

## Word Feature Spelling List

by Dr. Neva M. Viise

The Word Feature Spelling (WFS) list is a spelling list divided into four achievement levels. The words on each level are divided into groups of five, each subgroup investigating the student's treatment of a specific word feature such as beginning sound, consonant blend, long vowel pattern, etc. An assessment of students' spellings of the words on this list will indicate the features which have already been mastered and will pinpoint the level at which instruction must begin.

We recognize that to be useful, the assessment must take a minimum of student time, must be able to be quickly and easily scored, and must give precise and useful information. The Word Feature Spelling assessment has been designed to fulfill these requirements.

1. It can be quickly administered: Most students can be assessed by writing a maximum of 50 words.
2. It can be quickly and easily scored: The lists are divided into subgroups of five words and each subgroup is scored for only one feature. Once a teacher is familiar with the word lists, scoring of each test takes approximately one minute.
3. It gives precise, useful information that will:
  - a. identify for each student:
    - i. the spelling features which are already mastered.
    - ii. the features which are at the students instructional level and which belong in his/her word study plans
    - iii. the features which are currently beyond the student's ability to use correctly and should be left for later instruction
  - b. enable you to create a binary 0/1 chart to easily identify students with similar instructional needs for appropriate small group instruction.

### Directions for use as a graded spelling assessment

The word feature spelling list was designed as ungraded list to be used to identify overall spelling development in students of all ages. One real strength of this list is that it is not tied to grade levels and so avoids the pass/fail value judgment of most spelling lists. For children achieving below grade level this assessment makes it possible to identify the individual student's spelling progress and anticipated instructional needs without regard to the grade in which they are enrolled.

However, to aid teachers in determining what features to include in an initial feature assessment we conducted a pilot program that determined the features most representative of the spelling accomplishments at each grade level. This provides a way of tracking beginning-to-end-of-year progress, and year to year increases that can be used by teachers who need this information.

The 50 words (ten features) that most closely encompass the spelling achievements at each grade level have been identified as:

Emergent/letter name	List I	Primer Level	A-F
		First Grade	A-J
Within word pattern	List II	Second Grade	D-M
		Third Grade	H-Q
		Fourth Grade	K-T
Syllables and affixes	List III	Fifth Grade	N-W
		Sixth Grade	R-DD
Derivational relations	List IV	Seventh +	V-HH

Every attempt should be made to score as many students as possible at their own grade level. However, students scoring below 50% or above 90% need to be assessed with additional words from the list below or above.

### **Directions for use as a spelling stage list**

You may choose to assess a group by dictating an entire numbered list rather than limiting it to grade levels. In this case, it is wise to begin with the lowest list on which you anticipate finding problems. If a speller fails on more than two of the last four features on any numbered list, do not proceed to the next list since you have found the level at which the student needs instruction.

List correlations with spelling stages.

List I (A-F) covers the spelling features considered and mastered during the *emergent* and *letter name* stages of learning.

List II (D-M) examines the spelling features commonly associated with the *within word pattern* stage of spelling development including the treatment of complex vowels, /r/controlled vowels, and simple marked endings.

List III (N-W) features correlate with the *syllables and affixes* stage of spelling development but also include a beginning look at word meanings that provide a clue to spellings in unaccented syllables and related words.

List IV (AA-HH) addresses features at the *derivational relations* stage of spelling that often cause difficulty for spellers into their adult years. Attention to related words and the etymology of words such as a study of Greek and Latin forms and spellings unique to French, German, etc. become very important. Spelling proficiency at this level is very dependent on wide and constant reading since many spellings must be associated with memory of visual patterns.

