Primary 3 Spelling and Vocabulary List

Primary 3 · English

The Singapore Syllabus

1 About this list

MOE does not publish a national spelling list, and each school sets its own weekly lists. This is TSS's own list for Primary 3, pitched to the level using the MOE English Language Syllabus 2020. Use it alongside your child's school list. Everything on this page, including the practice and answers, is in the free PDF from the button at the top, ready to print.

What the official documents say, and what this list is

Point	What it means for you
National spelling list	MOE does not publish a national spelling list. Schools set their own spelling lists, so the list your child brings home will be different from this one.
Your school's own list	Some schools post their weekly lists on the school website or class portal. Learn that list first, as the school test uses it.
Mother Tongue lists	Mother Tongue spelling lists, such as tingxie for Chinese, are set by schools too. This page covers English only.
MOE English Language Syllabus 2020	Vocabulary is one of the six areas of language learning in the syllabus. Pupils learn how words are formed, how words relate to one another and how they are used in context.
Marks from P3	From P3, schools hold no more than one weighted assessment per subject each term. Ask your child's teacher whether a spelling test counts towards a mark.
Foundation or Standard	In P5 and P6, English is taken at Foundation or Standard level, depending on P4 school exam results. This list is pitched at Standard English. A child taking Foundation English can start with the Primary 4 list and move up.
PSLE English	Spelling and vocabulary are assessed in Paper 1 (Writing) and Paper 2 (Language Use and Comprehension). The next section shows where.
This list	TSS's own 160 words for Primary 3, in 16 themed lists of 10 across the four school terms, plus 10 challenge words. Every word has a short meaning and an example sentence written by TSS. MOE and SEAB did not issue this list.

- The list uses British spelling, such as colour, favourite and neighbour, as MOE's own syllabus documents do.

2 How vocabulary is tested in Primary 3

Each school sets its own P3 English tests and decides their format, and from P3 a school holds no more than one weighted assessment per subject each term. The skills are the same ones PSLE English tests at the end of P6, so the practice on this page uses the PSLE vocabulary item types: 5 multiple-choice questions and a 5-blank cloze in each set.

What each question type asks your child to do

Question type	What your child does	Practise it on this page
Vocabulary multiple choice	Reads a sentence and picks, from four options, the one closest in meaning to a given word.	Practice sets A and B, questions 1 to 5
Vocabulary cloze	Reads a short passage with blanks and picks the best of four words for each blank, using meaning, words that go together and grammar.	Practice sets A and B, blanks 1 to 5
Editing for spelling	Finds wrongly spelt words in a passage and writes them correctly.	The tricky words list and the weekly routine
Comprehension cloze	Fills each blank in a passage with one suitable word of their own.	Working out a new word from context
Writing	Uses exact, correctly spelt words in compositions and situational writing.	Day 3 of the weekly routine

Where vocabulary and spelling are tested in PSLE English (0001)

Paper and component	Item type	Items and marks
Paper 2, Booklet A: Vocabulary	Multiple choice	5 items, 5 marks
Paper 2, Booklet A: Vocabulary Cloze	Multiple choice	5 items, 5 marks
Paper 2, Booklet B: Editing for Spelling and Grammar	Open-ended	10 items, 10 marks
Paper 2, Booklet B: Comprehension Cloze	Open-ended	15 items, 15 marks
Paper 1: Situational Writing (14 marks) and Continuous Writing (36 marks)	Open-ended	Assessed on accurate and appropriate vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and spelling

- Weightings: Paper 1 (Writing) 25%, Paper 2 (Language Use and Comprehension) 45%, Paper 3 (Listening Comprehension) 10% and Paper 4 (Oral Communication) 20%, out of 200 marks. Paper 2 lasts 1 h 50 min and has 25 multiple-choice and 50 open-ended questions. Source: SEAB PSLE English Language syllabus 0001, implemented from the Year of Examination 2025.
- SEAB does not publish a word list for these questions.

