
Here's an Instant Activity for February 21, 2005



STRATEGY FOR SPELLING SUCCESS

For most learners, spelling well doesn't just happen. It is the result of a conscientious spelling curriculum that:

1. provides a menu of skill-building activities that range in sophistication to teach critical concepts at a student's own level,
2. uses assessment to gather information to target word study to the specific words each student has not learned from among all previously introduced words in the program, as well as to identify skills not yet mastered,
3. equips teachers with guidelines for spelling expectations in everyday writing that increase as students develop as writers, making the classroom a rehearsal for real-world writing, and
4. proposes multiple opportunities to engage parents in the acquisition of spelling skills with their child.

This Instant Activity helps teachers achieve item number 1 above—and item number 4, if the activity is assigned as homework.



LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Approximately Grade 4



PURPOSE

Concept: The most frequent spelling patterns for words with the soft-syllable ending /əɪ/ are *le*, *al*, and *el*.

Skills: phonics, word analysis, visual skills, identifying words with a given criterion

This Instant Activity develops emerging wordsmiths' ability to hear and spell the soft-syllable ending designated as /əɪ/. This sound challenges spellers because the unstressed syllable, or soft syllable, can be spelled with different vowels, but each vowel sounds the same. The games in the Follow-Up section of this lesson can reinforce various word properties in a playful venue.



SUGGESTED USE

Use this Instant Activity with Unit 17, Activity 1F, in Level 4 of the Spelling Sourcebook Series.



TEACHING DIRECTIONS

Write *level* on the chalkboard. Pronounce the word, and note that the soft syllable at the end of the word is spelled *el*. Underline *el*. Show students the way a dictionary identifies this sound—/əɪ/. Ask students to verify using a dictionary. Note that the unstressed vowel is called a “schwa.”

Next, ask students to identify more words that end with the same unstressed vowel sound (e.g., eagle, total, camel). The most frequent spelling for /əɪ/ is *le*, yet *al* and *el* spellings are common. Less common are *il* (e.g., pencil) and *ol* (e.g., capitol). The *ful* suffix also produces this sound (e.g., careful).

Next, print the Instant Activity and distribute a copy to each student. Discuss the activity to ensure that students know what is expected. Ask students why the activity is titled Soft-Syllable Troublemakers—why is this spelling pattern a problem? Note the /əl/ in *syllable* and *trouble*. Note again the symbol (/əl/) that is used for this sound in a dictionary. Discuss the directions and its words with /əl/ (pencil, tackle, mental, useful, symbol, syllable, vowel). Then ask students to complete the activity at home or at school.



FOLLOW-UP

Challenge students to find and write more words that have this ending sound to conclude that *le* is by far its most common spelling pattern.

Use the alphabetical word collection to play a game. Call out a word property (e.g., begins with a consonant blend, has an antonym, is a homophone, has a long vowel). Students respond with a word from their list that meets the criterion.

Play another game! Write *level* on the chalkboard and identify it as an /əl/ word. Ask students to identify an unusual property of this word. Conclude that it's spelled the same way forward and backward! Can students find and write more words with this characteristic? (e.g., dad, mom, wow, peep, Anna, noon, did, madam, deed, gag, racecar, radar, Sis).



FOR MORE

For more activities to teach all the essential skills and concepts, and to develop a total spelling and language-related program, use the Spelling Sourcebook for your grade level. Further extend the concepts and skills in the Spelling Sourcebook Series with Word-Wise Sourcebook Two for third and fourth grade.

To reinforce essential languages skills and concepts for lower performing learners in fourth grade, use Word Skills in Rhythm and Rhyme, Level 3, featuring General Spaghetti, and the Level 3 Core Word Activity Cards. Word Skills in Rhythm and Rhyme extends language learning with six chant-along rhymes introduced on CD-ROM and followed up with over 100 blackline master practice pages. Springboard from the Core Words to more words with the Level 3 Core Word Activity Cards. Level 3 includes the top 335 Core Words on a 3.5" x 6" card, with a grade-specific activity on back.

To learn about the Series:

Request our free, on-loan Overview Video by calling 888-WE-SPELL (888-937-7355). The video can also be ordered through our web site: www.sittonspelling.com.

To learn how to use the Spelling Sourcebook Series:

1. Attend a seminar that explains and demonstrates lessons that reflect the Spelling Sourcebook methodology. For more information, visit www.sittonspelling.com. Click on the Training tab at the top of the page, then click on Seminar Schedule.
2. Use the **NEW TUTOR ME** Training Video/CD-ROM for your grade level either on your own or in a small group. Rebecca Sitton guides you through a complete unit, tells you exactly what to do, and why. Set aside about two hours to acquire complete expertise, or learn about each part of a unit as you need it. Invite parents to discover how their child will be learning to spell with the Parent Introduction. Visit www.sittonspelling.com for more information.

To order your SPELLING SOURCEBOOK:

Northwest Textbook Depository

P.O. Box 5608

Portland, OR 97228

800-676-6630

503-639-2559 (fax)

Build Skills and Word Experiences



Name _____, Super Speller

Soft-Syllable Troublemakers



Get a pencil and get ready to tackle this mental task! Here's the useful symbol that stands for this soft-syllable vowel sound in a dictionary—/ə/.

Write a word that ends with /ə/ for each letter of the alphabet.

a _____

n _____

b _____

o _____

c _____

p _____

d _____

q _____

e _____

r _____

f _____

s _____

g _____

t _____

h _____

u _____

i _____

v _____

j _____

w _____

k _____

x _____

l _____

y _____

m _____

z _____