

Information on Spelling for Parents

What words does my child need to learn to spell?

There are approximately 450 000 words in the English language. If you were to learn to spell 5 words a day, it would take 246 years to learn them all. It is of little use to learn to spell words that you are unlikely to use regularly and therefore have little use for in your writing. A child who is interested in music needs to know how to spell musical terms and names of their favourite instruments or composers and a hunting enthusiast needs to master words like 'rifle, scope, and prey' that they are likely to use in their writing.

Words related to the topic the children are learning about in class also need to be learnt. This means that if the child is learning to write a piece of persuasive writing they will need to be able to spell words like: 'persuade, disagree and conclusion' and if the topic is sustainability then it is important to know how to spell words such as 'environment, change and impact' correctly.

At Makarewa School we use the **Essential Spelling Lists** from the New Zealand Council of Educational Research (NZCER) because their lists of words are based on the words children use most often in their writing. These lists are referred to in documents and resources provided to schools by the Ministry of Education. We have shared these lists with you on our school website.

Good spellers have the ability to spell common words, use knowledge of letters and chunks to assist in spelling new words, know how words are structured and make links to other words, use visual memory to decide if the word looks right and use resources to check words. Research tells us that the measure of a successful speller can be seen in how they approach writing unknown words, rather than how many words they rote learn for the spelling test each week.

Spelling Expectations

It is expected that children will be working at the level associated with their Year level.

Year Level	Expectation
Year 1 & 2 students	Students who are spelling proficiently at level 1 will be able to spell the majority of high frequency words (Essential Lists 1-3) correctly.
Year 3 & 4 students	Students who are spelling proficiently at level 2 will be able to he majority of spell most high frequency words in Essential Lists 1-4) correctly.
Year 5 & 6 students	Students who are spelling proficiently at level 3 will be able to spell most high frequency words (Essential Lists 1-6) correctly. Year 5 - 90% of List 5 Year 6 - 90% of List 6
Year 7 & 8 students	Students who are spelling proficiently at level 4 will have few errors within high frequency words (Essential Lists 1-7). Year 8 students should have control over the spelling of most commonly misspelt words.

LEARNING YOUR WORDS

- **LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK**
- **LOOK** at the word you want to learn, and I mean really look.
 - Which bits of the spelling are easy and which are not so obvious?
 - Mark the 'hard spots' that is the difficult part of the word, using a different coloured pen.
 - Is the word similar in spelling to another word that has a related meaning?
 - Can you break it into parts?
 - Have a really good look and think about the spelling until you think you can spell it.
- **SAY** the word, while looking at it. Is the spelling a reflection of the sound? If not, what is different?
- **COVER** the word with your hand. Close your eyes and try to 'see' the word in your head.
- **WRITE** it.
- **CHECK** your spelling by uncovering the word and comparing it with your spelling. Check it letter by letter. If it's wrong, start again; if it's right, celebrate how clever you are.

Here is a link to the [Essential Word Lists](#).