

To: Parents of children with dyslexia
From: Susan Barton <Susan@BartonReading.com>
Subject: Homework Accommodations
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

Until your child's reading, writing, and spelling skills have reached grade level, please provide the following 3 accommodations during homework time (if you are not already doing them). The following will cut homework down to a reasonable length of time, and they will help eliminate the nightly "homework wars."

1. Read everything out loud to him.

His reading will **NOT** get any better by having him read to you every night for 20 minutes. If you want him to learn, then read the material **to** him.

2. Ask each homework question out loud, let him answer it out loud, and you write it down.

That's called "acting like a scribe," (when I explain it to a child, I call it "acting like a secretary") and it is a very common accommodation. If he tells you the wrong answer, write down that wrong answer. In other words, you are **not** changing his answers. You are strictly getting rid of print for awhile.

If he has to write a book report, let him listen to the book on audio (or you read it to him), let him compose his report out loud, and you write it down.

If he has to write a story, let him dictate it, and you write it down.

Then all the teacher has to do is accept dictated homework.

Do **NOT** have him copy what you wrote down. He does not learn anything by copying it, so it is wasted time.

3. Ignore the weekly spelling test.

Children with dyslexia cannot learn to spell by memorizing a list of words. Even if, after spending a huge number of hours trying to learn them, he can do "okay" on Friday's test, he cannot retain them from one week to the next. So give it up.

He will become a very good speller by using the Barton System, but you'll be teaching spelling a very different way. He'll be learning to spell by sounding out words and apply some very reliable spelling rules. Does it really work? Yes. Here's a email I recently received from a teacher proving that:

I have been using your program for 3 years and I love it! I have seen results that are amazing! When my principal asked our staff to reflect on one practice that has made a difference, I told her it was my working for 30 minutes each day in small groups using the Barton System – and the data proves the impact it has on spelling.

In August, according to the FAIR spelling assessment:

7 students < 20th percentile
9 students 21st percentile to 49th percentile
5 students > 80th percentile

In December, every single student made significant gains except the two who were already at the 91st and 98th percentile.

1 student < 20th percentile
2 students 21st to 49th percentile
6 student 50th to 79th percentile
12 students > 80th percentile

The most significant gains were made by my lowest 2 reader/spellers. One went from 19th percentile to 49th percentile. The other went from 19th percentile to 69th percentile. And two of my good readers who had been poor spellers went up 68 percentile points each.

Debbie Sanders
Thunderbolt Elementary
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So stop wasting precious time on the teacher's weekly spelling list. Tell your son that he'll be learning a very different way of spelling from you, and within a year, he'll be spelling as well as the other kids. Between now and then, you will both just ignore the grade on Friday's test because you are not going to study for it.

Or, if his teacher is caring and flexible, perhaps you could convince her to give him the Barton Weekly Spelling Tests instead of the regular spelling test. He could come in 15 minutes early on Friday morning so she could give him the test. The results of that test should be recorded as his weekly spelling grade.

During class, when it is time for the regular spelling test, he can pull out a sheet of paper and do his best. But that test is not graded and does not count -- because he cannot learn spelling by memorizing lists. And I am sure his teacher is aware of that by this time of year.

If you provide those 3 accommodations during homework time, you will no longer face nightly tears and battles, homework will take a reasonable length of time, and now you'll have plenty of time for tutoring, time for him to develop his gifted areas, and time for him to just "be a kid."

If you have any more questions, now or in the future, please contact me again.

Susan Barton, Developer

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