



Spelling,  
punctuation and  
grammar (SPaG) -

A guide for  
parents

Year 4

## **Introduction**

In the 2014 National curriculum for English, there is a very significant emphasis placed on SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar).

This booklet outlines the expectations for Year 4, including:

- The statutory word list (100 words) for Years 3 and 4
- The spelling rules/patterns covered in Years 3 and 4
- The grammar foci for Year 4
- The technical vocabulary pupils need to understand in Year 4

We appreciate that there is a lot of information in this booklet, and that it may be a lot to digest! Our rationale is to keep you informed, in order for us to work together to support children in their learning. Therefore, practical ideas for how you can help are included. If you have any queries, a wealth of information can be found online, and we are always here should you wish to ask us for more information.

## **Statutory word list**

The word lists for Years 3 and 4 are statutory. The list is a mixture of words children frequently use in their writing and those which they often misspell. Parents can support their children by ensuring that they are familiar with these words, by applying them, using the range of games and activities listed in this booklet. They will also be a focus for homework and tests throughout the year.

## **Spelling rules/patterns**

As a school, we have decided to split the Year 3/4 spelling programme to make it more manageable. Please note that the sections that are highlighted in yellow are spelling patterns/rules that are to be covered in Year 4.

## **How is spelling taught in school?**

Your child will have a daily, short, focused session of spelling and grammar. During this session, new spelling patterns/rules and grammar content will be introduced and then reinforced through games and activities that encourage enquiry and pattern finding.

## **Parent/Carer support**

Parents can support their children by having a good understanding of the expectations and maintaining a focus on spelling and grammar at home. Once a fortnight your child will receive a spelling sheet with a list of spellings to practise and learn. These will consist of words from the Year 4 spelling or grammar programme. Your child will have a spelling test every other week and we will expect to see these words increasingly spelt correctly in their writing.

## Statutory word list

(Yellow highlighted words to be covered in Year 4)

|                |              |                |                 |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| accident(ally) | disappear    | interest       | pressure        |
| actual(ly)     | early        | island         | probably        |
| address        | earth        | knowledge      | promise         |
| answer         | eight/eighth | learn          | purpose         |
| appear         | enough       | length         | quarter         |
| arrive         | exercise     | library        | question        |
| believe        | experience   | material       | recent          |
| bicycle        | experiment   | medicine       | regular         |
| breath         | extreme      | mention        | reign           |
| breathe        | famous       | minute         | remember        |
| build          | favourite    | natural        | sentence        |
| busy/business  | February     | naughty        | separate        |
| calendar       | forward(s)   | notice         | special         |
| caught         | fruit        | occasion(ally) | straight        |
| centre         | grammar      | often          | strange         |
| century        | group        | opposite       | strength        |
| certain        | guard        | ordinary       | suppose         |
| circle         | guide        | particular     | surprise        |
| complete       | heard        | peculiar       | therefore       |
| consider       | heart        | perhaps        | though/although |
| continue       | height       | popular        | thought         |
| decide         | history      | position       | through         |
| describe       | imagine      | possess(ion)   | various         |
| different      | increase     | possible       | weight          |
| difficult      | important    | potatoes       | woman/women     |

## Spelling rules/patterns

(Yellow highlighted words to be covered in Year 4)

