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Introduction to Codebusters

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Spelling is an ignored wound in American education.

It is so ignored that university teacher-preparation programs do not even include a single course on how to teach spelling.

Lacking professional guidance, teachers concoct a variety of approaches. Some present a list of words and tell their students to memorize them for Friday’s test. Others have their students finger-paint the words. Others dwell on complex rules, such as: “In monosyllabic words ending in a terminal consonant, double the terminal consonant before adding -ed or -ing.”

Spelling is so ignored that California’s entire content standards for eighth grade spelling instruction is four words long: Use correct spelling conventions. That’s it. One sentence. Four words.

No wonder students cannot spell.

Spelling ought to be taught in high school, where it is most needed.

Spelling is not a simple grade school skill. Spelling is an advanced literacy skill that requires logical, orderly thinking. High school requires enormous written output, including homework, written exams, essays, research papers and theses. Despite the fact that the preponderance of students’ written work is blighted with spelling errors and despite the fact that standardized tests require written submissions to evaluate the students’ spelling skills, high schools do not teach spelling.

Students who write like this:

I'am writting this papper about wind. I hate wind, wind is yukky and dum. their aint nuthin esle to say about it

do not fare as well as those who write like this:

A slight breeze eased its way through a deserted alley. Suddenly it ceased, as if it had blown itself out.

Memory vs Logic

There are two kinds of good spellers: those with photographic memories and those who use logic. The focus of this article is on the logic of spelling.

Spelling is a specialized form of reading. The teaching of spelling (and reading) begins with an understanding of the syllable.

Most textbooks on spelling, reading, and phonics are full of notions such as: memorize these words… memorize the two CCs and two MMs in ‘accommodate’… memorize this rule… memorize this mnemonic device. Do they really think that knowlege of glottal stops, morphemes, phonemes,
graphemes, digraphs, labials, fricates, open syllables, R-controlled vowels and terminal consonants would enhance the teaching and learning of spelling?

1. PYBOP

What is the purpose of spelling?

To create a PYBOP.

What is a PYBOP?

An acronym for Put Your Brain On Paper

Whenever you write something, you are making your invisible thoughts visible. You are demonstrating your level of literacy. You are Putting Your Brain On Paper. The following reveals that the writer does not understand written words:

“I plege a legion to the flag of the Untied Stats of Amerca . . . ”

If you respect your mind, expose it on a silver platter not a piece of garbage. No ragged edges, no wrinkles, no coffee stains, no pencil too light to read…NO GARBAGE!

Writing is about using words you can spell. NEVER write a word unless you can spell it!

Writing is not a game in which you rite-right-wirte-write a word and make the reader guess what it is. Homework has lost its meaning. It ought to be perceived as a PYBOP.

2. The syllable

All of the secrets of reading and spelling are contained in the syllable.

One Vowel-Sound-Symbol Per Syllable is the rule by which all written words are formed.

A syllable is the smallest readable part of a word.

Every syllable contains exactly one vowel-sound-symbol.

Consonants cannot be read alone. The must attach to a vowel-sound-symbol.

A syllable is a vowel-sound-symbol and any consonants that attach to it.

There are about one million American English words. Only one of them does not have a vowel-sound-symbol. What is that extraordinary word, the wordsmith may ask? You can torture me to the nth degree and I still will not tell you. I insist that you discover it for yourself.

There are 3 kinds of vowel-sound-symbols: Vowels, Diphthongs, and the letter Y, as found in cat, coat, and cry.

The syllable contains the secrets of spelling, reading and phonics.
There are no big words. Big words are simply long words full of small syllables. It is the ability to perceive and understand those syllables that separates the poor readers and poor spellers from the experts.

3. SAS + SAW

Every word has two forms: a SAS form and a SAW form.

SAS = Say As Spoken. TATER (dialects and accents occur here)

SAW = Say As Written. PO-TA-TO (dialects and accents are eliminated here)

In the spoken word *Wednesday* there are 2 syllables: \wenz dee\n
In the written word *Wednesday* there are three syllables: WED-NES-DAY

Spoken syllables get distorted from one mouth to the next. /Febuary/ /Febuwary/

Written syllables are permanent undistorted records of a word. FEB-RU-ARY

SAS phonics focuses on spoken syllables. \wenz dee\n
SAW phonics focuses on written syllables. WED-NES-DAY

SAW = the phonics of spelling.

SAW is the ultimate word-attack skill.

Much of what we speak is a form of language distortion.

We speak one language and write quite another.

