

Overview

Word Sorts for Within Word Pattern Spellers is a companion volume to the core text *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction* (WTW). The core text supplies the theory and research that underlie the curriculum laid out in these companions and it is important that teachers have this text available for reference.

Within word pattern spellers are typically transitional readers who can identify most one-syllable words in context but still struggle to spell those same words correctly when they write. During this stage of development, students learn to spell long-vowel patterns as well as diphthongs and *r*-influenced vowels. *Words Their Way: Word Sorts for Within Word Pattern Spellers* provides teachers with prepared reproducible sorts and step-by-step directions on how to guide students through sorting lessons. There are organizational tips as well as follow-up activities to extend the lesson through weekly routines. The materials provided in this text will complement the use of any existing phonics, spelling, and reading curricula.

These students are usually in the late first to mid-fourth grades and should already know how to hear and spell two-letter consonant blends and digraphs, as well as short vowels, to be ready for the features in this book. To figure out exactly where individual students should start within this supplement, you need to administer one of the spelling inventories and use the feature guides in Chapter 2 of *WTW*.

Word study as we describe it is analytic. Students examine words they already know how to read, and sometimes even spell, as a way to gain insight into how the spelling system works. This in turn enables them to analyze unfamiliar words they encounter in reading and to master the spelling of similar words. For this reason we do not recommend that you give a pretest and then eliminate all the correctly spelled words from the weekly routines and the final assessment. Known words provide important reference points for the student who is using but confusing the spelling feature of interest. In this way we help students work from the known to the unknown through the scaffolding process.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF THIS BOOK

Research shows that students are using but confusing a variety of vowel patterns at about the same time, so there is some interplay in the sequence presented here among the vowels. Short- and long-vowel sounds are introduced first with pictures, and then the common and less common patterns are introduced. These sorts will include homophones—words that sound the same but are spelled with different patterns to reflect different meanings (e.g., *pair* and *pear*). Students then focus on *r*-influenced vowels, vowel diphthongs, and other ambiguous vowel patterns that reflect a range of vowel sounds that are neither long nor short. Complex consonant patterns such as the *tch* in the word *match* and other consonant patterns that are influenced by vowel sounds are examined in sorts that build on concepts developed in the earlier sorts. At the same time, we expand the repertoire of consonant clusters to include more difficult three-letter

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digraphs and blends. Silent consonants found at the beginning of words are introduced at this time as well. We start examining two-syllable words toward the end of this sequence by studying two-syllable high-frequency words. Finally, there is a brief introduction to inflectional word endings with the past-tense morpheme (*-ed*) and plurals. The grand finale of this book of sorts is a review of all the long-vowel patterns through the study of homophones.

RESOURCES

For each unit, *Notes for the Teacher* provide placement guidelines and background information about the features of study. The notes also describe weekly routines that ensure practice and enrichment and offer suggestions for books and games. Each unit has at least one spell check to assess student learning. For each sort there are directions for how to introduce the sort as well as additional teaching tips. Sorts are presented as black line masters that can be reproduced for every student so that each student can sort their words a number of times. We recommend that you enlarge the sorts about 10% to maximize the paper size. You should also use the masters to prepare a set of pictures and words for modeling. You may want to make a transparency of the sort and cut it apart for use on an overhead or enlarge the words for use in a pocket chart. You can also simply make your own copy to cut apart and use on a desktop or on the floor.

Most of the sorting lessons are described as teacher-directed closed sorts with preestablished categories indicated with headers and key words. For more discovery-oriented lessons you can cut off the headers and encourage your students to establish their own categories in an open sort. Headers might then be given back to label the columns. The Appendix contains a variety of headers that you can use to label your categories. See Chapters 3 and 6 of *WTW* for additional background information, organizational tips, games, and activities. Use the Independent Word Study form in the Appendix of this book for homework.

PLACEMENT AND PACING

This book contains 10 units of study grouped by early, middle, and late designations in the table of contents. Following are general guidelines for placing students, using the inventory results.

Early within word pattern spellers will know short vowels and will be using but confusing silent vowel markers (FLOTE for *float* or BRITE for *bright*). They may earn 0 to 2 points under “long vowels” on the inventory. They will be ready to contrast short and long vowels with pictures and words in Sorts 1 to 18. If students are still missing two or more short vowels or blends and digraphs they will benefit from the sorts offered in *Word Sorts for Letter Name Spellers*.

Middle within word pattern spellers will earn several points under “long vowels” (3 or 4) and may even earn points under “other vowels.” They will benefit from the review of common long-vowel patterns and the introduction to less common vowels in Sorts 19 to 30.

Late within word pattern spellers will spell most long vowels correctly (missing no more than one on the inventory) but will still make errors in the “other vowel” category. They might take a step back to review *r*-influenced vowels (Sorts 25 to 30) before moving into Sorts 31 to 50.

Each unit contains Spell Checks that can be used as pretests to gather more in-depth information about features and to place your students more accurately. For example, you might give Spell Check 2 (page 32) to students who are in the early within word pattern stage to determine if they can spell words with the common CVCe pattern. If students spell 90% on a spell check correctly, you can safely move on to the next feature. If students spell between 50% and 75% of the words correctly on the pretest, the words and features are at their instructional level.

The pacing for these sorts is designed for slow to average growth and the words selected for the sorts are the most frequently occurring words for that sound or pattern, but feel free to substitute similar words. After introducing a sort, you should spend about a week following routines that encourage students to practice for mastery. If your students seem to be catching on quickly, you can increase the pace by spending fewer days on a sort or you may skip some sorts altogether. On the other hand, you may need to slow down and perhaps even create additional sorts for some students using the blank template in the Appendix. Additional words are included for most sorts to provide more practice or to challenge students with a more developed reading vocabulary. Additional sorts and words may be found in the Appendix of *WTW* as well as on the CD-ROM.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Many of the vowel sounds in English do not exist in other languages, and the sounds that are the same may be spelled with different letters. For example, the Spanish language has only one short-vowel sound (short *-o* spelled with *a*), one diphthong (*oi*) and no *r*-influenced vowels. Long *-o* and long *-u* are spelled with those corresponding letters, but the long *-a* sound is spelled with *e*, long *-e* with *i*, and long *-i* with *ai*. If students are literate in their first language, they may try to spell the sounds they hear in English with the correspondences they know from their first language. Word sorting lessons will help them sort out the differences and focus their attention on new sounds and patterns, but expect English Language Learners (ELLs) to need extra practice and support. Following are several suggestions.

1. Reduce the number of words in a sort.
2. Spend extra time saying the words aloud and discussing meanings, not only in the introductory lesson but also throughout the week.
3. Pair ELLs with English speakers for partner work.
4. Accept variations in pronunciation. (Even native English speakers pronounce vowel sounds in a variety of ways.) Allow students to sort in ways that make sense to them but still reflect sound and pattern correspondences. For example, students may sort the words *mail*, *snail*, and *pail* separately from *rain*, *paid*, and *paint*, but the *-ail* words fall into their own pattern category.

