

Spelling Guidelines

The following District 7 guidelines for spelling are intended to provide a framework of understanding for the use of materials from the Houghton Mifflin language arts series. Teachers have the flexibility and professional discretion to use this framework in determining their own weekly spelling lists, worksheets and adaptations necessary to meet the needs of students in their class.

Spelling lists and tests are not a stand-alone grade on our Progress Report but can be used as a vehicle for spelling instruction.

Houghton Mifflin Spelling activities include the following:

1. A pretest activity that may include the word list and/or dictation.
2. The weekly spelling list follows a phonic and/or spelling rule that is to be explicitly taught by the teacher.
3. Daily practice activities reinforce the skill being taught. Teachers can select from those activities and use the ones they feel are most useful and/or pertinent.
4. The week ends with a spelling test which can be a word list and/or dictation.

Spelling lists

The number of spelling words varies by grade level and must come from the Houghton Mifflin series. The list may include challenge words and high frequency words essential for good writing. (Note: High frequency words are to be selected from the Rebecca Sitton spelling program). The number of words in the weekly spelling list may be based on the outcome of the pretest and may vary depending on the instructional level of the student. Teachers carefully consider the instructional needs of each student and make modifications to the number of words as needed.

Spelling list length recommendations:

K	3-5 words per week starting in April
1 st	10 – 15 words
2 nd	10 – 15 words
3 rd	10 – 20 words
4 th	15 – 20 words
5 th	15 – 20 words

Dictation

It is recommended that if a classroom teacher gives a weekly test that it be a dictation test instead of a list of single words. The purpose of dictation is that it:

1. Allows the teacher to monitor knowledge of current and past spelling words
2. Serves as a tool to assess the use of capitalization and punctuation, important tools for writing.
3. Builds listening stamina for students

Dictation recommendations:

Grade 1: dictates one sentence

Grade 2: begins with one sentence 1st trimester, two sentences 2nd trimester, and three sentences 3rd trimester.

Grades 3 – 5: use at least three or more sentences utilizing words from the list.

Spelling tests are usually administered on Friday. Spelling lists should be uniform by grade level by school. Grading procedures should also be uniform at each school site.

Practice and Test Grading Recommendation:

To avoid confusion between scores on a single assignment that might not be at end of year standard versus scores on the Progress Report, it is recommended that a raw score be put on papers that are going home ie. 18/20 or 32/50. For gradebook purposes, it is recommended that all scores be entered as a rubric score on the NP-4 point scale used for the Progress Report.

Students with an adapted spelling list, (the number of words have been reduced) are considered to be working below grade level expectations, and will not be able to receive a 3 on the report card. It is recommended that teachers provide a comment on the report card indicating spelling adaptations.