**Mnemonics**

When you think about spelling, you need to remember there are five channels we must use in order to become effective ‘spellers’ –

* Auditory;
* Visual;
* Haptic / written;
* Semantic - semantic knowledge refers to the general knowledge and features that make up concepts that people have acquired and abstracted from their experiences. Concepts are associated with and comprised of semantic knowledge. Concepts are also connected to words; and
* Mnemonic.

Mnemonic is a word that we first find in print in 1753 and comes from the Greek, ‘**mnemonikos’** meaning ‘of or relating to memory’. The idea of a mnemonic device (a memory trigger) first appears in 1858.

The word comes from ‘Mnemosyne’ who was a member of the Titans (no, not the team, the giants of ancient Greece!) and a Goddess in the Pantheon of Ancient Greece. Her name literally means ‘remembrance’.

Mnemonics were a part of life in ancient times. There were no cameras, no voice records, no smart phones, laps tops, computers or tablets. If you wanted to remember something, you practised the ‘art of memory’.

For us in modern times, mnemonics help us remember everything from the order of the notes on the line of a music staff – **E**very **G**ood **B**oy **D**eserves **F**ruit – to the order of the planets in our solar system - **M**y **V**ery **E**ducated **M**other **J**ust **S**erved **U**s **N**ine **P**izzas – Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto.

When Jacques Cousteau was working on his underwater breathing system, he created a mnemonic to help him remember the correct English title that he had chosen. The mnemonic was an acronym …

**S**elf **C**ontained **U**nderwater **B**reathing **A**pparatus – SCUBA.

The memory trick was so effective that the name ‘scuba’ stuck and the acronym became an initialism (a word made of the first letters of the words from which it is derived).

The best mnemonics are simple – my year six teacher gave me this one after I had signed off a letter writing exercise by writing ‘Yours truely’ and then my name. Then I heard my teacher’s voice beside me, ‘Sue-Belinda, truly has five letters (he held up five fingers and wiggled each as he said) T-R-U-L-Y.’ That event took place more than forty years ago and I still remember it today.

Here are some of my favourites …

* ‘forty’ – Naughty forty doesn’t play with ‘u’.
* ‘affect’ and ‘effect’ – Affect for action and effect for eventual end. RAVEN – **R**emember **A**ffect **V**erb **E**ffect **N**oun
* ‘embarrass’ – when you are embarrassed, you got ‘**r**eally **r**ed’ (2 r’s) and feel like a ‘**s**illy **s**ausage’ (2 s’s).
* ‘there’ and ‘their’ – ‘There’ has ‘here’ inside it, they are both place words. ‘Their’ has ‘heir’ inside, they are both ownership words.

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| ***Word or Word Family*** | ***Mnemonic*** |
| Words containing ‘ould’ | **o** **u** lucky **d**uck  could, would, should |
| Forth | Naughty forty does not play with ‘u’ |
| ‘ight’ word family | Practice this one like a rap – Mrs I, Mrs G, Mrs H, Mrs T  Bright, light, slight, fight, height, night, might, sight |
| practice, practise | Pract**ice** has ‘**ice’** in it – both words are nouns (names of people, places and things) but pract**is**e has ‘**is’** in it and both words are verbs (doing words) |
| Stationery, stationary | You buy station**er**y from a station**er.**  A c**ar** is station**ar**y when it is stopped. |
| There , their | There as ‘here’ inside it – they are both places words. Their has ‘heir’ inside it and they are both ownership words. |
| believe | There is a ‘**lie**’ in be**lie**ve. |
| Principal | The princi**pal** of the school is your **pal**. |
| piece | **Pie**ce has the word ‘**pie**’ inside it. |
| accommodation | Remember two people are sharing the room – Clever Claire and Marvellous Meg – 2 c’s and 2 m’s |
| affect, effect | **A**ffect for **a**ction and **e**ffect for **e**ventual outcome – RAVEN – Remember Affect Verb Effect Noun |
| pennant | **Go ants!**  ant |
| bargain | You **gain** something from getting a bar**gain**. |
| business | I take the **bus** to my **bus**iness. |
| difficulty | Mrs D, Mrs I, Mrs FFI, Mrs C, Mrs U, Mrs LTY |
| embarrass | When you become emba**rr**a**ss**ed, you go **r**eally **r**ed (2 r’s) and feel like a **s**illy **s**ausage (2 s’s). |
| complement, compliment | The red roses will complement the table setting and make it compl**ete** for us to eat!  Listen for the long ‘e’ in ‘ete’.  When you gave Jane that lovely comp**lime**nt about her smile, she felt like she was standing in the **lime** light. |
| words ending in vowel + consonant + ‘e’ | The magic ‘e’ or Bionic ‘e’ makes the vowel in front of it say its own name (not sound) – site, cute, rate, wrote.  site  Magic 'e' wand |
| 2 vowels together | When two vowels going out walking, the first one does all the talking.  When you have two vowels together, the first one generally says its own name while the other stays silent.  c**oa**t, gr**ee**n, q**ue**, m**ea**n, r**ai**n, v**ia**l, t**ea**l |
| hear, here | You h**ear** with you **ear**. |
| necessary | It is necessary for a shirt to have one **c**ollar (1 ‘c’) and two sleeves (2 ‘s’s’). |
| rhythm | **r**eally **h**as **y**our **t**wo **h**ips **m**oving |
| said | You said to **s**peak **a**nd **I** **d**id. |
| separate | Never se**para**te a **para**trooper from his **para**chute. |
| secretary | A **secret**ary must know how to keep a **secret**. |
| son, sun | A s**o**n is a b**o**y.  All things live **un**der the s**un**. |
| special | The **CIA** is full of spe**cia**l agents. |
| to, too, two | T**o** go h**o**me from home is **o**ne round trip,  To say t**oo** much – **oo** those lips slip  T**w**o dollars for a pencil is **w**ay too high  when **also** or **too** a ruler I must buy. |
| thought, though, through | I **thought** I saw a dinosaur  **Though** I can’t be certain  It came in **through** the back door  Then hid behind the curtain. |
| together | If you come with me, we’ll go **together to get her**. |
| February | ‘**Br** it’s cold in the Northern Hemisphere in Fe**br**uary.’ |
| desert, dessert | A de**s**ert is **s**andy (one ‘s’) but a de**ss**ert is **s**ticky and **s**weet (two ‘s’s’). |
| meat, meet | I like to **eat** m**eat**. |
| island | An island **is land**. |
| ascertain | When you ascertain information, be **as certain** as you can. |
| argument | I lost an ‘e’ in that argument. |
| ‘ie’ / ‘ei’ rule | ‘i’ before ‘e’ except after ‘c’ or when sounding like ‘a’ as in ‘neighbour’ and ‘weigh’  ‘counterfeit’ does not run true to form and ‘weird’ is just a long way from the norm!  Here are all the exceptions in one odd sentence!  ***Neither counterfeit foreign sheikh seized the weird heights!*** |