

THRASS SPELLING WORKSHOP

This sheet is for parents who couldn't make it to our workshop. Hope this makes sense. Feel free to come and see me if you have any questions.

Andrea Mace

The THRASS Program identifies 20 vowel phonemes and 24 consonant phonemes. A phoneme can be represented by different combinations of letters, eg(a, a-e, ai, ay, all make the ay as in play sound). The vowels are the most difficult to establish and correct. They have to be recognised by ear. Vowels are sounds made by allowing the breath to pass freely through the mouth. The tongue and the lips alter their positions for each vowel. They are always voiced (vocal chords must vibrate), and the tip of the tongue should always touch the lower teeth.

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH THEIR SPELLING HOMEWORK

- Stretch the word out to establish the number of phonemes (sounds that make up the word not letters) eg d r i n k (5 phonemes), s w ee t (4 phonemes), c o ff ee, (4 phonemes), g ar d e n (5 phonemes)
- To establish how many are vowel phonemes, clap the syllables for the word eg gar den has 2 syllables. The number of syllables is dictated by the number of vowel phonemes, so if you know there are 2 syllables there must be 2 vowel phonemes. In the word 'garden' the vowel phonemes are "ar" as in car, and "e" as in wooden. The 'ar' is made up of two letters but it is only one phoneme.
- During our workshop, many parents had difficulty hearing the two consonant phonemes at the end of words like drink, nest, milk, because we blend them together as we say them.
- Some words in our English language have to be learned visually, the rules of THRASS don't even apply eg one, two,
- Children do internalise familiar words eventually and spell them without thinking. As they become competent spellers and writers, they rely less on sounding out words.
- I will now give some examples to try to make sense of what I have said -

Word		Number of vowel phonemes	Number of consonant phonemes	Number of syllables
dolphin	d o l p h i n	2	4	2
happy	h a p p y	2	2	2
father	f a t h e r	2	2	2
quilt	q u i l t	1	4	1
computer	c o m p u t e r	3	4	3

Note that the letter Q and X are represented on the THRASS Chart as follows - Q makes the C as in cat sound so it goes in that group and X (in X-ray) is made up of three phonemes - 'e' as in bed, 'c' as in cat and 's' as in sit. In 'fox' the X is made up of two phonemes - 'c' as in cat and 's' as in sit. Very tricky!!!!