| Spelling Pattern  | Rules and Guidance  | Example Words  |
|---|---|--|
| Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words of more than one syllable | If the last syllable of a word is stressed and ends with one consonant letter which has just one vowel letter before it, the final consonant letter is doubled before any ending beginning with a vowel letter is added. The consonant letter is not doubled if the syllable is unstressed.   | forgetting, forgotten, beginning, beginner, prefer, preferred<br><br>gardening, gardener, limiting, limited, limitation  |
| The 'i' (hit) sound spelt y elsewhere than at the end of                        | These words should be learnt as needed.   | myth, gym, Egypt, pyramid, mystery   |
| The 'u' (cup) sound spelt ou  | These words should be learnt as needed.   | young, touch, double, trouble, country   |
| More prefixes   | <p>Most prefixes are added to the beginning of root words without any changes in spelling, but see in- below.</p> <p>Like <b>un-</b>, the prefixes <b>dis-</b> and <b>mis-</b> have negative meanings.</p> <p>The prefix <b>in-</b> can mean both 'not' and 'in/'into'. In the words given here it means 'not'.<br/>Before a root word starting with l, <b>in-</b> becomes <b>il</b>.<br/>Before a root word starting with m or p, <b>in-</b> becomes <b>im-</b>.<br/>Before a root word starting with r, <b>in-</b> becomes <b>ir-</b>.</p> <p><b>re-</b> means 'again' or 'back'.<br/><b>sub-</b> means 'under'.<br/><b>inter-</b> means 'between' or 'among'.<br/><b>super-</b> means 'above'.<br/><b>anti-</b> means 'against'.<br/><b>auto-</b> means 'self' or 'own'.</p> | <p><b>dis-</b>: disappoint, disagree, disobey<br/><b>mis-</b>: misbehave, mislead, misspell (mis + spell)</p> <p><b>in-</b>: inactive, incorrect<br/>illegal, illegible<br/>immature, immortal, impossible, impatient, imperfect<br/>irregular, irrelevant, irresponsible</p> <p><b>re-</b>: redo, refresh, return, reappear, redecorate<br/><b>sub-</b>: subdivide, subheading, submarine, submerge<br/><b>inter-</b>: interact, intercity, international, interrelated (inter + related)<br/><b>super-</b>: supermarket, superman, superstar<br/><b>anti-</b>: antiseptic, anti-clockwise, antisocial<br/><b>auto-</b>: autobiography, autograph</p> |

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| <p>The suffix <b>-ation</b></p>   | <p>The suffix <b>-ation</b> is added to verbs to form nouns. The rules already learnt still apply.</p>   | <p>information, adoration, sensation, preparation, admiration</p>  |
| <p>The suffix <b>-ly</b></p>  | <p>The suffix <b>-ly</b> is added to an adjective to form an adverb. The rules already learnt still apply.</p> <p>The suffix <b>-ly</b> starts with a consonant letter, so it is added straight on to most root words.</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <p>(1) If the root word ends in <b>-y</b> with a consonant letter before it, the <b>y</b> is changed to <b>i</b>, but only if the root word has more than one syllable.</p> <p>(2) If the root word ends with <b>-le</b>, the <b>-le</b> is changed to <b>-ly</b>.</p> <p>(3) If the root word ends with <b>-ic</b>, <b>-ally</b> is added rather than just <b>-ly</b>, except in the word <b>publicly</b>.</p> <p>(4) The words <b>truly, duly, wholly</b>.</p> | <p>sadly, completely, usually (usual + ly), finally (final + ly), comically (comical + ly)</p> <p>happily, angrily</p> <p>gently, simply, humbly, nobly</p> <p>basically, frantically, dramatically</p>  |
| <p>Words with endings sounding like 'shure' 'chure'</p>                         | <p>The ending sounding like 'shure' is always spelt <b>-sure</b>.</p> <p>The ending sounding like 'chure' is often spelt <b>-ture</b>, but check that the word is not a root word ending in <b>(t)ch</b> with an <b>er</b> ending - e.g. <i>teacher, catcher, richer, stretcher</i>.</p>   | <p>measure, treasure, pleasure, enclosure</p> <p>creature, furniture, picture, nature, adventure</p>   |
| <p>Endings <b>-sion</b></p>   |  | <p>division, invasion, confusion, decision, collision, television</p>  |
| <p>Endings which sound like 'shun' spelt <b>-tion, -sion, -ssion, -cian</b></p> | <p>Strictly speaking, the suffixes are <b>-ion</b> and <b>-ian</b>. Clues about whether to put <b>t, s, ss</b> or <b>c</b> before these suffixes often come from the last letter or letters of the root word.</p> <p><b>-tion</b> is the most common spelling. It is used if the root word ends in <b>t</b> or <b>te</b>.</p> <p><b>-ssion</b> is used if the root word ends in <b>ss</b> or <b>-mit</b>.</p> <p><b>-sion</b> is used if the root word ends in <b>d</b> or <b>se</b>.</p> <p><b>Exceptions:</b> <i>attend - attention, intend - intention</i>.</p> <p><b>-cian</b> is used if the root word ends in <b>c</b> or <b>cs</b>.</p>   | <p>invention, injection, action, hesitation, completion</p> <p>expression, discussion, confession, permission, admission</p> <p>expansion, extension, comprehension, tension</p> <p>musician, electrician, magician, politician, mathematician</p> |

