

General Directions for Administering the Words Their Way Inventories

Students should not study the words before a test. Assure students that they will not be graded on this activity, and that they will be helping you plan for their needs. Introduce the assessment to students; for example:

I am going to ask you to spell some words. Spell them the best you can. Some of the words may be easy to spell; some may be difficult. When you do not know how to spell a word, spell it the best you can.

Ask students to number their paper (or prepare a numbered paper for kindergarten or early first grade). Call each word aloud and repeat it. Say each word naturally, without emphasizing phonemes or syllables. Use it in a sentence, if necessary, to be sure students know the exact word. Sample sentences are provided along with the words. After administering the inventory, use a Feature Guide, Class Composite Form, and, if desired, a Spelling-by-Stage Classroom Organization Chart to complete your assessment. Error Guide forms for the Primary and Elementary Inventories are available at PDToolkit for *Words Their Way*. The online assessment application helps complete the feature guide and create a class composite automatically.

Scoring the Inventory Using the Feature Guides

1. To score by hand, make a copy of the appropriate Feature Guide (PSI p. 320, ESI p. 324, USI p. 327) for each student. Draw a line under the last word used if you called fewer than the total number and adjust the possible total points at the bottom of each feature column.
2. Score the words by checking off the features spelled correctly that are listed in the cells to the right of each word. For example, if a student spells *bed* as BAD, he gets a check in the initial *b* cell and the final *d* cell, but not for the short vowel. Write in the vowel used (*a*, in this case), but do not give any points for it. If a student spells *train* as TRANE, she gets a check in the initial *tr* cell and the final *n* cell, but not for the long vowel pattern. Write in the vowel pattern used (*a-e* in this case), but do not give any points for it. Put a check in the “Correct” column if the word is spelled correctly. Do not count reversed letters as errors but note them in the cells. If unnecessary letters are added, give the speller credit for what is correct (e.g., if *bed* is spelled BEDE, the student still gets credit for representing the consonants and short vowel), but do not check “Correct” spelling.
3. Add the number of checks under each feature and across each word, double-checking the total score recorded in the last cell. Modify the ratios in the last row depending on the number of words called aloud.

Interpreting the Results of the Spelling Inventory

1. Look down each feature column to determine instructional needs. Students who miss only one (or two, if the features sample 8 to 10 words) can go on to other features. Students who miss two or three need some review work; students who miss more than three need careful instruction on this feature. If a student did not get any points for a feature, earlier features need to be studied first.
2. Determine a development stage by noting where students first make two or more errors under the stages listed in the shaded box at the top of the Feature Guide and circle the stage.
3. Use power scores or total number correct as a guide to calling the stage. Refer to the Power Scores and Estimated Stages table in Chapter 2.

Using the Classroom Composite and Spelling-by-Stage Classroom Organization Chart

1. Staple each Feature Guide to the student's spelling paper and arrange the papers in rank order from highest to lowest total points or use raw scores.
2. List students' names in this rank order in the left column of the appropriate Classroom Composite (PSI p. 320, ESI p. 324, USI p. 327) and transfer each student's total feature scores from the Feature Guide to the Classroom Composite. If you did not call out the total word list, adjust the numbers on the Possible Points row of the Classroom Composite.
3. Highlight cells where students make two or more errors on a particular feature to get a sense of your students' needs and to form groups for instruction.
4. You may find it easier to form groups using the Spelling-by-Stage Classroom Organization Chart (p. 322). List each student under the appropriate spelling stage (the stage circled on the Feature Guide) and determine instructional groups.

The online assessment tool on the website can automate many of these steps for you.

Note: See Chapter 2 for more detailed directions on choosing, administering, scoring, and interpreting the inventories, as well as using them to form instructional groups.

Primary Spelling Inventory (PSI)

The Primary Spelling Inventory (PSI) is used in kindergarten through third grade. The 26 words are ordered by difficulty to sample features of the letter name–alphabetic to within word pattern stages. Call out enough words so that you have at least five or six misspelled words to analyze. For kindergarten students or other emergent readers, you may only need to call out the first five words. In late kindergarten and early first-grade classrooms, call out at least 15 words so that you sample digraphs and blends; use the entire list for late first, second, and third grades. If any students spell more than 22 words correctly, you may want to use the Elementary Spelling Inventory.

Using the following list, call out the spelling word, then the sample sentence, then repeat the spelling word.

