all aspects of writing, including their knowledge about spelling, so that appropriate teaching about spelling may be planned.

Strategies used for spelling

The most useful information for students to learn about spelling includes the following:

- how to spell high frequency words, which includes commonly used words as well as words used often when writing about personal interests or about topics currently being studied;
- how to apply the most useful techniques and routines for learning words to ensure that such words will automatically be spelled correctly in future writing;
- how to proofread writing and know how to use a wide range of appropriate resources to locate correct spelling as needed;
- knowledge of common spelling patterns in the English language and how this knowledge helps with spelling correctly;
- knowledge of common sound-symbol relationships in the English language and how this knowledge helps with spelling correctly;

- knowledge of generalisations about how to add prefixes and suffixes to base words in the English language and how this knowledge helps with spelling correctly;
- understanding how compound words are formed;
- knowledge of common derivatives or roots in words in the English language and how this knowledge helps with spelling correctly;
- understanding the correct use and placement of apostrophes for contractions and for possessive case;
- for beginning writers of English it is also helpful to learn about onsets and rimes and how knowledge of “reliable” rimes helps with the spelling of many words with the same rime;

Another strategy that is important to continually apply with all of the other strategies is that of word analogy. This means that for every word that is known or learned, writers should be considering how that knowledge will help them spell other words – words with the same spelling pattern, the same sound-symbol relationship, the same prefix or suffix, the same base word, the same derivative, the same rime, and so on.

Teaching and learning about spelling strategies

The following guidelines will assist you to teach these in the most effective ways. A classroom program should include what is most appropriate for students at their stage of development in writing and reading. A balanced spelling program will include some *learning of words* and some studies to *learn about words*.

Learning High-Frequency Words for Writing and Reading

The most frequently used words (approx 50) make up about half of the writing that is done by all authors, including students. A study by Oxford University Press in Australia (2008) found that there are about 300 words used more often than others in Australian students’ writing. They are listed in order of frequency (see www.oup.com.au for *The New Oxford Word List*). Such lists are a helpful guide about useful words for all students to know how to spell automatically, but learning them is more meaningful if students are involved in their compilation as they notice the most frequently used words in texts they read and write.

Here are some ways to help students learn to spell these words, but do not focus on this until students are at the stage of writing where some words are being spelled the conventional way.

Involving students in locating the words

To underscore the idea of high-frequency words, have students keep a list of the words they encounter most often in their own reading and writing. Also carefully observe

students' writing, and if see they are consistently misspelling the same high-frequency word, say, "I notice you are using that word often in your writing, so let's find out and learn the correct spelling." It may be very difficult for students to break the habit of a misspelling if they do it for a few weeks. Make learning high-frequency words an early priority, along with trying unknown words, as it's also important for students to continue to be risk-takers.

Later supply them with a chart of the High-Frequency Words, which students can keep in their writing folder or notebook or display it on their desks. They can refer to the list when writing and check off each word as they learn it. You could have older students check early in the year if they know how to spell all high-frequency words. If not, they need to set personal goals to learn them.

Learning the words and developing a word wall

Words are selected for students to learn, usually one at a time, unless it makes sense to learn some words together, such as *could*, *should* and *would*. The word is written on a chart and students talk about anything that surprises them about the spelling of the word. They may notice smaller words within the word; they may notice that the word is pronounced differently when compared with words with the same spelling pattern (e.g. *raid*, *paid*, *laid* and *said*) or that a word has a different spelling pattern when compared with other words that sound the same (e.g. *red*, *bed*, *fed* and *said*); they may notice that a word has a letter that surprises them (e.g., the letter *l* in the word *walk*); they may notice how words are built (e.g. from *walk* to *walked* and *walking*). This sharing of observations helps the students to carefully look at the features of a word.

Teach the following routine to help students learn each word:

LOOK at the word carefully so that you can picture it when your eyes are closed

SAY the word

SPELL the word, almost chanting the letters

COVER the word and picture it in your mind

WRITE the word

CHECK the spelling, letter by letter

This is done several times over until the students can write the word quickly and automatically. It is helpful if they have individual erasable boards for this so they can write and erase the word many times. Then add the word to a word wall that is preferably displayed in an area where you can easily refer to the words for many future word activities. When suitable ask students to try to make new words just by changing the beginning of the known word, such as *play* – *may*, *May*, *stay*, *day*, *way*, *bay*, *stray* or by adding beginnings (prefixes) and endings (suffixes), such as *play* – *replay*, *plays*, *playing*, *played*, *playful*, *playfully* and form compound words, such as *playground*, *playmate*, *role play*.