3 Term 1 words (lists 1 to 4)

40 words in 4 lists: school life, family and home, action words, describing people.

List 1: School life

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
assembly	a meeting of the whole school in the hall	The principal spoke to us during assembly.
canteen	the place in school where you buy food	I bought fried noodles at the canteen.
recess	a short break between lessons	We play catching during recess.
timetable	a list that shows when each lesson happens	Check the timetable to see which books to bring.
principal	the head of a school	The principal shook hands with the winners.
uniform	special clothes that everyone in a group wears	I iron my school uniform on Sunday night.
notebook	a book with blank pages for writing notes	Write the new words in your notebook.
practise	to do something again and again to get better at it	I practise the piano every evening.
complete	to finish something	Complete the worksheet before Friday.
attention	careful listening or watching	Pay attention when the teacher is speaking.

List 2: Family and home

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
parents	your mother and father	My parents work in the city.
cousin	the child of your aunt or uncle	My cousin is visiting from Penang.
neighbour	a person who lives next to you	Our neighbour gave us some curry puffs.
relatives	people in your family	All our relatives came for the reunion dinner.
chores	small jobs you do at home	My chores are to sweep the floor and fold the clothes.
laundry	clothes that need to be washed, or have just been washed	I helped Mum hang out the laundry.
corridor	a long passage outside rooms or flats	Do not leave your shoes in the corridor.
balcony	a small platform outside a window or door	Grandma grows herbs on the balcony.
favourite	liked more than all the others	Blue is my favourite colour.
elderly	old (a polite word)	We helped an elderly man carry his groceries.

List 3: Action words

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
carry	to hold something and take it somewhere	Can you carry this bag for me?
climb	to go up using your hands and feet	The boys climb the rope in the gym.
crawl	to move on your hands and knees	The baby can crawl across the room.
hurry	to move or do something quickly	We had to hurry to catch the bus.
search	to look carefully for something	We searched the room for my missing key.
shout	to say something very loudly	Do not shout in the library.
whisper	to speak very softly	She whispered the answer to me.
build	to make something by putting parts together	Let us build a tower with the blocks.
choose	to pick one thing from many	You may choose one sweet from the jar.
follow	to go after someone or something	Follow me to the hall.

List 4: Describing people

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
friendly	kind and pleasant to others	The new girl is very friendly.
brave	not afraid to do something difficult or scary	The brave boy let the spider walk across his hand.
clever	quick to learn and understand	The clever girl solved the puzzle quickly.
lazy	not wanting to work	The lazy cat sleeps all day.
helpful	happy to help others	Ahmad is helpful and always tidies the class bookshelf.
polite	speaking and behaving in a kind, respectful way	It is polite to say thank you.
honest	telling the truth	An honest boy returned the wallet he found.
careless	not careful, so you make mistakes	I was careless and spilled my drink.
cheerful	happy and full of smiles	Our cheerful bus driver hums every morning.
naughty	behaving badly	The naughty puppy chewed my slipper.

4 Term 2 words (lists 5 to 8)

40 words in 4 lists: nature, weather and sky, animals, food and cooking.

List 5: Nature

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
forest	a large area full of trees	Many animals live in the forest.
river	a large stream of water that flows to the sea	We walked along the river.
mountain	a very high hill	It took two hours to climb the mountain.
pond	a small area of still water	Fish swim in the pond at the park.
rock	a hard piece of stone	I sat on a rock to rest.
branch	a part of a tree that grows out from the trunk	A bird sat on a branch.
trunk	the thick main stem of a tree	The tree trunk was too wide to hug.
nest	a home that birds build for their eggs	There are three eggs in the nest.
stream	a small, narrow river	We dipped our feet in the cool stream.
nature	trees, plants, animals and everything not made by people	We enjoy nature on our walks.

