

Spelling Works



Synopsis

After more than thirty years of teaching writing skills and developing his own unique mechanics exercises at a top New York school, Jim Halverson decided to share his successful methods with a wider audience. The result is *Spelling Works*, a book that makes the difficult task of English orthography both engaging and fun. As Halverson says, "Every teacher knows the inefficiency of teaching spelling by rote memorization. The kids study for the quizzes, do well on them, and then misspell many of the same words the next day in their own writing." To involve students, he created exercises that are each part of an ongoing story, and at the end of each unit they review the new concept with games and a "spelling maze." An added benefit of exercises that are stories is that the students also learn better proofreading skills as they scan sentences for misspellings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jim Halverson grew up in Indianapolis, graduated from Brown University, and lived in Paris. After teaching in Baltimore, he and his wife Anita moved to New York where he taught at Saint Ann's, a private nonsectarian school, for more than thirty years and also wrote six books for Scholastic, Inc. He is now retired, and he and Anita split their time between New York and Maine.

This book is outstanding. We have recently begun to use this book in our home classroom for our 3rd, 4th and 7th grade students. The kids are excited when I pull it out because they find it fun, especially my 7th grader who has struggled with spelling. I was skeptical that a spelling curriculum

that claimed to be for 4th-8th graders would really work for such a diverse age group, but the lessons are straightforward and the presentation of the spelling rules can be understood easily by most children. Best of all, I have seen results already in their written work, because they are understanding and remembering the lessons. While it is expensive for a softcover book, the pages are reproducible and can be used for many students. Still, if I had just one student I would buy this book and consider it a good investment, because I am seeing better results in this short period than I have seen with anything else we have used over the years.

Thought my rising 6th grader was just a poor speller. Bought this book in the hope that she might improve a little this summer before she started middle school. After just four chapters, I am feeling pretty optimistic that she will improve dramatically. She seems to be grasping the rules and really learning HOW to spell! The book moves through the rules of spelling systematically -- one rule per short chapter. She doesn't mind doing a chapter at a time since it doesn't take that long. It has also made it easy for me to help her practice each rule -- I just create our own spelling list for each chapter. I recommend this book highly!

Bought this for my 10 year old who was a poor speller. We have only started using it but there is already a noticeable improvement. The lessons are concise, easy to explain, and easy for him to do but effective. That's what counts. I would recommend this to help a struggling speller.

Love love love this spelling book for my 7th graders. Spelling is broken down into easy-to-follow strategies. Highly recommend.

Not totally sure if this book does what it claims yet. I was more 'wordy' than I thought it would be rather than activity pages but the student I got it for seems to like it.

Title: Spelling Works Author: Jim Halverson Graphic Artist: Jack Ryan Publisher: Better Karma Publishing ISBN: 978-0984775347 "The first task of English teachers is to make writing enjoyable and fulfilling, not drudgery, for if the students think about writing in a positive way, then they will want to become better spellers," Jim Halverson states in his book, "Spelling Works - New and Improved Lessons and Mazes to Help Students Master Spelling Rules and Spot Their Own Errors." This over-sized paperback book is one hundred and seventeen pages. With the author having taught in private school for over thirty years, the book is targeted toward children in grade five and above but

can be a good teaching tool for those new to the complicated English language. Artist Jack Ryan does sophomoric yet sometimes humorous drawings that enhance the reading. In the age of electronics, most children do not have a love for orthography or syllabification so teachers and parents need any creative tools to aide them in the process. In Halverson's book, there are twelve units that discuss and dissect spelling nuances with a thirteen page answer guide at the end. After a short introduction, each unit has a "for the teacher" section first with an overview and teaching notes. Each unit starts with an explanation of the spelling rule, practices, hints, tips, and then a fun challenge or maze related to the spelling issue, sometimes including an illustration or a "did you know that" sidebar. The twelve rules covered pertain to syllable division, root words, doubling one-syllable words, the final silent "e" and "y," the "i" before "e," apostrophes in contractions, plurals and singular possessives, homophones, endings and stress accenting. With so many hands-on practices and games to engage the reader, this is an innocuously fun way to learn tips such as words ending with "us" or "cle" are usually nouns while those ending with "ous" and "cal" are adjectives, coining is making up a known root word with new affixes, or apostrophes are always placed where letters from one of the words have been omitted, not where two words have been joined together. If your student is struggling with this topic and memorization is not working, this easy-to-do and understand textbook may be the key to establishing new habits in writing. One would hope the writer has a book on punctuation similar to this to help a student further excel in spelling words properly. This book was furnished by the publicist for review purposes.

This book is a great way to inject more fun and interest into the often mundane task of spelling. Most of us learn spelling by memorizing endless lists of words. Jim Halverson's approach is different. He attempts to demystify spelling and condense it to a series of logical rules. Some are familiar to us, like "i before e except after c" and some are more obscure. Once you learn Halverson's rules, you should be able to spell with greater confidence and accuracy. *Spelling Works* is comprised of 12 lessons. Each lesson has an overview, some introductory material that can be used to design a lesson plan, clever worksheet exercises to practice the underlying concept and a review maze. You can tell that this was written by an experienced teacher and author who clearly has a passion for spelling and the English language.*A review copy was furnished by the publisher.

I just received this book so can't actually review it yet, but I want to correct what another reviewer said. This book is NOT reproducible. You will need a book for each child. Even if it were reproducible, you'd have to spend so much time copying, it wouldn't be worth it. Better to just buy

the book, support the author, and enjoy!

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