



20 BEST TIPS

for teaching

Reading and Spelling

 ALL ABOUT *Reading*

 ALL ABOUT *Spelling*

An Important Message

from Marie Rippel



Hi, my name is Marie Rippel and I'm the author of *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling*. I'm so grateful you've taken some time out of your day to download these 20 tips for helping your child learn in a more efficient, effective way.

What you're about to read are just a few of the insights and methodologies that are infused into the *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling* programs. You'll see that my materials have a unique approach based on scientific research of learning behavior in children.

I hope this quick preview gives you a glimpse into the curriculum, along with some confidence that this can work for whomever it is you are teaching, whether that is your own child or a class full of children.

Thank you again for taking a quick glimpse into what works best for learning and development. I appreciate your dedication.

Marie Rippel

Marie Rippel
Founder, All About Learning Press, Inc.



1

Use an Orton-Gillingham Approach Combined with the Latest Research

The Orton-Gillingham approach helps take the mystery out of reading and spelling by focusing on *why* words are spelled the way they are. Although the English language contains just 26 letters, these letters combine to create 44 speech sounds, and there are over 250 ways to spell those sounds. That makes it very hard for some children to comprehend and learn. But the Orton-Gillingham approach condenses the spelling of these sounds into phonograms (letters or combinations of letters, such as sh or igh), which accelerates the process of learning to read and spell. Students are taught rules and generalizations that help make reading and spelling *much* easier.

Orton-Gillingham is a powerful approach to teaching reading and spelling because it is:

- **multisensory**
- **sequential**
- **incremental**
- **cumulative**
- **individualized**
- **phonics-based**
- **explicit**

The Orton-Gillingham approach makes reading and spelling easier for *all* children, including those with dyslexia and other learning challenges.



2 Realize that Words Are Made Up of Sounds

When we speak, we blend sounds together to make a word. For example, when we say the word *ham*, we quickly blend the sounds /h/–/ă/–/m/.

When we spell, we can take those individual sounds apart. That process is called *segmenting*.

A quick way to determine if your student can segment words is to ask, “What sounds do you hear in the word *pan*?”

If your student cannot easily identify the three individual sounds (/p/–/ă/–/n/), teach him how to segment words. This is an important skill that will make learning to spell much easier for your student. After the child learns to hear the individual sounds, he can represent each sound with the corresponding letter or letter combination.



3

Represent Sounds with Phonograms

A phonogram is a letter or letter combination that represents a sound.
For example:

- ck is a phonogram that says /k/ as in *clock*.
- s is a phonogram that says /s/ as in *sat* or /z/ as in *present*.
- oy is a phonogram that says /oi/ as in *oyster*.

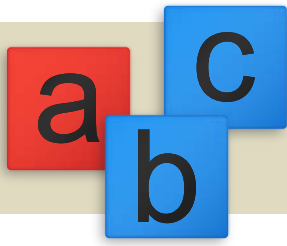
Each sound in a word can be represented by a phonogram.

Let's take the word *play* as an example.

If you pronounce the word slowly to hear the individual sounds, you will hear three different sounds: /p/-/l/-/ā/. For each sound, we write down a phonogram: p-l-ay.

When students know the phonograms and which sounds they represent, reading and spelling become much easier. If students know that the sound of /j/ can be spelled dge, reading the word *bridge* becomes simple. Spelling becomes easier, too. Students do not need to remember b-r-i-d-g-e as a string of letters; instead, each sound is simply represented by a phonogram: b-r-i-dge.

Memorizing words as strings of unrelated letters usually results in frustration. Children who are taught to read and spell using the phonograms, on the other hand, see it as a doable task. They can learn at an accelerated pace with less frustration.



4

Use Color-coded Letter Tiles to Accelerate Learning

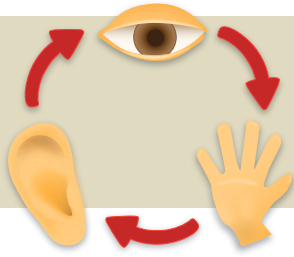
In *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling*, we use color-coded letter tiles to add a unique twist to the way children learn to read and spell.

Color coding makes it easy for students to see the role that each type of letter plays in a word. For example, consonants are blue, vowels are red, and phonograms representing the sound of /er/ (such as er, ir, and ur) are purple.

Letter tiles are important because they turn an *idea* or *concept* into something your student can see and manipulate. Letter tiles demonstrate new concepts and help the student practice reading and spelling new words.

