

Words Their Way

In order to move students forward in reading and writing, it is essential to have efficient and effective instruction in word study.

Words Their Way provides this instruction through a researched-based approach that allows students to receive instruction at their developmental level. Words Their Ways addresses foundational skills (phonics), spelling, and vocabulary through working with words: examining, manipulating, comparing, and categorizing.

Words Their Way does not use traditional spelling tests. Instead, we use the child-centered approach that helps students recognize and learn to apply **sound, pattern, and meaning** in their sorts and beyond isolated lists.

Activities to support your child at home:

Remember: The words that your child brings home are not intended to be memorized for a test.

Instead, help them sort and categorize the word cards based on the headings or key words (such as **CVC**, **-ion**, or **oddballs**). The headings are written in bold. Usually there are words that are also in bold print. These bolded words are an example of the type of words that fit under a heading.

- ✓ **Blind sort:** Put down the headings to establish categories. Then, shuffle the remaining word cards. Call each word out loud without showing the card to your child. Ask your child to show you which category it fits. Next, show your student the word and ask them to put it under the correct category.
- ✓ **Speed sort:** Have your child set up the headings and shuffle their words. Start a timer and have your child sort their word cards as quickly as they can. When they are done, check to make sure the words are sorted correctly. You may do this several times in a row or over several nights. Encourage your child to "beat" their time while staying accurate with their sorts.
- ✓ **Word hunt:** Sometimes students don't automatically see the relationship between spelling words and reading words. Have your student hunt through their reading and writing for words that are additional examples of the sound, pattern, or meaning unit they are studying. For example, if one of their headings is "short *a*" words, have them look for and notice other short *a* words. You may want to work with your child and take turns finding words that fit their sorts.
- ✓ **Extensions:**
 - Ask your child to **say more words** that would fit under the headings. Make it a game and take turns saying the words.
 - Have your child **write** the words that fit under each category instead of placing the word card. If your child misspells the word, say it two or even three times.
 - This works well with the blind sort. After they write the word, your child can check their spelling with the word card.

- Add additional words that fit the sound, pattern, or meaning of their categories.
- Vocabulary development is essential to growth in reading and writing. Talk about the **meaning** of the words in the sort. Try and use the word in a sentence.
- **Be creative!** There are many different ways to sort and categorize words. Create a new word game with your child or play a different word game each time.