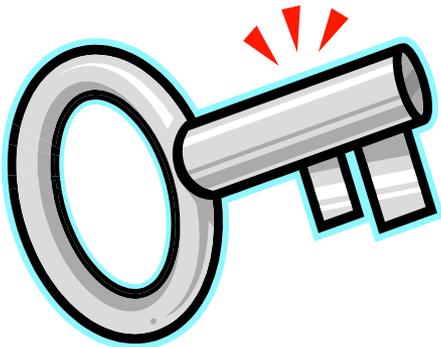




Morphological Awareness: A Key to Language and Literacy Growth

Susan Waite, Speech-Language Pathologist
Center of Excellence for
Speech and Language Development
English Montreal School Board

ALDI SYMPOSIUM 2013
September 24, 2013



Peter Bowers, Ph.D.

WordWorks Literacy Center



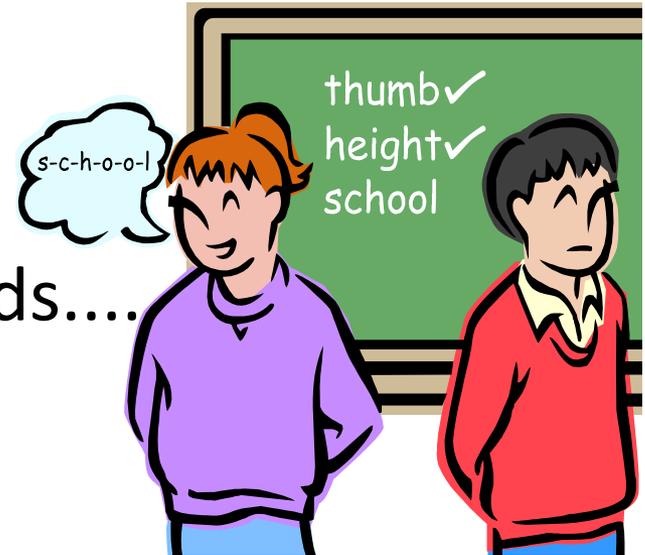
Critically important question #1

Is traditional spelling instruction effective?

Is it REEEEEALLY?

Or could we be doing it better?

Think about your current methods.....



Is spelling a separate field of study? Should it be?