### Procedure

1. Choose the spelling list or features most appreciate for your students.
2. Give the spelling assessment by calling each word, incorporating it into a sentence, and then repeating the isolated word. This list is designed to be used for older challenged readers as well as regularly achieved children and the freedom of instructors to create their own sentences adapted to their students' particular knowledge and interests has been judged to be more important to reliability than the reliability gained through using uniform sentences.
3. Score the tests by counting the number of examples correct on each subgroup of five. Only the feature being considered is scored. A score of four or five (80%-100% correct) indicates a pass or mastery score; a score of three or less indicates a failure or unaccomplished feature.
4. Compute the total number correct for each speller. Arrange the class scores from lowest to highest and record them on the class assessment form. To maintain the most precise information, record the exact scores, giving each feature a score of 0-5. Now take a second class assessment form. Record the class scores again, giving each score of four or five a 1 (mastery) and each score a zero through three a 0 (failure to achieve). This will, at a glance, give you a picture of the spelling level of your class and will identify the areas where each member begins to have serious spelling confusions. It will also aid in combining students with similar problems for appropriate instruction.

Word Feature Spelling List Form A

**List I**

A. Single beginning consonant

1. pit
2. sad
3. net
4. dig
5. man

A. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words correct with the beginning consonant.

B. Single end consonant

1. fat
2. top
3. car
4. bed
5. him

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with the correct end consonant.

C. Vowel inclusion

C. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words in all lists (20 words) that include a vowel (any vowel). \*See scoring key below.

D. Beginning two-consonant cluster

1. drop
2. chin
3. step
4. glad
5. shut

D. \_\_\_\_\_

E. Correct short vowel

E. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words in all lists with a correct short vowel in correct vowel position. (Added unnecessary vowels are not scored as incorrect if correct vowel is in first vowel position. Ex: "piet" (pit) and "sade" (sad) = correct; "peit" and "sead" = incorrect.)\*

F. End two-consonant cluster

1. fish
2. dump
3. luck
4. rich
5. last

F. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with the correct end two-consonant cluster.

\*Scoring key for features C and E

1-3 = 0

4-7 = 1

8-11 = 2

2-15 = 3

16-19 = 4

20 = 5

## List II

### D. Beginning two-consonant cluster

1. drop
2. chin
3. step
4. glad
5. shut

D. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with the correct beginning two-consonant cluster.

### E. Correct short vowel

E. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words in lists D and F with a correct short vowel in correct vowel position. Divide by 2 for score (10=5, 8-9=4, etc.). Added unnecessary vowels are not scored as incorrect if correct vowel is in the first vowel position. Ex: "chien" = correct "chein" = error.

### F. End two-consonant cluster

1. fish
2. dump
3. luck
4. rich
5. last

F. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with the correct end two-consonant cluster.

### G. Correct long vowel plus a vowel marker

1. game
2. load
3. slide
4. free
5. fight

G. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words that contain a correct initial vowel and a marker (marker = the second vowel such as the "e" in "slide," the "a" in "load." Also include the "gh" in "fight"). In other words, count as correct, words spelled with the pattern of a rhyming word. ("lode" for "load" as in "rode).

### H. Correct short vowel, "r" controlled

1. clerk
2. girl
3. cord
4. barn
5. first

H. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of correct short vowels in these "r" controlled words. The letter on each side of vowel must also be correct. (girle=correct; gril=error).

### I. Marked ending

1. sharpened
2. cracked

3. shorter
4. classes
5. parted

I. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words where the end morpheme (“ed” “en” “es”) is correctly represented.

J. Correct long vowel plus correct marker (G LIST)

1. game
2. load
3. slide
4. free
5. fight

J. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words in list G (recheck list) that contain the correct initial vowel and the correct marker in the correct position. (Correctly spelled words).

K. Three consonant cluster

1. ranch
2. scam
3. splatter
4. threw
5. catch

K. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of 3-consonant units spelled correctly.

L. Correct long vowel pattern, “r” controlled

1. cure
2. fear
3. wire
4. shore
5. chair

L. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of correctly spelled words.

M. Vowel digraph/diphthong

1. voice
2. mouth
3. chew
4. crawl
5. shook

M. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of digraphs/diphthongs correctly represented.

