

## SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION CORRESPONDENCE IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

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### **Rezumat**

*În acest articol este accentuată importanța predării pronunției și ortografiei. La fel, sunt evidențiate tehnici și metode eficiente de predare a pronunției și a ortografiei pentru a facilita înțelegerea sensului și scrierea corectă a cuvintelor în limba engleză.*

The teaching of English to speakers of other languages has, in recent years rightly given emphasis to the students mastery of the sound system of the language. In contrast, English orthography is not emphasized, and is in part often replaced by a more regular transcription in which each graphic symbol has a consistent value and every unit of sound system has a consistent representation. Yet the new speaker of English will eventually need to deal with the spelling system – to translate Graphic symbols into sound –and he should be taught to do this

Pronunciation can give you clues and offer you tactics in how you teach spelling, and vice versa. Using pronunciation-based activities and games when teaching spelling will help your students understand spelling patterns easier and faster, and minimize misspellings in the future by drawing on their knowledge of pronunciation.

There are some ways how to use pronunciation in teaching spelling:

- Raise Awareness of the Pronunciation-spelling Relationship

**Children are never too young to learn that pronunciation and spelling are closely interrelated.** Students should know that spelling is rarely faithfully reflected in pronunciation. For instance, *Wednesday* is pronounced [wenz(ə)dā], where the first ‘d’ is silent. This lack of complete letter-to-sound matching is the case for many more words than we would like to admit, such as *Worcester*, the name of an English city which, to many students’ surprise, is pronounced [wis-tər].

It’s important to make students aware of how differences in spelling affect pronunciation. For instance, **moral** and **morale** are stressed differently when spoken out loud, and this is a clue they can use to learn to understand which spelling to use for which concept [2, p. 25].

**Another way to reinforce spelling and pronunciation is to teach similarly spelled words in sets.** For instance, the sentence „The farmer’s crop didn’t **yield** as expected and he feared the King’s Knights would **wield** their swords to collect the tax" help students memorize the letter patterns as well as the sounds. You can also choose to contrast the pronunciation of words that are spelled with the same letter groupings, as with the sentence "Adding too much flour will make the **dough** too **tough** to work with. Such sentences emphasize that even if these words eye-rhyme, (seem as though they have the same sound) they don’t.

In this manner, even if the student forgets say how to spell morale, knowing its pronunciation will more likely help the student retrieve/recall the correct spelling form.

Silent Letters

**Another spelling-pronunciation challenge is the many silent letters children are expected to omit when pronouncing certain words, but write when spelling them.** Examples include:

*B* - debt, doubt ,dumb, subtle

*K* – know, knee, knob, knock

Using spelling lists and silent-letter word exercises will allow students to better process the idea that even when a letter is not pronounced it should still be included in the word’s spelling. On top of teaching silent letter words, you have to teach the exceptions where the silent letter is not silent, such as with the word **sandwich**.

- Words with –ough, -ent/-ant and Other Troublesome Letter Clusters [4, p.67].

**Teach notoriously idiosyncratic words in isolation, to ensure children are paying attention to their complexities.**

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Enough / cough / through / although / plough have the same spelling **-ough**, but are pronounced differently nonetheless.

Making children aware of this linguistic feature will ensure they learn it and never misspell these words. Create spelling lists for words that are commonly misspelled or hard to learn. Focus on spelling forms such as **-tial** and **-cial** (as in **substantial** and **crucial**), or endings such as **-ence** and **-ance** (as in **pretence** and **significance**).

- Teaching Spelling Through Pronunciation [1, p.48].

**This is a fun activity that teaches students how a single sound can take different spelling forms.** Such activities can be particularly helpful when teaching common English sounds such as the schwa (/ə/) as in **sofa**, **supply**, **incredible**, **gallop**, **enemy**. All these words spell the schwa sound differently. In fact, any vowel can be pronounced as the schwa sound.

A great exercise is to take any grade-appropriate text and omit all /ə/ sounds and ask students to retrieve the right schwa spelling. This is an effective exercise to make students aware of how flexible and common the /ə/ sound is in English.

Other eye rhymes such as **heard/beard** are not pronounced the same and might often cause confusion because despite similarities in spelling, their pronunciation is a lot different. For instance, **lore** and **love** have different vowel sounds, even using the same vowel. The pair of words **dear/pear** also visually deceive the speaker making a student believe they would be pronounced the same, although they are actually not.

Eye-rhyming exercises will make students conscious of how deceitful spelling can be and how important it is to resort to pronunciation and other linguistic parameters to figure out the correct spelling of words.

Exaggerated pronunciation can help students visually represent a word's spelling and so avoid misspelling it. Students' writing often suffers from unaccented syllable misspellings, where you see words such as **libary**, **proibly** and **Wensday**.

To help your students spell these words correctly you can have them exaggerate the pronunciation of the word. This will ensure they've learned the correct correspondence between spelling and pronunciation and whenever they suspect a misspelling, they can "pronounce for spelling" to get it right [3, p.17].

- **Poems**

**An indispensable teaching aid for spelling is to use poems.** In view of their rhyming features, poems can help you teach spelling through pronunciation.

Again, find or create your own rhyming poems and omit the last word. You can provide the words in brackets if the words are hard to guess. Here's a fun excerpt from the poem, „Our Strange Lingo,” which in all its grandeur expresses the absurdities that torment English spellers and speakers,

**Teaching spelling is an admittedly arduous process that requires persistence and patience.**

Children are often befuddled by the absurdities of the English language and your sustained support and guidance will help them use pronunciation to learn or improve their spelling skills.

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