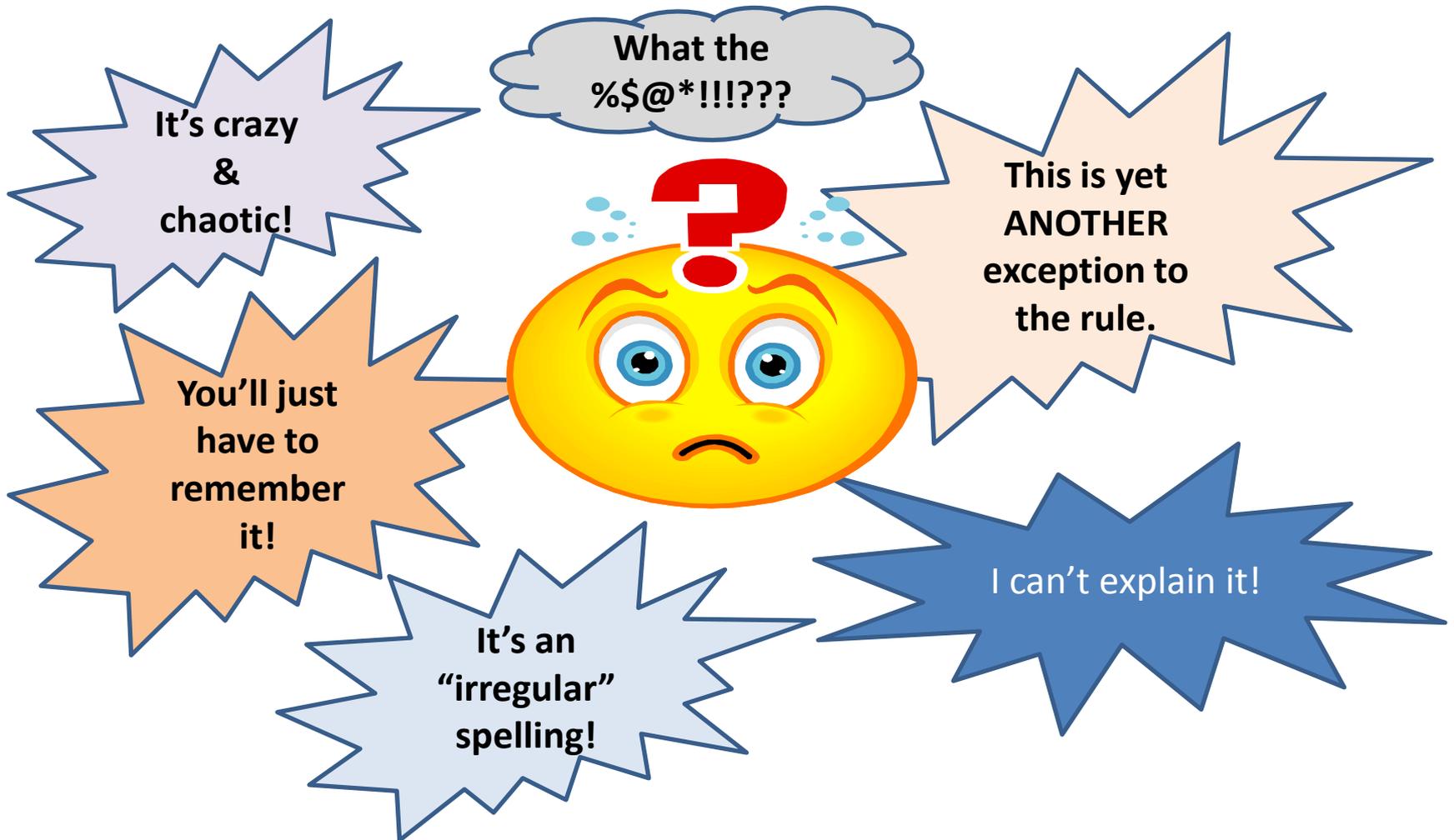
Equally important question #2

Is there a “**system**” in English spelling?