In particular, spelling rules are a very abstract thing. They are hard to explain to a child, especially if that child has some attention issues or auditory processing difficulties. Most kids tend to zone out when you begin talking about how we use dge for the sound of /j/ only after a short vowel. It's too many words to process and too abstract to sink in.

But if we demonstrate this same concept using letter tiles, it is suddenly much easier to understand. To achieve long-term retention, the child must fully understand a concept.



5

Use Multisensory Activities

Using multiple senses at once stimulates a “full brain” experience and enhances the ability to retain information. When children can *see* something as it is explained, and *hear* about it, and then *do* it using hands-on activities, they are much more likely to retain the new information.

Visual activities can include demonstrating spelling rules with color-coded letter tiles. With the letter tiles, you can demonstrate rules and patterns and the ways they apply to various words. Word Banks are another helpful visual activity, consisting of lists of words that follow a specific spelling rule or pattern. When children are able to see words grouped together, they can more easily grasp the similarities between the words.

For **auditory activities**, discuss new spelling rules and concepts. Children can quickly learn new letter combinations, such as au, by *saying* the sound as they write it. Oral review is an important auditory activity as well.

Kinesthetic activities can include an array of hands-on activities such as manipulating letter tiles to test out spelling rules, tracing letters in the sand or on soft fabric, and writing or typing dictated phonograms.

Children learn more quickly when they are taught through their strongest mode of learning. Using all three learning modalities stimulates a synergistic effect so they learn even faster.



6

Respect Your Child's Funnel

Teaching another person isn't always as straightforward as simply relaying facts. In fact, the limitations of short-term memory prevent students from thoroughly processing information when too many tidbits are presented at one time.

That's why you need to understand your child's "mental learning funnel" when teaching. If you pour a lot of information into the top of the funnel, only a certain amount of the information will be absorbed. Your child's memory will either become overloaded and dump the new information entirely, or will only be able to store fragmented pieces. In many cases, these are not the most important pieces.

To avoid overloading your child's funnel, be very selective and carefully choose new information that will make the biggest difference for your child. Then introduce those new concepts *one at a time*.

The lessons in the *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling* programs focus on one main concept at a time. This gives your student the opportunity to thoroughly commit each new concept to memory, which ultimately sets the stage for permanent learning and long-lasting retention of knowledge.



7

Teach the Six Syllable Types

There are six basic syllable types in English:

- Closed
- Open
- Name Game
- Vowel Team
- Bossy R
- Pickle

We start off by teaching **Closed** syllables. A closed syllable ends in a consonant and the vowel has a short vowel sound, as in the word *bat*.

Next we teach **Open** syllables. An open syllable ends in a vowel and the vowel has a long vowel sound, as in the first syllable of *open*.

In **Name Game** syllables, Silent E makes the vowel long, as in *name*.

Vowel Team syllables consist of two letters that team up to make a new sound, as in *south*.

Bossy R syllables are characterized by Bossy R's effect on vowel sounds, as in *barber* and *bird*.

A **Pickle** syllable consists of a consonant followed by the letter **I** and then Silent E.

Help your student master the syllable types one at a time, and then continue on until all six syllable types have been taught.

With the knowledge gained through labeling syllable types, students can decode and spell many multisyllable words on their own.



8

Teach *All* of the Jobs of Silent E

You are probably familiar with the most common job of Silent E, which is to make the vowel before it long, as in the word *note*.

But that's just **Job #1**.

Did you know that Silent E actually has *six* other jobs as well?

They include:

Job #2: Silent E makes c and g soft, as in the words *dance* and *hinge*.

Job #3: Silent E keeps i, u, and y from being the last letter in a word, as in *pie*, *have*, and *clue*.

Job #4: Silent E shows that a word isn't plural, as in *rinse*.

Job #5: Silent E adds a vowel to Pickle syllables, such as *apple*.

Job #6: Silent E makes th say its second sound, /~~t~~h/, as in *bathe*.

Job #7: Silent E clarifies the meaning of words, such as *bye*.

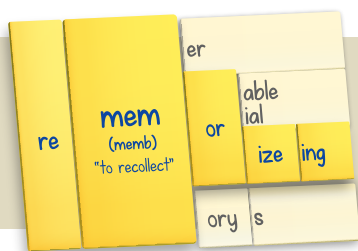
Understanding all the jobs of Silent E helps students see the patterns of English spelling. Instead of seeing English as random or full of exceptions, they can see that there are reliable patterns. This makes it easier to categorize words and remember how to spell them and read them.