Other alternatives to rote memorisation

Tips like these help students master words rather than simply memorising them.

1. Learn words with the same pattern, such as *could*, *would*, *should*, together, and include others to help remember the spelling (such as *shoulder*, to remember the *l*).
2. Think about how spelling and meaning go together, then link words with related meanings: two, twin, twice (remember the w).
3. Look for words-within-words: what - hat, was - as, when - hen.
4. Use memory aids such as "*here* is in the words *where* and *there*."
5. Build word families starting with a base word (back: backs, backing, backward, quarterback).
6. Focus on the part of misspelled words that may be causing a problem, such as the *ai* in *said*. Link with other words you know with the same spelling pattern (such as *rain*, *train*, *aid*, *paid*, or *pain*).
7. Refer back to words on the word wall when searching for words with a particular sound or spelling pattern so that you are noticing the features of these high frequency words many times over.

A note about word walls

The development of a word wall as an alphabetical record of the words students automatically recognise and can spell correctly is particularly important for younger writers and ELL students. Those words become the backbone of all other kinds of studies, such as learning about sound-symbol relationships. Words on the word wall that can help with the spelling of other words (e.g. *all*, *an*, *at*, *back*, *bad*, *best*, *brother*) can also be marked with a star so students may refer to them to help when writing similar words. Try to have the word wall at a height which is best for students to use and if possible have it near your meeting area so that it can easily be referred to for Shared Reading or Shared and Interactive Writing. Students need to see you model how to use analogy when reading and when writing, using a known word to help with the reading or writing of another word.

Apart from the common high frequency words, your students will also have interests in topics they like to write about or that you may be studying together, so there will be other words that are "high frequency" for your students. Show how your words are organised the same as words in a dictionary or thesaurus and encourage your students to figure out how to organise the words under each letter of the alphabet, demonstrating how this will help them to quickly locate entries in many kinds of references.

Learning Personal New Words for Writing

A seven-year-old recently commented that instead of the whole class learning the same spelling words, students would be better off learning the words they wanted to use for their own writing. Smart kid! So how do we help students select and learn relevant words? They need to learn how to proof-read, how to choose appropriate words, and how to best learn those words. These tasks can all be demonstrated by using enlarged samples of students' writing. Involve the student writer in the process and tell the class that they can all learn about how to do the same things with their own writing.

Proofreading

As soon as students are spelling some words conventionally, encourage them to proofread, underlining or circling words they think are wrong, and then trying to get them right. Students may try each word two or three ways (it's useful for them if this is done in a margin beside the writing) and then use a resource to check the spellings. Help them to use a variety of resources, including books and people, because a dictionary or a wordbook may not be useful unless the writer is sure about how the word begins. Students also need to consider how much of this correcting they should do and for which pieces of writing they will make more of an effort, otherwise this task may be so daunting that students will never want to write again. There has to be a sensible balance between caring about doing your best but not spending too much time on correcting all spelling mistakes.

Choosing Words

From their proofreading (and class word lists, if appropriate), students select a group of words they think will be useful for future writing. Perhaps also indicate one or two other words a student may want to learn because you have noticed these misspelled in the students' writing. Help students to learn about making wise choices of words to learn.

Learning Words

In relation to learning words, the most important thing for students to be taught is how to learn words the most effective ways. Demonstrate useful ways to learn how to spell words, such as described below and encourage students to discuss how such techniques and routines can help them to learn words better. It's easier if these techniques and routines have already been introduced to the students as useful ways to learn words that the whole class has selected to learn, such as with high frequency words.

Teach the students to:

- Notice the part of the word that they spelled wrongly and try to remember the correct spelling of that part. Perhaps think about what is surprising about the correct spelling.

- Use the Look-Say-Spell-Cover-Write-Check routine until the word can be quickly and automatically spelled correctly. The best way to do this is with individual white boards and markers, so that students use the board to write, check and erase many times until the correct spelling is automatic. It is essential that students have the correct spelling before repeating this routine. (Note: this is also a very good way for students to relearn a word they have been misspelling for some time.)