List 6: Weather and sky

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
thunder	the loud noise in the sky during a storm	The thunder made the dog hide.
lightning	a bright flash of light in the sky during a storm	Lightning lit up the dark sky.
sunny	bright with sunshine	It is a sunny day for a picnic.
cloudy	covered with clouds	The sky is cloudy this morning.
breeze	a light, gentle wind	A cool breeze blew through the window.
puddle	a small pool of water on the ground	He jumped into the puddle.
shower	a short fall of rain	We waited under the shelter for the shower to stop.
drizzle	very light rain	It began to drizzle as we left school.
weather	how hot, cold, wet or windy it is outside	The weather today is hot and sticky.
humid	warm and damp	The air felt humid after the rain.

List 7: Animals

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
elephant	a very large grey animal with a long trunk	The elephant sprayed water with its trunk.
tiger	a large wild cat with orange fur and black stripes	The tiger crept through the long grass.
giraffe	a tall animal with a very long neck	The giraffe ate leaves from the top of the tree.
rabbit	a small furry animal with long ears	The rabbit hopped across the field.
snake	a long animal with no legs	The snake slid under a rock.
squirrel	a small animal with a bushy tail that lives in trees	A squirrel ran up the tree.
tortoise	a slow animal with a hard shell that lives on land	The tortoise moved very slowly.
penguin	a black and white bird that swims but cannot fly	The penguin dived into the icy water.
feather	one of the light, soft parts that cover a bird	I found a blue feather on the ground.
tail	the part at the back of an animal's body	The puppy chased its own tail.

List 8: Food and cooking

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
breakfast	the first meal of the day	I had toast for breakfast.
lunch	the meal in the middle of the day	We eat lunch at noon.
dinner	the main meal in the evening	Our family has dinner together.
recipe	instructions for cooking a dish	Mum followed a recipe to bake the cake.
fry	to cook food in hot oil	Dad will fry some eggs.
boil	to heat water until it bubbles	Boil the water before making tea.
bake	to cook in an oven	We bake cookies for Christmas.
taste	to try a little food to see what it is like	Taste the soup to see if it needs salt.
sour	tasting sharp, like a lemon	The green mango was very sour.
oven	a box that heats up to cook food	Put the tray into the oven.

5 Term 3 words (lists 9 to 12)

40 words in 4 lists: people in the community, sports, feelings, getting around.

List 9: People in the community

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
community	the people who live in an area	Our community planted trees at the park.
volunteer	a person who helps without being paid	A volunteer read stories to the children.
hawker	a person who sells food at a stall	The hawker has sold noodles for thirty years.
librarian	a person who works in a library	The librarian helped me find a book.
guard	a person who keeps a place safe	The guard checked our names at the gate.
mechanic	a person who repairs cars	The mechanic fixed our car engine.
cashier	a person who takes the money in a shop	The cashier gave me my change.
customer	a person who buys something	The shop was full of customers.
uncle	your father's or mother's brother, or a polite name for an older man	Uncle Lim fixes bicycles at the void deck.
auntie	your father's or mother's sister, or a polite name for an older woman	The auntie at the drinks stall knows my order.

List 10: Sports

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
football	a game where two teams kick a ball into a goal	We play football after school.
badminton	a game where you hit a shuttlecock over a net	I play badminton with my father.
swimming	the sport of moving through water	Swimming is good exercise.
practice	a time when you train to get better	We have football practice on Tuesday.
coach	a person who trains a team	Our coach shouted, "Keep going."
whistle	a small tool you blow to make a high sound	The referee blew the whistle to start the game.
goal	the net you aim at in football, or a point scored	The ball flew into the goal.
champion	the winner of a competition	Siti is the school chess champion.
compete	to try to win against others	Ten schools will compete in the race.
trophy	a cup given as a prize	Our team lifted the trophy.

