

# Rebecca Sitton's APPLESEED



PLANT THE SEEDS TO GROW SPELLING AND WORD-SKILL LITERACY.

## Is the Word Preview Worth the Five Minutes It Takes to Give It?

The Teaching Notes in your Sourcebook are definitive. They tell you exactly how to give a Word Preview. Yet, I'm not sure the Teaching Notes sufficiently emphasize the importance of this research-based strategy.

The headline that runs across the top of the Word Preview activity in your Sourcebook identifies it as a visual skill-building activity. That's its sole purpose. It is the single, most effective research-based procedure for developing visual skills. And why are visual skills so important? Read on.

The high-use writing words, the Core Words, that we're teaching students to spell are words that students have already learned to read. They have had many reading experiences with these words—or so I hope. Otherwise, we're putting the cart before the horse because reading a word is far easier than spelling one.

Once students are accustomed to reading certain words, they no longer see them letter by letter. In fact, good readers do not even see individual words. Instead, they see a phrase at a glance.

The Word Preview teaches students two essential skills, two evidence-based traits of good spellers. First, it teaches students to learn to see, or visualize, a word and its sequential letters in their mind's eye. Second, it teaches students to see the sequential letters of a written word. To do this, students must learn a new system of looking at a word, different from the habits they've developed for reading a word. Research shows that these skills can be taught and learned.

Telling students to learn to spell and proofread words is not a substitute for teaching them how to spell or proofread words. Spelling and proofreading require the ability to switch from one's "reading eyes" to "spelling and proofreading eyes."

Read this: A significant fact worthy of your attention is that all of your spelling knowledge is of little consequence unless you've learned the crucial skill of proofreading.

How many f's are in the sentence? Count them.

If you've learned how to switch from your "reading eyes" to your "spelling and proofreading eyes," your answer is seven. If not, you, too, would benefit from the skills taught in the Word Preview!

Before you can implement Priority Words in the Sourcebook's accountability methodology, be certain that your students have a solid background in visual skills. The most effective strategy for learning this set of skills is the Word Preview. Yes, it's worth the five minutes it takes to give it at the opening of each unit. Otherwise, your students will use their "reading eyes" as they try to proofread for their Priority Words because that's all they know how to do.