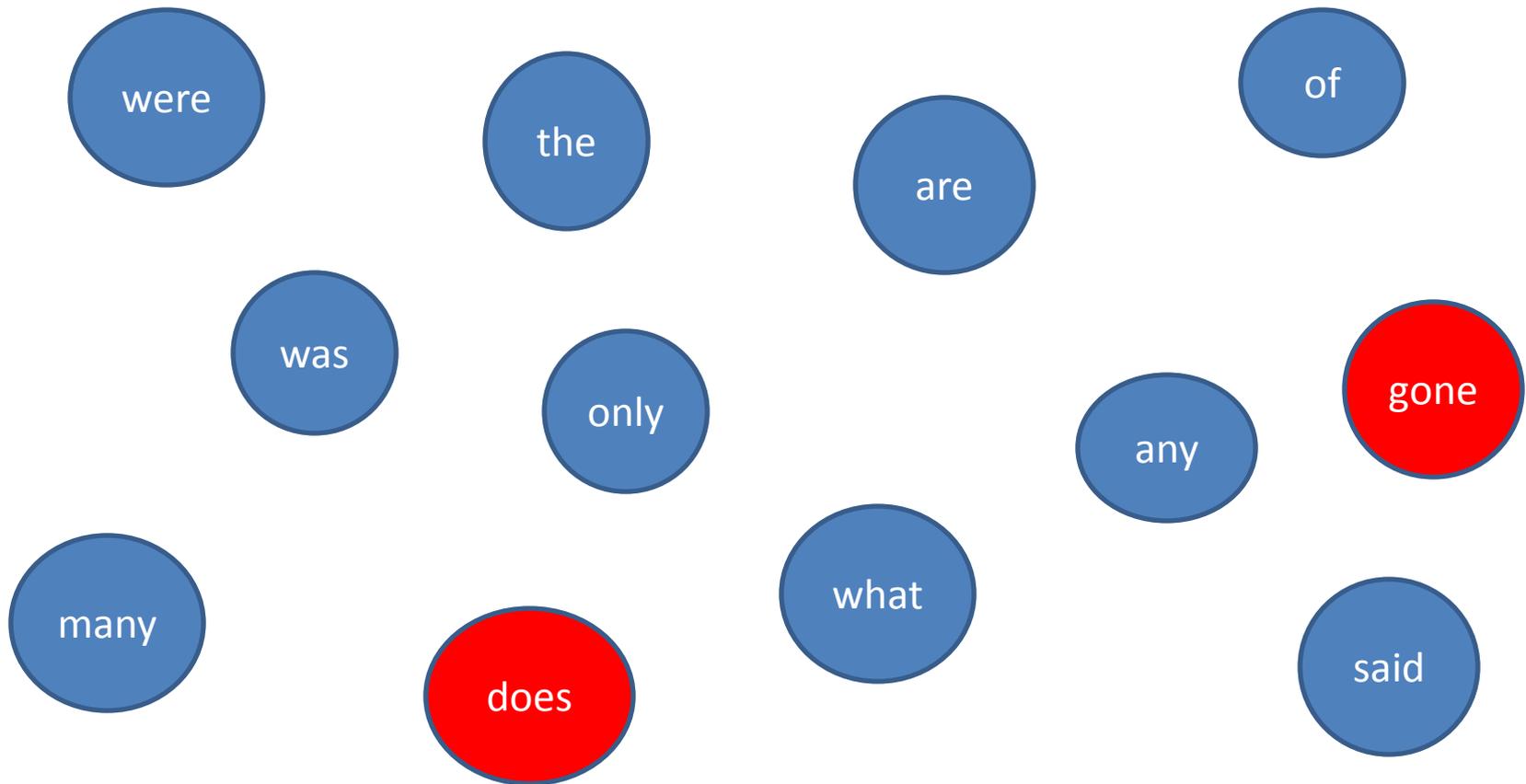
OR

Are we dealing with **total chaos?!?**

The complexity of English spelling: What we tell students....



Problem: These high-frequency words
will **not** go away!



The intriguing case of **do** and **go**

do

go

es

ne

ing

do + es → does

do + ne → done

do + ing → doing

go + es → goes

go + ne → gone

go + ing → going

Monumentally important question #3

Are the spellings of English **best** explained by:

SOUND?

Or are they **better** explained by:

MEANING?

Or are they **optimally** explained by **BOTH?**

Can anyone explain this...please?