List 11: Feelings

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
proud	pleased with something you or someone else did	Mum was proud of my good work.
nervous	worried and a little afraid	I felt nervous before my show and tell.
worried	thinking that something bad may happen	Dad was worried when I came home late.
surprised	feeling something you did not expect	I was surprised to see my cousin at the door.
lonely	sad because you are alone	The new boy felt lonely at recess.
jealous	unhappy because someone has something you want	She felt jealous of her sister's new bicycle.
grateful	thankful	I am grateful for my kind friends.
upset	unhappy and worried	He was upset when he lost his cap.
calm	quiet and not worried	Stay calm and listen to the teacher.
embarrassed	feeling silly in front of other people	I was embarrassed when I tripped on stage.

List 12: Getting around

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
station	a place where trains or buses stop	We waited at the MRT station.
platform	the place where you stand to get on a train	Stand behind the yellow line on the platform.
passenger	a person travelling in a vehicle	The passengers got off the bus.
seat	a place to sit	I gave my seat to an old lady.
traffic	the cars and buses moving on a road	There was heavy traffic on the way home.
crossing	a place where people can cross a road	Use the crossing when the green man shows.
helmet	a hard hat that protects your head	Wear a helmet when you ride a bicycle.
arrive	to reach a place	We will arrive at the zoo at nine.
depart	to leave	The coach will depart at noon.
direction	the way you go to get somewhere	Which direction is the beach?

6 Term 4 words (lists 13 to 16)

40 words in 4 lists: celebrations, the five senses, time and order words, tricky words.

List 13: Celebrations

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
reunion	a meeting of people who have not seen each other for a while	We have a reunion dinner on the eve of Chinese New Year.
greeting	something friendly you say when you meet someone	We said a cheerful greeting to each guest at the door.
costume	special clothes you wear to look like someone else	I wore a pirate costume to the party.
invitation	a card or message asking you to come to an event	I sent an invitation to all my classmates.
guest	a person you invite to your home or party	Each guest got a goodie bag.
fireworks	bright lights that explode in the sky	We watched the fireworks on National Day.
parade	a line of people marching to celebrate	The parade marched past the crowd.
gift	a present	Grandma gave me a gift for my birthday.
special	different and better than usual	Today is a special day for our family.
tradition	something people have done the same way for a long time	Giving red packets is a tradition at Chinese New Year.

List 14: The five senses

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
smell	to notice something with your nose	I can smell curry cooking.
touch	to feel with your hand	Do not touch the hot pan.
sound	something you hear	I heard a strange sound outside.
bitter	having a strong, sharp taste, like dark coffee	The medicine tasted bitter.
smooth	flat and even, with no bumps	The table felt smooth.
rough	not smooth	The tree bark is rough.
sticky	able to stick to things	My fingers are sticky from the honey.
bright	full of light	The room is bright and sunny.
fragrant	having a sweet, pleasant smell	The jasmine flowers are fragrant.
crunchy	hard and making a noise when you bite it	I love crunchy apples.

List 15: Time and order words

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
first	before all the others	First, wash the rice.
next	coming straight after	Next, pour in the water.
then	after that	We had lunch and then we went home.
finally	at the end, after everything else	Finally, the bus arrived.
suddenly	quickly and without warning	Suddenly, the lights went out.
later	after some time	I will call you later.
before	earlier than	Wash your hands before you eat.
after	later than	We went to the park after lunch.
while	during the time that	I read a book while I waited.
during	all through a period of time	Please be quiet during the show.

List 16: Tricky words

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
because	for the reason that	I wore a jacket because the room was cold.
believe	to think something is true	I believe you are telling the truth.
different	not the same	The twins wear different shirts.
people	more than one person	Many people came to the concert.
enough	as much as you need	Do we have enough chairs for everyone?
February	the second month of the year	My birthday is in February.
Wednesday	the day after Tuesday	We have PE on Wednesday.
through	in one side and out of the other	The train went through the tunnel.
thought	the past of think	I thought it would rain.
caught	the past of catch	The goalkeeper caught the ball.

