

Word Wall Tips

The development of a Word Wall is a popular instructional technique that can be used to help students learn to read and spell irregular words. Word Walls use a wall, bulletin board, or poster for the purpose of displaying and grouping words.

Here are some tips for using Word Walls.

- Group irregular words on the wall in different ways, such as in alphabetical order, by similar spelling patterns, or by topic. Topics can include science, social studies, and math.
- Provide students with individualized Word Walls for home and school use.
- Select words from high frequency word lists, content area textbooks, and reading programs.
- Add a limited number of words gradually, approximately five per week. Limit the words to those that students will encounter often in their reading.
- Display the words in a highly visible, accessible place.
- Encourage the students to use the Word Wall when reading and writing independently.
- Provide ongoing instruction and modeling to struggling students to remind them how to use the Word Wall.
- Provide many practice opportunities (e.g., short periods, several times a week) in reading and spelling words on the Word Wall.
- Incorporate the Word Wall into many activities, such as sorting the words in many ways.
- Add pictures to help students remember the words. Remove pictures once students can read the words.

(1TRA, 2000; 2TRA, 2001; Cunningham, 2000)

Sample Word Wall

Word Walls can be used to sort words according to a number of characteristics (e.g., alphabetical order, topics, spelling patterns). The words below are sorted alphabetically.

<u>A</u> answer	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u> color could	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>H</u>
<u>I</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>L</u> listen	<u>M</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>O</u> old other	<u>P</u>
<u>Q</u>	<u>R</u> reign	<u>S</u> said should sugar	<u>T</u> thought	<u>U</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>X</u> water who
<u>Y</u> yacht	<u>Z</u>						

Sample Word Wall Activity

These activities use contextual, semantic, syntactic, graphophonemic, and spelling clues to teach and reinforce irregular word recognition.

- Put on your detective hat; we are searching for clues using the Word Wall provided. Number your paper/chalkboard/dry-erase board from 1 to 4. I am going to number my paper/chalkboard/dry-erase board also.

(Number your paper/chalkboard/dry-erase board from 1 to 4.)

I will think of a word on the Word Wall, and you are going to try to guess the word. I will give you one clue at a time. Listen carefully to each clue and write the word you believe I am describing on your paper. Do not share your answers aloud; just write them on your paper.

Clue #1:

It ends with the letter d.

(Next to #1, #2, #3, and #4 on the board, draw a line and write the letter d on the end of each line, directing the students to do the same on their paper/slate/dry-erase board. [example: 1. _____d, 2. _____d, etc.])

Write a word ending in the letter d from the Word Wall next to #1 on your paper/slate/whiteboard.

Clue #2:

It has the letter s in it.

(Write the letter s in front of #2, #3, and #4. [example: s 2. _____d]).

Write the Word Wall word you think I am describing next to #2. It might be a new word if your old one did not have an s in it, or it might be the word you wrote for clue #1.

Clue #3:

It has six letters.

(Erase the line next to #3, #4, and #5 in places to make six blanks with d in the last one. [example: s 3. _____d])

Write the Word Wall word you think I am describing next to #3. It might be a new word if your old one did not have six letters or it might be the word you wrote for clue #2.

Clue #4:

It fits in the sentence: I think dogs _____ chew on bones, not furniture.

(Write the sentence on the board under #4.)

Raise your hand if you think you know the word.

(Allow time for students to locate the word.)

_____, tell us the Word Wall word you discovered.

(Students should write the answer on their paper: [should]).

Listen and repeat what I say.

*(Read and spell **should**. Students echo.)*

If I cover up the consonant digraph, what is the last part of the word?

(Answer: **ould**.)

There is another word on the Word Wall with **ould**. Raise your hand if you can find another word with **ould** as a word part.

(Answer: **could**.)

(Read and spell **could**. Students echo.)

Now write the word **could** on your paper/slate/board.

2. (Hold up five fingers.)

I am thinking of a five-letter word that begins with the letter **s**.

(Write the letter **s** on the board, with a line divided into five blanks.

[example: s _ _ _ _])

I am thinking of a word that makes sense in this sentence: These cookies aren't very sweet, I wonder if I forgot to add the _____.

(Students should write the answer on their paper: [**sugar**]).

Listen and repeat after me.

(Say **sugar** and spell it. Students echo.)

3. I am thinking of a five-letter word we learned yesterday. This word comes from the story we will read today about kings and queens. The word makes sense in this sentence: The king will _____ over this land until he dies.

(Allow time for students to locate the word [**reign**] and write the answer on their paper.)

