

Three Troublesome Triplets

Lesson Type: Language Arts - dealing with three sets of sound alike words that are spelled differently

Grade Range: 3 – 7

Time Required: One to two periods for instruction, and several more short periods for review and reinforcement, maintenance and mastery.

Resources needed: One or more printed stories in which these nine words are frequently used incorrectly. Copies for each student.

Objectives:

1. To learn the meanings of "there, their, they're," and "to, too, two," and "peace, piece, peas"
2. To recognize their meanings by their spelling and in their context when seeing them in print
3. To be able to use the correct form in written work

Procedures:

Point these sets of words out to student and have them read the words. Point out that they all sound the same. In speech they can't be used incorrectly, but that is not the case when we write. Let your students know that it is important to use these correctly when writing.

Instruction to students:

1. Write each set of three words on the blackboard. Teach the meaning of each word with a sentence on the blackboard in which the word appears, or by reading such a sentence.
2. Ask students to volunteer giving a meaning. Stress the meaning in several ways
3. Give students clues of how to know when to use which one. For example: "there is the opposite of t-here, their meaning something belonging to them has the word heir in it, or hair misspelled in it, they're meaning they are has hay misspelled in it. Many students will come up with mnemonic devices if you ask them to look for them.
4. Say sentences with such a word in it. Ask students how the word should be spelled and why.
5. Hand out written work where students can fill in the blanks or where the words are not written correctly and to correct each sentence.

Follow-up:

After a couple lessons ask students to write a paragraph in which they use as many of these words as possible, but spell them the wrong way. Then have students exchange the paragraphs to correct them.

Play a game using these words. For example: "I'm thinking of a word that tells me how many. Who can give me the word and spell it correctly." I'm thinking of a word that is part of a whole ... etc.

Other troublesome triplets: pair, pear, pare – right, rite, ride – buy, by, bye – and others.

There are also many troublesome pairs of words. Using a few of these might be a good way to start with younger students.