1. fan A fan will keep you cool on a hot day. *fan*
2. pet I have a pet cat who likes to play. *pet*
3. dig Let's dig a hole in the sand. *dig*
4. rob A raccoon will rob a bird's nest for eggs. *rob*
5. hope I hope you will do well on this test. *hope*
6. wait You need to wait for the letter. *wait*
7. gum I stepped on some bubble gum. *gum*
8. sled The dog sled was pulled by huskies. *sled*
9. stick I used a stick to poke in the hole. *stick*
10. shine He rubbed the coin to make it shine. *shine*
11. dream I had a funny dream last night. *dream*
12. blade The blade of the knife was very sharp. *blade*
13. coach The coach called the team off the field. *coach*
14. fright She was a fright in her Halloween costume. *fright*
15. chewed The dog chewed on the bone until it was gone. *chewed*
16. crawl You will get dirty if you crawl under the picnic table. *crawl*
17. wishes In fairy tales, wishes often come true. *wishes*
18. thorn The thorn from the rosebush stuck me. *thorn*
19. shouted They shouted at the barking dog. *shouted*
20. spoil The food will spoil if it sits out too long. *spoil*
21. growl The dog will growl if you bother him. *growl*
22. third I was the third person in line. *third*
23. camped We camped down by the river last weekend. *camped*
24. tries He tries hard every day to finish his work. *tries*
25. clapping The audience was clapping after the program. *clapping*
26. riding They are riding their bikes to the park today. *riding*

Words Their Way Primary Spelling Inventory Feature Guide

Student's Name _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____ Date _____
 Words Spelled Correctly: _____ / 26 Feature Points: _____ / 56 Total: _____ / 82 Spelling Stage: _____

SPELLING STAGES →	EMERGENT		LETTER NAME-ALPHABETIC			WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES		
	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	EARLY	Feature Points	Words Spelled Correctly
Features →	Consonants		Short Vowels	Digraphs	Blends	Common Long Vowels	Other Vowels	Inflected Endings			
	Initial	Final									
1. fan	f	n	A								
2. pet	p	t	E								
3. dig	d	g	I								
4. rob	r	b	O								
5. hope	h	p				o-e					
6. wait	w	t				ai					
7. gum	g	m	U								
8. sled			E		sl						
9. stick			I		st						
10. shine				sh		i-e					
11. dream					dr	ea					
12. blade					bl	a-e					
13. coach				ch		oa					
14. fright					fr	igh					
15. chewed				ch			ew	-ed			
16. crawl					cr		aw				
17. wishes				sh				-es			
18. thorn				th			or				
19. shouted				sh			ou	-ed			
20. spoil							oi				
21. growl							ow				
22. third				th			ir				
23. camped								-ed			
24. tries					tr			-ies			
25. clapping								-pping			
26. riding								-ding			
Totals	/ 7	/ 7	/ 7	/ 7	/ 7	/ 7	/ 7	/ 7	/ 7	/ 56	/ 26

Words Their Way Primary Spelling Inventory Classroom Composite

Teacher _____ School _____ Grade _____ Date _____

SPELLING STAGES →	EMERGENT LATE		LETTER NAME-ALPHABETIC		WITHIN WORD PATTERN		SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES		
	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE
Students' Names ↓ Possible Points	Consonants		Blends	Common Long Vowels	Other Vowels	Inflected Endings	Correct Spelling	Total Rank Order	
1.	Initial 7	Final 7	7	7	7	7	26	82	
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
7.									
8.									
9.									
10.									
11.									
12.									
13.									
14.									
15.									
16.									
17.									
18.									
19.									
20.									
21.									
22.									
23.									
24.									
25.									
26.									
Highlight for instruction*									

*Highlight students who miss more than 1 on a particular feature; they will benefit from more instruction in that area.

Elementary Spelling Inventory (ESI)

The Elementary Spelling Inventory (ESI) covers more stages than the PSI. You can use it as early as first grade, particularly if a school system wants to use the same inventory across the elementary grades. The 25 words are ordered by difficulty to sample features of the letter name–alphabetic to derivational relations stages. Call out enough words so that you have at least five or six misspelled words to analyze. If any students spell more than 20 words correctly, use the Upper-Level Spelling Inventory to get a more accurate estimate of a student’s ability; at the upper level, the ESI can overestimate the stage.

