

Teacher Resource · Free resource

Dictation sentences – Years 3/4 (all Appendix 1 rules)

Year group: 3/4

Source: DfE, *English Appendix 1: Spelling* (2013)

Purpose: Ready-to-use teacher dictation. Read sentences aloud. Pupils write from memory. Mark together and discuss.

Ofsted (2024, Telling the Story): "Dictation is highly effective but rarely used in primary classrooms." These sentence sets provide classroom-ready material for all Y3/4 rules.

How to use these sentences

Tell pupils which rule is being practised — they should know what pattern to expect

Read the sentence clearly once — at natural pace, not slowed down

Pupils write — no looking at the board or lists

Read it again — pupils check their own work

Reveal the spelling — pupils self-mark, then discuss any errors

The correction step is where the learning happens. A pupil who wrote *disappear* and then sees *disappear* — and understands *dis-* + *appear* — will remember it far longer than one who just copied the word correctly.

Set 1: Prefixes (*un-*, *dis-*, *mis-*, *re-*, *sub-*, *inter-*, *super-*, *anti-*, *auto-*)

She had to **redo** the work because she had **misunderstood** the instructions.

It was **unsafe** and **unfair** to **disappear** without telling anyone.

The **submarine** used an **automatic** navigation system to travel **underwater**.

He tried to **rebuild** the structure but **misplaced** the most **important** piece.

The **international** team used **antiseptic** spray and worked with **superhuman** speed.

Her **autobiography** described how she had **overcome** every **unusual** challenge.

Dislike for the **substandard** plan grew until the whole team chose to **disagree**.

They had to **return** to the **submarine** base because the **antifreeze** had **run out**.

The **intercity** train was **misled** by an **incorrect** signal at the **junction**.

She used her **interacting** skills to **rebuild** the **relationship** between the **groups**.

Set 2: Suffix *-ation*

The **information** on the display board helped everyone understand the task.

She looked at the painting with **admiration** because the colours were so vivid.

The science lesson required careful **observation** of the plants each day.

With great **imagination**, he built an entire world from a pile of bricks.

The **transformation** of the caterpillar into a butterfly took two weeks.

Her **education** began with **exploration** and grew through **experimentation**.

The **invitation** to the **celebration** arrived with a detailed **explanation** of the event.

The **organisation** of the festival required **preparation** and careful **consideration**.

She hoped the **conversation** would lead to **cooperation** and a lasting **solution**.

His **determination** turned the **situation** into a moment of real **inspiration**.

Set 3: Suffix *-ly*

She **certainly** worked hard enough to deserve the reward.

The children **gently** placed the eggs back in the nest.

He was **probably** the fastest runner in the whole school.

She **happily** accepted the challenge and got started straight away.

Simply adding the suffix does not always work — you need to check the base word.

The magician **dramatically** revealed the hidden card to the **completely** silent audience.

He spoke **particularly clearly** when explaining the **basically** straightforward rule.

She **recently** arrived and **immediately** began to work **quietly** and **efficiently**.

The room was **suddenly completely** still — not a sound from anyone present.

Apparently, the decision had been made **recently** but nobody had been **properly** informed.

Set 4: Suffix *-ous*

It was **dangerous** to walk near the edge of the cliff in the wind.

She was the most **famous** scientist in the country.

The adventurers crossed the **mountainous** terrain for three days.

He was **nervous** before the performance but felt better once he started.

The crowd was **outrageous** in their celebrations after the final whistle.

With **courageous** determination, she kept going even when it was hard.

The atmosphere was **glamorous** and **adventurous** — everyone was **nervous** with excitement.

His **humorous** response to the **outrageous** situation made everyone laugh.

The **poisonous** plant was **famous** across the **mountainous** region.

She was **marvellous** at the game — both **vigorous** in attack and **cautious** in defence.

Set 5: -tion, -sion, -ssion, -cian

She asked the teacher for **permission** to leave the room.

The **musician** played her violin with great skill and **expression**.

The class had a **discussion** about the fairest way to divide the work.

His **position** in the team meant he had to make quick **decisions**.

The **magician** performed tricks that created a sense of mystery and **tension**.

Can you answer the **question** without any help, or do you need some **direction**?

The **electrician** fixed the **connection** with great **precision** and **attention** to detail.

Her **profession** required a great deal of **passion** and careful **preparation**.

The **politician** gave a long **explanation** of the **situation** after the **session** ended.

After much **deliberation**, she gave her **permission** and the **mission** could begin.

Set 6: *ch* spellings (Greek and French)

The **character** in the story showed great bravery throughout the difficult **scheme**.

