

January 9, 2012

Dear Parents,

Starting this week we will send home a spelling "list", and we will learn how to take a **spelling test!** This will not only help us transition into second grade, but will help us work on handwriting, word patterns, and beginning, MIDDLE, and ending sounds. (Most of us do well on beginning and ending sounds as reflected on the report card or development checklist, but many of us are struggling with the middle sounds and vowel patterns.) We will still be "making words" in class occasionally, but the homework on Monday night will now be related to the spelling words for that week:

There will be 6-8 words on the list that are based on a spelling strategy or a related pattern (same vowel sound, rhyme, etc.). Then there are extra challenge words (that follow the spelling strategy or pattern).

**Monday:** Get list. Do homework page. Parents can help. Return homework to school. (Keep the list)

**Tuesday:** Work on words at home. (See suggestions below)

**Wednesday:** Practice test at school. We will check it and correct it in class. Then you will know which words need more work.

**Thursday:** Work on any words that are still giving your child trouble.

**Friday:** Final test

Please do not work more than 5 or 10 minutes a day on spelling. At this age, it is usually better for the children to write the words instead of just spelling them orally. They can make the words with magnets on the refrigerator or write them in the sand in the backyard or on a chalkboard, white board, tablet paper, or in a cookie sheet that has corn meal or sugar in it. They might even "sky write" the words really big in the air. Encourage them to sound out the words as they spell. (This will obviously help them sound out words when they read, too.) Chants are fun. Use your imagination and have fun. This test will also "encourage" us to use good penmanship, so please watch for and praise good pencil position, good letter formation and neat handwriting. Letters written backwards will be incorrect.

This first list will be easy so that we can concentrate on formatting our paper for the test and not worry too much about actually learning to spell the words. Then the words will get more difficult as we go along.

As always, thank you for your help and support.

First Grade Team

P.S. On "short" 4-day weeks, we'll have the practice test the day before the "final" test. (ex: on Thursday before Friday)

P.S.S. You might want to hang on to this note for future reference. Thanks.