



Skills and Concepts for Grade 1

Formal spelling instruction can begin when first graders can read, know the names of the letters and can write them, know that letters make words, and have acquired a phonological awareness. They have participated in guided writing, predicting spellings as words are written, and are emerging as writers through attempting the spelling of words through approximations.

A first grader's spelling experiences should include:

spelling by analogy (onsets and rimes: _at—sat, bat, hat)

short vowel spelling patterns (words with one vowel: not)

long vowel spelling patterns (words with two vowels: note)

consonant spelling patterns (/z/: boxes, was, wise, zip, fuzzy)

spelling digraphs (ch/chin, sh/wish, th/this, wh/when)

spelling double-letter words (will)

words spelled the way they sound (that)

words not spelled the way they sound (they)

silent letters (have)

predicting spellings in guided writing

spelling consonant blends (from, stop, plan)

consonant and vowel letter substitutions (letter-card manipulations)

Further, students should learn **strategies** that enable them to anticipate the spelling of a word, such as a short vowel sound is usually spelled with one vowel, double letters stand for one sound, knowing how to spell one word may help spell rhyming words, and some letters spell more than one sound.

Spelling experiences should be integrated with opportunities for **language growth**, such as **antonyms** (in/out), **homophones** (for/four), **regular plurals** (cats), **contractions** (that's), **multiple meanings** (can), **idioms** (to have a fit, to have a ball, to have the blues), **sorting words** (by phonic properties, structural attributes), **vocabulary development** through the discussion of unfamiliar words, such as those generated in patterning activities (man, tan, ban), making words through the addition of **suffixes** (s, ed, ing).

Experiences with literature should be plentiful, learning the concept of story and the use of words in context to write one.

Explicit instruction in **visual skills** is essential, including the Word Preview—then students apply these skills in writing and proofreading.

Students need abundant **writing** opportunities (guided, structured, dictated, independent) to work toward the mastery of **Core Words** 1-35, to grow them into many more words, and to maintain 100% accuracy in all everyday writing for **Priority Words** 1-15 (by the end of the school year).