



Teaching a Word Family

- Present a word family consisting of eight to ten spellings with a common rime (e.g. 'eat') or individual sound (e.g. /-oo/).
- Draw attention to the common element in the family through the use of colour.
- Read together.
- Remove words from sight and construct words by physically manipulating plastic/wooden letters.
- Choose a trigger word to remember the sound in the word family being taught. Write the sound in red on one side of a small piece of card. On the other side write the whole word and draw a small picture. This allows the sound/spelling patterns learnt can be regularly practiced by rote until they are automatically recalled for reading and spelling.
- A sentence is made up using as many words from the word family as possible. 'Silly' sentences improve memorization e.g. 'I like to eat meat in my seat.'
- To test retention, drill trigger cards and then dictate sentences using words from the previously taught word family.
- The pupil reads back what he has written, if there are still errors then encourage him to proof read as the teacher repeats the dictation. The pupil underlines words he is unsure of. He then looks back at the word family to see if he can correct any mistakes.
- Once a word family has been taught, incorporate words from it periodically in subsequent dictations.
- Build constant revision and over-learning into the retention of the word family through a variety of activities (worksheets, games, wordsearches, cloze etc.)
- Teach only one word family per week, keeping confusable sounds or chunks a few weeks apart e.g. 'ea' and 'ee'.