_____, tell us the Word Wall word you discovered.

Listen and repeat after me. (Say **reign** and spell it. Students echo.)

4. (Write the letters **a**, **s**, **d**, and **i** on the board.)

The word I am thinking of is spelled with these four letters. The word makes sense in this sentence: When the king saw the queen, he stopped and _____ hello to her.

(Allow time for students to locate the word [**said**] and write the answer on their paper.)

_____, tell us the Word Wall word you discovered.

Listen and repeat after me.

*(Read the sentence inserting the word **said**. Students echo.)*

*(Say **said** and spell it. Students echo.)*

5. Which word on the Word Wall means "the act of thinking?"

*(If no one guesses the word, provide clues one at a time. Allow time between clues for students to locate and write the answer [**thought**]).*

Clue #1: The word that means "the act of thinking" begins and ends with the same letter.

Clue #2: The word that means "the act of thinking" makes sense in this sentence: Sally and Fred _____ the movie was funny.

_____, what is the word?

Listen and repeat after me.

*(Read the sentence, inserting the word **thought**. Students echo.)*

*(Say and spell **thought**. Students echo.)*

6. Turn to your neighbor. Choose one of the Word Wall words. Tell your partner the letter it begins with, but not the word.

Slowly write each letter with your finger on your partner's back.

Your partner should try to guess the word. Write the word again on your partner's back, saying each letter aloud together.

End by saying the word.

Take turns until it is time to line up for lunch in a few minutes.

Word Wall/Pared de Palabras Hints for the Bilingual Classroom

- **Create separate word walls for English and Spanish words.**
 - Use separate colors of ink when writing in English and Spanish.
For example, print all Spanish words in red and all English words in black.
 - Mixing words can sometimes create confusion between similar looking words.
For example, *dime* ("dime" in English) and *dime* ("tell me" in Spanish).

- **In Spanish there are some letters *ñ* and digraphs *rr* that do not occur (or seldom occur) in the initial consonant position.**
 - The medial positions of words containing these letters can be highlighted on the word wall.

For example:

<i>b<u>rr</u>a</i>	<i>b<u>rr</u>a</i>
<i>ca<u>rr</u>o</i>	<i>ca<u>rr</u>o</i>
<i>pi<u>ñ</u>a</i>	<i>pi<u>ñ</u>a</i>
<i>ni<u>ñ</u>o</i>	<i>ni<u>ñ</u>o</i>

- **On Spanish word walls, you can include articles with nouns to help students identify the gender of a word in Spanish.**

For example:

el caballo	el mapa	la miel
la brocha	el águila	el rocío
el azúcar	el agua	la piel

- **Illustrate both uppercase and lowercase letters on Spanish Word Walls. For example, for the letters *Ch*, and *Ll*, the word wall could model these letters as follows:**

<i>Ch/ch</i>		<i>Ll/ll</i>
Chihuahua	chango	lluvia
Chiapas	chocolate	lleno
China	leche	Llegaré temprano a clase.

(Note: The digraph *rr* never occurs at the beginning of a word, and *ñ* is rarely capitalized. Therefore neither letter needs to be modeled in the uppercase.)

- **Include high-frequency, commonly misspelled words and other words you notice students misspelling, and high-frequency words that need accents or diereses. You can also add basic accent rules.**
 - Commonly misspelled words: *voy, yo, vaca, hoy, había, vez, juego, cuando, que, quiero, quien, etc.*
 - Common words with written accents accent or diereses: *agüita, bilingüe, vergüenza, papá, mamá, había, tenía, camión, corazón, está, día, pingüino, etc.*
 - Question words when used in a question need an accent:

¿Cuándo es tu cumpleaños?	¿Qué es eso?
¿Por qué estás triste?	¿Dónde está tu mamá?

¿Qué?	¿Cuándo?	¿Quién?	¿Por qué?
¿Cuánto?	¿Dónde?	¿Cuál?	¿Cómo?

- **In order to facilitate transition, you can use word walls that contrast English and Spanish conventions.**

Examples:

- Words capitalized in English, but not in Spanish:

	<u>Spanish: No Capitals</u>	<u>English: Capitals</u>
Days of the week:	<i>miércoles</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>
Months of the year:	<i>junio</i>	<i>June</i>
Languages:	<i>español</i>	<i>Spanish</i>

- Punctuation in English and Spanish:

In English, one question/exclamation mark: ***What a beautiful day!***
Where are you from?

In Spanish, two question/exclamation marks: ***¡Qué hermoso día!***
¿De dónde eres?

