



PAT

Spelling Skills

Achievement band descriptions



Word types

PAT Spelling Skills distinguishes four word types, each associated with a conceptual aspect:

- **Simple base (phonology)**
This means focusing on common regular sounds of consonants and short vowels. Phonology begins with phonemic awareness and letter–sound knowledge, moving to phonetically plausible representations of sounds, and then accurate representation of all sounds in a word.
- **Simple base with affix (morphology)**
Affix juncture rules are applied where the base word spelling is regular, so attention is on the juncture rules and their exceptions. At higher bands the focus is on less common examples including more unusual exceptions to affix juncture rules.
- **Complex base (orthography)**
This includes recognising words by sight, knowing a range of spelling rules for base words, knowing irregular forms of words (eg plural, past tense) recognising legal and illegal letter combinations, and knowing a range of more complex phonic letter–sound relationships relevant to spelling.
- **Complex base with affix (morphology)**
Affix juncture rules are applied where the base word spelling is not straightforward. This includes base words with irregular forms such as plurals and past tense (eg gone is classified as a complex base with an affix as the conventional ‘ed’ to indicate past tense is not applied here). Knowing root meanings and recognising foreign words also provides support for spelling.

The purpose of differentiating between simple base and complex base is to provide diagnostic support to teachers to identify if students can apply basic phonological knowledge to plausibly represent all the sounds in a word. Research shows that this basic level of phonological skill is the first step in spelling development. Complex base words cover all other non-regular spellings. Research also shows that there is no clear hierarchy of skill development. There are many ways in which word spelling may be complex including across very common words. Students need to learn a range of skills including simply knowing how to spell some irregular words.

The purpose of differentiating between simple base words with an affix and complex base words is to provide diagnostic support to teachers to identify if students know the affix juncture rules when the base word spelling is simple, compared with knowing both complex base spelling and affix juncture rules.

The focus for each of the word types varies across the tests as the spelling words become more difficult. The easier tests have a greater focus on regular base spelling words and simple affix juncture rules with some high-frequency complex words. The harder tests have a greater focus on complex base spelling words and more complex affix juncture rules and exceptions.

Item types

There are four item types used in PAT Spelling Skills, each requiring the application of different skills.

- **Complete the word** items require students to hear a short, simple word and then drag and drop the missing letter or letters.
- **Listen and spell** is a dictation task. Students hear the word, hear it in a sentence that supports common usage of the word, hear it again and then type it. Where homonyms are used, the sentence clearly supports the meaning of the word.
- **Select the correct spelling** involves identifying which of four options is the correct spelling of a word.
- **Correct the misspelled word** items include identifying the incorrect word in a sentence with about five words of the same difficulty as the misspelled word. Students then type the correct version into the answer box. No clues are provided about which word might be incorrect.

Achievement band descriptions and examples

Achievement band 170 and above

Students at this level can spell, identify and correct mistakes in very difficult and uncommon words.

*subconscious,
perseverance*

Achievement band 160–169

Students at this level can spell long words with repeated sounds spelled differently.

insufficiently

They can identify and correct misspellings of long, irregular and challenging words with affixes.

bureaucracy

Achievement band 150–159

Students at this level can spell longer, less familiar words with challenging vowel combinations.

reasonable

They can identify longer words with inconsistent affixes.

particularly

Students can correct misspellings of challenging words with affixes.

inconceivable

Achievement band 140–149

Students at this level can spell words with non-phonetic spelling.

luggage

They can identify the correct spelling of longer words with challenging affixes.

independence

Students can correct misspellings of long and irregular words with affixes.

assistance

Achievement band 130–139

Students at this level can spell words with difficult vowel combinations.

opinions

They can identify the correct spelling of longer words with affixes.

disagreement

Students can recognise errors in words with non-phonetic spelling.

bought

Achievement band 120–129

Students at this level can spell challenging one-syllable words and regular polysyllabic words.

whole

They can identify the correct spelling of difficult, long and irregular words.

replies

Students can identify and correct misspellings of longer, compound and irregular words.

statement

Achievement band 110–119

Students at this level can spell regular, short words, some with affixes.

lunch

They can identify the correct spelling of longer words with regular affixes, and they are beginning to be able to identify compound words.

afternoon

Students can identify and correct some misspellings in regular words of about seven letters.

finally

Achievement band 100–109

Students at this level can spell common words that are fairly regular and short, without affixes.

crawl

They can identify the correct spelling of longer words which may have irregular spelling or with affixes.

running

Achievement band 90–99

Students can identify the correct spelling of one-syllable words with blended letters or irregular spelling.

*identify the **ck** in lock*

They can spell one-syllable words with regular spelling, including regular affixes such as '-ed'.

called

Achievement band 80–89

Students at this level can identify letter sounds in frequently used, phonetic words of up to five letters.

*identify the **oo** in good*

They can identify the correct spelling of phonetic words of up to five letters, including some regular affixes.

deep

Achievement band 79 and below

Students at this level can identify letter sounds in very frequently used, phonetic words.

*identify the **i** in big*

They can identify the correct spelling of simple words up to three letters.

top