CVrC
Words

- curd
- nerd
- bird
- word

Base +
Affix

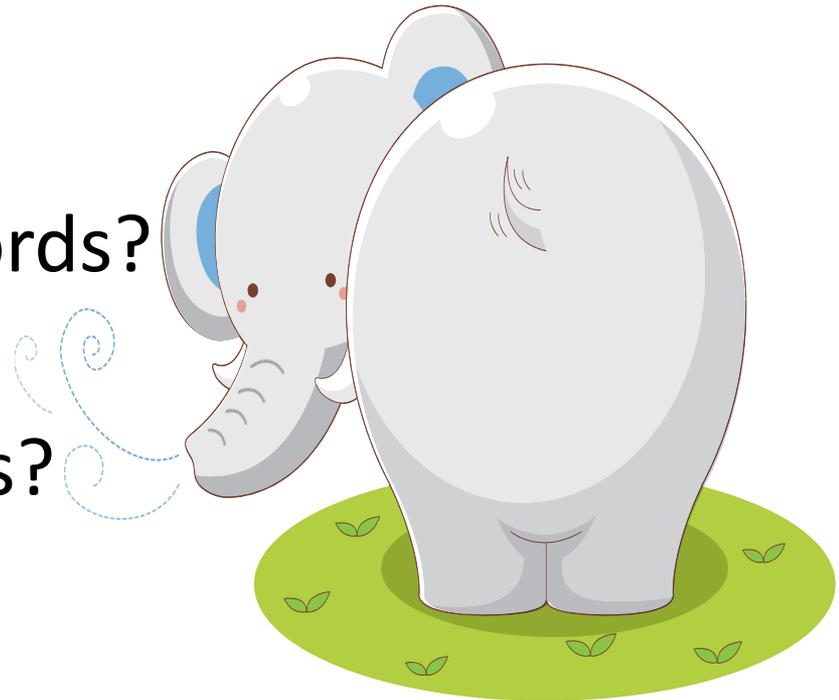
- stirred
- heard
- fired

And I'll bet you can't answer
Question #4 (a or b)!!!
(Multisyllabic words....uh-oh!)

Is there a **satisfactory** way to instruct our students to:

a) Decode multisyllabic words?

b) Spell multisyllabic words?



Do vowels reliably signal the presence of syllables?

Counting vowels works well in these words:

- ladybug
- elephant
- marigold
- octopus
- opening
- knitted; ratted
- anxiety; science; reality

But what about these words?

- Wednesday
- learned, signed
- washed, talked
- real; field
- beautiful
- anxious

Tricky question #5

Why is there a “g” in the word “**sign**?”

The answer to this next question
will help us answer Question #5

Why is there a “**b**” in in the word “**doubt**?”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvABHCJm3>

aA

Question #5 revisited

Soooooo...

why is there a “g” in the word “**sign**?”

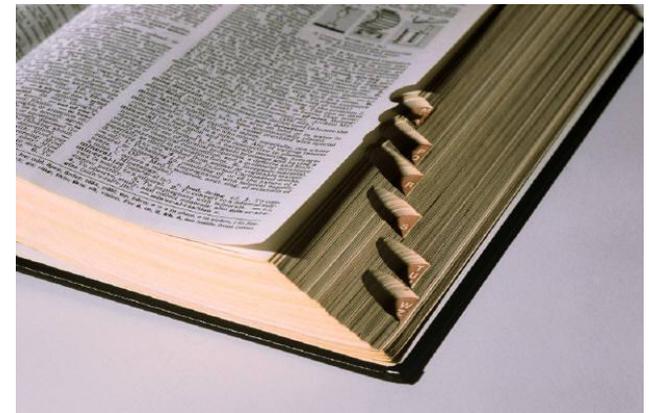
Huh?

mis	as	sign <i>signare = "mark, stamp, indication, symbol" (Latin)</i>	al	
con re			ed	
re	de		ify	
			ing	
			ment	
			ate	ion
				ure

The traditional *dictionary* approach to uncovering the meaning of “morphology”

Morphology: (1) the branch of biology dealing with the form and structure of organisms;
(2) in linguistics, the pattern of word formation in a particular language, including inflection, derivation, and composition.

Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com>



What does “morphology” mean?



The **Structured Word Inquiry** approach to uncovering the meaning of the word “morphology”

Suffixes and prefixes = no prefixes; one suffix: *ology*
(ology = “study of, a speaking of” from Greek *-logia*)

Base = *morphe*: form, shape; beauty, outward appearance.
Origin: Greek

Source for suffixes, prefixes and base: www.etymonline.com

Related words: morph, morphs, morphed, morphia, **morpheme**, morphine, morphing, amorphous, metamorphosis, anthropomorphize, etc.

Source for related words: WordSearcher (Neil Ramsden)

Word sums: Separate the prefixes and suffixes from the base

morph + s → morphs

morph + ing → morphing

morph + ed → morphed

morph + eme → **morpheme** *

morph + ine → morphine

morph + ology → morphology

a + morph + ous → amorphous

geo + morph + ology → geomorphology

dys + morph + ia → dysmorphia

And so on.....

