

## Implementation of *Words Their Way* Notes from the Classroom

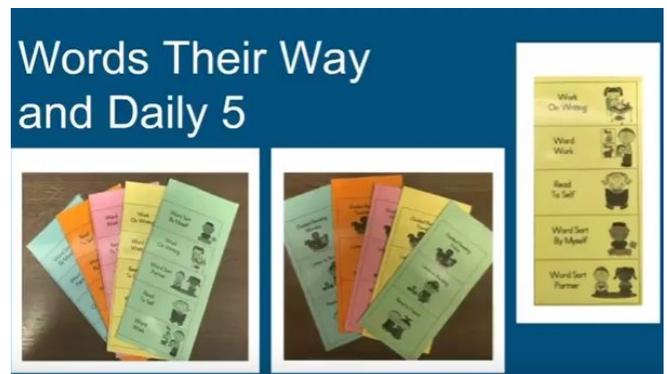


Teachers from Elk Island Public Schools came together to share how they have implemented *Words Their Way* in their Grade 1-6 classes. This synthesis document highlights tips they shared in the webinar hosted by ERLC May 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSO-CPe20sU>

*Many thanks to the participating teachers from Elk Island Public Schools:  
Dana Turnbull-Smith, Darlene Shield, Heidi Nicks-Tambasco, Sarah Budd, Chrissy MacQuarrie and Sheila Storey*

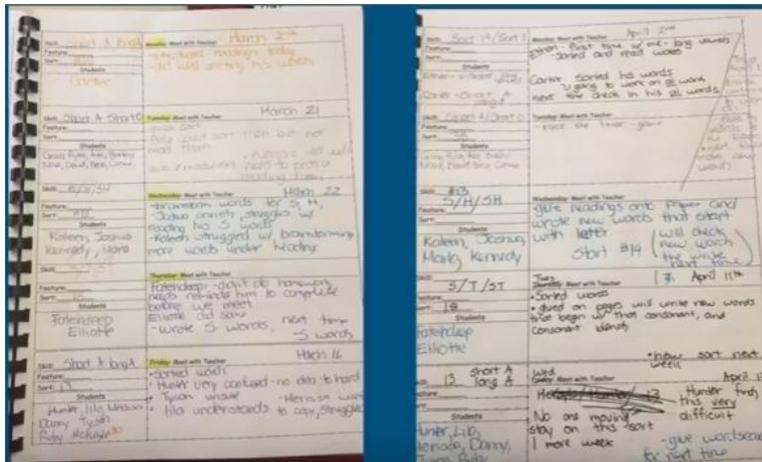
### Using *Words Their Way* in a Combined Class (Grade 1/2)

- Use the Daily 5 as the guiding structure in the classroom and incorporate *Words Their Way* into that structure
- Use Bookmarks as an organizational tool
- Use *Word Sort by Myself* and *Word Sort With a Partner* as a way to introduce the concept of word sorts.
- Once students become comfortable with doing the words sorts, these activities become part of the word work station.
- On Mondays, the teacher meets with each grouping of students to introduce the words and/or word concepts they would be working with that week. The other students in the class work independently on other Daily 5 choices.
- Students spend two weeks on each word sort.
- At the end of every month, the teacher assesses students using a spelling inventory or quiz to see where they are at and determine if they are ready to move on to the next sort.
- It is important to track where the students are and what sorts they have worked on to avoid repeating sorts too often.
- Students enjoy this hands on approach to learning about words and their patterns!



## Organizing *Words Their Way* in a Grade 2 Class

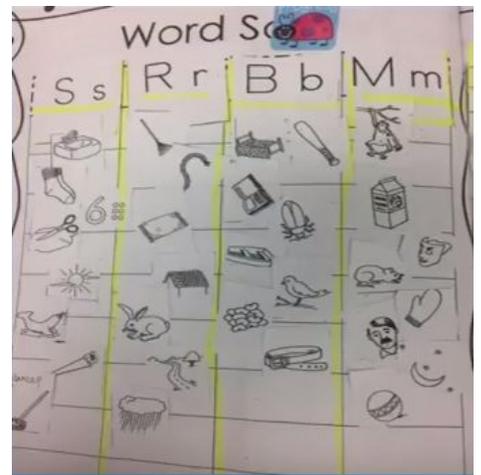
- After a spelling assessment, students were divided into groups based on their spelling needs.
- During the first 15 minutes while the students are working independently on their calendar books, the teacher meets with a group and begins with their word sort. Then, students work on other word activities e.g., making words.
- Students are moved on to the next sort when the teacher feels they are ready.
- The students know what sort they are working on by referring to the personalized clips that are attached to the folders (see image on the right). Each clip has a student's name on it.
- The colored folders represent the different spelling levels. Each folder contains approximately 10 copies of the sort and any extra activities that go with the sort.
- The maximum number of students in a group is six.
- They have access to their word sort books during Daily 5 time so they can work on word sorts or other words activities that go with the pattern.



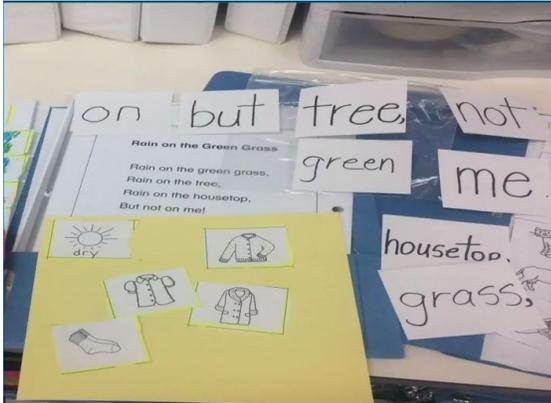
- Here is an example of what planning for a week of word work looks like (see image on the left).
- This organizational tool is used to track what the students are working on for word work for the week, how they are doing, who is ready to move on and who will continue with the sort.
- *Words Their Way* helps differentiate instruction to meet the students where they are at.

