

Summary Chart for Five Stages of Spelling Development

STAGE ONE — PRECOMMUNICATIVE		
<i>Description</i>	<i>Hallmarks of spelling</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<p>The precommunicative stage (typically 3+ years to 5+ years) may be thought of as “make up writing” with the child imitating writing by copying or inventing random strings of letters and possibly numerals.</p> <p>There is little or no evidence of letter-name knowledge or letter-sound relationships. The writer has a message in mind, but this is not communicated to the reader.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Writing has the appearance of random strings of letters, numbers and other common symbols. (b) When letter forms are used uppercase forms predominate. (c) Apart from chance occurrences, no letter-sound correspondence is evident. (d) Using symbols to communicate messages recognises that speech may be written down. 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>[That is the sun]</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>[It is raining. Simon is inside]</p> </div>

STAGE TWO — SEMI-PHONETIC		
<i>Description</i>	<i>Hallmarks of spelling</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<p>At the semi-phonetic stage (typically 4+ years to 6+ years), the beginnings of partial mapping of phonetic content words are evident.</p> <p>There is recognition that sounds in words are represented by sounds of letters. Spelling is abbreviated with one to three letters used to spell full words.</p> <p>Knowledge of the alphabet and letter formation becomes more complete.</p> <p>This stage marks the appearance of what is commonly called “invented spelling”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A letter name strategy is often evident. (b) The main sounds in words are represented. (c) The letters used show some form of partial mapping to sounds within a word. (d) Initial sounds and final sounds most often represented. (e) Consonants are used more often than vowels. 	<p>R [are], U [you], B [be], YL [while]</p> <p>RSK [ask], YL [while], KS [kiss], OD [old], YSTDA [yesterday]</p> <p>TLEFN [telephone], ERPLN [aeroplane], LEFNT [elephant], MODSTA [monster]</p> <p>PAT [pants], BN [been], OPN [open]</p> <p>KR [car], BRZ [birds], BZR [buzzer]</p>

STAGE THREE — PHONETIC

<i>Description</i>	<i>Hallmarks of spelling</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<p>During the phonetic stage (typically 5+ years to 7+ years), the writer is better able to map the sounds of short regular words. For the first time all major sounds are represented by letters.</p> <p>As writers progress in this stage, sounds within more complex words are frequently mapped. Word segmentation and improving spatial orientation are evident.</p> <p>Older students who are seen as having poor spelling skills may not have progressed through or beyond this stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The surface-sound features of words are represented. (b) Spellings show the sequence of sounds in pronunciations. (c) A few common letter strings are reproduced accurately as complete units. (d) There may be difficulty in discriminating some sounds sufficiently well to match them with letters or groups of letters. (e) Letters are usually assigned on the basis of sound alone. 	<p>DUN [done], JOORS [jaws], HOPT [hopped], ACSITING [exciting] TELAFON [telephone], BABES [babies], FAKTARES [factories], GLOWSD [closed] -ING, -EE, -OO, -UN, MOOVEE [movie], RELEE [really], ROOING [rowing] CHRUK [truck], CHRA [tray], CHRAP [trip], SBSEL [special], GROD [drop] QEEN [queen]</p>

STAGE FOUR — TRANSITIONAL

<i>Description</i>	<i>Hallmarks of spelling</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<p>In the transitional stage (6+ years to 11+ years), most basic conventions of English spelling are evident and most common words are known and written down unerringly.</p> <p>Spelling by analogy becomes more evident for unknown words. There is a transition from sole reliance on sound for representing spelling to use of visual and morphological information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Vowels are placed in syllables. (b) Vowels and consonants are used instead of a letter name strategy. (c) Common English letter strings are evident. (d) Nasals are sometimes represented before consonants. (e) A more sophisticated understanding of spelling patterns and language structures is evident. (f) Extended knowledge of the structure of words is shown. (g) More reliance on visual strategies may lead to reversals within words. 	<p>EGUL instead of EGL, OFORD instead of OFRD EL instead of L in ELEFANT [elephant] YOUSUAL [usual], CORGHT [caught] -OUGH, -IOUS, BANGK [bank] instead of the phonetic BAK; STRAIT [straight], MONSTUR for earlier MOTIHSTA [monster], EIGHTEE for earlier ATEE [eighty] prefixes, suffixes, contractions, compound words, silent consonants and double consonants evident RAOD [road], SIAD [said], BECUASE [because]</p>

STAGE FIVE — CORRECT

<i>Description</i>	<i>Hallmarks of spelling</i>
<p>At the correct stage (typically from 10–11+ years), almost complete mastery of even the most complex sound-symbol principles is evident.</p> <p>By and large students now have available a wide range of strategies for checking and self-correcting words.</p> <p>Proof-reading strategies and skills for “looking up” words are used with increasing proficiency during the correct stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Instances of individual words or atypical spelling patterns causing difficulty. (b) Recognition and production skills are highly correlated. (c) The proportion of errors that are identified and respelt correctly increases markedly. (d) Students at the correct stage continue to make some unusual errors, and fail to identify these when proofreading their work.