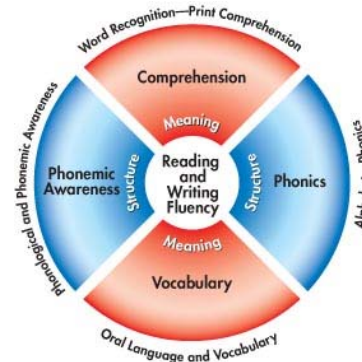




4/5 Spelling Connections

Students in grades 4 and 5 will continue to use Dr. Richard Gentry's Spelling Connection program. Dr. Gentry is an acclaimed expert in the field of spelling development and has had a powerful impact on improving literacy in American schools. Dr. Gentry is the author of several books, including The Science of Spelling.

Gentry's program delivers effective research-based instruction and data collected in the Radnor Township School district has validated the program's effectiveness with our specific student population. Options for differentiated instruction, a developmentally appropriate word list that presents the right words and patterns at the right time, and proven strategies such as word sorting combine to provide quality spelling instruction. A wide variety of instructional resources including online game and activities, connections to writing and the content areas offer students multiple opportunities to transfer and apply learned skills. RTSD students continue in the Spelling Connections program through grade 8.



Elementary Word Study
K-5

Radnor Township School District

For additional information you may contact your child's classroom teacher, the building level reading department or Maureen McQuiggan, RTSD K-12 Literacy Coordinator.

A year of careful study, pilot programs, pre and post testing and data analysis was devoted to the investigation of many programs. The programs selected for our elementary schools are research-based, reputable, rigorous and exemplify what is "best practice" in the field of education.

Elementary Word Study K-5

Radnor
Township
School
District



Why “Word Study”?



Remember how we were taught to spell when we were students? Many of us were simply handed a list of words and told to write each word

five times. We then had our Friday spelling test, after which we may have forgotten those very words.

Remember how we were taught to decipher new words we encountered when reading? I can still hear my teachers saying, "Just sound it out!"

Of course, we were also taught some reading and spelling rules such as, "When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking." But did you know that this rule, like many others that we were taught, holds true less than fifty percent of the time? (Clymer, 1996). Not only do these precepts lack reliability, but the teaching of rules is not really the best way to help our students learn. We learn best by active involvement and practice with the task at hand, which allow us to see word and letter patterns for ourselves. Research suggests that the brain is a pattern detector, rather than an applier of rules. If our brains are indeed "pattern detectors," then we should provide our students with plenty of opportunity to investigate and organize those patterns.

Fortunately, we are now seeing dramatic and exciting changes in the teaching of spelling and word recognition. The field of "word study" provides students an op-

portunity to manipulate words (and parts of words) in meaningful and enjoyable activities and games. Reading ability can develop dramatically as word study lessons develop experience with:

- * Letters and their corresponding sounds.
- * Components of words, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- * Patterns of how words are spelled, such as word families.
- * How parts of words often will give hints to the meaning of a word, as well as its spelling or pronunciation.

Word study activities call for active problem solving. Students are encouraged to look for spelling patterns, form hypotheses, predict outcomes, and test them. These activities require students to continually ask themselves, "What do I know about this new word, and how is it similar to words that I already know?"

You child is about to embark on just such an exciting exploration into the world of words.

K-1 Wilson Foundations

Researched and created by Wilson Language Systems, Foundations brings researched-based, multi-sensory, system-



atic, sequential instruction into our K/1 classrooms with a fully integrated word study program that incorporates active engagement, developmentally approach activities, a wide array of manipulatives and reinforcement to ensure every student builds a strong foundation in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, handwriting, and sight vocabulary.

Using Foundations, teachers incorporate a 25-minute daily lesson into their language arts classroom instruction. Foundations lessons progressively build a solid foundation in reading and spelling while students continually practice their developing critical thinking, speaking and listening skills. The materials that accompany the instructional delivery make the Foundations period one that students look forward to and enjoy. Group work, manipulatives, movement and constant feedback keep students engaged. The careful sequencing of skills cleverly ensures students master the material as they progress through the school year.

2-3 Fountas and Pinnell Phonics Lessons 2: Letters, words and how they work Word Study Lessons 3: Letters, words and how they work

Students in grades 2 and 3 will be engaged in direct instruction “mini-lessons” and independent exploration activities related to word study through the Fountas Pinnell Phonics and Word Study programs. The continuum presented in the Fountas Pinnell encompasses nine scientific categories of learning: Early Literacy Concepts, High-Frequency Words, Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Spelling Patterns, Letter Knowledge, Word Structure, Letter/Sound Relationships, Word-Solving Actions and Word Meaning.

The goal of the program is to develop automaticity with students' abilities to:

- *Apply phonics as both a decoding and encoding strategy.
- *Acquire and retain high frequency words.
- *Decipher and use rich vocabulary.
- *Manipulate words and word parts.

The program builds these skills through systematic and sequential phonics instruction. Students work with a variety of games, activities and constructivist endeavors to refine and solidify skills.