7 Phrasal verbs

A phrasal verb is a verb with a small word such as up, off or on, and the small word changes the meaning. These are common in stories and in everyday speech.

Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verb	Meaning	Example sentence
wake up	to stop sleeping	I wake up at six on school days.
put on	to dress yourself in something	Put on your shoes before we go out.
take off	to remove clothes, or for a plane to leave the ground	Please take off your wet socks.
clean up	to make a place neat and tidy	We clean up the classroom before we go home.
hurry up	to move or act more quickly	Hurry up or we will miss the bus.
line up	to stand one behind another	The pupils line up after recess.
fill in	to write the missing words or details	Fill in your name at the top of the form.
look for	to try to find	I looked for my eraser under the desk.

8 Words with close meanings

Vocabulary questions often give options that mean nearly the same thing. Only one fits the sentence exactly. These pairs and groups are easy to mix up.

Telling close meanings apart (Primary 3)

Words	The difference	Examples
shout, scream	Shout means to call out loudly. Scream means to cry out in a high voice, usually from fear or excitement.	He shouted to his friend across the field. She screamed when she saw the snake.
alone, lonely	Alone means no one is with you. Lonely means sad because you are alone.	I was alone at home but I did not feel lonely.
practise, practice	Practise (with s) is the doing word. Practice (with c) is the thing.	I practise the piano every day. Piano practice is at five.
lend, borrow	Lend means to give something for a short time. Borrow means to take it for a short time.	Can you lend me a pencil? May I borrow your pencil?
hear, listen	You hear sounds without trying. You listen on purpose.	I heard a dog bark. Listen carefully to the teacher.

9 Working out a new word from context

Your child will meet words that are not on any list. The rest of the sentence usually gives a clue. Teach these five kinds of clue, then use the steps when answering a cloze or multiple-choice question.

Five kinds of context clue, with worked examples

Clue	Example sentence	How the clue helps
Meaning given	The arid land, which gets almost no rain, could not grow rice.	The words after the comma explain it. Arid means very dry.
Same meaning nearby	Her room was tidy, and every shelf was orderly too.	Too links it to tidy. Orderly means neat.
Opposite meaning nearby	Unlike his boisterous brother, Ken was quiet and calm.	Unlike signals the opposite of quiet and calm. Boisterous means noisy and lively.
Examples given	Citrus fruits, such as oranges, limes and lemons, are sour and juicy.	The examples show what the group is. Citrus fruits are fruits like these.
Cause and effect	The soup was so scalding that Mei waited ten minutes before she could sip it.	She had to wait, so it must be very hot. Scalding means very hot.

Steps for a vocabulary cloze or multiple-choice question

Step	What to do
1	Read the whole sentence, and for a cloze the sentences before and after it, before looking at the options.
2	Say in your own words what kind of word should go in the blank: a feeling, an action or a thing.
3	Look for a clue word such as but, unlike, because, so or such as.
4	Try each option in the blank. Cross out any that do not make sense.
5	Choose the best option and read the sentence again with it.

10 Practice: vocabulary MCQ and vocabulary cloze

TSS's own practice, using words from this list. There are 2 sets, 20 questions in all. Each set has 5 multiple-choice questions and a 5-blank cloze passage, the two vocabulary item types in Booklet A of PSLE English Paper 2. Read each cloze passage from top to bottom first. Cover the answer column while your child works, then go through the reasons together.

