Spelling List Template

This template guides educators through the process of creating formative spelling assessments for their students. This resource includes four main components of the spelling list creation process with example words illustrating each component. This is an example of a first-grade spelling list with fifteen words, but it can be adjusted for different grade levels or list lengths.

For more on this technique for developing spelling lists, read the Iowa Reading Research Center blog post "Where Have All the Spelling Lists Gone?" by Graduate Assistant Emily Ball.

Using the Spelling List Template

- In the first section, take note of all of the spelling skills that students have already mastered in the scope and sequence (e.g., the 26 core graphemes, digraphs, the FLSZ rule, CVC syllables, suffix -*s*, and suffix -*es*).
- In the second section, write five words that provide students an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of previously learned spelling rules. For example, if students have learned the 26 core graphemes, digraphs, and CVC syllables, this section may include words like "top," "chap," "shut," "sit," and "chip."
- In the third section, write five words that require students to apply a current instructional skill. For example, if you are teaching the long /a/ vowel sound spelled as "ai" or "ay," your words might include "stay," "snail," "mail," "day," and "tray."
- In the final section, write five nonsense words—"made-up" words that follow standard English spelling patterns—that require students to apply a current instructional skill. For example, if you are teaching the long /a/ vowel sound spelled as "ai" or "ay," your nonsense words might include "flaip," "snay," "haid," "zlay," and "snaip."

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Previously Taught Spelling Skills

Real Words That Require Application of Previously Taught Skill

Real Words That Require Application of Target Skill

Nonsense Words That Require Application of Target Skill