- Perhaps look at a spelling pattern in the word and think of other known words that have the same pattern (for example, *good* has the same spelling pattern as *look*).

- Use memory aids (such as "I am a friend to the end" or "Friday is at the end of the week").

- Look for words within words (such as *hen* in the word *when*).

- If appropriate, work on spelling the base word before adding the prefix or suffix, such as *remember – remembered*, *real – really*, *satisfied – dissatisfied* or using known words to spell compound words, e.g. *some* helps with the spelling of *someone* and *sometimes*.

It may be that misspellings are caused by wrong pronunciation and so that needs to be corrected first.

It may be that misspellings are caused because the word is a homophone; common homophones such as *two*, *to*, *too* are worth learning, but students need to realise that for many homophones it is best to use a resource to check the spelling matches the meaning.

It may be that misspellings are because there are many ways to represent each sound in English, so investigations can help to learn about these, but students should also select frequently used words to learn so that they automatically use the correct spelling and they should also check in resources when they are not sure.

It may be that misspellings are caused because students do not know the generalisations for adding prefixes and suffixes to base words (this is particularly a common reason for error from year 3 onwards) so this will require investigations to learn these generalisations.

(To help with the teaching of the last few points above, refer to the following pages.)

Learning Related Words

It is most useful for students to choose a few words to learn, to learn them thoroughly, and then think about related words they now know how to spell, such as:

- Other words with the same rime (for example, *rat*, *cat*, *splat*, *fat*, *sat*, *chat* and then how they could build to other words such as *rats*, *cats*, *chats*)

Other words with the same spelling pattern (for example, *now*: *bow, cow, low, tow, wow* and then how they can build to other words such as *bowing, bowed, bowtie, cowboy, lower, lowest, below, tow, towing, towed, towtruck, tower*).

- Other words in the same family (*like*: *alike, liking, dislike, likable, likes, liked, likeness, unlike*).

- Other words with the same derivative (*autograph*: *autobiography, photograph*).

By doing this the students will develop a better understanding about how the English written language works and they will learn many words by just beginning with a few words. They can apply this knowledge to many other words they wish to write, for the rest of their lives.

Getting Feedback (not tests)

If you or the students want to check how well they've learned their words, they can have a partner ask them to spell each word and then they can check to see how successful they were and discover which words they may need to work with more to make sure they are remembered. Also ask students to record in a notebook the words they are learning, to write the strategies they are using to learn them, and the other words they are learning that are similar in some way to their word lists. Collect a few notebooks each week to see where students may need help and make time every week or two for students to share their ideas about how they are learning words.

As soon as you give spelling tests, rather than building in time for feedback, the students will see that the main goal is to score high on a test and will lose sight of the fact that learn to spell is so that others can read your writing. This will affect which words they choose to learn, how they learn them, and the learning will not transfer to their writing.

Be sure to have a range of dictionaries (mostly paperback) and wordbooks for students to use as resources for checking or confirming spelling.

Learning about Letters

Young writers need to learn the names of letters and need to be able to recognise each letter in lower and upper case forms, but learning about letters should not precede learning to read. The learning of letter names helps with the discussion about how sounds are represented etc.; it is easier to have such discussions when the students know the label for each of the 26 marks used in English writing.

Students need to be read to daily for sustained periods of time, they need to be involved in shared reading (where they are reading along with the teacher) of poems, songs, and big books, and they need opportunities to read themselves. This reading may be role-play reading at first or reading through memorisation. Students also need to have writing demonstrated through shared writing, to help the teacher with some parts of the writing in interactive writing, and have many opportunities to write themselves, regardless of their

stage of spelling development. These experiences all provide a context for learning about letters and give some purpose to the task. They also help students understand how thoughts can be expressed as written words, to learn what a sentence is, and what a word is, and how these differ from a letter. Without these experiences the 26 upper-case and 26 lower-case may just be 52 abstract shapes.