Set A, vocabulary MCQ: choose the option closest in meaning to the word in capitals

Question	Options	Answer
1. The CHEERFUL girl greeted everyone at the gate.	(1) happy and full of smiles (2) sleepy (3) rude (4) shy	(1) happy and full of smiles
2. We had to HURRY to catch the bus.	(1) wait (2) move quickly (3) sing (4) stop	(2) move quickly
3. The puppy felt LONELY when the family went out.	(1) hungry (2) sad because it was alone (3) excited (4) dirty	(2) sad because it was alone
4. The roses in the garden were FRAGRANT.	(1) sweet-smelling (2) broken (3) tiny (4) dry	(1) sweet-smelling
5. Please COMPLETE the worksheet before recess.	(1) lose (2) colour (3) finish (4) fold	(3) finish

Set A, vocabulary cloze: A day at the park. Choose the best word for each blank

Passage	Options	Answer and why
Last Saturday, my family went to the park. A cool (1) _____ was blowing.	(1) breeze (2) puddle (3) thunder (4) recipe	(1) breeze. A breeze is a light wind that can blow.
We saw a squirrel (2) _____ up a tree.	(1) boil (2) climb (3) whisper (4) choose	(2) climb. Squirrels go up trees using their feet, so they climb.
My little brother felt (3) _____ near the big dog, so he held my hand.	(1) nervous (2) grateful (3) polite (4) clever	(1) nervous. He held my hand because he felt a little afraid.
(4) _____, it started to rain, and we ran to a shelter.	(1) Because (2) While (3) Suddenly (4) Before	(3) Suddenly. The rain came without warning, and only Suddenly makes a full sentence.
We were (5) _____ to get home dry.	(1) jealous (2) grateful (3) lazy (4) naughty	(2) grateful. Getting home dry is something to be thankful for.

Set B, vocabulary MCQ: choose the option closest in meaning to the word in capitals

Question	Options	Answer
1. The BRAVE firefighter ran into the smoky building.	(1) not afraid to do something difficult or scary (2) sleepy (3) careless (4) rude	(1) not afraid to do something difficult or scary
2. Please WHISPER in the library.	(1) shout loudly (2) sing (3) speak very softly (4) laugh	(3) speak very softly
3. The ELDERLY man waited for the bus.	(1) young (2) old (3) tall (4) angry	(2) old
4. Ben was EMBARRASSED when he called his teacher "Mum".	(1) very hungry (2) proud (3) brave (4) feeling silly in front of other people	(4) feeling silly in front of other people
5. The train will DEPART at noon.	(1) arrive (2) leave (3) stop (4) break down	(2) leave

Set B, vocabulary cloze: The farm trip. Choose the best word for each blank

Passage	Options	Answer and why
On the morning of our trip, it was raining only lightly, just a (1) _____.	(1) drizzle (2) thunder (3) trophy (4) volunteer	(1) drizzle. Very light rain is a drizzle.
We had to (2) _____ at the bus stop by eight o'clock.	(1) search (2) arrive (3) whisper (4) compete	(2) arrive. To reach a place by a time is to arrive.
Mrs Lim told us to be (3) _____ to the driver and thank him.	(1) careless (2) jealous (3) polite (4) upset	(3) polite. Thanking someone is kind and respectful.
At the farm, a (4) _____ who helps there for free showed us how to feed the goats.	(1) trophy (2) passenger (3) champion (4) volunteer	(4) volunteer. A person who helps without being paid is a volunteer.
When I lost my water bottle, my friend helped me (5) _____ for it.	(1) search (2) boil (3) climb (4) crawl	(1) search. You search for something you have lost.

11 Challenge words

For a child who finds the Primary 3 lists easy. Use these, then move on to the Primary 4 list.

10 challenge words

Word	Meaning	Example sentence
supermarket	a large shop that sells food and things for the home	We buy our groceries at the supermarket.
museum	a building where interesting objects are kept for people to see	We saw old coins at the museum.
restaurant	a place where you pay to eat a meal	We had dinner at a seafood restaurant.
interesting	making you want to know more	The book about volcanoes was very interesting.
important	mattering a lot	It is important to look both ways before you cross.
excellent	very good	She did an excellent job on her poster.
minute	sixty seconds	Wait a minute while I find my shoes.
ceiling	the top inside surface of a room	A gecko was crawling on the ceiling.
argument	an angry talk between people who disagree	The twins had an argument over the last biscuit.
certain	sure	Are you certain that you locked the door?