9 Tame the Rule Breakers

Rule breakers are words that do not follow the spelling rules. Help students memorize these tricky words by following these practical ideas:

- Ask your student to identify the part of the word that doesn't follow the rules. Have your student draw attention to that portion of the word by circling it. In the *All About Spelling* program, we actually throw these words ("bad guys") into jail. This helps the concept stick in the student's mind.
- Use tactile methods to help imprint the tricky word in your student's mind. Have your student trace the word in the sand, on a piece of velvet fabric, in a pan of uncooked rice, in the snow, or on a plush carpet square. Or seal a zip-top bag filled with pudding, liquid soap, or shaving cream, and have your student write the word with his finger on the surface of the bag.
- Teach similar troublesome words together, such as *one* and *once*, and *would*, *could*, and *should*.
- For words in which a sound is muffled, encourage the student to "pronounce for spelling." For example, when we say the word *cabin*, it often sounds like "cabun." To pronounce for spelling, we would emphasize the last syllable: cab-IN.



10

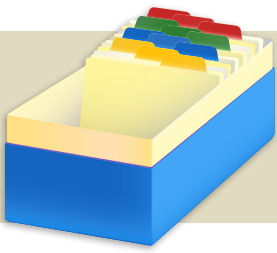
Teach Word Parts

Thousands of words can be made with prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Knowing these word parts enables students to spell harder words such as *neurologist*, *multitude*, and *chiropractic*. For example, recognizing the Greek root *graph* can help students correctly read and spell words like *geography*, *graphic*, and *graphite*.

It's also important to know how to add prefixes and suffixes to base words. There are some simple rules that will help your child correctly spell longer words with ease. *All About Spelling* presents these rules in a way that is easy to remember.

Morphology is the study of the way words are constructed. For example, the word *knowledge* comes from the base word *know*. Even though the first syllables of *know* and *knowledge* are pronounced differently, a student who understands morphology gets the connection between the two words. Students with a background in morphology can read more complex words and grasp the basic meanings of those words. Morphology-based activities are included throughout the *All About Reading* program.

An understanding of Latin roots and Greek word parts is beneficial for reading and spelling. Our programs offer extensive yet approachable study of these topics, giving students a firm foundation of knowledge.



11

Make Review a Priority

Consistent review is the key to getting concepts to “stick.”

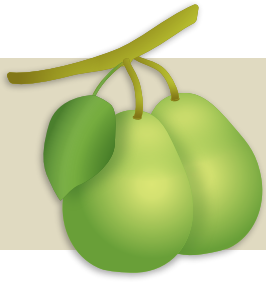
Just because you’ve taught a concept once or twice doesn’t mean that your student has actually mastered it. Mastery takes time and practice.

But achieving mastery doesn’t have to be boring, and a few minutes of daily review can go a long way.

Here are five review strategies that will help your student more effectively store information in his long-term memory:

1. Make sure your child understands the main point of the lesson.
2. Use multisensory methods during review time.
3. Review frequently after introducing a new concept.
4. Customize review for your child’s needs.
5. Never “retire” a concept. Keep it fresh in your child’s mind.

These review strategies are seamlessly woven into the *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling* programs. You don’t have to consciously remember to schedule review because review strategies are built right into the curriculum. You can sit back, relax, and enjoy watching your child make consistent progress!



12

Teach Proper Homophone Usage

Homophones are words that sound alike but are spelled differently.

Here's an example of homophones being used incorrectly: *Eye wood like ewe two meat my hoarse.*

This is an extreme example, of course, but students are faced with the choice between these sound-alike words every time they write. Do I use *their* or *there*? *Pair* or *pear*? *Stationary* or *stationery*?

Begin by teaching the word with the most common usage first and then introduce the other homophone later on. Remember to explain the meaning of the homophone when teaching your student how to spell it. Include homophone pairs in dictation exercises so that students can practice choosing the correct word for the sentence.

Try out our “Homophone Machine” to tickle your child’s funny bone:

www.homophonemachine.com



13

Avoid the Curse of Knowledge

Knowledge is valuable, but it can make it hard to teach a concept to someone else. For example, your culinary knowledge may help you bake a great pie, but that same knowledge may become a curse when you attempt to teach someone else to bake a great pie. Being good at something doesn't always make you good at teaching it.

Avoid letting the curse of knowledge interfere with your ability to teach your child. Here's how:

- **Empathize with your child.** Remember—learning is hard work!
- **Don't assume your child knows things automatically.** Always try to keep in mind the many things your child doesn't know, and don't assume your child knows something automatically.
- **Take things slow.** Don't try to introduce too much information in a short period of time. Respect your child's funnel.
- **Take an inventory of every skill that needs to be taught.** Address all areas of need so that there will be no gaps in your child's understanding of the subject.
- **Teach each new skill separately.** Newly learned skills can be combined with previously learned skills.



