



# WORD STUDY

## A Guide for Parents



### Closed Sort

The student lays out the headers and sorts their words or pictures according to the categories the headers create.

### Blind Sort

The headers are layed out in front of the child. A parent reads the words or pictures and the child points to the correct category- they do not see the word or picture until it is laid down. After all the words/pictures are read, the child and their parent read through each column to check the word. If there is a mistake, the child moves the card to the correct category.

### Written Sort

Before this activity begins the students label their paper with the features they are studying. The parent picks up one card at a time and reads the word aloud without showing it to the child. The student writes the word in the correct corresponding column for that feature. This activity reduces a student's reliance of visual cues.

### Word Hunt

During a word hunt students search through text they have already read to find words similar to the patterns they are studying. The goal of the hunt is to take isolated word work and link the target features to a connected text. Students then write the words they find under the correct feature headings.

### Speed Sort

The sort is the same as the regular sort except that the child sorts the words as fast as he can. Students check their work, then sort again to try to beat their own time.

### How can parents help their child with their word study at home?

Parents should be an active participant during the weekly word sorts at home. Begin the week by reviewing the sort words or pictures with your child. As they show you the headings or categories, have them explain what each one means. Also review the meanings of words, especially homophones & homographs. After the child sorts their words or cards, have your child verbally explain why they have sorted them in this particular way. Finally, have your child read through the pictures or words to make sure there are no errors.

### What should parents do when children make mistakes?

If your child makes a mistake, you could prompt him or her by saying, "I see a word in this column that doesn't look right to me." Encourage the child to identify the mistake independently. If there is still confusion, help the child make the correction.

References  
Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction by Donald Bear, Marcia Invernizzi, Francine Johnston, and Shane Templeton

Troy School District  
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## What is Word Study?

Word Study provides students with opportunities to investigate and understand the patterns in words. Students also use these word patterns to puzzle out meanings of words that help them understand content area vocabulary. *Words Their Way* is an alternative to traditional spelling instruction. It is based on learning word patterns rather than memorizing a list of unconnected words. Knowledge of these patterns means that students don't learn to spell just one word at a time; rather, they learn to spell a group of words that follow a pattern. Reading, writing and spelling are closely connected, so utilizing word study instruction helps students develop literacy skills that will be used when reading and writing.



## What does Word Study look like in the classroom?

Word Study instruction is provided in small groups based on a student's specific developmental spelling stage. Students are taught at their instructional level - not too easy, or too difficult - and matches their literacy needs based on assessment. During instruction, pictures, words or vocabulary are sorted in hands-on learning activities that require children to examine, discriminate, and make critical judgments about sounds, spelling patterns, and word meanings. Students compare and contrast categories of word features to discover similarities and differences between categories. The features students learn during sorts are applied to new words in writing and reading.

### **SORTS**

Students are taught sorts gradually in the classroom as determined by the classroom teacher. All sorts are not necessarily used every time. Be sure to follow the instructions given by the teacher.

**PHONICS+SPELLING+VOCABULARY  
INSTRUCTION =  
WORD STUDY**

### **How do teachers plan for Word Study Instruction?**

Students are assessed periodically to determine their current level of spelling development. Teachers plan instruction for small groups that focus on moving each child forward in that development.

Depending on individual need, students may take scheduled tests to assess understanding of focused features. Informal assessments are also conducted through weekly word study assignments and in daily writing across the curriculum for example.