SAS: Jeat? No, jew?

SAW: Did you eat? No. Did you?

The ultimate secret of spelling is learning how to undistort spoken words.

Good spellers know how to undistort spoken words.

**There are two ways to say a word: SAS and SAW.**

SAS words are distorted and vary from one mouth to the next.

/FEBUARY/ /FEBUWARY/ /FEBWARY/

SAW words are undistorted. FEB RU ARY

Amateurs try to spell words the way they are spoken (SAS).

Experts realize that SAS words are distorted. They use SAW to undistort them.
This is how the amateur speller thinks:
I say FEBUARY so I am going to spell it the way I say it.

Amateurs do not realize that their spoken words are distorted.

This is how the expert speller thinks:
I say February in high speed speech, but when I look at each syllable, I realize that the undistorted word is FEB-RU-ARY, so those are the sounds I am going to spell.

Experts know how to SAS and SAW words.

SAS reveals the distorted sounds of high-speed speech: /WENZDEE/

SAW reveals the undistorted sounds of written words: WED-NES-DAY

Good spellers realize that when WED-NES-DAY is spoken quickly it distorts into the /wenzdee/ sound.

Good spellers do not try to spell the spoken phonics of /wenzdee/. They try to spell the SAW phonics of WED-NES-DAY.

Good spellers think like this:

The spoken word /wenzdee/ undistorts into WED-NES-DAY.

If I slowly say WED-NES-DAY, and then say it faster and faster,
it eventually distorts into the /wenzdee/ sound.

Average spellers do not realize that their spoken words are distorted. They think spelling is chaotic and systemless. They think that spelling would make more sense if we spelled words the way we speak them. They don’t realize that words are spoken (distorted) in a variety of ways, and that spelling captures the undistorted version of a word, regardless of how many ways it can be slushed in high-speed speech.

There is nothing wrong with high-speed speech (SAS). It’s efficient, lyrical, and musical. One just needs to recognize that writing (SAW) is the undistorted version of high speed speech.

/pyunt the hyuse/ is really PAINT THE HOUSE,

/pawk the caw/ is really PARK THE CAR,

/jiscuz/ is really JUST BECAUSE,

/february, febuwary, febwary/ are distortions of FEBRUARY.

SAS: Spoken words delight the ear (dozydotes an mairzydotes)

SAW: Written words delight the eye ( does eat oats and mares eat oats)
Reading occurs on two word-attack levels.

The first attack is SAW. The second is SAS. Consider *Worcestershire*

The first attack is to read each syllable. (SAW) wor-ces-ter-shire

The second attack is to find out how it is spoken. (SAS)

The skilled reader separates the two forms as follows:

Wor-ce-ster-shire speeds up into /werstersher/

Con-do-le-ez-za speeds up into /condaleeza/

(Perhaps Condoleezza will show her boss how to SAS and SAW *nuclear*).

Most words have two forms, a SAS form and a SAW form.

Poor spellers try to spell the SAS. (wensdee)

Good spellers try to spell the SAW. (WED-NES-DAY)

Our goal is not to barrage students with assignments, but to show them how to put their brains on paper.

**Student PYBOP:**

By codebusting *cupboard* into cup-board, I deduced that the original cupboard was a board for cups. This made me wonder if the word “raspberry” was also logically constructed. I looked up “rasp” in the dictionary and discovered that a rasp is a thorn or a scratchy thing. I am looking at a raspberry now, amazed that I had not noticed the little rasps on it before.

This PYBOP provides insight into the reason why raspberry is spelled the way it is, regardless of how we squish and mangle it in high-speed speech. It serves as a cogent argument against the notion that words ought to be spelled the way they are spoken.

**Teacher PYBOP**

I koncentrate on kreative riting. i dont wont to stifle theyre kreativity by imposing the standards u demand in ur pyboppola krappola.

I am sorry for that teacher and her students. Look at the following student PYBOPs and decide for yourself if their creativity has been stifled by demanding that they only use words that they can spell.

**The Hunting Trip**

Leaving for a short hunting trip, the two men noticed a small boy playing near their cabin. On returning empty-handed, they decided to use their remaining bullets by shooting at a large box near by. Satisfied, they drove off, but neglected to see the pool of blood drooling from the holes in the box.
Wind

A slight breeze eased its way through a deserted alley. It traveled at a lazy pace, pausing to whisk an unwanted newspaper into the air. Unintentionally, it reformed itself into a whirlwind, darting between empty trash cans, and tearing through the leaves of a tree. Suddenly it ceased, as if it had blown itself out.