***morpheme**: the smallest meaningful unit in a language (e.g. _s, _ed, a, the, sign, morph)

a ana anthropo geo holo homeo iso meta poly	morph <i>morphe = "form, shape" (Greek)</i>	ed eme ic ine ing ism ology ose osis ous
		ize
		ed ing

So now, what does morphology mean?



roi

s

aume ♂

auté ♀

al

iste

e

s

ment

The purpose of word sums

Word sums reveal the underlying word structure in a word with more than just a base

mis + be + have + ing → misbehaving

sign + ate + ure → signature

un + help + ful + ness → unhelpfulness

please + ant + ly → pleasantly

pity + ful → pitiful

Important point: “Spelling it out” versus “sounding it out”

Say the individual letters of bases and affixes one-by-one

Group letters that work as teams to produce one sound (e.g. “er”, “ed”, “ing” and “double l”)

Pause before and after letter groups that work as teams to produce one sound (see above)

“**Is rewritten as**”: the phrase used to introduce the final spelling of a word when affixes are added, symbolized by: →. After this, say “**check the joins!**” to highlight that there might be a change to the end of a base or a suffix.

http://wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Spelling-Out_Word_Sums.html

http://www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Spelling-Out_Word_Sums_files/spelling%20out%20word%20structure%20best.pdf

The purpose of the word matrix

- The word matrix concretely represents members of an
 - orthographic morphological word family,
 - that share a connection in both:

structure and meaning

- Inclusion of a word in a matrix is tested with a word sum

Source:

http://wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Home_files/Handout%20for%20IDA%20fall%202012.pdf

Which comes first: The matrix or the word sum?



Most likely, you'll start analysing a new word by creating a word sum.

un + heal + thy → unhealthy
distasteful → dis + taste + ful

BUT you can also present a matrix to your students first. They can create word sums from the matrix, and hopefully continue to add words.

Your students are becoming “word detectives.”



Steps for Structured Word Inquiry

1) Identify any prefixes or suffixes

2) Identify the base element (and its meaning)