It is also more helpful if students have multiple exposures to all of the letters and their names rather than just focusing on one letter at a time. The following activities are some of the things you can do:

- Read lots of different alphabet books to the students and encourage students to read them.
- Whenever you are writing in front of the students name each letter as you write it.
- Use the students' names to teach recognition and naming of the letters by writing a student's name on a chart and having students chant the letters, spelling the student's name ("Give me an A, give me an N, give me a D, give me a Y.").
- Write 2 or 3 students' names on a chart and talk about the letters in each name, such as naming each letter and comparing the names to see if they have any letters the same and naming these.

You can also explore each letter of the alphabet to discover it in words the students are familiar with, such as in the following process.

Exploring Letters

- Reread familiar books, rhymes, chants, and songs, and lists of the students' names, asking students to look for words with a particular letter. List these on a chart; for example, words with the letter *c*: cat, school, Christine, circus, truck, cake, back, circle, Charlotte, Celeste, picnic, ocean, bunch.

- Help students to identify the letter in each word and underline it. Ask students to group the words according to the placement of the letter in the word. For example:

beginning	middle	end
cat	school	picnic
Christine	circus	
circus	truck	
cake	back	
circle	circle	
Charlotte	picnic	
Celeste	ocean	
bunch		

- During the next few days, ask students to find other words they know with this letter and add them to the class list.

•If students are able to hear sounds in words you may also help them to group the words according to the sounds the letter *c* represents. You could talk about how it changes when combined with the letter *h*, such as in Charlotte, bunch, and Christine, and so you may decide not to list these words. For example:

cat	<u>c</u> ircus	ocean
circ <u>u</u> s	<u>c</u> ircle	
circ <u>l</u> e	Celeste	
cake		
truck		
back		
picnic•		

Notice how the same letter may represent more than one sound, depending on the word. This is important for students whose first language is not English, particularly if their first is a phonetic language, such as Spanish. Be careful not to refer to a letter name as a sound; a letter is different from a sound. Also be careful not to make misleading statements such as “c says /k/”.

Learning about Phonological Awareness and Sounds (Phonemes)

Young writers often try to use the sounds in words to help figure out their spellings; more experienced writers often use this phonetic strategy first, and then try other approaches, including applying knowledge about common spelling patterns. So it is definitely worthwhile to help students hear the sounds in words by developing phonological awareness if necessary, and then exploring sound/symbol relationships and spelling patterns. These strategies are especially useful if you continuously encourage students to think about how these strategies will help them as readers and writers.

Developing Phonological Awareness

The terms “phonological awareness” and “phonemic awareness” are synonymous in educational circles these days but the following definitions may help you to understand the meaning of each and how they are linked.

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sound units in the spoken language, such as words, syllables, onsets and rimes, rhyming endings and the separate phonemes in words.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear the phonemes in words in spoken language. (A phoneme is the smallest sound unit of spoken language, e.g. the word dog has 3 phonemes: /d/-/o/-/g/; the word shack has 5 letters but only 3 phonemes: /sh/-/a/-/ck/) So phonological awareness includes phonemic awareness.

There are several aspects of phonological awareness that students develop through the chanting of nursery rhymes, songs and finger plays and playing around with words. But for some students teachers may need to provide suitable experiences that allow

phonological awareness to develop. Such experiences should be provided in the first couple of years of schooling.

Some possible experiences to help students develop phonological awareness include the following.

- Students develop the ability to hear sounds in words when they are involved in lots of shared reading of poems, chants, songs, and big books with repetitive refrains and rhyme. Focus on aspects such as rhyme by asking students to listen for and identify rhyming words, and clapping when they hear them.
- Ask students to clap according to the number of sounds they hear in familiar words.

Note: These words rhyme: *by, high, buy, lie, sigh, try, bye, pie, my* (the end of each word sounds the same but there is not necessarily the same spelling pattern in each word).

These words have the same rime: *tart, cart, smart, dart, part* (they each end with the same sound and they all have the same spelling pattern *-art*).

Learning about Onsets and Rimes

The sounds in an English syllable are known by linguists as onsets and rimes. The onset is the part of the syllable that comes before the vowel and the rime is the part of the syllable from the vowel onwards.

	onset	rime			
bat	=	/b/	/at/		
bricks	=	/br/	/icks/		
		onset	rime	onset	rime
contact	=	/c/	/on/	/t/	/act/

Using this knowledge of words can assist students with spelling and reading if they are guided to make analogies such as: Knowing how to read and write *can* helps you read and write *man, ran, fan, span, flan, then, plan, pan, tan, clan, bran.....*

Students learn how to use analogy like this if you model how to figure out words this way in shared reading and shared writing.