1. bed I hopped out of bed this morning. *bed*
2. ship The ship sailed around the island. *ship*
3. when When will you come back? *when*
4. lump He had a lump on his head after he fell. *lump*
5. float I can float on the water with my new raft. *float*
6. train I rode the train to the next town. *train*
7. place I found a new place to put my books. *place*
8. drive I learned to drive a car. *drive*
9. bright The light is very bright. *bright*
10. shopping She went shopping for new shoes. *shopping*
11. spoil The food will spoil if it is not kept cool. *spoil*
12. serving The restaurant is serving dinner tonight. *serving*
13. chewed The dog chewed up my favorite sweater yesterday. *chewed*
14. carries She carries apples in her basket. *carries*
15. marched We marched in the parade. *marched*
16. shower The shower in the bathroom was very hot. *shower*
17. bottle The glass bottle broke into pieces on the tile floor. *bottle*
18. favor He did his brother a favor by taking out the trash. *favor*
19. ripen The fruit will ripen over the next few days. *ripen*
20. cellar I went down to the cellar for the can of paint. *cellar*
21. pleasure It was a pleasure to listen to the choir sing. *pleasure*
22. fortunate It was fortunate that the driver had snow tires. *fortunate*
23. confident I am confident that we can win the game. *confident*
24. civilize They wanted to civilize the wild cat. *civilize*
25. opposition The coach said the opposition would be tough. *opposition*

Words Their Way Elementary Spelling Inventory Feature Guide

Student's Name _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____ Date _____
 Words Spelled Correctly: _____ / 25 Feature Points: _____ / 62 Total: _____ / 87 Spelling Stage: _____

SPELLING STAGES →	EMERGENT		LETTER NAME-ALPHABETIC			WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES			DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS		
	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	EARLY	MIDDLE
Features →	Consonants Initial	Consonants Final	Short Vowels	Digraphs	Blends	Common Long Vowels	Other Vowels	Inflected Endings	Syllable Junctures	Unaccented Final Syllables	Advanced Affixes	Bases or Roots	Feature Points	Words Spelled Correctly
1. bed	b	d	e											
2. ship		p	i	sh										
3. when			e	wh										
4. lump	l		u		mp									
5. float		t			fl	oa								
6. train		n			tr	ai								
7. place					pl	a-e								
8. drive		v			dr	i-e								
9. bright					br	igh								
10. shopping			o	sh				pping						
11. spoil					sp		oi							
12. serving							er	ving						
13. chewed							ew	ed						
14. carries							ar	ies	rr					
15. marched							ar	ed						
16. shower							ow			er				
17. bottle									tt	le				
18. favor									v	or				
19. ripen									p	en				
20. cellar									ll	ar				
21. pleasure											ure	pleas		
22. fortunate							or				ate	fortun		
23. confident											ent	confid		
24. civilize											ize	civil		
25. opposition											tion	pos		
Totals			/ 7	/ 5	/ 6	/ 7	/ 5	/ 7	/ 5	/ 5	/ 5	/ 5	/ 62	/ 25

Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (USI)

You can use the Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (USI) in upper elementary, middle school, high school, and postsecondary classrooms. The 31 words are ordered by difficulty to sample features of the within word pattern to derivational relations spelling stages. With normally achieving students, you can administer the entire list, but you may want to stop when students misspell more than eight words and are experiencing noticeable frustration. If any students misspell five of the first eight words, use the ESI to more accurately identify within word pattern features that need instruction.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. switch | We can switch television channels with a remote control. <i>switch</i> |
| 2. smudge | There was a smudge on the mirror from her fingertips. <i>smudge</i> |
| 3. trapped | He was trapped in the elevator when the electricity went off. <i>trapped</i> |
| 4. scrape | The fall caused her to scrape her knee. <i>scrape</i> |
| 5. knotted | The knotted rope would not come undone. <i>knotted</i> |
| 6. shaving | He gave up shaving to grow a beard. <i>shaving</i> |
| 7. squirt | Don't let the ketchup squirt out of the bottle too fast. <i>squirt</i> |
| 8. pounce | My cat likes to pounce on her toy mouse. <i>pounce</i> |
| 9. scratches | We had to paint over the scratches on the car. <i>scratches</i> |
| 10. crater | The volcano crater was filled with bubbling lava. <i>crater</i> |
| 11. sailor | When he was young, he wanted to go to sea as a sailor. <i>sailor</i> |
| 12. village | My Granddad lived in a small seaside village. <i>village</i> |
| 13. disloyal | Traitors are disloyal to their country. <i>disloyal</i> |
| 14. tunnel | The rockslide closed the tunnel through the mountain. <i>tunnel</i> |
| 15. humor | You need a sense of humor to understand his jokes. <i>humor</i> |
| 16. confidence | With each winning game, the team's confidence grew. <i>confidence</i> |
| 17. fortunate | The driver was fortunate to have snow tires on that winter day.
<i>fortunate</i> |
| 18. visible | The singer on the stage was visible to everyone. <i>visible</i> |
| 19. circumference | The length of the equator is equal to the earth's circumference.
<i>circumference</i> |
| 20. civilization | We studied the ancient Mayan civilization last year. <i>civilization</i> |
| 21. monarchy | A monarchy is headed by a king or a queen. <i>monarchy</i> |
| 22. dominance | The dominance of the Yankees baseball team lasted for several years.
<i>dominance</i> |
| 23. correspond | Many students correspond through e-mail. <i>correspond</i> |
| 24. illiterate | It is hard to get a job if you are illiterate. <i>illiterate</i> |
| 25. emphasize | I want to emphasize the importance of trying your best. <i>emphasize</i> |
| 26. opposition | The coach said the opposition would give us a tough game. <i>opposition</i> |
| 27. chlorine | My eyes were burning from the chlorine in the swimming pool.
<i>chlorine</i> |
| 28. commotion | The audience heard the commotion backstage. <i>commotion</i> |
| 29. medicinal | Take cough drops for medicinal purposes only. <i>medicinal</i> |
| 30. irresponsible | It is irresponsible not to wear a seat belt. <i>irresponsible</i> |
| 31. succession | The firecrackers went off in rapid succession. <i>succession</i> |