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| <p>The suffix -ous</p>  | <p>Sometimes the root word is obvious and the usual rules apply for adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters.</p> <p>Sometimes there is no obvious root word.</p> <p>-our is changed to -or before -ous is added.</p> <p>A final 'e' of the root word must be kept if the /dʒ/ sound of 'g' is to be kept.</p> <p>If there is an /i:/ sound before the -ous ending, it is usually spelt as i, but a few words have e.</p> | <p>poisonous, dangerous,<br/>mountainous, famous,<br/>various</p> <p>tremendous, enormous,<br/>jealous humorous,<br/>glamorous, vigorous<br/>courageous, outrageous</p> <p>serious, obvious, curious<br/>hideous, spontaneous,<br/>courteous</p> |
| <p>Words with the 'k' sound spelt ch (Greek in origin)</p>  |   | <p>scheme, chorus, chemist, echo, character</p>  |
| <p>Words with the 'sh' sound spelt ch (mostly French in origin)</p>                               |   | <p>chef, chalet, machine, brochure</p>   |
| <p>Words ending with the 'g' sound spelt -gue and the 'k' sound spelt -que (French in origin)</p> |   | <p>league, tongue, antique, unique</p>   |
| <p>Words with the 's' sound spelt sc (Latin in origin)</p>  | <p>In the Latin words from which these words come, the Romans probably pronounced the c and the k as two sounds rather than one - /s/ /k/.</p>  | <p>science, scene, discipline, fascinate, crescent</p>   |

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| Words with the 'ay' sound spelt ei, eigh, or ey |  | vein, weigh, eight, neighbour, they, obey  |
| Possessive apostrophe with plural words         | The apostrophe is placed after the plural form of the word; -s is not added if the plural already ends in -s, but is added if the plural does not end in -s (i.e. is an irregular plural - e.g. children's). | girls', boys', babies', children's, men's, mice's<br>(Note: singular proper nouns ending in an s use the 's suffix e.g. Cyprus's population)   |
| Homophones and near-homophones                  |  | accept/except, affect/effect, ball/bawl, berry/bury, brake/break, fair/fare, grate/great, groan/grown, here/hear, heel/heal/he'll, knot/not, mail/male, main/mane, meat/meet, medal/meddle, missed/mist, peace/piece, plain/plane, rain/rein/reign, scene/seen, weather/whether, whose/who's |

## Spelling Activities

Try some of these activities to help your child learn their spellings.

