

UPPER LEVEL SPELLING INVENTORY (USI)

The Upper Level Spelling Inventory (USI) can be used in upper elementary, middle, high school, and postsecondary classrooms. The 32 words are ordered by difficulty to sample features of the within word pattern to derivational relations spelling stages. With normally achieving students you can administer the entire list, but you may stop when students misspell more than eight words and are experiencing noticeable frustration. If any students misspell five of the first eight words use the ESI to more accurately identify within word pattern features that need instruction.

Instructions for Administering the Inventory

Students should not study these words in advance of testing. Assure the students that this is not for a grade but to help you plan for their instructional needs.

Possible script: “I am going to ask you to spell some words. Spell them the best you can. Some of the words will be easy to spell; some may be difficult. When you do not know how to spell a word, spell it the best you can.

Ask students to number their paper and administer this the same way you would a spelling test. Say each word naturally (without emphasizing syllables) and repeat it. Use it in a sentence, if necessary, to be sure students know the exact word. Sample sentences are listed below along with the words. After administering the inventory use the **USI Feature Guide** and **Class Composite Forms** to complete your assessment or use the Assessment Application to record errors and calculate scores automatically

1. switch	We can switch television channels with a remote control. <i>switch</i>
2. smudge	There was a smudge on the mirror from her fingertips. <i>smudge</i>
3. trapped	He was trapped in the elevator when the electricity went off. <i>trapped</i>
4. scrape	The fall caused her to scrape her knee. <i>scrape</i>
5. knotted	The knotted rope would not come undone. <i>knotted</i>
6. shaving	He didn't start shaving with a razor until 11th grade. <i>shaving</i>
7. squirt	Don't let the ketchup squirt out of the bottle too fast. <i>squirt</i>
8. pounce	My cat likes to pounce on her toy mouse. <i>pounce</i>
9. scratches	We had to paint over the scratches on the car. <i>scratches</i>
10. crater	The crater of the volcano was filled with bubbling lava. <i>crater</i>
11. sailor	When he was young, he wanted to go to sea as a sailor. <i>sailor</i>
12. village	My Granddad lived in a small seaside village. <i>village</i>
13. disloyal	Traitors are disloyal to their country. <i>disloyal</i>
14. tunnel	The rockslide closed the tunnel through the mountain. <i>tunnel</i>
15. humor	You need a sense of humor to understand his jokes. <i>humor</i>
16. confidence	With each winning game, the team's confidence grew. <i>confidence</i>
17. fortunate	The driver was fortunate to have snow tires on that winter day. <i>fortunate</i>
18. visible	The singer on the stage was visible to everyone. <i>visible</i>
19. circumference	The length of the equator is equal to the circumference of the earth. <i>circumference</i>
20. civilization	We studied the ancient Mayan civilization last year. <i>civilization</i>
21. monarchy	A monarchy is headed by a king or a queen. <i>monarchy</i>
22. dominance	The dominance of the Yankee's baseball team lasted for several years. <i>dominance</i>
23. correspond	Many students correspond through e-mail. <i>correspond</i>
24. illiterate	It is hard to get a job if you are illiterate. <i>illiterate</i>
25. emphasize	I want to emphasize the importance of trying your best. <i>emphasize</i>
26. opposition	The coach said the opposition would give us a tough game. <i>opposition</i>
27. chlorine	My eyes were burning from the chlorine in the swimming pool. <i>chlorine</i>
28. commotion	The audience heard the commotion backstage. <i>commotion</i>
29. medicinal	Cough drops are to be taken for medicinal purposes only. <i>medicinal</i>
30. irresponsible	It is irresponsible not to wear a seat belt. <i>irresponsible</i>
31. succession	The firecrackers went off in rapid succession. <i>succession</i>

Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, vocabulary and Spelling Instruction © 2012 by Pearson Education, Inc

Scoring the Inventory Using the USI Feature Guide

1. Make a copy of the **Upper Level Spelling Inventory Feature Guide** for each student or use the Assessment Application, which you can download from the to your computer and follow the directions for setting up your classroom database.

2. Analyze the words by checking off the features, syllable units, or meaning units spelled correctly that are listed in the cells to the left of each word. For example, if a student spells sailor as SAILER they get a check in the vowel pattern cell for AI, but not for the unaccented final -or syllable. Put a check in the “correct” column if the entire word is spelled correctly.

3. Add the number of points under each feature and across each word, allowing you to double-check the total score recorded in the last cell. Adjust the ratios in the last row, depending on the number of words called aloud.

Interpreting the Results of the Spelling Inventory

4. Look down each feature column to determine instructional needs. A student who misses only one (or two if the features samples 8 to 10 words) can go on to other features. A student who misses two or three needs some review work, but students who miss more than three need careful instruction on this feature.

5. To determine a stage of development note where students first make two or more errors under the stages listed in the shaded box at the top of the Feature Guide. Circle this stage.

Using the USI Class Composite and Spelling By Stage Form

6. Staple each feature guide to the student’s spelling paper and arrange the papers in order from highest total points to lowest total points. If you use the Assessment Application you do not need to do this but keep students’ papers.

7. List students' names in this rank order in the left column of the **USI Class Composite** and transfer each student's feature scores from the bottom row of the individual Feature Guides to the Composite form. The Assessment Application will do this for you. If you call out less than the total list, *adjust the totals* on the Classroom Composite

8. Highlight cells where students make *two or more errors* on a particular feature to get a sense of your groups' needs and to form groups for instruction,

9. Many teachers find it easier to form groups using the **Spelling By Stage Classroom Organization Chart**. List each student under the appropriate spelling stage (the stage circled on the student's feature guide) and look for instructional groups.

NOTE: See Chapter 2 for more detailed directions for choosing, administering, scoring, interpreting and using the inventories to form instructional groups.