

Spelling Strategy

People get credit for creative writing, but not for creative spelling!

Spelling involves representing the word visually on paper. Because English words do not follow simple rules where the sound corresponds to the spelling, a key step is to represent the word visually internally. Good spellers report seeing a mental image of the word with a feeling of familiarity. They just feel that it looks right. The basic strategy of an expert speller involves the following steps :-

1. Think of something that feels familiar and pleasant. When you have that feeling, look at the word you want to spell for a few seconds. It may help to actually place the word up and to your left in the visual accessing area.
2. Next, look away and move your eyes up and to your left and remember what you can of the correct spelling. Notice the gaps (if any) and look back at the word, review the letters which fit in the gaps and repeat the process until you can picture the word in its entirety.
3. Look up at your mental image and then write down what you see. Check that it is correct. If not, go back to Step 1, take another look and get the image clear in your mind.
4. Look up at your mental image and spell the word backwards. This will really make sure the image is clear. No phonetic speller can possibly spell a word backwards.

To enhance the basic strategy.

- a) Think of some scene that is really memorable. What are the submodalities? Give the word you want to spell the same submodalities.
- b) Picture the word in your favourite colour.
- c) Put the word on a familiar background.
- d) Make parts that you find difficult stand out by submodality changes. Make them bigger, closer, or vary the colour.
- e) If the word is a long one, break it down into chunks of three or four letters. Make the letters small enough so that you can see the whole word easily, and big enough to read without strain.
- f) Trace the letters in the air as you see them. If you have a strong kinaesthetic preference, trace the letters on your arm to build your picture with added feeling.