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| <p><b><u>Scrambled words</u></b></p> <p>Fold a piece of paper into 3 columns. Write the words in the first column, then write each word again in the second column with the letters all jumbled up. Fold the correct answers behind the page and see if a partner can unscramble the words correctly.</p> | <p><b><u>Air and back spelling</u></b></p> <p>Write the word in the air, really big, then really small, saying each letter as it is written. If the word can be sounded out, use the phonemes, if not, use the letter names. Try writing words on each other's backs and see if your partner can say what word you're writing.</p> | <p><b><u>Acrostic</u></b></p> <p>Use your target word to make an acrostic poem with each line beginning with the next letter to spell out the word- it's easier to remember if the poem makes sense! e.g. what:</p> <p><b>W</b>hile Sam was walking down the path,<br/> <b>H</b>e saw a cat that stared, then laughed.<br/> <b>A</b> cat that laughs is quite a feature,<br/> <b>T</b>ell me, have you seen such a creature?</p> | <p><b><u>Write a story</u></b></p> <p>Write a paragraph/ story containing as many words as possible that follow the spelling rule/pattern you are focusing on.</p> |
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| <p><b><u>Letter Writing</u></b></p> <p>Write a letter to a friend, family member, teacher or super hero. Underline the spelling rules that you have focused on in your letter.</p>  | <p><b><u>Colourful words</u></b></p> <p>Use two different colours to write your words- one for vowels another for consonants then write them all in one colour.</p>  | <p><b><u>Rainbow writing</u></b></p> <p>Write your words over and over, each time on top of the last but in a different colour- create a rainbow word.</p>   | <p><b><u>Graffiti wall</u></b></p> <p>Create a graffiti wall, inspired by graffiti artists, draw your target words again and again across a page to create the artwork.</p> |
| <p><b><u>Ambidextrous</u></b></p> <p>Swap your pen into the hand that you don't usually write with. Now try writing your spellings with that hand.</p>  | <p><b><u>Words within words</u></b></p> <p>Write down target words and then see how many other words you can make from the same letters.</p>   | <p><b><u>Words without vowels</u></b></p> <p>Write spelling words in a list, replace all the vowels with a line. Can your partner fill in the gaps? (Also could be done without consonants instead, which is easiest?)</p> | <p><b><u>Make Some Music</u></b></p> <p>Write a song or rap that includes your words. Share with a friend or family member.</p>   |
| <p><b><u>Pyramid power</u></b></p> <p>Sort a given group of words into a list from easiest to hardest. Write the easiest once in the middle at the top of the page, the next easiest twice underneath, third easiest three times below that etc so forming a pyramid.</p> | <p><b><u>Hangman</u></b></p> <p>Write dashes for the letters of the word. Your partner needs to say letters and guess the word before you complete the stick man.</p>  | <p><b><u>ABC Order</u></b></p> <p>Write a list of your spellings in alphabetical order. For even greater challenge, can you write them in reverse alphabetical order first?</p>  | <p><b><u>Squiggly / Bubble spelling words</u></b></p> <p>Write a list of your spelling words twice - once in your regular writing, then in squiggly or bubble letters.</p>  |
| <p><b><u>Consonant circle</u></b></p> <p>Write a list of examples of your spellings. Circle all the consonants.</p>   | <p><b><u>Sign your words</u></b></p> <p>Use sign language finger spelling to sign your words.<br/> <a href="http://www.unitykid.com/signlanguage.html">http://www.unitykid.com/signlanguage.html</a><br/><br/> <a href="http://www.british-sign.co.uk/bsl-british-sign-language/fingerspelling-alphabet-charts/">http://www.british-sign.co.uk/bsl-british-sign-language/fingerspelling-alphabet-charts/</a></p> | <p><b><u>UPPER and lower</u></b></p> <p>Write a list of your spelling words, firstly in UPPERCASE and then in lowercase.</p>   | <p><b><u>Across and down</u></b></p> <p>Write all of your spelling words across and then down starting with the first letter.</p> <p>W h e n<br/>h<br/>e<br/>n</p>          |



