

Developmental Spelling Stages

Stages	Instructional Strategies	Grade Levels
<p>Stage I: Pre-Phonetic Spellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use random strings of letter-like forms and scribbles to represent message • use a few letters repeatedly • mix upper and lower case letters but show preference for upper case • write randomly on page • produce text not readable by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read aloud and often • display words in students' environment and label objects/pictures • create big books and picture dictionaries • use dictations and experience charts • have students chant and choral read familiar stories and dictations • have students categorize words by common patterns 	↑ Kindergarten ↓
<p>Stage II: Phonetic Spellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are aware of sound-symbol relationships • represent all essential sound features of a word • use blends, consonant digraphs, and long vowel patterns • have some sight words • leave spaces between words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have students develop word families for basic vowel sounds in familiar words • discuss and have students practise identifying the spelling patterns and sounds heard in words • have students identify familiar words with one and two syllables • use the cloze procedure with familiar words • use word bags or banks 	↑ Elementary Level (Grades 1-5) ↓
<p>Stage III: Transitional Spellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use basic word conventions and letter sequences • begin to use morphological and visual strategies in addition to phonetic information • demonstrate greater understanding of vowel digraphs, long vowel patterns, diphthongs, and inflectional endings • often include all necessary letters in a word, but reverse some • use alternate spellings for the same sound in different words, but do not fully understand the conventions that dictate these differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review common consonant and vowel patterns • have students sort familiar past-tense words by the ending sound • focus on the connection between vowel spelling and spelling changes when adding <i>ing</i> or <i>ed</i> • have students do simple word expansion activities • encourage and provide opportunities for regular writing • have students proofread their own and others' writing • have students identify their own problem words • have students look for spelling patterns in two-, three-, and four-syllable words 	↑ Middle Level (Grades 6 – 9) ↓
<p>Stage IV: Conventional Spellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extend knowledge of word structures such as affixes, base words, contractions, compound words, and homonyms • demonstrate greater accuracy in using silent consonants and in doubling consonants before adding suffixes • recognize when a word does not “look right” and try alternative spellings • learn irregular spelling patterns • spell most words correctly and quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have students develop personal spelling lists of own problem words • create meaning maps with words that have derivations • explore common Latin and Greek derivational forms • have students combine forms to make nouns or adjectives • have students use a variety of language resources • have students write regularly and proofread their own and others' writing for spelling 	↑ Secondary Level (Grades 10 – 12) ↓
<p>Continued Development: Mature Spellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a greater command of an expanding vocabulary • often return to a phonetic approach if other strategies fail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide formal and informal mini-lessons to individuals and groups as needed to review and refine spelling knowledge and strategies • have students proofread their own and others' writing for accurate written communication. 	↓