

## Spelling Dictation

**Decoding words accurately, reading words fluently, and spelling words correctly are the three key skill strands developed in this phonics program.** English is a phonetic language because of the fact that our letters each represent a specific sound or in some instances more than one sound. The decoding process consists of associating sounds with the already-known letters in the word and blending those sounds together to identify a word. The activity of spelling reverses this process. The identity of the word is already known; it is the spelling of the word that must be discovered. **The student first identifies the number of sounds he hears in the dictated word and then tracks or represents those sounds by writing the letters of the alphabet which represent the various individual sounds he has identified within the dictated word.** Spelling dictation is an intrinsic part of this phonics program; half of the instructional activity in this program consists of dictating the words from each lesson in the book to students. **A major purpose in dictation is to establish for the student the direct and consistent relationship in English between letters and their sounds.**

Most individuals who have experienced a lifetime of difficulty in learning to read and write believe the language is not learnable because it is arbitrary. And the corollary to the belief that something is arbitrary is that it is also, therefore, unfair. **Stress from the very beginning that the English language is predictable, that there exists an underlying set of rules, and that by systematically learning and applying these rules, virtually anyone can learn to read and to spell successfully.**

**Dictation Procedure for Section One**

1. The teacher pronounces the word two times. **"The word is jam, jam."** If necessary, the teacher should exaggerate the pronunciation of the individual sounds in the word in order for the more challenged students to be able to hear those individual sounds.
2. The teacher identifies the number of sounds contained in the word and makes those sounds. The teacher says, **"three sounds (and pronounces them slowly and clearly) - /j/, /a/ (short a sound), /m/."**
3. Students write the letters in the word on dry-erase marker board or on practice paper as they hear each individual sound in the word pronounced by the teacher.
4. The teacher pronounces the word a final time. The teacher says, **"jam."**
5. Students hold up their marker boards for the teacher to see. If the teacher sees a student has misspelled the word, the teacher will say to the student, **"Think about it."** The teacher will not tell the student how to spell the word but will instead pronounce the word again and exaggerate whatever element in the word the student has misspelled. Even if the student continues to misspell the word, the teacher does not tell the student the correct spelling of the word at this point.
6. The teacher asks students to say the word. The teacher says, **"Say the word."**
7. Students say, **"jam."**
8. The teacher asks how many sounds are in the word. The teacher asks, **"How many sounds?"**
9. Students identify the number of sounds in the word. Students reply, **"three."**
10. The teacher asks for the first sound in the word *jam*. The teacher asks, **"first sound?"** Students do not say the name of the letter *j* but instead make the sound, **"/j/."** The teacher writes the letter *j* on the board.
11. The teacher asks for second sound in the word *jam*. **"The teacher asks, "second sound?"** Students do not call out the name of the letter *a* but instead make the sound, **"/a/"** (short *a* sound). The teacher writes the letter *a* on the board.
12. The teacher asks for the third sound in the word *jam*. **"The teacher asks, "third sound?"** Students do not call out the name of the letter *m* but instead make the sound, **"/m/."** The teacher writes the letter *m* on the board.
13. Students check to make sure they have spelled the word correctly and make any changes in their spelling of the word at this time. If a word contains the letter teams *qu* or *ck*, those letter teams are underlined at this point. (Beginning on page 74 additional consonant teams are introduced.) If a word contains the letter *s* where *s* represents its second sound, the letter *s* is double underlined at this time.