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| <p><b><u>Back Writing</u></b></p> <p>Use your finger to spell your words, one letter at a time on your partners back. Partner has to guess the word.</p>  | <p><b><u>Find your words</u></b></p> <p>Using your reading book, list as many spellings that follow the rule as possible.</p>  | <p><b><u>Choo- Choo words</u></b></p> <p>Write the entire list end- to-end as one long word (like a train). Use a different coloured crayon for each word.<br/>E.g.<br/>hopmopestopdrop</p> | <p><b><u>Connect the dots</u></b></p> <p>Write your spelling words in dots. Then connect the dots by tracing over them with a coloured pencil. Can you do this with joined up writing?</p> |
| <p><b><u>Rhyming words</u></b></p> <p>Write a list of your spelling words. Next to each word, write a rhyming word. If necessary, your rhyming word can be a nonsense word (as long as it follows the same spelling pattern).</p> | <p><b><u>Adding my words</u></b></p> <p>Each letter has a value. Consonants are worth 10 Vowels are worth 5<br/>Find as many spellings that follow the rule / pattern and add up your score.</p> | <p><b><u>Spelling poem</u></b></p> <p>Write a poem using several of your spelling words. Underline the words that you use. You can write any style of poem.</p>                             | <p><b><u>X words</u></b></p> <p>Find two target words with the same letter in and then write them so they criss cross.</p>   |

## Year 4 Grammar Content

| <b>Year 4: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Word</b>   | <p>The grammatical difference between plural and possessive -s</p> <p>Standard English forms for verb inflections instead of local spoken forms [for example, we were instead of we was, or I did instead of I done]</p>  |
| <b>Sentence</b>   | <p>Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases (e.g. the teacher expanded to: the strict maths teacher with curly hair)</p> <p>Fronted adverbials [for example, Later that day, I heard the bad news.]</p>   |
| <b>Text</b>   | <p>Use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme.</p> <p>Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun within and across sentences to aid cohesion and avoid repetition.</p>   |
| <b>Punctuation</b>  | <p>Use of inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech [for example, a comma after the reporting clause; end punctuation within inverted commas: The conductor shouted, "Sit down!"]</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark plural possession [for example, the girl's name, the girls' names]</p> <p>Use of commas after fronted adverbials</p> |

## Year 4 Grammar Terminology

|                           |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Determiner</p>         | <p>A determiner is a word that introduces a noun. It goes before any modifiers (e.g. adjectives or other nouns).</p> <p>Some examples of determiners are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- articles (the, a or an)</li> <li>- demonstratives (e.g. this, those)</li> <li>- possessives (e.g. my, your)</li> </ul> <p>quantifiers (e.g. some, every).</p> | <p><u>the</u> home team <u>a</u> good team <u>that</u> pupil <u>Julia's</u> parents <u>some</u> big boys</p>   |
| <p>Pronoun</p>            | <p>A pronoun (I, me, he, she, herself, you, it, that, they, each, few, many, who, whoever, whose, someone, everybody, etc.) is a word that takes the place of a noun.</p> <p>In the sentence 'Joe saw Jill, and he waved at her', the pronouns 'he' and 'her' take the place of Joe and Jill, respectively.</p>  | <p><u>She</u> was feeling confident. <u>His</u> appetite had grown.<br/>She wasn't sure what to do with <u>herself</u>.</p> <p><u>Whoever</u> ran through the tape first, won.</p> |
| <p>Possessive pronoun</p> | <p>A possessive noun is a noun indicating ownership (or possession).</p>   | <p>a <u>dog's</u> bone a<br/><u>man's</u> jacket a<br/><u>lion's</u> mane</p>  |
| <p>Adverbial</p>          | <p>An adverbial is a word or phrase that is used, like an adverb, to modify a verb or clause.</p> <p>Adverbs can be used as adverbials, but many other types of words and phrases can be used this way, including preposition phrases and subordinate clauses.</p>   | <p>The bus leaves <u>in five minutes</u>. She worked <u>until she had finished</u>.</p>  |

## **Websites for Grammar**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english/spelling\\_grammar/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/english/spelling_grammar/)

<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/Flash.aspx?e=spelling-grammar01>

<http://www.funbrain.com/grammar/>

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar>

<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/interactive/literacy2.htm>

<http://www.crickweb.co.uk/ks2literacy.html>

<http://www.grammar-monster.com>

