

VISUALIZING WORDS

GOAL

The goal of this technique is to teach your child how to visualize words. Most good spellers do this naturally but some students don't make the transition from sounding words out to visualizing them.

If you have a spelling list then tick the words that are easy to spell and use this technique for the difficult words.

STEP 1: Write the word on a piece of paper and have your child look at it while they count out loud to 20.

Explanation: The purpose of this is to stop them from verbalising or sounding out the word. It's not that sounding out the word is a bad thing but the goal of this exercise is to shift them to the next step of *visualizing* the word.

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STEP 2: Next turn the paper over and ask them to picture the word in their mind (close their eyes if necessary).

If you see them looking upwards this is a sign they are using their visual memory.

- a. Tap them on their left shoulder and ask them what letter was at the *start* of the word.
- b. Tap their right shoulder and ask them what letter was at the *end* of the word.
- c. If they can do this ask them what is next to these letters but emphasize working backwards from the end of the word!

Explanation: The purpose of working backwards is for the same reason given in Step 1.

STEP 3: If they make a mistake then hold up the word again for them to look at and ask them to count out loud to 10. Now turn the paper over and repeat step 2. Note that your child can have *as many looks* as necessary until they get the word correct!

When done, pick a letter in the middle and ask them to tell you what the letter is on either side of it.

STEP 4: Aim for at least 3 words over 3 days. Intermittently ask them to spell the word out loud so you can check that they have retained it in their visual memory! In time they will start to visualize words without having to use this technique. You have now shifted the way they attend to words when spelling!

What if they can't do it?

You will be surprised to find that most students *can* do this. If it is a problem then you may need to take a step back and practice visualizing objects. Hold an object (eg. pen) in front of your child and ask them to describe it. Now ask them to describe it again with their eyes closed. When they can do this, add another object....keep going until your child is able to visualize multiple objects.