Words Their Way Upper-Level Spelling Inventory Feature Guide

Student's Name _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____ Date _____
 Words Spelled Correctly: _____ / 31 Feature Points: _____ / 68 Total: _____ / 99 Spelling Stage: _____

SPELLING STAGES →	WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES			DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS				Words Spelled Correctly	
	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	Assimilated Prefixes		Feature Points
Features →	Blends and Digraphs	Vowels	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings and Syllable Juncture	Unaccented Final Syllables	Affixes	Reduced Vowels in Unaccented Syllables	Greek and Latin Elements				
1. switch	sw	i	tch									
2. smudge	sm	u	dge									
3. trapped	tr			pped								
4. scrape		a-e	scr									
5. knotted		o	kn	ttd								
6. shaving	sh			ving								
7. squirt		ir	squ									
8. pounce		ou	ce									
9. scratches		a	tch	es								
10. crater	cr			t	er							
11. sailor		ai			or							
12. village				ll	age							
13. disloyal		oy			al	dis						
14. tunnel				nn	el							
15. humor				m	or							
16. confidence						con	fid					
17. fortunate					ate			fortun				
18. visible						ible		vis				
19. circumference						ence		circum				
20. civilization							liz	civil				
Subtotals		/ 5	/ 9	/ 7	/ 8	/ 4	/ 2	/ 4	/ 0	/ 46	/ 20	

(continued)

Words Their Way Upper-Level Spelling Inventory Feature Guide (Continued)

Student's Name _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____ Date _____
 Words Spelled Correctly: _____ / 31 Feature Points: _____ / 68 Total: _____ / 99 Spelling Stage: _____

SPELLING STAGES →	WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES			DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS			Words Spelled Correctly	
	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE		Feature Points
Features →	Blends and Digraphs	Vowels	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings and Syllable Juncture	Unaccented Final Syllables	Affixes	Reduced Vowels in Unaccented Syllables	Greek and Latin Elements	Assimilated Prefixes		
21. monarchy								arch			
22. dominance						ance	min				
23. correspond							res		rr		
24. illiterate				ate			pha		ll		
25. emphasize						size	pos		pp		
26. opposition								chlor			
27. chlorine						ine					
28. commotion						tion			mm		
29. medicinal					al			medic			
30. irresponsible						ible	res		rr		
31. succession						sion			cc		
Subtotals	/ 0	/ 0	/ 0	/ 0	/ 2	/ 6	/ 5	/ 3	/ 6	/ 22	/ 11
Totals	/ 5	/ 9	/ 7	/ 8	/ 9	/ 10	/ 7	/ 7	/ 6	/ 68	/ 31

Words Their Way Upper-Level Spelling Inventory Classroom Composite

Teacher _____ School _____ Grade _____ Date _____

SPELLING STAGES →	WITHIN WORD PATTERN			SYLLABLES AND AFFIXES			DERIVATIONAL RELATIONS				Total Rank Order
	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	MIDDLE	LATE	EARLY	
Students' ↓ Names	Blends and Digraphs	Vowels	Complex Consonants	Inflected Endings and Syllable Juncture	Unaccented Final Syllables	Affixes	Reduced Vowels in Unaccented Syllables	Greek and Latin Elements	Assimilated Prefixes	Correct Spelling	99
Possible Points	5	9	7	8	9	10	7	7	6	31	
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											
6.											
7.											
8.											
9.											
10.											
11.											
12.											
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16.											
17.											
18.											
19.											
20.											
21.											
22.											
23.											
24.											
25.											
26.											
27.											
Highlight for instruction*											

*Highlight students who miss more than 1 on a particular feature if the total is between 5 and 8. Highlight those who miss more than 2 if the total is between 9 and 10.