**3) Assemble the word on this model:
Any prefixes + base element + any suffixes**

**4) Check the 'joins'
Especially where there is a suffix**

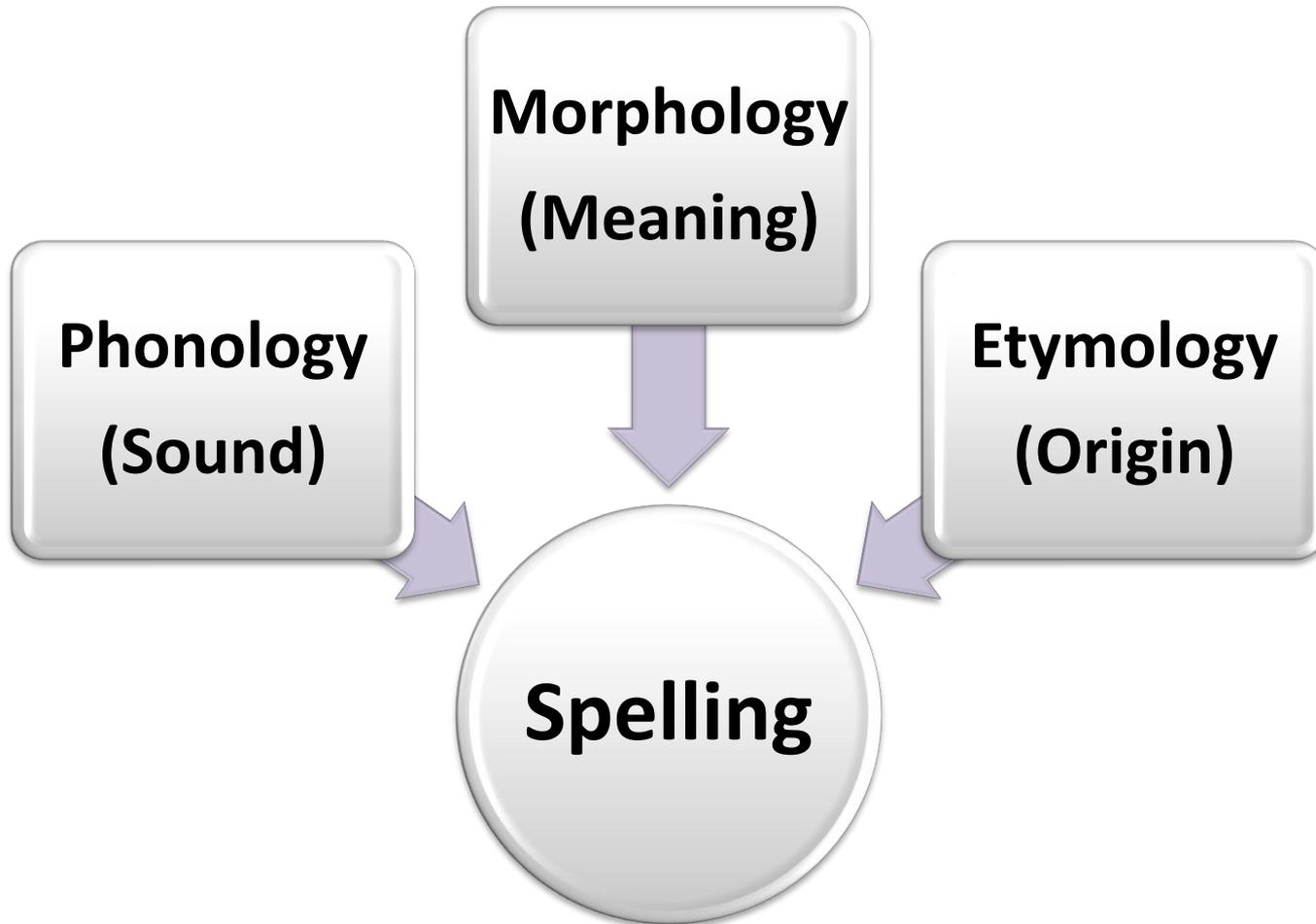
Written word

Peter Bowers in action!

“Mr. B” instructs a class about how he learned to spell the word “*really*”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCw1YbrnD6s&list=PL46D5C127BD4DD637>

So, **how** do we explain English spelling
to our students?



When should we do this?

