

**Holy Family Primary School
GOWRIE**



**SINGLE WORD
SPELLING TEST (SWST)**

Agreed Practice



SWST Agreed Practice

Related Policies:

Nil

Policy

Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)

The **Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)** is a series of tests designed to assess the attainment in spelling of 5 to 14 year old students. There are 9 Single Word spelling tests in the series each consisting of between 30 and 50 words.

SWST is intended for use in identifying gaps in a student's knowledge of word components and for tracking student progress over successive years. The results of the spelling tests inform teachers of a student's immediate learning targets/goals and are used for explicit planning for spelling instruction. The spelling tests are graded in difficulty and guidelines are provided for the analysis of a student's errors in the tests. The intention of the error analysis is to give a detailed assessment of a student's spelling knowledge.

SWST will provide a Raw Score and Word Level for each student. Teachers need to be committed to undertaking a high-level analysis of the errors that the students make. Each word that is misspelt on the test is investigated for its component errors. For example KEEP is made up of 3 components K.EE.P whilst there are more complex words such as SKIPPING, SK. DOUBLE LETTER. + ING. Through an analysis of these errors the students will be grouped with others exhibiting similar spelling traits and allow for purposeful learning to take place to remedy spelling deficiencies. The analysis will provide teachers with a word Level for each student.

...in order to improve spelling outcomes [teachers] need to spend productive time helping students to think about patterns in the English language and to become aware of the spelling strategies they use.

Spelling is a complex cognitive process, not a simple process of memorisation.

(Topfer, C. and Arendt, D. (2010) Guided Thinking for Effective Spelling, Education Services Australia Ltd.)

Background Information

In 2013, teachers at Holy Family trialled the use of the **Single Word Spelling Test (SWST)** as a spelling management and assessment tool to identify each student's spelling needs in Years One to Six.

From 2014, teachers will use the SWST to enable them to target specific spelling word lists for each student throughout the year. The word lists are presented in phonemes, spelling components and spelling conventions. Students will use motivating learning strategies and be engaged in learning activities to develop their awareness of their spelling conventions and use them in context in their writing.

The Australian Curriculum – English

The words presented in the **Single Word Spelling Test** supports Spelling in the Australian Curriculum - English. Spelling is situated in the LANGUAGE STRAND under the sub strands of Language Variation and Change; Expressing and Developing Ideas; and Sound and Letter Knowledge. Specifically:

- Year One - Year Two: Expressing and Developing Ideas, Sound and Letter Knowledge
- Year Three - Year Six: Language Variation and Change; Expressing and Developing Ideas

Spelling Program

SWST forms part of a whole school approach to spelling. At Holy Family, we believe spelling is a vital part of communication. It is important that students develop an interest in the English language and learn strategies to assist them to become independent spellers who are able to communicate effectively through writing in a variety of contexts. Spelling is an engaging inquiry process which needs to be supported by a consistent approach across the whole school.

At Holy Family Primary School teachers will use SWST to accurately identify each student's spelling needs in their classroom. Teachers at Holy Family are to only use SWST lists as the basis for their Spelling Programs. A photocopy of the 'Structured Spelling List' (which also includes the 'Irregular Words') needs to be included in teaching programs for each specific group in the classroom. Teachers will highlight or mark off each component as it is covered. Students with identified needs (both ends of the spectrum) will have an individualised photocopy of the structured spelling list within the teacher's program.

There are approximately 30 – 40 spelling patterns/rules to be targeted throughout the year. The results of the spelling test inform teachers of a student's Word Level and the learning targets/goals. These can be used for explicit planning for spelling teaching and learning. It is encouraged that when teachers are selecting words from the structured spelling lists, they select words from left to right.

No student is to move to the next Word Level until all spelling patterns, rules, word families have been practised and learnt. If a teacher knows a student has achieved success with their Level Words then a supplementary test should be given and teacher judgement is made to move the student to the next Level. The supplementary test can be given to individual students at any time during the year.