12 How to use this list

Each list has ten words, about right for one week. If a list is too much, split it over two weeks. A few minutes every day works better than one long session.

A weekly spelling routine you can run at home

Day	What to do	Time
Day 1	Read the list together. Say each word clearly, talk about what it means and read the example sentence aloud.	10 to 15 minutes
Day 2	Look, say, cover, write, check for every word (see the next table). Circle the tricky part of any word your child got wrong.	15 minutes
Day 3	Your child writes a new sentence for five of the words. Check the spelling and the meaning together.	15 minutes
Day 4	A practice test. Read each word in a random order, then read it in its sentence. Mark it together and redo any word that was wrong.	10 minutes
Day 5	Check only the words missed on Day 4. Add any word that is still wrong to next week's list.	5 to 10 minutes

Look, say, cover, write, check

Step	What your child does
Look	Look closely at the word. Notice its letters, any double letters and the tricky part.
Say	Say the word aloud, then spell it letter by letter. Break a long word into parts, for example "dis-ap-pear".
Cover	Cover the word with a hand or a card.
Write	Write the word from memory.
Check	Uncover the word and compare letter by letter. If it is wrong, start again from Look.

How school spelling tests often work

What to expect	What to do at home
The list usually comes home some days before the test.	Check the test day with your child or the teacher and start the routine early in the week.
Some tests read out single words. Others, often called dictation, read out a sentence or a short passage for your child to write in full.	Practise both. Read out a word on its own, then read out its example sentence for your child to write.
In a dictation, capital letters and punctuation may be checked as well as spelling.	Remind your child to start with a capital letter and end with a full stop.
Each school decides the format, the number of words and whether a test counts towards a mark.	Ask the teacher if you are unsure. Use the school list first and this list for extra practice.

Is this list the right level? A five-minute check

Result	What it means	What to do
9 or 10 right	The level is easy for your child.	Use the challenge words, then try lists from the Primary 4 list.
5 to 8 right	The level is about right.	Work through the lists in order, one a week.
Fewer than 5 right	The level is too hard for now.	Start with the Primary 2 list, or split each list into two weeks of five words.

- How to check: pick 10 words from different lists. Read each one aloud for your child to spell, then ask what it means. Count a word as right only if it is spelt correctly and the meaning is roughly right.

If your child finds spelling hard

What you notice	What to try
Most words are wrong every week.	Cut the list to five words a week and learn the school list first. Small wins build confidence.
Words are right on test day but forgotten a week later.	Keep a list of words still being learnt and test them again a week later, then a month later.
Letters come out in the wrong order.	Clap the syllables, write the word in parts, and write the tricky part in a different colour.
The spelling is right but the meaning is not known.	Ask your child to say a new sentence with the word before writing it.
Your child is upset by practice or avoids it.	Keep sessions to ten minutes, praise effort, and make it a game: spell words aloud in the car or on the way to school.
It is still hard after a whole term.	Talk to your child's English teacher, who sees your child's work every day and can suggest the next step in school.

13 2027 school terms and which lists to use

The lists follow the four school terms. This table gives the 2027 term dates from MOE and the lists for each term. It is the only part of this page that changes from year to year.

2027 school terms for Primary 3

Term	2027 dates	Lists	Holiday after
Term 1	Mon 4 Jan to Fri 12 Mar	Lists 1 to 4	13 to 21 Mar
Term 2	Mon 22 Mar to Fri 28 May	Lists 5 to 8	29 May to 27 Jun
Term 3	Mon 28 Jun to Fri 3 Sep	Lists 9 to 12	4 to 12 Sep
Term 4	Mon 13 Sep to Fri 19 Nov	Lists 13 to 16	20 Nov to 31 Dec

- Primary 1 starts on Monday 4 January 2027. Primary 2 to 6 start on Tuesday 5 January 2027.
- Source: MOE, School terms and holidays for 2027 (14 July 2026).