

Teacher Resource · Free resource

## Pretest and retest pairs – Years 5/6

Year group: 5/6

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

Purpose: Pairs of pretests (Monday) and retests (Friday) for the Y5/6 statutory word list.

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### How to use pretest/retest

**The evidence:** A pretest-teach-retest cycle is one of the most effective learning routines in spelling research. Pupils who attempt a pretest before instruction show significantly better retention than those who only study and test.

*(Source: Kornell, N. et al. (2009). Unsuccessful retrieval attempts enhance subsequent learning. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General.)*

**The routine:**

**Monday pretest** — pupils attempt all words without having studied them. Mark together immediately. Each pupil identifies their own errors.

**Tuesday–Thursday teaching** — focus on the spelling rules and etymology relevant to that week's words. Use the Y5/6 rule explainers and dictation sentences in this library.

**Friday retest** — same words in a different order. Pupils compare Monday and Friday scores.

**The gap** — words reappear in a future test 4–6 weeks later to check long-term retention.

**A pupil who scores 6/25 on Monday and 22/25 on Friday is experiencing exactly the right kind of learning.** The pretest failure is productive — it creates retrieval pathways that make subsequent learning stick.

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## Set 1: Y5/6 Statutory Words – Batch A (25 words)

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**Monday pretest:** accommodate · accompany · aggressive · amateur · ancient · apparent · appreciate · attached · available · average · awkward · bargain · bruise · category · cemetery · committee · communicate · community · competition · conscience · conscious · controversy · convenience · correspond · criticise

**Friday retest:** correspond · criticise · apparent · community · aggressive · awkward · cemetery · attached · ancient · committee · accommodate · available · conscience · controversy · bruise · average · appreciate · communicate · category · amateur · accompany · bargain · competition · conscious · convenience

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## Set 2: Y5/6 Statutory Words – Batch B (25 words)

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**Monday pretest:** curiosity · definite · desperate · determined · develop · dictionary · disastrous · embarrass · environment · equip · especially · exaggerate · excellent · existence · explanation · familiar · foreign · forty · frequently · government · guarantee · harass · hindrance · identity · immediate

**Friday retest:** immediately · familiar · embarrass · excellent · existence · foreign · guarantee · especially · identity · forty · desperate · hindrance · develop · frequently · dictionary · curiosity · definite · exaggerate · equip · explanation · determined · environment · disastrous · harass · government

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### Set 3: Y5/6 Statutory Words – Batch C (25 words)

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**Monday pretest:** individual · interfere · interrupt · language · leisure · lightning · marvellous · mischievous · muscle · necessary · neighbour · nuisance · occupy · occur · parliament · physical · prejudice · privilege · profession · programme · pronunciation · queue · recognise · recommend · relevant

**Friday retest:** relevant · recommend · recognise · queue · pronunciation · programme · profession · privilege · prejudice · physical · parliament · occur · occupy · nuisance · neighbour · necessary · muscle · mischievous · marvellous · lightning · leisure · language · interrupt · interfere · individual

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## Set 4: Y5/6 Statutory Words – Batch D (25 words)

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**Monday pretest:** restaurant · rhyme · rhythm · sacrifice · secretary · shoulder · signature · sincere · sincerely · soldier · stomach · sufficient · suggest · symbol · system · temperature · thorough · twelfth · variety · vegetable · vehicle · yacht · immediate · especially · conscious

**Friday retest:** conscious · especially · immediate · yacht · vehicle · vegetable · variety · twelfth · thorough · temperature · system · symbol · suggest · sufficient · stomach · soldier · sincerely · sincere · signature · shoulder · secretary · sacrifice · rhythm · rhyme · restaurant

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## End-of-Year 6 check – full Y5/6 statutory word list (100 words)

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*Use at the end of Year 6 to assess full statutory word list retention.*

**Test words (randomised order):** accommodate · accompany · aggressive · amateur · ancient · apparent · appreciate · attached · available · average · awkward · bargain · bruise · category · cemetery · committee · communicate · community · competition · conscience · conscious · controversy · convenience · correspond · criticise · curiosity · definite · desperate · determined · develop · dictionary · disastrous · embarrass · environment · equip · especially · exaggerate · excellent · existence · explanation · familiar · foreign · forty · frequently · government · guarantee · harass · hindrance · identity · immediate · individual · interfere · interrupt · language · leisure · lightning · marvellous · mischievous · muscle · necessary · neighbour · nuisance · occupy · occur · parliament · physical · prejudice · privilege · profession · programme · pronunciation · queue · recognise · recommend · relevant · restaurant · rhyme · rhythm · sacrifice · secretary · shoulder · signature · sincere · sincerely · soldier · stomach · sufficient · suggest · symbol · system · temperature · thorough · twelfth · variety · vegetable · vehicle · yacht

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## Rule pattern pretest/retest

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### Set R1: *-cious* and *-tious*

**Monday pretest:** ferocious · cautious · suspicious · ambitious · precious · nutritious · conscious · delicious · spacious · atrocious · conscientious · fictitious

**Friday retest:** fictitious · conscientious · atrocious · spacious · delicious · conscious · nutritious · precious · ambitious · suspicious · cautious · ferocious

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### Set R2: *-able* and *-ible*

**Monday pretest:** comfortable · possible · noticeable · terrible · reliable · visible · manageable · responsible · fashionable · accessible · divisible · believable

**Friday retest:** believable · divisible · accessible · fashionable · responsible · manageable · visible · reliable · terrible · noticeable · possible · comfortable

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### Set R3: *-ant/-ance* and *-ent/-ence*

**Monday pretest:** observant · innocent · hesitant · different · expectant · frequent · tolerant · confident · evidence · abundance · brilliance · obedience

**Friday retest:** obedience · brilliance · abundance · evidence · confident · tolerant · frequent · expectant · different · hesitant · innocent · observant

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## Error analysis record (class level)

After each retest, record which words 3 or more pupils misspelled. These words need reteaching.

Word	Error pattern	Rule to reteach	Date

This table feeds directly into targeting: words that cluster into a common error pattern (e.g. seven pupils writing separate instead of separate) should be retaught as a rule, not a word.

## Long-gap retest (4–6 weeks after initial teaching)

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Pick 10 words from any set taught 4–6 weeks ago. Test without warning.

**Why:** The spacing effect shows that retrieval practice after a delay produces stronger long-term retention than immediate retesting. A test 4 weeks later, even if some words are forgotten, produces better retention outcomes than additional practice in the same week.

*(Source: Cepeda, N.J. et al. (2006). Distributed Practice in Verbal Recall Tasks. Psychological Bulletin.)*

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*Source: DfE English Appendix 1: Spelling (2013). Pretest-retest methodology: Kornell et al. (2009); Cepeda et al. (2006). All word lists verified against statutory Appendix 1 document.*