14

Break the Guessing Habit

When a student falls into the habit of “word guessing,” it can be frustrating for both the teacher and the student.

Sometimes students guess because they lack the foundation skills necessary to help them decode words. Other students fall into the habit of guessing because they have been previously taught using teaching methods that rely on sight words or have been encouraged to use context clues to interpret the text.

You can break the guessing habit by providing the tools to decode words without guessing. The *All About Reading* [blending procedure](#)* is a highly effective method for students who tend to guess at words. **The basic steps of the blending procedure are:**

- Lay out the letter tiles for the word your student is struggling with.
- Have your student touch each phonogram and say the sound.
- Have your student blend the word together (as shown on the PDF linked above).

With this method, your child will learn to look at each phonogram, starting at the beginning of the word and then progressing through each phonogram in order. It won't take long for your student to transfer this blending skill to printed words and then you won't even need the letter tiles. Practice this blending procedure for a few minutes a day, five days a week, and soon you'll be able to say *adios* to the word-guessing habit!

*http://www.allaboutlearningpress.com/content/downloads/AAR_Blending_Procedure.pdf



15

Keep Lessons Short but Frequent

Always remember this important tip: short, frequent lessons are much better than longer, sporadic lessons. Comprehension and long-term learning improve when done in brief daily bursts.

In a short lesson, your child's attention is less likely to wander, and you'll find that you can accomplish more when your student is actively engaged in the lesson. Keep the lessons upbeat and fast-paced and use teaching tools and activities that hold the child's interest.

The length of your daily spelling lesson will depend on the time you have available, the attention span of your child, and the amount of material you wish to cover. For most students, aim for spelling lessons that last 15 to 20 minutes per day, five times a week. You can adjust the length of the lesson up or down according to your individual child's attention span and specific needs.

For reading, opt for 20 minutes per day of instruction and an additional 20 minutes per day of read-aloud time. You may wish to split the instruction time and the read-aloud time into two sessions at different parts of the day to work with your child's attention span.

It is much better to do a shorter lesson every day than it is to do a longer session less frequently. By keeping the material in front of your child on a regular basis, you'll help reinforce new concepts and maximize the efficacy of review.



16

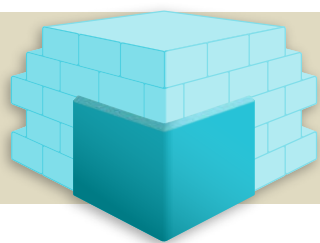
Use Mistakes as a Teaching Opportunity

When your student makes a spelling mistake or incorrectly decodes a word while reading, determine what caused the error. Is there a rule or concept that needs to be reviewed? Is the student pronouncing the word correctly? Are letters being transposed? If you find the cause of the error, you can use the mistake as a teaching opportunity.

Here are more ideas for handling errors:

- **Separate the task of writing from the task of editing.** Students have a lot to focus on at once—handwriting, word spacing, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling—so write on one day and edit the next day.
- **Determine if the mistake is caused by a phonetic error or a rule error.** Make note of any troublesome words and specifically review those in your next lesson.
- **Avoid making corrections too soon.** When your student misreads a word in a sentence, resist the temptation to correct the misread word immediately. Let him reach the end of the sentence before interrupting, giving him the chance to self-correct.

Keep corrections light and positive; remember—this is hard work for your child!



17

Build a Strong Foundation

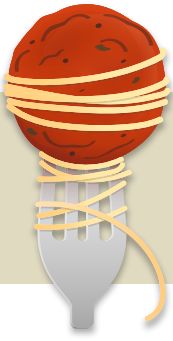
When children struggle with reading and spelling, the reason is often that they are missing some basic—yet very important—information.

Perhaps your student doesn't know how to hear the individual sounds in a word and subsequently leaves letters out when spelling. Or perhaps your student doesn't know the phonograms and misspells or misreads words as a result. Maybe your student struggles to identify syllables or remember the reasons for adding Silent E. Without these basic skills, reading and spelling can be very difficult.

The solution is simple: help your student build a strong foundation. Teach your student clearly and effectively by adding just one new skill at a time. This brings clarity rather than confusion.

When working with an older child, start at the beginning, briefly review the concepts he already knows, and concentrate on the concepts he *doesn't* know. Quickly build a strong foundation and then move on. There is no sense in starting at Level 4 when your student needs to learn important information from Level 1. Instead of setting up your student for defeat, provide a solid foundation. Your student's reading and spelling skills will be much stronger, and you'll both be much less frustrated.