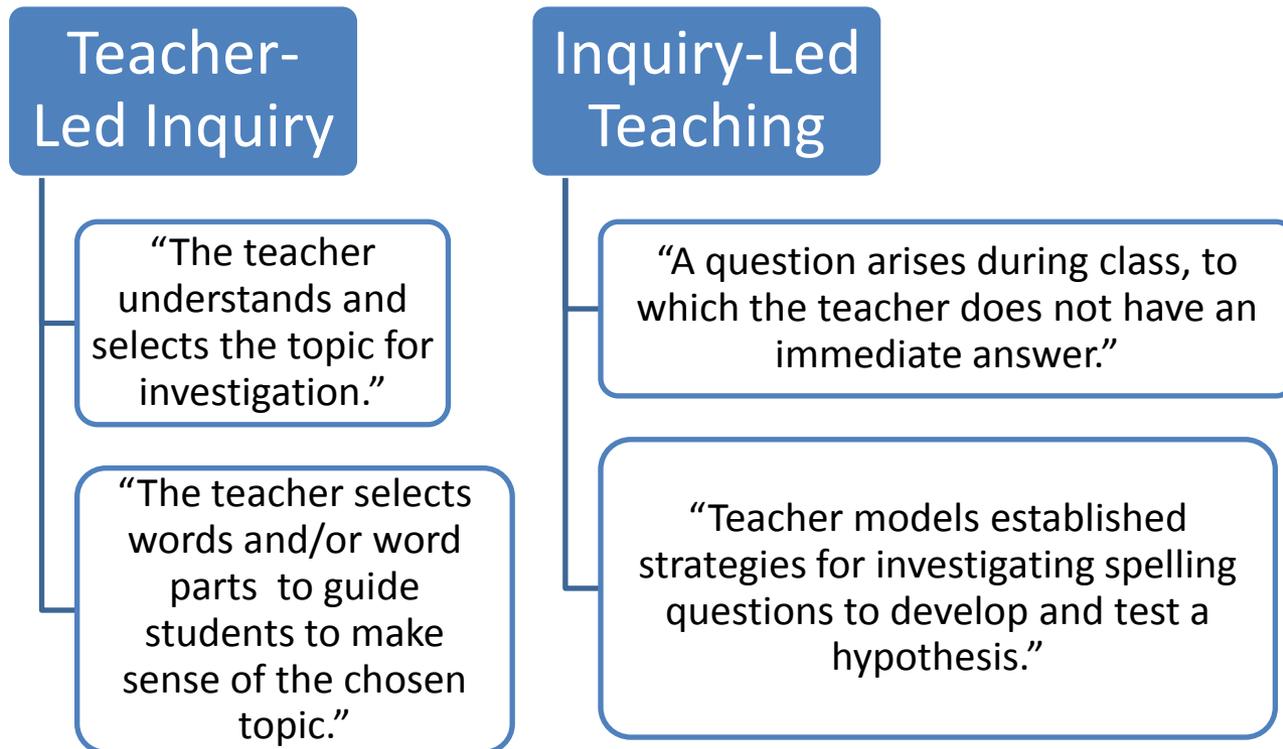
All the time.....

In contexts where learning is occurring.

Let's think of specific opportunities for you to approach word learning and spelling this way.....

