

Literacy Essentials: *The Journey From Spelling to Reading Why Is There No Spelling Lists/ Homework?*

The goal of homework is to provide **effective practice** for children as they move toward mastery of various literacy skills. The heart of this goal revolves around the question of “What is **effective practice**?” The person involved with practice must know the program well enough to provide oversight and correction in order to be effective. Practice makes progress and permanent, not perfect. So, the need for the practices to be accurate cannot be overstated. JXC teachers and other trained individuals are best able to provide effective practice with this specific literacy program, *Literacy Essentials*.

Phonograms

Effective practice of the spelling patterns or phonograms requires knowledge of the handwriting program and the sounds represented by the phonograms. Phonograms are taught and practiced in a multisensory manner that includes handwriting. The handwriting program is not a copy method. Students are given specific verbal explanations for where to place and move their pencil in order to form each letter. Therefore, parents would need to understand the language of instruction for handwriting. *Parents, please go online to www.accessliteracy.com/parents to view a list of the phonograms your scholar is learning.*

Spelling

Spelling words are not practiced by calling out letters, nor are they practiced by rote copying of words multiple times. Letter names are referenced from time to time, but for the low to mid elementary scholars, phonograms are referenced as they are gaining phonological awareness - primarily phonemic awareness. Again, the program utilizes a multisensory approach. With that in mind, parents would first need knowledge of how to use the spoken/auditory recording of the word for spelling (which would include correct syllabication for multi-syllable words and correct “say to spell” pronunciations, e.g., *said*). Next, the parent would need to help the student determine which phonogram is used to spell the sounds they hear (e.g., see vs sea, which spelling pattern for the sound /E/). The parent would need to understand the rules of orthography and the marking system. Without this knowledge the parent is unable to offer the support necessary for “effective practice.”

Given the complexities of teaching orthography, our school wants to communicate to you, parents, that the classroom teacher will own the responsibility for teaching to master handwriting, phonograms, and spelling. Spelling words are practiced in multiple sessions throughout the school day. Spelling words will not be sent home for rote memory/practice. The spelling words will come after the mastery assessment in the form of a Reading List to where you will see how your scholar can then read what is spelled. Scholars practice reading the spelling words in each lesson/session as well. *Attendance and participation in class is vital in order to accomplish mastery.* Your teacher should communicate phonograms your scholar is struggling with and/or phonemic awareness activities to practice at home. Further assistance will be provided after that is utilized.

Ideas for Effective Literacy Practice at Home

- With K-1, the parents should read aloud to their children and once the children are reading in the classroom, the student can read to the parent at home. Additional resources, listed above, will be communicated.

Ineffective Homework Ideas

- Rote copying of letters for handwriting practice, phonograms or spelling words multiple times.
- Watching videos contrary to the letter sounds(phonemes) presented at school.