

Orthography Program with Symbol Imagery A Reading Improvement Program

English orthography is the system of rules that govern how words are pronounced and spelled. The English orthography is relatively complex due to the varied roots of the language in history. But simply being able to recite the rules is not enough to lead to adequate reading skills.

Symbol imagery is the sensory-cognitive ability to create mental imagery for sounds and letters in words. It is the form of sensory input that underlies both phonological and orthographic processing that supports reading and spelling. Developing symbol imagery involves exercises that help the individual create and maintain an accurate visual image of a word or part of a word. These exercises require the individual to create the visual imagery and be able to manipulate it. By combining the orthographic rule instruction with symbol imagery reinforcement, improvements in spelling and reading are seen.

On the most basic level, our written language consists of the association of sounds to individual letters. So when we begin the Orthography Program we start with making sure that this association is in place and understood. Multi-sensory instruction, including symbol imagery techniques, is used to reinforce the connection between sound and symbol as well as to improve orthographic recognition (visual recognition of the spelling pattern). The program continues into vowel digraphs.

Once the basic sound / symbol correspondence has been established, we introduce the rules that relate to single syllable words. With each rule introduction there is a process of understanding the rule; expressing the rule using one's own words; demonstrating the application of the rule when reading; and demonstrating the application of the rule when spelling. Worksheets are used at the initial stage of rule introduction. This is followed by reading controlled texts out loud, to allow for errors to be identified and the student to be cued into phonological analysis skills to correct the errors. Concurrently the rule is being reinforced with spelling tasks.

The student progresses through this highly structured, sequential program beginning with single syllables and now progressing through multi-syllable words. The student learns multisyllable skills beginning with the rules that control how words are broken into syllables and accented. As the student gains confidence and becomes stable using the skills, they receive instruction in the common prefixes and suffixes to encourage more rapid identification of words. Depending upon the age of the student, additional instruction may include word roots.

The student always moves forward at her own pace. Skill mastery must be demonstrated at each step, before new skills are introduced. Students begin reading controlled texts as soon as practicable, and are monitored for errors and cued to use the skills being developed.

Anticipated outcomes include improvements in word attack (sounding out unfamiliar words), word knowledge (words quickly recognized), reading accuracy (words misread, skipped or guessed at), reading rate (how quickly a student reads), and comprehension (the ability to identify and remember important information in what is read.) It is our hope to foster a desire and interest in reading with the student.



Colorado Reading Center

303-781-9800

450 West Jefferson Ave • Englewood, Colorado 80110
Successfully solving learning problems since 1995

www.ColoradoReading.com