## Using *Words Their Way* in Grade 4

- *Words Their Way* allows students to work on word sorts that are appropriate for the level that they are at.
- The image on the right shows a student's word sort on initial consonants. This student is working at the letter and picture sorts for emergent spellers level.
- Over time this student has moved on to concepts of words and print. This involved picture sorts, shared



reading activities, cut-up sentence strips to go with the poem, locating sight words, and adding some of the words to the student's word wall.



- Here is a word sort (image on the left) for a student working at the derivational spelling level. For this sort, the student is using base words and adding different word endings.

- Students work on word work activities for the first 10 minutes of Daily 5 time.

- Students work on the word sort/pattern for a two week period.

- A copy of the lesson goes home on the first day

the new words are introduced. Parents are sent a copy of their child's words for the week and can provide support at home as well.

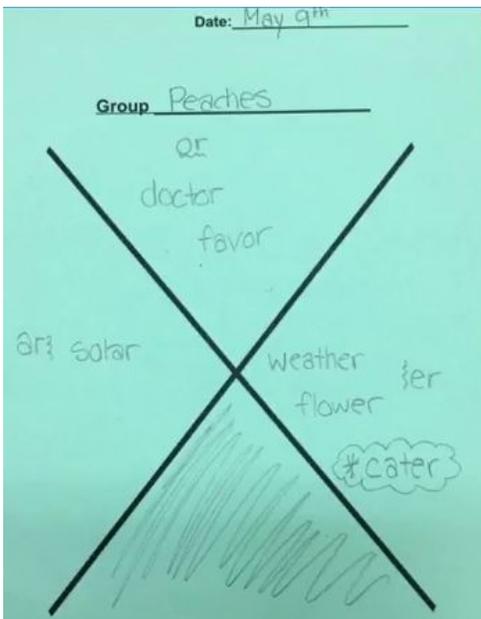
- The test, which occurs on a Friday, does not necessarily touch on all the words. Assessing half of the words would still provide the teacher with insight as to whether or not students understand the concepts.

Word Sort

base -ct	-ctious	base -ss	-ss + ion
extract	election	possess	appreciation
distinct	distinction	express	confession
subtract	detection	congress	expression
predict	production	possession	profession
select	subtraction	express	
detect	election	profess	
✓		confess	
	✓		oddball congress

### Assessment and *Words Their Way* in Grade 5

- To assess student understanding, all students use the same format. They begin by writing down the headers. If they cannot remember what the headers are, the teacher provides the word to the student. Students are being assessed on their ability to sort the words not memorize the headers.



- Each spelling group is provided with five words which are taken directly from their sort.

- For the sixth word, students add an additional word that was not part of the sort but fits the sorting rule. This allows the teacher to see if the student understands the sorting rule and can apply it to a new situation.

- The assessment can be done as a whole group. The first group is given their first word, then the next group gets their first words, etc. Then, you go back to the first group and give them the second word and you continue with this process until all groups have been given their five words. This works well as it allows time for students to process while you are providing the other groups their words.

- This type of spelling assessment can also be done in small groups at the beginning of your conferences. This



- In March you can see the progress made by the students.
- The weekly sorts and assessment allow you to determine how the students are doing, if they are applying the patterns and transferring the learning to other words.

## Implementing *Words Their Way* in Grade 6

- We modified the Daily 5 to Daily 3.
- On day one, this is when the small groups of students are given their new word sorts for the week and the mini lessons and conferencing focuses on word work (e.g, teaching the new word sorts)..
- There are five to seven word work groups in the class.
- It does take a few minutes to cut out the words. My suggestion is try having students cut the words prior to coming to the word work mini-lesson.
- A set of word cards also goes home.

## Tips and Tricks

- Have a master list of the word sorts posted in the class (e.g., on the whiteboard) so if a student loses a word card, they can find the word on the master list and write it on a piece of paper or sticky note and add it to their sort.
- Have students cut the word cards while announcements are on or as part of their morning routine.
- Have students write their assigned number or colour on the back of each word card so if it is found on the floor you know which student it belongs to.
- You can post words from the word sorts on to the word wall.
- The students keep their word sort in baggies in their Daily 5 basket/bin.
- Duotangs are another organizational tool that can be used. Instructions of how to do the different types of word sorts is inserted at the front of the duotang. Then, a soft pencil case with three holes stored inside the duotangs is used to store the word sort cards.
- Word sorts take only about five minutes and not necessarily the whole block of time. If students finish their word sorts. have other literacy activities for them to do (e.g., magnetic letters, letter tiles, whiteboards, ABC order, rainbow writing, reading, and writing).

## Daily Schedule

In each 31 minute LA period, we break the time down like this:

Mini Lesson (5-10 minutes) based on weekly schedule

Block 1 (10 mins)

working with students (group or individual), while remainder of class works on their chosen activity

Block 2 (10 mins)

working with students (group or individual), while remainder of class works on their chosen activity

Day 1,3,5 we have 2 periods of LA. Day 2 and 4 we have 3 periods of LA.

## Weekly “Daily 3” Schedule

Topic of Our Mini-Lesson and Conferencing:

Day 1- Word Work focus

Day 2- Writer’s Workshop

Day 3- Writer’s Workshop

Day 4- Guided Reading

Day 5- Guided Reading

\*Students choose to work on any of the 3 activities, regardless of the Day #