

## Developing A Visual Checking Sense with *What Looks Right?*

(From Patricia M. Cunningham, *What Really Matters in Spelling*, Pearson, 2012)

*What Looks Right?* is an activity to help your students develop a visual checking sense and to teach them how to use the dictionary to check the spelling of a word. To begin a *What Looks Right?* lesson, create two columns headed by two words that rhyme and have different spelling patterns. Have your students write the same words in columns on their papers.

whale

trail

Have your students pronounce and spell the words and lead them to realize that the words rhyme but have a different spelling pattern. Highlight or underline the spelling pattern in *whale* and *trail* and have them do the same on their papers. Tell them that there are many words that rhyme with *whale* and *trail* and that you can't tell just by saying the words which spelling patterns these words will have. Next, say a word that rhymes with *whale* and *trail* and write it both ways, saying, "If the word is spelled like *whale*, it will be j-a-l-e. If it is spelled like *trail*, it will be j-a-i-l." Write these two possible spellings under the appropriate word.

whale

trail

jale

jail

Tell your students to decide which one "looks right" to them and to write **only the one** they think is correct. When the students have decided which one looks right and written

this word in the correct column, have your students find the word in the dictionary to “prove they are right.” Don’t wait for everyone to find the correct spelling. As soon as anyone has found it, ask all your students to turn to that page and verify the correct spelling. If any of your students guessed wrong, have them erase the incorrect spelling and write the correct spelling. Cross out the spelling you wrote that is not correct and continue with another example.

For the first examples, choose common words that you think most of your students will instantly recognize which is the correct spelling. As you write each word, explain your thinking. “If it is spelled like *whale*, it will be n-a-l-e, but if it is spelled like *trail*, it will be n-a-i-l.”

whale	trail
<del>jale</del>	jail
nale	nail

Once you have written the word both ways, have your students choose the one they think is correct and write only that one. When they have made their choice, have them find the word to prove they were correct and then fix any incorrect spellings. Cross out your incorrect spelling.

whale	trail
<del>jale</del>	jail
<del>nale</del>	nail

Continue to add words and have your students guess and then check. As the lesson goes on, they should get quicker at finding the words in the dictionary.

whale	trail
jale	jail
nale	nail
scale	scat
snale	snail

If this spelling pattern has any homophones, include these without letting on that both are possible. If one of your students tells you that both are right, tell them they can write both and then prove it by finding both in the dictionary. When they have found both, have them read the definitions and help them understand how they can use the dictionary to determine which homophone has the meaning they are trying to spell.

whale	trail
jale	jail
nale	nail
scale	scat
snale	snail
sale	sail

Continue to add words, interspersing any homophones. At the end of the list, add some longer words to show your students that we use the same procedure for checking the spelling of longer words. If your students are not very quick at finding words in the

dictionary, you may want to stop the lesson when they tire and continue it on a second or even a third day.

whale	trail
jale	jail
nale	nail
scale	<del>scat</del>
<del>snale</del>	snail
sale	sail
stale	<del>stait</del>
male	mail
bale	bail
<del>quale</del>	quail
tale	tail
pale	pail
fale	fail
<del>detale</del>	detail
<del>toenale</del>	toenail
exhale	<del>exhait</del>
<del>monerale</del>	monorail
<del>fingerale</del>	fingernail
tattletale	<del>tattletail</del>

Doing some *What Looks Right?* lessons will take some time but consider all that your students are learning. In addition to developing a visual checking sense, they are learning how you use a dictionary to determine the correct spelling of a word and how the dictionary definitions will tell you which homophone has the meaning you want. You may want to post a chart with these strategies after you have done several lessons so that students learn to independently use these spelling strategies when they are writing.

### Check your Spelling

1. If you write a word and it doesn't "look right," try writing the word with a different spelling pattern.
2. If you still are not sure, check the one you think might be right by finding the word in the dictionary.
3. If you are not sure which homophone (sail, sale; deer, dear) to use, find the words in the dictionary and read the definition to decide which one is right.

