

Simply Classical Level 4 Language Arts Guidelines

Spelling

In Level 4, phonics instruction will coordinate with reading selections and will then be reinforced through the student's daily spelling lessons. Decoding (phonics) promotes encoding (spelling) and as the student advances, each works to embolden the other. We continue work on these essential abilities in both English and Latin to increase fluency in reading and writing. Simply Classical Level 4 promotes grammar-level mastery of phonics and spelling through *Traditional Spelling*.

We selected *Traditional Spelling Book One* not only for ease of use and clear visual presentation, but also for the thorough review that effectively builds on everything covered in *Simply Classical Spelling: Step-by-Step Words Books One and Two* from Simply Classical Curriculum Levels 2 and 3. While *Traditional Spelling Book One* might have moved too quickly for our younger Simply Classical students in Levels 2 or 3, its neatly sequential progression is perfect to achieve both review and mastery with our students in Simply Classical Curriculum Level 4.

In many ways, *Traditional Spelling* seems so simple, but this comprehensive program includes everything needful in spelling for our children with special learning needs in Level 4. Moreover, the exercises and teaching methods in *Traditional Spelling* are supported by strong research including these features:

- Systematic review of phonics, phonemes, and sight words (previously learned in SC 1, 2, 3)
- Focus on mastery of new spelling patterns, phonemes, and sight words
- Detailed practice in word study for improved observational skills in becoming "word detectives"
- Instruction with prefixes, suffixes, plurals, contractions
- Easy-to-teach, predictable lessons
- Multi-sensory teaching, visual-auditory practice with movement activities
- Strategically color-coded phonemes
- Spelling with *meaning*—each lesson includes definitions, and no-fluff age-appropriate stories teach science (salt, photosynthesis) and American history (Washington, Lewis and Clark) with the spelling words!

We follow the five-day *Traditional Spelling* schedule in our Level 4 Curriculum Manual. For those who need a four-day schedule, simply **combine Day Two and Day Three into one day for a four-day week** with the test given on the fourth day. If possible, however, we recommend following the Teacher Manual for a five-day spelling schedule with four days of instruction, review, and practice followed by a quick review and test on the fifth day.

Diligent work in *Traditional Spelling* this year will produce satisfying results in reading. Spelling is the lost art that quickly improves a student's writing while solidifying his reading. Better spellers make better readers, so take time to prepare and teach each lesson.

Suggestions for Teaching Traditional Spelling

Before Day One each week

- Prep words for the week on sentence strips with colorful letters as described in the *Traditional Spelling* Teacher Manual or before the first day of the lesson, write words on the board in black marker.
- Pull the coordinating Phonogram Card(s).
- Mark the coordinating page(s) of *Classical Phonics*.
- Place the word cards on display for the entire week.
- Prepare the student's notebook for the upcoming week.
- Check to see that each student has a sharpened red, blue, and black pencil.

Teaching Day One each week

- **Recite & Review:** Plan to begin the lesson by reviewing the previous week's material on which students have already been tested. Add only any previous material correlating with the day's list. Example: If you will introduce a long vowel team, review other long vowel teams students have learned.
- **Present New Material:**
 1. Have student open to the first page of the lesson. Read the Phonics Focus together. Read the new list aloud so the student hears the words pronounced correctly.
 2. Say, Spell, Say: Conduct this from the gray word box on page one of the lesson as the student follows along with one finger using strong, clear voices.
 3. Define: Ask the student to define the words they know and, with your help, learn meanings to other words. Bring student answers to a correct, simple definition at your student's level. Clarify meanings and spellings of any homophones in the list (blue vs. blew, so vs. sew).
 4. Reread: Ask students to listen to the list one more time, but this time encourage them to listen for sounds the words have in common. When teaching different sounds (soft c / soft g), group similar words and read stressing the common sound in each group. Ask students what the words in each group have in common.
 5. Instruct: Read the Instructions aloud. Ask the student to take out her blue checking pencil for highlighting instructions. Reread each heading on the page, such as *Write the words where the long /a/ sounds spelled ai*, and have the student circle important information (ai) to help her follow directions and to reduce questions during quiet work time.
- **Practice:** Study with the student the oral, written, or listening activities outlined in the Teacher Guide. After looking at each spelling pattern from the Phonics Focus, pin the Phonics Flashcards up on the board for review during the week.
- **Written Work:**
 1. Ask the student to wait before picking up her pencil. Teach the instructions using the marked list of words on the board for reference. Tell the student to take out her pencil and be ready to write. Check posture, paper tilt, and pencil grip. State in the same way each time, *Everyone is ready. You may now begin.* With the same phrasing each time, students develop the good habit of waiting for the instruction.
 2. Ask students to make a small mark next to words on the list as they use them. This is especially helpful with fill-in-the-blank sentences and becomes a good strategy for test-taking. Do not let students mark through or cover the whole word. Explain that students will use the list all week, so students must be able to see words clearly.
 3. Give her a specified time. If she finishes early she is to check work for accuracy, find and make 3-5 improvements.

