

CUED SPELLING: MNEMONIC STRATEGIES

RULES - some spellings do follow logical rules (like "i before e, except after c" - which most people remember). The learner may be helped by rules like this, but (a) make sure you've got them right, and (b) keep them simple and few in number.

WORD IN WORDS - just breaking words up into bits like syllables helps us to remember them, but if you can break them up into smaller words that mean something, it's even easier to remember them. Words like shep/herd, care/taker and water/fall are like this.

FRONTS AND BACKS - quite a lot of words have the same sort of start or finish. Starts and finishes can be looked at closely in a set of words that start or finish the same. Starts (like "sta-", "pre-", "un-") are often not as hard as finishes (like "-tion", "-ate", "-ous", "-ght").

FAMILIES - words which have the same fronts and backs can be put in groups or families. Sorting out the words into families can be a game, perhaps even with a little prize for the winner. You can do this with words that have the same middles, too. You might think of other ways of sorting words into families or categories.

MAKE A PICTURE - if you can make up a picture in your mind about a word, this will help you remember it. (Like thinking up a picture of two people getting married (wed) on a Wednesday to remind you how to spell the name of that day). Some of your mind pictures or "visual images" will seem really silly - but this is good, because if they are funny you will remember them better.

RELATIONS - two words that look different can still sometimes be related (or "associated") in some way. If you can relate a word you don't know to one you do know, you then might remember them together - right! Like: "b **icy** cle" - "fridge". But the learner must be able to remember the second word (e.g. fridge) easily. It is usually easier to remember there is a link between words than remembering there is not a link or relationship between words.

SHRINK AND GROW - with some words, you can remember a short hard bit of it or just some initials for each part, like "par" in "separate". Often it helps to "grow" the initials into new words, to give you a saying or rhyme to remember.

Like: b / e / a / u / tiful = **big** elephants aren't **ugly** - tiful

Another example: n e **c** e **s** ary - has 1 **collar** and 2 **socks**

FIX & STRETCH MEANING - it helps if we really understand what those hard words mean. The learner might choose them because they seem interesting, but talking about the full and exact meaning and use for while will make the word even more interesting, and help fix it in the learner's mind.

FUNNIES - as much as you can, work jokes and other silly and comic things into what you do with Cued Spelling. Funny things are much more likely to be remembered.

RHYME AND RHYTHM - rhyme is very good for helping you remember, like in "i before e except after c". If finding a rhyme is too hard, try to get some rhythm into the mnemonic so it is easier to say. You could even try singing some of the words!

HIGHLIGHT - we only usually get one bit of a hard word wrong. Try highlighting the hard bits with colors (perhaps green for easy bits, red for hard bits). Or just use capital letters or underline: e.g. station**Ery**

Different learners must find out by trying which of these ways works best for them. Different learners will find different ways better. The helper must not push the learner into a particular way, especially not into the way that feels easiest to the helper!

Your Cued Spelling will not do much good if the learner doesn't get lots of practice with writing as well. To become a better speller, you need to practice writing, wherever you are. The learner needs to write shopping lists, leave notes and messages, write letters and requests, and so on. Find reasons to write and audiences for writing.

This list may give you some ideas, but helpers often have good ideas which are too complicated for learners to remember. It's better if learners think up their own ideas, if they can. They will have to remember them quickly and easily if they need to use the hard word when writing, so the ideas must be "short and sweet".

Remember

1. KEEP IT SIMPLE
2. LET THE LEARNER DO WHAT'S EASY FOR THEM
3. FIND LEARNERS REASONS TO WRITE