Select words students know, from books, rhymes, songs, and so on, and discover together how knowing one word can help with the recognition or writing of others, just by changing the beginning letter(s). For example, when reading the chant "Mary Mack" write the words Mack, black, back, on a chart and invite students to suggest other words with the same sound: pack, sack, whack, track. Use an erasable whiteboard and magnetic letters to help with this task. Ask students, "How will this help you with your reading and writing?" and demonstrate this when working out how to read and write words during shared reading or shared writing experiences. [If you do not make this link to reading and](#)

writing, the students may not understand the purpose of learning about such sounds in words.

For example: A student is writing a book about chickens and wants to write “Then the hen will lay some eggs.” The student is figuring out how to write the word *lay*. Guide the student to listen for the sounds /l/ –/ay/ and link the word to a known word *day* /d/ – /ay/. Similarly if a student is struggling to read the word “lay” in a book, it is more useful to link with the reading of “day” and firstly looking at the ‘ay’ in the word “lay” rather than always encouraging students to firstly look at the beginning of the word. Of course you would also be encouraging the student to think about what they know about hens and eggs and what word would make sense.

Learning about Sound/Symbol Relationships

One strategy used to help with spelling of unknown words is to have knowledge of common sound-symbol relationships in the English language and understand how this knowledge helps with spelling correctly.

Use the following process to explore the 44 sounds (approximately) in the English language if necessary, but there is no need to spend time learning about sounds you have noticed are not causing problems in your students’ writing. Begin with consonant sounds rather than vowel sounds, because vowel sounds are easily confused with each other due to the similarity of pronunciation.

- Tell students you have noticed them listening for sounds in words they are trying to write, so you will help them discover how different sounds may be written. Reread familiar books, rhymes, chants, and songs, asking students to listen for words with a particular sound. List these on a chart; for example, words with a /k/ sound: kite, cat, school, bike, Christine, truck, cake, back.
- Help students to identify the letter(s) that represent this sound. Underline these and ask students to group the words according to the different ways the sound is represented. For example:

kite, bike, cake
cat, cake
school, Christine
truck, back

- During the next few days, ask students to find other words they know with this sound and add them to the class list. Explain that they must say a word to listen for the sound, and do not confuse them by referring to the sound by a particular letter name. As other sounds are explored, continue to ask students how this will help them with their reading and writing.

Reinforce how the same sound may be represented in more than one way, depending on the word. Students may discover that there are some ways that are more common for

representing particular sounds or that the position of a sound may influence the letter(s) that represent it, such as *ck* is never found at the beginning of a word.

When studying the ways to represent each sound, guide students to notice such generalisations that can further assist with the spelling of English words. By involving the students in such investigations they will form hypotheses and test them as they discover more words with a particular sound and they are more likely to form useful and truthful generalisations rather than being told statements that are not complete and therefore not very helpful.

For example, when investigating how the /ee/ sound (as in *bee*) is represented, the students will find many ways, e.g. *be, bee, ski, believe, leaf, receive, key, funny...* As they group the words according to the spelling pattern they can investigate more closely the words with *ei* and the words with *ie* and they will notice that when the /ee/ sound follows the letter *c* for those words, it is always *ei* so they can form a complete generalisation. The following generalisation was expressed by a group of students who were studying this: “When deciding whether to write *ie* or *ei*, in words with an /ee/ sound, if the /ee/ sound follows the letter *c* the /ee/ sound is represented by *ei* and not *ie*.” Another way to express this is “if *i* and *e* together have the sound of /ee/ the *i* comes first, except after *c*. When this investigation occurs and therefore this generalisation is properly discovered, it is a very useful generalisation, with few exceptions (e.g. *seize, neither*).

As you are studying various sounds, ask students to decide if there are any words in the lists that they think would be suitable to automatically know, because they are more likely to use this word in their writing or because it may help with the spelling of many other words. Also discuss how in English, because there are many ways to represent a sound, it is wise to check with resources if the correct spelling is not automatically known.