### List III

#### N. Representation of syllable units

1. indication (4)
2. interference (4)
3. navigator (4)
4. administrator (5)
5. repetitios (4)

N. \_\_\_\_\_

Count as correct each word where the correct number of syllables have been represented. A vowel must be included in each syllable but the vowel does not have to be correct. (“interference” = correct; “interfrence” = incorrect; “repititious” = correct, etc.).

#### O. Phonetically matched endings, “ar” “er” “or” in accented syllable

1. butcher
2. actor
3. collar
4. harbor
5. coroner

O. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of correct “er” “ar” or “or” endings.

#### P. Syllable juncture

1. botttom
2. pilot
3. commmmand
4. messssage
5. basic

P. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words where the letters across the syllable juncture are correctly represented (“tt” in bottom; “il” in pilot, etc.) No doubling may occur in “pilot” or “basic.”

#### Q. Correct “ed” and “ing” endings

1. dropped
2. mailed
3. traded
4. dressed
5. planning

Q. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with correct endings (doubling and dropped “e” handled correctly). The vowel in the root word must be correct.

#### R. Suffix

1. jealous
2. caution
3. basement
4. structure
5. comprehensive

R. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the words where the underlined suffix is correct.

S. Vowel in unaccented syllable; 2-3 syllable word

1. private
2. weapon
3. admiral
4. circus
5. policy

S. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the words where the underlined suffix is correct.

T. Prefix (unchanged)

1. unnecessary
2. address
3. companion
4. arise
5. interrupt

T. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with the underlined letters (unchanged prefixes) correctly represented.

U. Prefix (assimilated)

1. immature
2. appear
3. impress
4. illegal
5. assign

U. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with the underlined letters (assimilated prefixes) correctly represented.

V. Vowel in unaccented syllable; 4-5 syllable word

**Recheck the words in List N.** Count the words with the underlined letters correctly represented.

1. indication
2. interference
3. navigator
4. administrator
5. repetitious

V. \_\_\_\_\_

W. Root constancy

1. invitation
2. dividend
3. imposition
4. competition
5. majority

W. \_\_\_\_\_

Count words where the underlined letters are correct.

X. Contractions\*

1. isn't
2. ours
3. what's
4. we're

5. its (The dog hurt its paw.) X. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the words where the apostrophe is correctly used.

\*Contractions are more an instructional issue than a developmental issue, but need to be checked, and, if necessary, remediated at this level. For those having trouble, it is wise to separate the study of contractions from possessives until the use of the apostrophe has been clarified.

**List IV**

AA. Ed/ing endings in multisyllabic words

1. omitted
2. occurring
3. labeled
4. forbidden
5. sheltered

AA. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the number of words with correct endings (doubling and dropped “e” handled correctly).

BB. Vowel reduction

1. pronunciation
2. reception
3. mischievous
4. explanation
5. curiosity

BB. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the correctly spelled words.

CC. Able/ible

1. irritable
2. credible
3. desirable
4. admissible
5. changeable

CC. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the words where the underlined letters are all correctly represented.

DD. Ance/ence ery/ary el/le endings

1. audience
2. entrance
3. handle
4. diesel
5. cemetery

DD. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the words where the underlined letters are all correctly represented.

EE. Ous/ious ending

1. cautious
2. gracious
3. generous
4. ambitious
5. adventurous

EE. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the words where the underlined letters are all correctly represented.

FF. Related words/vowel shift/advanced

1. desperately
2. ferocious
3. apologetic
4. allegation

5. solarium

FF. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the correctly spelled words.

GG. Greek and Latin roots

1. psychic
2. fracture
3. physician
4. astronaut
5. portfolio

GG. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the correctly spelled words.

HH. Foreign/borrowed patterns

1. bureau
2. schnauzer
3. tsumani
4. bonsai
5. technique

HH. \_\_\_\_\_

Count the correctly spelled words.