Before Days Two and Three each week

- Prepare to teach the first portions with student books closed, as indicated in the *Traditional Spelling* Teacher Manual.
- **Preparation:** On the board display flashcards and spelling words, activities left-to-right in order, and a list to review the week's sounds / spellings. Write any fill-in-the-blank activities on the board.

Teaching Days Two to Four each week

More thorough practice of the Phonics Focus.

- **Review and Recite:** Review the week's Phonics Focus and Phonics Flashcards. Recite together the week's list in Say, Spell, Say format.
- **Practice:** Use planned activities from the Teacher Guide and a quick Word Study Game. As the student finds words that answer questions, mark any spellings, teams and blends, and silent e on the master list written on the board. Try to use a different color for each question to help the student see phonograms, prepare for the written activity, and become familiar with the colorful letter activity.

- **Quick Word Study Game:** For this game the student needs a mini whiteboard, a marker, and an eraser. Keep score using tally marks. Using the Word Study questions in the Teacher Guide, ask the question, tell how many answers to look for, and tell them how many points the answers are worth. She write her answer. If she answers accurately and answers in Say, Spell, Say format, she gets a point. Example: *Which two words have the long /a/ sound spelled with an ai? Each answer is worth one point.* Pause. Let her write her answer. If it is correct, she then says her answer to earn the full point, “rain, r-a-i-n, rain.” (Continue moving swiftly through the list but stop if fatigue becomes apparent. Resume at that spot the next day.) One point per full answer. (Option: Challenge questions are worth 5 points.) Award an extra privilege for attaining a high score or simply congratulate the student for a good score.
- **Written Work**
 1. Page 2, Column 1: After reviewing and highlighting instructions, students complete a variety of written activities, such as alphabetical order. The first few times, give a mini-lesson on the skills.
 2. Page 2, Colorful Letters: Plan extra time the first 3-4 weeks while learning the steps to colorful letters. With continued repetition this will eventually require only 10-15 minutes from start to finish.
 3. Page 3, Story and Sentences: For the first two thirds of the year, read the story aloud and ask the student to follow along while noting the spelling words printed in bold type. In the final stretch of the year, have the student read the story aloud one sentence at a time. Pause to look at words with marked syllabication. Have the student help to sound out those words. Train them to see words in manageable phonetic chunks.
- **Review of New Material:** Finish with a quick review of the new material using *Classical Phonics*. Ask the student to turn to the proper page in her *Classical Phonics* book and follow along “with your finger and eyes,” as you read each word together. As she becomes more proficient, reading can move quickly. Maintain a smooth rhythm to reading the words. Insist that she read in a clear, loud voice. Each page will show several sounds at the top and columns of words underneath. Ask her to state the sound at the top of the column before reading the lists.
- Close each spelling lesson by asking, *Do you have any questions about the lesson?* If she has a question, address it, and make sure the point is reviewed in the next lesson.

Before Day Four each week

- Review the dictation to be given.

Before Day Five each week

- Prepare the copies of the test form.

After Day Five (or test) each week

- Conduct **Purple Word Trace** with each missed word as follows.
 - The student writes his missed words correctly onto paper.
 - The student traces carefully around the word with purple fine-tip marker or colored pencil. Purple = red + blue to combine both consonant and vowel teams into one whole word.
 - The student looks at the shape and form of the purple traced word.
 - The student then copies the word correctly three times beneath the purple word.
- Note and mark any missed words from the test as indicated in the *Traditional Spelling* Teacher Manual.
- If 0-2 words are missed, add these to the next week’s Dictation and Final Test.
- If 3 or more words are missed, review the lesson and play one or more of the Spelling Review Games found at the back of your *Traditional Spelling* Teacher Manual with the missed words.
- Place all missed word cards in a pile for ongoing review.

Ongoing Review

- Set aside a brief, separate spelling time for review. Review with flashcards, games from the Appendix, or Activity options from the *Traditional Spelling* Teacher Manual. We schedule this review on Fridays, but it can occur any time in the week.
- Cycle through all missed or difficult words at least once weekly. Transfer mastered words to a separate pile for less frequent review.

Spelling Practice Sheets

- These are scheduled for you in your lesson plans.

Supplemental Workbook

- This is scheduled for you in your lesson plans.