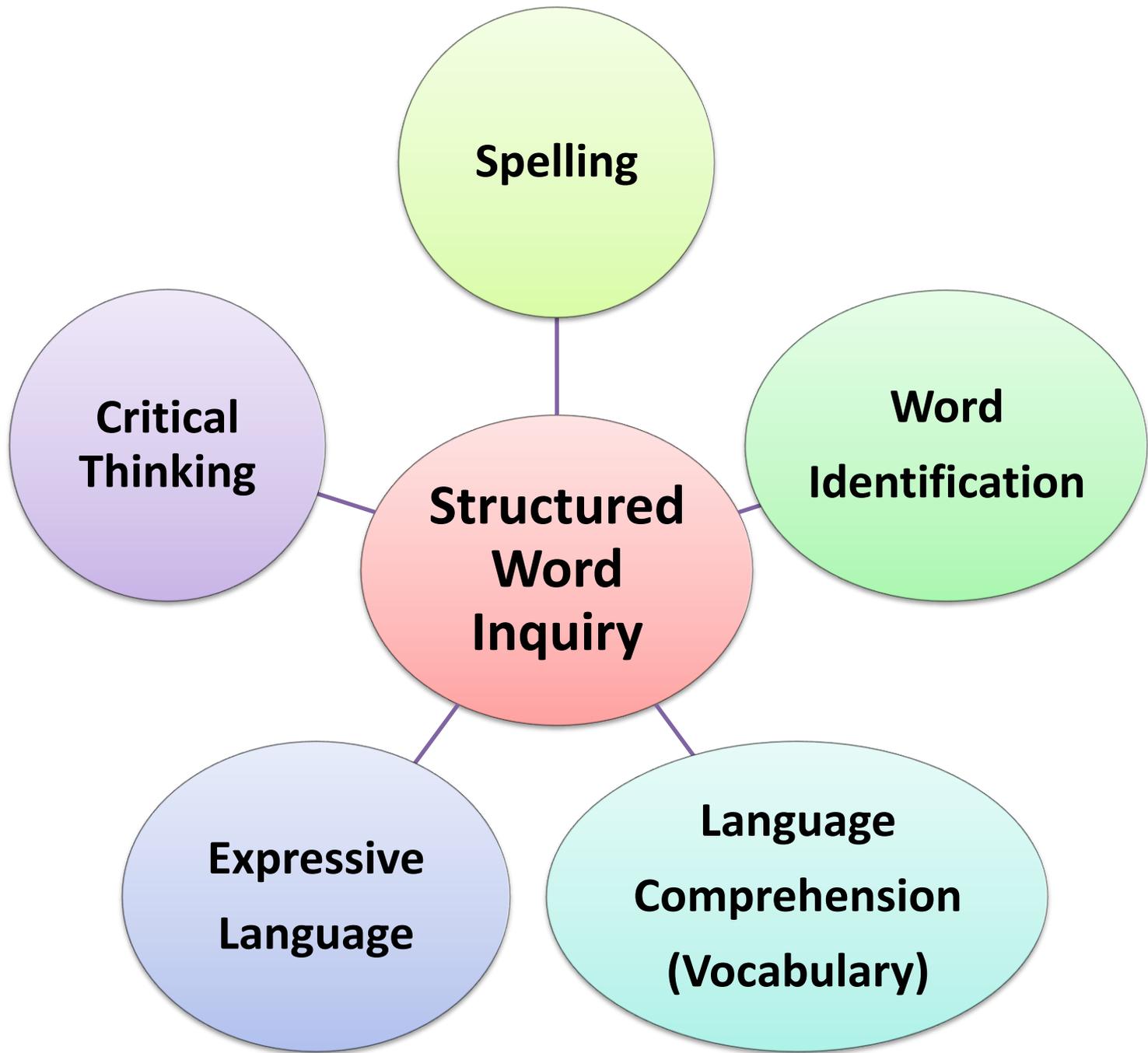
Two kinds of Structured Word Inquiry

Source: Bowers, P. (2009). *Teaching How the Written Word Works*.
Kingston, ON: WordWorks Literacy Center. (p. 3)



Why “Structured Word Inquiry?”

- Engages students’ interest in words
- Develops critical thinking
- Develops independent learning
- Builds vocabulary, reading and spelling skills by establishing a “spelling/meaning connection”



Why does it work?

- Systematic
- Contextual/meaningful
- Explicit
- Direct
- Metalinguistic and metacognitive
- Repetitive and reinforcing
- Multisensory
- **Student inquiry-driven**

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/making-sense-of-spelling-gina-cooke>

Very useful online resources

- Etymologyonline (free)

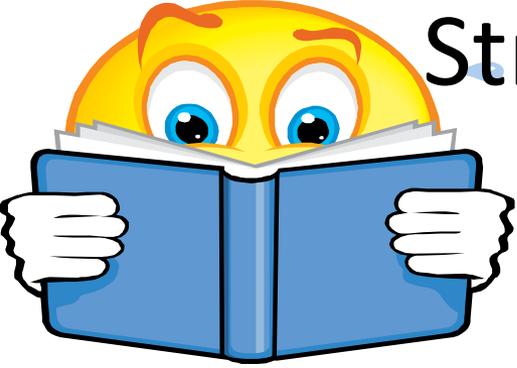
www.etymonline.com

- Wordsearcher and Mini Matrix-Maker (both are free)

<http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/searcher/index.html>

- Word Microscope (free until Oct 31/13)

<http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/>



Structured Word Inquiry: Relevant websites



<http://www.wordworkskingston.com>

[http://www.realspelling.fr/Welcome to Real Spelling/Choose-New.html](http://www.realspelling.fr/Welcome%20to%20Real%20Spelling/Choose-New.html)

<http://www.realspellers.org/>

<http://linguisteducatorexchange.wordpress.com/>

Recommended reading:

“Morphology Works”

By Dr. John R. Kirby and Peter N. Bowers

Queen’s University

From the series:

“What Works? Research into Practice”

June 2012, Research Monograph #41

Ontario Association of Deans of Education

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Morphology.pdf

Thanks

