

Spelling at MHA ~ Parent Guide

Through our work with **Grammarsaurus**, children learn how words are built — not just memorised.

We focus on **etymology** and **morphology** in spelling, which means understanding where words come from and how words are made up of smaller parts called **morphemes**, such as:

- **Base** – the core part of a word that carries meaning (e.g. help, move, play)
- **Affix** – a morpheme that is either a prefix or a suffix
- **Prefix** – a part added **before** the base to change its meaning (e.g. un-, re-, mis-)
- **Suffix** – a part added **after** the base to change its form or meaning (e.g. ed, -ing, -ful, -ness)
- **Stem** – a word part that includes a base and may also contain other morphemes (e.g. lovely, dangerous, laziness)

What will children be doing in spelling lessons?

- Building words using bases, stems and affixes
- Learning the **etymology** of words – understanding their origins, historical roots, and language journey
- Exploring how morphemes change the meaning of words
- Using **word matrices** to see how one base can create many new words. A word matrix is a chart that shows how one base can grow into many new words using different prefixes and suffixes. It helps children see spelling patterns and deepens their understanding of word meanings
- Writing **word sums**
(e.g. runⁿ ⊕ ing = running, help ⊕ ful = helpful, drive^e ⊕ er = driver)
- Directly applying new spelling knowledge in their writing units
- Learning **four key spelling rules** for adding suffixes:
 1. Double the final consonant letter when a word ends in a CVC pattern, then add the vowel suffix.
 2. Drop the final silent e vowel letter, then add the vowel suffix.
 3. Change the final letter y after a consonant letter to i, then add the suffix (except -ing).
 4. Just add the suffix.

How you can help at home

We encourage a **creative and playful approach** to spelling rather than learning word lists. Here are some fun ways to support your child:

- Practise **phonics** to help spell common bases correctly, especially high-frequency ones like 'look', 'call', 'read', 'watch', etc.
- Take a simple base like 'play', 'jump', or 'walk', for example. Using word sums, see how many new words you can make with different prefixes and suffixes:

play ⊕ ed = played

play ⊕ er = player

re ⊕ play = replay

un ⊕ play ⊕ able = unplayable

- Practise breaking words into **word sums** to see how words are made:

walked = walk ⊕ ed

biker = bike ⊕ er

watching = watch ⊕ ing

- Choose a new base that you have learnt, maybe of Latin or Greek origin, and explore how many **prefixes and suffixes** you can add

Why morphology matters

Learning about morphemes helps children:

- **Improve their spelling** by recognising patterns not just sounds – for example, learning that the suffix -ed is the correct way to spell past tense verbs helps avoid mistakes like 'checkt' or 'needid'
- **Understand word meanings**
Knowing the meaning of a base (like 'move') helps children make sense of related words like 'remove', 'mover', or 'movement'
- **Expand their vocabulary and improve reading comprehension more easily**
As they begin to recognise familiar word parts, they can make sense of new words on their own, supporting reading and learning



Scan me!