In addition to *whale* and *trail*, your word wall contains four other pairs of words you can use as key words for *What Looks Right?* lessons. Here are some lessons for ote, oat; ite, ight; ue,ew; and oon, une.

vote

float

~~gote~~

goat

~~bote~~

boat

note

~~neat~~

~~eote~~

coat

tote

~~teat~~

quote

~~quate~~

~~throte~~

throat

wrote

~~wreat~~

ote

oat

~~sailbote~~

sailboat

devote

~~devoat~~

remote

~~remoat~~

~~raincote~~

raincoat

~~lifebote~~

lifeboat

white

tonight

bite

~~bight~~

brite

bright

<del>tite</del>	tight
kite	<del>kight</del>
<del>fite</del>	fight
site	sight
<del>flite</del>	flight
quite	<del>quight</del>
write	<del>wright</del>
<del>lite</del>	light
<del>slite</del>	slight
<del>midnite</del>	midnight
invite	<del>invight</del>
polite	<del>polight</del>
<del>flashlite</del>	flashlight
<del>bullfite</del>	bullfight
<del>termite</del>	<del>termight</del>
unite	<del>unight</del>

true

new

~~grue~~

grew

~~drue~~

drew

clue

~~cluw~~

~~knue~~

knew

glue	glew
blue	blew
due	dew
cue	<del>cew</del>
<del>chue</del>	chew
<del>stue</del>	stew
<del>fue</del>	few
<del>thru</del>	threw
<del>outgrue</del>	outgrew
pursue	<del>pursew</del>
<del>curfue</del>	curfew
<del>unscreue</del>	unscrew
<del>reue</del>	renew
<del>cashue</del>	cashew

June	soon
<del>mune</del>	moon
<del>spune</del>	spoon
tune	<del>teen</del>
<del>gune</del>	goon
dune	<del>deen</del>
prune	<del>preen</del>



<del>nune</del>	noon
<del>balune</del>	balloon
<del>cartune</del>	cartoon
<del>platune</del>	platoon
<del>typhune</del>	typhoon
immune	<del>immoon</del>
<del>racune</del>	raccoon
<del>afternune</del>	afternoon
<del>babune</del>	baboon
<del>coecune</del>	cocoon
Neptune	<del>Neptoon</del>

The words in this set will allow you to teach four more What Looks Right? lessons with words that have two or three common spelling patterns. Here are words you might use for those lessons.

afraid	grade
<del>traid</del>	trade
paid	<del>pade</del>
raid	<del>rade</del>
<del>waid</del>	wade
maid	made

braid	<del>brade</del>
aid	<del>ede</del>
<del>spaid</del>	spade
<del>shaid</del>	shade
<del>faid</del>	fade
<del>blaid</del>	blade
mermaid	<del>mermaid</del>
bridesmaid	<del>bridesmade</del>
<del>areaid</del>	arcade
<del>paraid</del>	parade
<del>barricaid</del>	barricade
<del>blockaid</del>	blockade
<del>lemonaid</del>	lemonade
<del>lampshaid</del>	lampshade
train	crane
<del>cain</del>	cane
<del>lain</del>	lane
brain	<del>brane</del>
<del>sain</del>	sane
pain	pane
rain	<del>rane</del>

plain	plane
chain	<del>chane</del>
strain	<del>strane</del>
sprain	<del>sprane</del>
main	mane
grain	<del>grane</del>
explain	<del>explane</del>
complain	<del>complane</del>
<del>airplain</del>	airplane
remain	<del>remain</del>
<del>insain</del>	insane
contain	<del>contane</del>

year	cheer
ear	<del>eer</del>
<del>stear</del>	steer
near	<del>neer</del>
dear	deer
gear	<del>geer</del>
year	<del>yeer</del>
spear	<del>speer</del>

hear	<del>heer</del>
clear	<del>cleer</del>
<del>reindear</del>	reindeer
appear	<del>appeer</del>
<del>pinocar</del>	pioneer
<del>enginear</del>	engineer
<del>voluntear</del>	volunteer
disappear	<del>disappeer</del>

green

mean

machine

~~eleen~~

clean

~~eline~~

teen

~~tean~~

~~tine~~

been

bean

bine

queen

~~quean~~

quine

~~leen~~

lean

line

screen

~~screan~~

~~serine~~

seen

~~sean~~

sine

~~deen~~

dean

dine

keen

~~kean~~

kine

between

~~betwean~~

~~betwine~~

~~sardeen~~

sardean

sardine

<del>submareen</del>	<del>submarean</del>	submarine
<del>fifteen</del>	<del>fiftean</del>	<del>fiftine</del>
<del>sunscreen</del>	<del>sunscreen</del>	<del>sunserine</del>
<del>magazeen</del>	<del>magazean</del>	magazine
<del>routeen</del>	<del>routean</del>	routine
<del>nineteen</del>	<del>ninetean</del>	<del>ninetine</del>
<del>jellybeen</del>	<del>jellybean</del>	<del>jellybine</del>
<del>trampoleen</del>	<del>trampolean</del>	trampoline
<del>tamboureen</del>	<del>tambourean</del>	tambourine
<del>seventeen</del>	<del>seventean</del>	<del>seventine</del>