Note: If you do not have time for Spelling Practice Sheets or the Supplemental Workbook, you may omit these or save them for later practice. It is more important to teach the Traditional Spelling lesson as indicated in your Traditional Spelling guide each day.

Composition and Grammar

A student with special learning needs often struggles more with writing than with any other aspect of education. We seek to help him with clear lessons and ample practice.

In Level 4, the student builds his knowledge of composition, English grammar, and mechanics of language through brief, daily exercises in *Core Skills Language Arts 1* and 2. These books provide our students with much-needed practice in basic composition and grammar concepts. They also expand effectively upon everything previously covered in our *Simply Classical Writing: Step-by-Step Sentences Books One and Two* (Simply Classical Curriculum Levels 2 and 3).

Core Skills Language Arts

We teach from *Core Skills Language Arts 1* and 2 simultaneously. First, we introduce or review simplified concepts from *Core Skills Language Arts 1*. Then we deepen the application through a page or two of extended practice in *Core Skills Language Arts 2*. Example:

2 pages in Naming Words (Nouns) in *Core Skills Language Arts 1*

1 more advanced page in Naming Words (Nouns) from *Core Skills Language Arts 2*

This combination will prove fruitful for students. In other areas of his studies this year, such as mammals, he may be allowed to receive lessons orally. In composition, however, he must write every answer. Your diligence—and his—will be rewarded with stronger knowledge of writing rules and the ability, in the end, to use them more effectively.

NB: To maintain correlating concepts (e.g., Proper Nouns), sometimes we skip back or ahead in *Core Skills Language Arts 2* to the corresponding page. Assure the student that whenever we do this, *we will return to any briefly omitted pages in Core Skills Language Arts 2*. Explain that we are more concerned with covering each topic with sufficient practice than we are with progressing exactly in page sequence. Much of the time, the two books coordinate well. Other times, a page or two will be out of order. We may sometimes explain this with “*” by the page assigned in an order different than the order it appears in the book.

For *Core Skills Language Arts*, you need no teacher manual. You may teach each page by reading these items with your student(s):

- Subject Heading -- Alert him to what will be studied.
- Black highlighted box -- Alert him to the specific rules and mechanics. Teach this on the board if he needs visual examples.
- Work the first exercise with him. Have him work the next two items. Check these. Note any errors and reteach any misunderstood concepts.
- Continue this pattern until the page is complete: Work one together and then allow him to work two independently with immediate checking and feedback.

Note: The answer key is in the back.

Writing assignments will take more time. Allow a day or two for editing and rewriting whenever possible.

Word Banks or Boxes

This may be the student's first experience with word banks. Teach him to draw lightly one single line through any word after he chooses to write it. By drawing the line after he writes, he will more easily see the word and copy it correctly.

Insist that he draw a line through, rather than rely on his memory. Show him how this makes his work easier as, one by one, he eliminates possibilities. Show him how this also provides a self-checking component. For example, if "horse" is the only word remaining to complete the sentence, "I wear a ____ on my head," he will know something is in error elsewhere on his page!

Correct Students' Spelling

Students may write in cursive or manuscript, but insist on writing in pencil. Expect correct spelling of words throughout the books. Have erasers ready, and teach how to use an eraser without tearing paper.

If, even after lessons and practice, the student remains unable to erase without tearing the page, allow him to draw one single line through the incorrect spelled word. He may then write the correctly spelled word nearby.

First Grade Spelling Guidelines

SPELLING

For detailed teaching guidelines and tips, see the *Traditional Spelling I Teacher Manual*.

Introduce the weekly spelling words on Monday. Write the words on the board, and talk about each one (what could make it difficult to spell, tips to remember the spelling, word meanings, etc.). Have students write the words daily during the week. (Use the *Spelling Practice Sheets* or a notebook.) Give the spelling test on Friday. Use the *Spelling Review Games* in the *Traditional Spelling I Teacher Manual Appendix* for additional preparation. We have provided a dictation sentence for each spelling test to help students learn to use capitalization and punctuation correctly.

We have included ideas for classroom games and activities each week that will help reinforce student mastery of the phonics/spelling concepts being taught. We have also referenced *Classical Phonics* pages that will give extra practice. It is a good idea to include the *Classical Phonics* words in the activities along with the week's spelling words. This will give students an opportunity to practice with multiple words even though they are only tested on a few each week.

We have added a *Traditional Spelling I Supplemental Workbook* with two worksheets provided for each lesson. The intention of this workbook is to give students additional practice in using their spelling words. These worksheets should be assigned before the weekly Dictation (Worksheet 1) and before the weekly spelling test (Worksheet 2). If you don't have the time to complete these worksheets and you feel your student doesn't need the extra practice, that is fine. It is better to skip this extra practice than to rush through the actual spelling lesson.