

# TIPS FOR USING PERCIVAL'S ESSENTIAL SPELLINGS WITH YOUR CHILD



Spelling is a key part of every child's learning and one of the key skills all adults use every day. However, not everyone learns spellings in the same way and for some children, the traditional weekly spelling test can be a torturous activity. This is especially true for children with special educational needs or dyslexia. These tips will explain how best to make Percival's Essential Spellings a fun and effective way to help your child.

laugh  
and  
U  
get  
happy



## How does Percival's Essential Spellings help?

One technique that can be used to help children to learn spellings is "mnemonics" or "acrostics". These are a set of words where each word's first letter helps us to remember a fact. They are similar to acronyms such as BBC or CNN. A well-known example of a mnemonic is how to remember the colours of the rainbow - Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain.

Each spelling in Percival's Essential Spellings has a mnemonic. The children need to learn the mnemonic, and then they will remember the spelling of the word. Eventually, with enough repetition, they will stop using the mnemonic and the word will have been learnt.

nigh  
t  
is  
good  
howling  
time



## Does Percival's Essential Spellings match the work that the children will do in school?

Yes and no. The words that have been chosen for Percival's Essential Spellings are words that all children will come across as they begin their journey through school. However, and this is crucial, these spellings are very quickly moved on from, and it is assumed that the children have learnt them, **OFTEN BY THE AGE OF SIX**. In reality, almost all of the children have not learnt all of them and, unless they happen to remember how to spell the words through their own efforts later in their journey through the school system, they may never learn them.

Because  
the  
new  
egg's  
wicked!



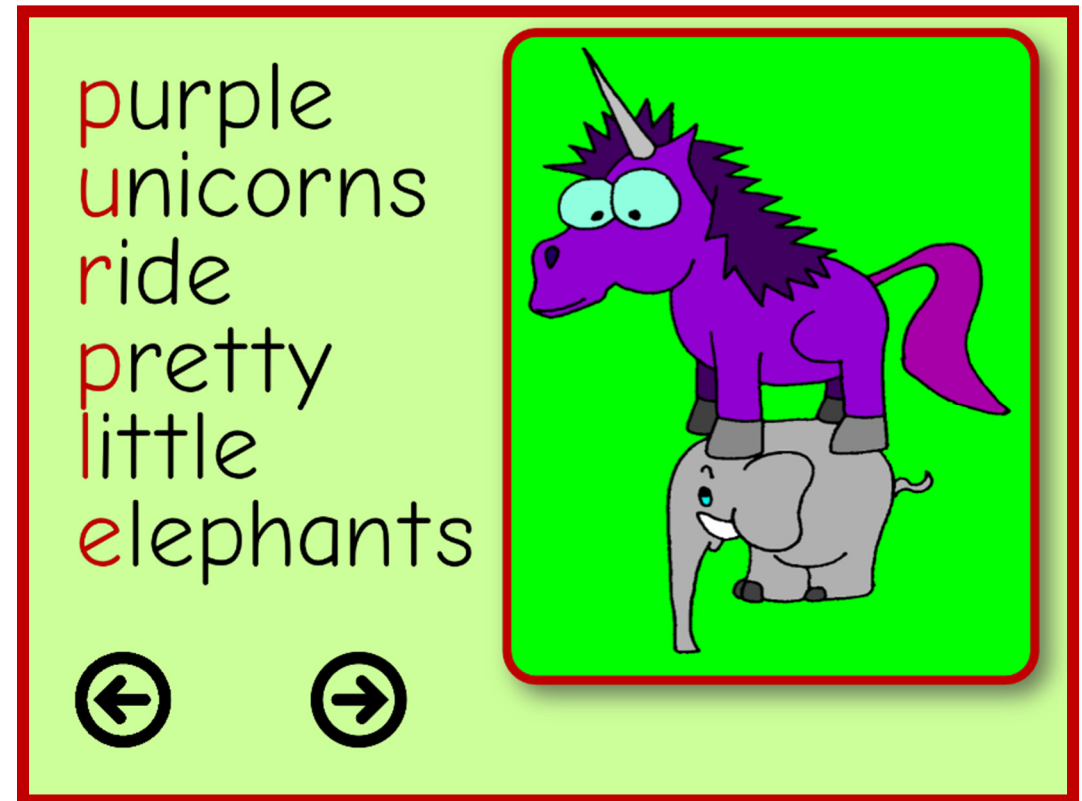
If a child is dyslexic, or has special educational needs, there is a good chance this will not even have been diagnosed by the time they have moved onto more complex spellings and these most crucial words may never be learnt. However, these words are the ones everyone needs to know because the majority of the words we use in everyday life are made up of these “high-frequency words”. If we take the previous sentence as an example, nine of the words (these x 2, are x 2, one x 2, because, day, made) are covered in Percival's Essential Spellings.