All About Reading and *All About Spelling* are designed to be relevant for all ages, whether your students are 6 or 66. The programs can be used by children and adults to build a strong foundation for literacy.



18 Teach Reading and Spelling Separately

Reading and spelling just go together—like spaghetti and meatballs—right? Not quite!

On the surface, it seems to make sense to teach reading and spelling together. After all, they seem so similar. But in reality, they require different teaching techniques and a different schedule. **Reading is easier than spelling, and teaching the two subjects separately is much more effective for most students.**

Need proof? Read the words in the box below. Easy, right?

mayonnaise

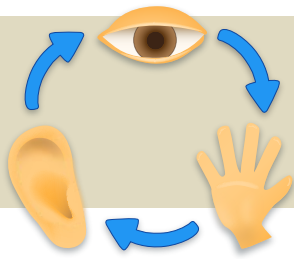
mischievous

somersault

cantaloupe

Now close your eyes and try to spell them. Not so easy. That's because there are more than 250 ways to spell the 45 sounds in the English language, and all those combinations can make words that are easy to read difficult to spell. For example, with a basic understanding of phonics, a child should be able to decode the word *special* without much trouble. But spelling the word *special* may present a young student with a greater challenge.

Teaching a student to read and spell the same words in the same time frame almost guarantees that one of these critically important subjects will fall by the wayside. Instead, teach reading and spelling separately, allowing your student to progress as quickly as possible in reading, while taking as much time as needed in order to become an effective speller.



19

Recognize Learning Differences

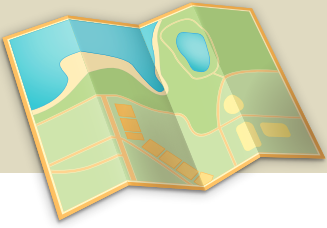
If we all learned the same way, it would make teaching very easy, but we don't. Not only do we all have different learning styles—auditory, visual, kinesthetic, or a combination of all three—that require varying instructional approaches in order to achieve success, but we also achieve mastery at different rates.

Learning issues such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and auditory processing disorder can have an impact on the way each student learns best.

That's why mastery-based, multisensory instruction is far superior to grade-level-based instruction. Instead of instruction that follows a predetermined pace and placement that is based on age, mastery-based instruction is based on current ability and then progresses—without gaps—at the pace dictated by the student's mastery of each step.

- **Place your child according to his or her ability.**
- **Teach your child at his or her pace.**
- **Use consistent review to achieve permanent learning.**
- **Make sure there are no gaps.**
- **Progress to the next level after mastery is achieved.**

When you teach a child at her instructional level and in a multisensory format that suits varying learning styles, she can blossom! And you can relish the fact that you are providing the foundation for long-term learning.



20

Use a Roadmap

It's much easier getting to a specific destination when you have a detailed map in front of you. It's the same way when you teach reading and spelling. If you want your students to reach their destination, you'll need some well-planned lessons to guide you.

Lesson plans help you keep your focus on your students' progress instead of on trying to figure out what to teach next.

Teaching without a lesson plan means that concepts may be presented in a disjointed manner, which will only confuse your student. When lessons are planned ahead of time, however, you'll be confident in knowing that you're not missing any important components or forgetting to cover a crucial concept. You'll be able to keep the lesson moving and keep your students engaged.

Keep in mind the following guidelines when planning your reading and spelling lessons or when evaluating prepared lesson plans:

- Lessons should be sequential, with each lesson building upon the previous one and laying the foundation for the next.
- Lessons should include daily review and use multisensory techniques.
- Lesson activities should be motivating and customizable for each child.



Where to Go from Here

By reading these 20 tips, you've gained a new understanding of the best ways to teach reading and spelling.

Although some of the principles in this report may sound complex, *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling* break them down into easy, bite-sized lessons that are both easy for you to teach and easy for your student to learn.

While I originally developed these programs for my own child who had a hard time learning to read and spell, they've gone on to help over 150,000 children master reading and spelling—even those who were previously diagnosed with a learning disorder.

[You can find some of their stories here.](#)*

I encourage you to go to my website to learn more about *All About Reading* and *All About Spelling*. I also have many educational articles, videos, free apps, and free downloads that you may find helpful.

If you have any questions at all, please call us at 715-477-1976, or email us at support@allaboutlearningpress.com. My staff and I are extremely passionate about helping children read and spell, and we would love to help you.

Marie Rippel

Marie Rippel
Founder, All About Learning Press, Inc.

*<http://www.allaboutlearningpress.com/testimonials>