In line with the philosophy of SWST, the weekly testing of Word Lists is not recommended. As a recommendation from the Action Research Projects undertaken in 2013, dictation will be used each week as a method of testing Word Levels for

each group of students. Each week the teacher will create a sentence or two (depending on their grade level) incorporating a minimum of two spelling words along with high frequency irregular words and possibly words learnt from previous weeks. This will assist teachers to ascertain and monitor their students' understanding and demonstration of their spelling words in a written context.

Supplementary Assessments

From each Word Level of the structured spelling lists, 25 words have been selected for use as an additional assessment for teachers who want to supplement the SWST to determine how much of a specific level a student knows. When a student's level has been found they can be informally assessed by giving them the appropriate set of words from the supplementary assessments. (SWST pp 89 – 93).

This will provide the teacher with more detailed knowledge of the student's attainments in their spelling. The supplementary assessments may also be useful for assessing and evaluating students with special needs.

Administration

In Term One, Week Four of the school year, students in Years One to Six are tested to ascertain their spelling Raw Score. The tests are administered orally in a sentence that puts the word in context and may take approximately 30 minutes each. Sentences are provided through the SWST program.

The students write their spellings on a photocopiable A4 answer sheet which the teacher then analyses for errors. There is space to record student details and then the Raw Score. This then becomes a handy and easily filed reference for the individual student.

The teacher conducts the analysis of each student's spelling test to ascertain the Word Level on a second analysis sheet. The Word Level assists the teacher in the teaching of spelling by providing a quick and easy reference for finding words with similar visual and phonological patterns. (The SWST resource provides the words). Errors on the SWST reveal information about what a student knows or needs to learn.

Testing will take place once a year with teachers being given the option to test a second time at the end of Semester Two to track student growth and progress for the current school year.

Students in Years Two to Six will learn **four structured words a week**. Students in Year One will learn **three**. (This list can be added to from other classroom lessons but are not part of the weekly structured list). The focus on learning fewer words will lead students to a greater depth of knowledge of spelling conventions.

Term One SWST results provides the teacher with a basis for spelling instruction in the classroom. The teacher can plan explicit and engaging spelling activities in their English program throughout the year that will target their students' specific spelling skills and needs.

Holy Family teachers will refer to Sacre, L. and Masterson, J. (2000) Single Word Spelling Test, GL Assessment Limited, London, UK, for direction on administering the spelling tests, marking and scoring the tests, interpreting and reporting the results, analysing the spelling errors and for learning strategies to improve spelling skills.

The following important information guidelines need to be followed by teachers for a consistent whole school approach to administering the SWST in Term One Week Four.

Guidelines for administration

As a guide Test A = Year One, Test B = Year Two, Test C = Year Three etc. However, individual students in different year levels may be given a different test according to their spelling results/data from the previous year.

SWST is intended for group administration, where a group may be as few as two or as many as a whole class. It can be undertaken in a flexible way, for example, split the test over two sessions in a day, especially for students with a high number of words to be recorded. It is not timed in its delivery.

(Students in Year One who are participating in the Forward Together Program are exempt from SWST).



The analysis of the SWST must be conducted by the classroom teacher. The analysis provides information to the teacher on the component errors in words. This determines the Word Level for each student.



Retest students as required. Do students need a high or lower level test? Students who achieve high scores (perfect or near perfect) need to be retested at the next level test and students who achieve a low score need to be retested at a lower level. (Learning Support will be able to provide some assistance in the administration and analysis of these tests and for those students who were absent).



Class data needs to be entered on to the 'Group Record Sheet' and placed in the teaching program.



Teachers need to record their individual student results on the electronic tracking sheets. These include: Raw Score, Word Level, Progress Score and Scale Score. (T-Drive 'Assessment' Folder)



In the following new school year, teachers will use the SWST results from the electronic tracking sheets to ascertain their class testing groups in Week Four Term One.

References

Sacre, L. and Masterson, J. (2000) Single Word Spelling Test, GL Assessment Limited, London, UK

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), English Scope and Sequence, Version 6.0

Forms

Nil

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