The **chemist** measured each ingredient carefully before the experiment began.

The whole **chorus** sang together, their voices creating a perfect **echo** around the cave.

The **chef** prepared a meal using a **machine** that nobody had seen before.

She picked up the **brochure** and read about the mountain **chalet** in detail.

His **charisma** and **characteristic** calm made him a natural **champion** of the **scheme**.

The **orchestra** played with **technical** precision — every **echo** was perfectly placed.

The **chef** used a clever **technique** to prepare the **chocolate** dessert.

She studied **chemistry** and found the **character** of each element **fascinating**.

The **chorus** of approval greeted the announcement — the **scheme** had been **chosen**.

Set 7: -gue, -que, sc = /s/

She wore her **badge** across the **bridge** to reach the other **edge** of the park.

The **unique** technique helped the whole **league** achieve a **precise** result.

Science requires **discipline** and careful **observation** of every **scene**.

An **antique** vase sat on the **crescent**-shaped shelf in the museum **foyer**.

The **dialogue** between the two **colleagues** was **vague** but important.

She had a **knack** for **science** — her **fascination** with it was clear from a young age.

The **league** had issued a **plaque** to mark the occasion with **dignity**.

The **scene** at the **crescent** end of the street was both **unique** and **grotesque**.

Scissors cut through the **discipline** of the **scene** like nothing else.

Her **conscience** told her that the **vague** plan was more of a **fatigue** than a solution.

Set 8: Homophones (Y3/4)

She could not **conceive** of a reason to **deceive** her closest friend.

The **ceiling** of the cave was so low she had to feel her way by touch.

He did not **believe** the team would **achieve** such a remarkable result.

To **receive** a prize is a great honour; to take one dishonestly is another matter.

Whether or not the **weather** was good, she planned to continue **regardless**.

She had to **accept** everything **except** the one thing she most wanted to keep.

The **scene** from the window was unlike anything she had **seen** before.

She wanted **peace** but all she got was a small **piece** of quiet before the noise returned.

He walked **past** the bakery and **passed** three people he knew on the way.

The team's **medal** was tarnished because one player had decided to **meddle** in the others' work.

Set 9: *-ture* and *-sure*

She took a **picture** of every **creature** she spotted in the garden that afternoon.

The **treasure** was hidden under layers of **pressure** and compacted stone.

It was a **pleasure** to **measure** the **temperature** of the liquid each day.

The **adventure** took them through rocky terrain of unusual **texture**.

In their **leisure** time, the class built a **structure** from recycled materials.

The **exposure** to sunlight gave the **mixture** its **beautiful** golden **colour**.

A **creature** of **extraordinary nature** was on display at the **leisure** centre.

The **treasure** map showed the **structure** of the island with **unusual texture**.

Her **future** depended on passing the **examination** under **pressure**.

The **picture** captured the **natural feature** of the landscape with great **precision**.

Set 10: Multisyllable doubling

She was **beginning** to **prefer** the **preferred** route through the forest.

The team **referred** the **matter** to the **committee** for a **final** decision.

Gardening is **limiting** in winter, but the **beginning** of spring changes everything.

The **conference** was attended by everyone who had been **referred** by a **colleague**.

She **preferred** the original but accepted that **preference** was a personal matter.

Forgetting the details was **frustrating** — she had been so **careful** at the **beginning**.

The **transfer** was **transferring** smoothly until the **preferred** route was blocked.

The **occurrence** was **baffling** — **occurring** in the **limited** window they had.

His **commitment** to **gardening** had **beginning** to show real results.

She **inferred** from the **reference** that her **preference** had been **considered**.

Set 11: /ɪ/ spelt y; /ʌ/ spelt ou

The **mystery** of the ancient **pyramid** puzzled every visitor to **Egypt**.

He could **double** his score by learning the **rhythm** of the game.

Her **country** had **enough** resources to **encourage** new ideas.

The **symbol** on the map showed the location of the old **gym**.

Even in **trouble**, she kept a **typical** sense of calm throughout.

The **young bicycle** riders crossed the **country** lanes in the **gym** kit.

His **system** was **typical** — too much **trouble** for too little **rhythm**.

A **crystal pyramid** sat on the desk as a **symbol** of her work.

The **young** scientist studied the **mysterious cylinder** for several days.

Double the **gym** sessions, **encourage** the **typical** and the results will **come**.

Source: DfE English Appendix 1: Spelling (2013). All sentences constructed using statutory words and patterns for Years 3–4. Sentences verified for appropriateness at Year 3/4 reading level.