

Tricks for learning spellings – mnemonics

Rationale

Learners have different learning styles and need different strategies to help them learn words they need to spell correctly. This worksheet gives the learners an opportunity to practise a new strategy which they might find useful for particularly difficult words. They can use this along with *Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check* or other strategies that they might have used to help with learning spellings.

A mnemonic is a memory aid often used to remember key facts. Creating visual images can also reinforce the spelling pattern. This one helps us to remember the colours of the rainbow: **R**ichard **o**f **Y**ork **g**ained **b**attles **i**n **v**ain (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet). English teachers can encourage learners to make up their own mnemonics for words they find difficult to spell.

Aim: To help learners remember difficult spellings; to develop creative learning strategies

Can be used: at any point in the course

Activity: Individual and pair work

Materials: One copy of Worksheet 4.1 per learner; copies of Worksheet 2.1 (*Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check*), optional

Focus: Spelling strategies

Estimated time: 30 minutes

Worksheet 4.1

- 1 Ask learners to discuss the strategies they use to learn spellings. Remind them of *Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check* (see Worksheet 2.1) if this does not feature in the discussion. Tell them that the purpose of this activity is to look at a strategy to help them remember the spellings of English words.
- 2 Hand out copies of the worksheet. Introduce the concept of mnemonics to the learners (and the word itself if you think it will appeal to them, explaining that the initial *m* is silent), using the example for the word *because*.
- 3 Ask them to do Exercise 1 and match the mnemonics 1–5 with words a–e.

Answers

1 c 2 b 3 d 4 e 5 a

- 4 Ask learners to do Exercise 2 in their notebooks. They work out their own mnemonics for the words. The more memorable and comical they are, the more likely the learners are to remember them.
- 5 Once they have completed a mnemonic, ask them to draw a picture to go with it.
- 6 Ask learners to think of three words they have found difficult to spell in the past and to write mnemonics for them.
- 7 Learners to share their mnemonics with other members of the class.
- 8 Display the best examples around the room.

Extension

Write these mnemonics on the board and ask learners to work out the words:

Some children in England never cook eggs. (science)

Two old men out running run over walls. (tomorrow)

Don't invite five friends if Charlie's uncle looks tired. (difficult)

Worksheet 4.1 Tricks for learning spellings

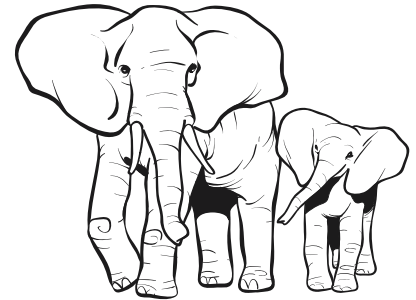
Here are three tricks to help you remember spellings.

1 Sentences and pictures

Use the letters of the word to make a sentence. This is called a *mnemonic*. A picture and a sentence together can help you to remember the spelling.

Example: *because*

Big **e**lephants **c**an **a**lways **u**nderstand **s**mall **e**lephants.



2 Words and pictures

Example: *hear*

Hear has got an *ear* in it.



3 Parts of words

You can use mnemonics for parts of words that you find difficult:

Example: *fiction*

fic **t** **i** **o** **n**
 two **ice** creams **On** **n**uts

1 Match the mnemonics 1–5 with the spellings patterns a–e.

- 1 apples under green hens
- 2 I grow happy tomatoes
- 3 oranges round six elephants
- 4 oranges up lemons down
- 5 apples in rice

- a** **p** **a** **i** **r**
- b** **n** **i** **g** **h** **t**
- c** **l** **a** **u** **g** **h**
- d** **w** **o** **r** **s** **e**
- e** **c** **o** **u** **l** **d**

2 Write your own mnemonic for the words in Exercise 1 and draw a picture to help you remember your mnemonics.