- **Incorporate word walls for commonly used homophones that can cause problems:**

haber / a ver (dos palabras)	haya / halla
ola / hola	coser / cocer
hacer / a ser (dos palabras)	casar / cazar
cayó / calló	azar / asar / azhar

Adapted from Escamilla, K. (2000). *Teaching literacy in Spanish*. In J.V. Tinajero & R. A. DeVillar (Eds.), *The power of two languages: Effective dual-language use across the curriculum* (pp. 126-141). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pared de Palabras: Actividades

(Los participantes utilizarán pizarrones blancos.)

Imaginen que son detectives. Escriban números del 1 hasta el 5. Estoy pensando en una palabra misteriosa y la palabra está en la pared de palabras. Les voy a dar una clave a la vez. Escuchen cada clave y escriban la palabra que creen es la palabra misteriosa. No digan nada. Escriban lo que piensan.

Clave #1: Está en la pared de palabras. Todos tienen que adivinar después de cada clave y escribir una palabra que esté en la pared.

Clave #2: Termina con la letra "a". Escriban la palabra al lado del #2. Si piensan que es la misma palabra que adivinaron en el número 1, escriban la palabra otra vez.

Clave #3: Tiene la letra "n". Escriban la palabra al lado del #3.

Clave #4: Tiene siete letras. Escriban la palabra al lado del #4.

Clave #5: Completa la oración: "La _____ es una fruta deliciosa."

Levanten la mano si saben la palabra.

Respuesta: manzana

Repitan la palabra (manzana). Deletreen la palabra.

Clave #1: (Muestre cinco dedos a la clase) Estoy pensando en una palabra de cinco letras de la pared de palabras.

Clave #2: Mi palabra empieza con la letra "d". (Escriba la letra "d" en el pizarrón.)

Clave #3: Mi palabra completa la oración: Me gusta ir a la finca _____ viven mis abuelos.

Respuesta: donde

Repitan la palabra donde. Deletreen la palabra.

Clave #1: (Muestre cuatro dedos a la clase.) Estoy pensando en una palabra de cuatro letras en la pared de palabras.

Clave #2: Termina con la letra "o". (Escriba la letra "o" en el pizarrón.)

Clave #3: Completa la oración: Yo _____ en Texas.

Respuesta: vivo

Repitan la palabra vivo. Deletreen la palabra.

Clave #1: Busquen las palabras que terminan con el sonido /e/.

Respuestas: café, desde, donde, once, llave, nombre, porque, que, tarde.

(Pida a los alumnos decir y deletrear las palabras mientras las escribe en el pizarrón.)

Repitan las palabras y deletreen las palabras.

Busquen dos palabras que rimen con cuna.

Respuesta: luna y una

Repitan las palabras y deletreen las palabras.

Vamos a jugar "Escriban y Digan" con tres palabras de la pared de palabras. En una hoja, escriban: bien, muy, y soy.

(Escriba las palabras en el pizarrón.)

Ahora, ¡díganlas!

- *Yo digo bien y ustedes dicen bien. (Los alumnos repiten bien.)*

Yo deletreo bien: B-I-E-N.

Ahora, deletreen bien. (Los alumnos repiten B-I-E-N.)

- *Yo digo muy y ustedes dicen muy. (Los alumnos repiten muy.)*

Yo deletreo muy: M-U-Y.

Ahora, deletreen muy. (Los alumnos repiten M-U-Y.)

- *Yo digo soy y ustedes dicen soy. (Los alumnos repiten soy.)*

Yo deletreo soy: S-O-Y.

Ahora, deletreen soy. (Los alumnos repiten S-O-Y.)

(Escriba las letras: "i", "r", y "o" en el pizarrón.)

Clave #1: Estoy pensando en una palabra que tiene esas tres letras.

Clave #2: Completa la oración: Me gusta nadar en el ____.

Respuesta: río

Repitan la palabra y deletreen la palabra.

Clave #1: Estoy pensando en una palabra que es un nombre de un animal.

(Hay cinco animales en la pared)

Clave #2: La palabra tiene tres sílabas.

Clave #3: La palabra completa la oración: Una _____ tiene un cuello muy largo.

Respuesta: jirafa

Repitan la palabra y deletreen la palabra.

Formen parejas.

Una persona de la pareja escoge una palabra secreta, pero NO se la dice a su amigo.

Dile a tu amigo la letra con que empieza la palabra secreta. Escribe la palabra en la espalda de tu amigo lentamente. Tu amigo tiene que adivinar la palabra.

Escribe otra vez diciendo cada letra y cuando termines, dile a tu amigo la palabra.