

Words for the Word Wall

What is a Word Wall?

A word wall is a display of words students use frequently in their writing. Words are added to the word wall as reinforcement after they are introduced. Students are expected to spell word-wall words correctly in their writing.

Setting Up a Word Wall

Choose a large bulletin board or wall area at students' eye level. Label it "Word Wall." Hang up large alphabet letters (upper- and lower-case letters) to label where the words will go on the word wall.

The word wall should be visible to students anywhere in the room, so they can easily use it to help them spell words. Be sure the word wall is near areas for teaching writing and reading, so you and the students can readily refer to words on the wall.

Using the Word Wall

Begin the year by writing each student's name on a card. You might cut out around the configuration of each word to help students see its visual shape. Each day, add a few names to the word wall and have students help you decide where to place each alphabetically.

As you begin formal spelling instruction, introduce to the word wall the "Special Words for Writing" or "Elephant Words" provided for each lesson. Cut them out around their configurations and mount them on brightly colored construction paper. As students consistently spell a word correctly, the word can be removed to make room for new words. Include at least one daily activity in which students review spellings of the word-wall words.

Introducing New Words

Choose one of the "Special Words for Writing" or "Elephant Words" for the unit. Write the word on the chalkboard and read it. Use the word in a context sentence. Have the students spell it with you as you point to each letter. After the students read the word, have them write it on their papers. Have them say each letter out loud as they write it. Repeat for all new words.

Rhyming Game

Ask students to find a word on the word wall that begins with _____, and rhymes with _____. For example, "The word begins with *w* and rhymes with *hill*." Have students write their guesses down and check them with the correct spelling on the word wall (*will*). Repeat with several words.

Find the Word

Write the first letter of a word from the word wall on the chalkboard. Give another clue by saying a sentence in which the word would fit. For example, "The word begins with *d* and fits in the sentence, "What will you _____ after school today?" Repeat this activity with several words from the wall.

Writing Sentences

Use several of the word-wall words in a sentence. Ask students to write the sentence they hear as you read it once and then repeat it slowly. Give students plenty of time to find the words on the word wall. Remind students to begin the sentence with a capital letter and end it with a period. Vary the activity by asking a question and having the students write a sentence that answers the question that includes the word-wall words.