Learning about Spelling Patterns

One strategy used to help with spelling of unknown words is to have knowledge of common spelling patterns in the English language and to understand how this knowledge helps with spelling correctly.

- Tell the students that thinking about what a word looks like is a useful spelling strategy, so you are going to explore some common spelling patterns together, particularly some that you have noticed they are not sure about in their writing. Reread a familiar big book, poem, or so on, selecting a particular spelling pattern you wish the students to look for. For example, look for and list words with *ea*, such as: *bead, bread, dead, instead, great, read, treat, break, ocean*.

- Ask students to identify and underline the *ea* spelling pattern in each word, say the words, and group them according to their pronunciation, such as:

bead, read, treat (where *ea* represents the /ee/ sound)

bread, dead, instead, read (where *ea* represents the /e/ sound)

great, break (where *ea* represents the /ay/ sound)
ocean (where *ea* represents the schwa sound)

Ask students to watch for other words with this spelling pattern and add them to the class list.

•Select one of the words and show how knowing it can help with the spelling of other words in that word family. For example, *great*: *greater, greatest, greatly*, or *break*: *breaking, breaks*. Ask students to try this with the other words you've found. Talk about how thinking about spelling patterns and building on word families can help with reading and writing.

Learning about Spelling Generalisations

One of the strategies used by successful spellers is the application of generalisations, more commonly known as rules. The most useful are those related to how to form plurals and add prefixes and suffixes to base words. Students understand and apply these generalisations better if they learn them through a discovery process and can express their application in their own words. The following process can be applied to the learning of any generalisation.

Refer to Students' Writing

Observe students' writing to decide whether they know enough about the spelling of base words to learn a particular generalisation and which one would be most helpful to start with. Share your observations: "I have noticed that you often write stories that tell about something that happened in the past, but you are not always sure how to write words ending with *-ed*. Let's see what we can learn about this together."

Search for Example Words Together

As a class, reread a big book, a chart of a song or a poem, or some familiar text copied onto an overhead transparency and ask students to watch out for relevant words. List them on a chart. For example, words ending with *-ed* found in a familiar big book may include: *hopped, squeaked, curled, croaked, and snuffled*.

Write the Base Words

Beside each word found, write the base word. For example:

•hopped	hop
•squeaked	squeak
•curled	curl
•snuffled	snuffle

Talk about what students notice about any changes to the base words when *-ed* is added to the base word.

Search for More Examples and Look for Patterns

Ask students to search for other related words in their reading and writing, to list the words, and to write the base word for each one. Ask students: "What do you notice about what happens to the base word when *-ed* is added? Do we always do the same thing? Can you figure out what happens to different groups of words and explain this to someone else?" Provide time for students to discuss their findings in small groups or pairs and then to come together as a class to share ideas. Begin to chart the generalisations they are forming.

Over the next few days ask students to watch for more examples to add each group and to check out the validity of their generalisations.

Have Students Write the Generalisations

Encourage students to individually write the generalisations they've discovered. Allowing students to use their own wording, such as "When the base word ends with an e, throw the e out the window before adding the *-ed*", makes the statements more meaningful. Tell students to watch out for example words to check their generalisations by, and if necessary, revise their statements. For example, students usually think that the last letter is always doubled for base words ending with a short vowel-consonant, but then they notice words such as *orbited* and *edited*, and realise that the consonant is only doubled if the stress is on the last syllable. Further refinements to this will happen over a period of time.

Extend the Study

When students know one set of generalisations, they can investigate whether the same idea applies to other situations, such as adding *-ing*, *-er*, or *-est*. They may want to make class resource books about their discoveries to refer to when writing.

Further investigations

To help students develop understandings about the use of apostrophes for contractions and for possessive case, to learn about the correct use of homophones (especially commonly used ones such as *their/there/they're* and *too/to/two*), to understand about the formation of compound words and to use knowledge about derivatives you can involve them in similar investigations. As students become familiar with the process you will be able to assign such learning tasks to the students who need to work on particular understandings, although whole class discussions usually help all students to understand more about the spelling of words in the English language.

(For more details refer to Spelling K-8: Planning and Teaching, by Diane Snowball and Faye Bolton, Curriculum Corporation and Focus on Spelling (DVD series), Diane Snowball, Curriculum Corporation, www.curriculumpress.com.au)