These are not thousand word essays of error riddled drivel. These are single paragraphs written by kids who have learned some basic skills honed by daily PYBOP practice. Has their creativity been stifled? Or released?

If you successfully nurture the PYBOP concept, your proteges will have greater respect for their minds. And so will you!

4. Codebusters

Codebusters are as important to learning spelling and reading as the times tables are to learning mathematics. One simple codebuster provides the phonetic code for the entire Japanese language. Codebusters should serve as the foundation of all spelling, phonics, and reading intruction.

The typical spelling lesson boils down to: Memorize these 10 words for next Friday's quiz. Good spellers learn ten words in 30 seconds, without resorting to memorizing.

You are going to learn how to read, write and spell almost every word in the Japanese language in less than one hour. Impossible? Not if you apply your SAS and SAW knowledge to codebusters.

5. Japanese Codebusters

How do you SAS and SAW this word? KABUKINEGO

If you are unsure, if you are fumbling and mumbling, if you are guessing…then you are facing the same dilemma your students face when they encounter new words. Once you understand codebusters your confusion will dissipate.

Japanese words are almost entirely composed of two letter codebusters.

A codebuster is a syllable the occurs repeatedly throughout a language

Codebusters must be read separately, one at a time (SAW).

These five codebusters form the SAW foundation for the Japanese language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codebusters</th>
<th>Japanese Codebusters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>baw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU</td>
<td>boo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
<td>bee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BO</td>
<td>bow (rhymes with go)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do not proceed until you can correctly pronounce BABUBIBEBO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BA</th>
<th>BU</th>
<th>BI</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>BO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KA</td>
<td>KU</td>
<td>KI</td>
<td>KE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YA</td>
<td>YU</td>
<td>YI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>HU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KA</td>
<td>BU</td>
<td>KI</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>GO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

complete the blanks, read the result

Words are made from codebusters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>BU</th>
<th>BI</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>BO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yokohama</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiroshima</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td></td>
<td>hi</td>
<td>shi</td>
<td>ro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harakiri</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ra</td>
<td>ki</td>
<td>ri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kikuyu</td>
<td></td>
<td>ku</td>
<td>yu</td>
<td>ki</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowing how to correctly separate words into syllables is an advanced word-attack skill, known as **THE SAW TECHNIQUE**.

Syllables must be read slowly, distinctly, one at a time (SAW).

**PYBOP**

“BA BU BI BE BO”
“What’s that?”

“The codebusters for the Japanese language.”

“So what?”

“By knowing them I can read and spell almost every Japanese word, including Yokohama, Fujiyama, Harakiri, and Kikuyu.”

“I wonder if English has codebusters.”

“So do I.”

7. SPANISH CODEBUSTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codebusters</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>BU</th>
<th>BI</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>BO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>baw</td>
<td>boo</td>
<td>bee</td>
<td>bay</td>
<td>bow (rhymes with go)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>PABLO</td>
<td>UNO</td>
<td>AMIGO</td>
<td>MESA</td>
<td>PESO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Spanish codebusters are pronounced exactly the same as the Japanese codebusters.

By learning how to pronounce these codebusters, one can quickly grasp the flavor and structure of Spanish words.

Codebusters must be read slowly, distinctly, one at a time (SAW).

How do you SAS and SAW these words?

amigo padre taco peso chihuahua

Now you have captured the phonetic essence of both Japanese and Spanish.

8: HAWAIIAN CODEBUSTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codebusters</th>
<th>HA</th>
<th>HU</th>
<th>HI</th>
<th>HE</th>
<th>HO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Haw</td>
<td>Hoo</td>
<td>Hee</td>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>ho</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five vowels (AEIOU) and seven consonants (HKLMNPW) make up the entire Hawaiian alphabet. In Hawaiian a consonant is always followed by a vowel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hawaiian</th>
<th>aloha</th>
<th>hula</th>
<th>wahine</th>
<th>kane</th>
<th>kona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Nearly every word in the Hawaiian language evolves from the HAHUHIHEHO codebusters.

By applying SAS and SAW to codebusters you have captured the phonetic secrets of the Hawaiian language.

SAS and SAW these words:

aloha kahuna mahalo male ukulele humuhumunukunukupuaa wahine

American English Codebusters

American English also has codebusters. They are similar to, but more complex than those presented here. These foreign codebusters will serve to prepare you for American English codebusters which will be revealed in the next article.

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