## How often should we use Percival's Essential Spellings?

This will be different for each child. To understand how long it may take, it is important to have a basic understanding of how we remember things.

Our memory can be split into two areas: short-term and long-term. We hold the information we need to remember for a short while, but can then forget (such as what we went to the bedroom to collect, or the day a favourite sports team is next playing), in our short-term memory, In the long-term memory, we store things that we need to remember indefinitely - spouse's birthday (hopefully!), how to drive etc.

Initially, most children store spellings (and most other information they learn in school) in the short-term memory. The key thing is the spellings need to be learnt frequently so they are moved from the short-term to the long-term memory. Percival's Essential Spellings helps this process by giving your child other interesting things to remember, rather than just what may appear to them a random series of letters. If the child can visualise a cartoon or do movements, along with the mnemonic, they are much more likely to be successful.





The key to making sure the spellings are retained is that they must be practised frequently. It is important not to try to learn too many spellings at one time, and it is crucial not to move onto other spellings until these have been remembered. It is then essential these spellings are practised again, at increasing intervals, even though they appear to have been learnt, to ensure they are not forgotten.

seven  
evil  
vampires  
eat  
nuggets



### The steps you need to follow are:

1. Introduce spellings a few at a time (no more than five).
2. Practise each of the words, learning the mnemonic, and then practise spelling the word.
3. After a few days to a week, ask your child to spell each word, without any practice first. If they can, they have **BEGUN** to move the spelling to their long-term memory.
4. Gradually reduce how often you practise the spelling. Move from every day to every other day. Reduce further to twice a week and then once a week.
5. Randomly come back to the spelling after this point to ensure that they have not forgotten the spelling.

## How can I make the best use of each mnemonic in Percival's Essential Spellings?

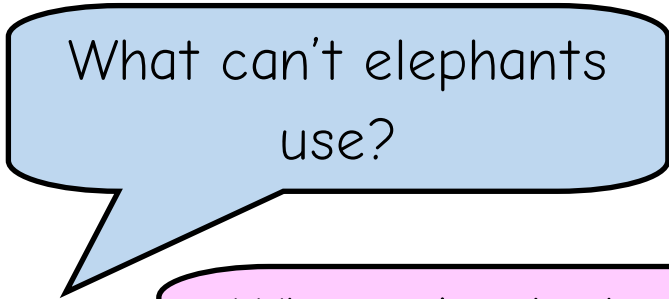
If we imagine that your child is learning to spell the word "because" they will be using the mnemonic Big Elephants Can't Always Use Small Exits. We need to make sure they remember this mnemonic by making it fun and memorable.

Firstly, there is the cartoon itself, which your child will hopefully find amusing. You can help this by acting out giving the elephant a push whilst one of you makes a squealing elephant noise, or anything else you can think of to make the pictures memorable.

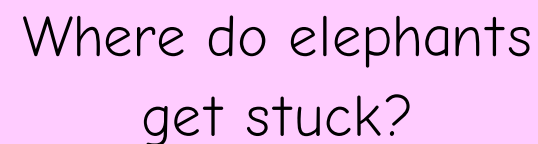
Some children also like to move whilst they are learning. You could get them to trace the letters of the word in the air or on the back of their hands etc.

Reading the mnemonic out loud together is also useful.


Asking your child questions about the mnemonic can also be helpful, especially before you have looked at it. For example, you could ask:




What can't elephants use?




Where do elephants get stuck?



Why would you make exits bigger?



What sort of animal gets stuck in small exits?



What sort of exits can't elephants always use?

## Do you provide other resources to help children to learn their spellings?

The perfect accompaniment to Percival's Essential Spellings are the **Essential Spelling Printable Posters!** These take more than 30 of the same mnemonics used in Percival's Essential Spellings and allow you to print them. You can then put them up in places that will help to familiarise your child even more frequently with the spellings.

The follow-up to Percival's Essential Spellings is **Percival's Spelling School**. In this, your child has ten fun games that they play, such as hangman, wordsearches, card match and Hilo, which help them to learn their spellings. Your child can either choose to play individual games or let the Professor choose the best challenges to make sure they learn the spellings quickly. The Professor also makes sure that your child learns lots of new words by insisting the ones your child uses get longer and longer. Don't worry though - the Professor explains what they mean as well as how to spell them! There is lots more information on our website [www.keystoneeducation.co.uk](http://www.keystoneeducation.co.uk). Just follow the link to Percival's Spelling School.

