

The Thread that Connects Us: A Linguistic Tapestry for Life

LYNN
STONE



Catholic
Education
Tasmania

1.

HOW ARE
WORDS
BUILT?

2.

HOW DO
WE
REMEMBER
THEM?

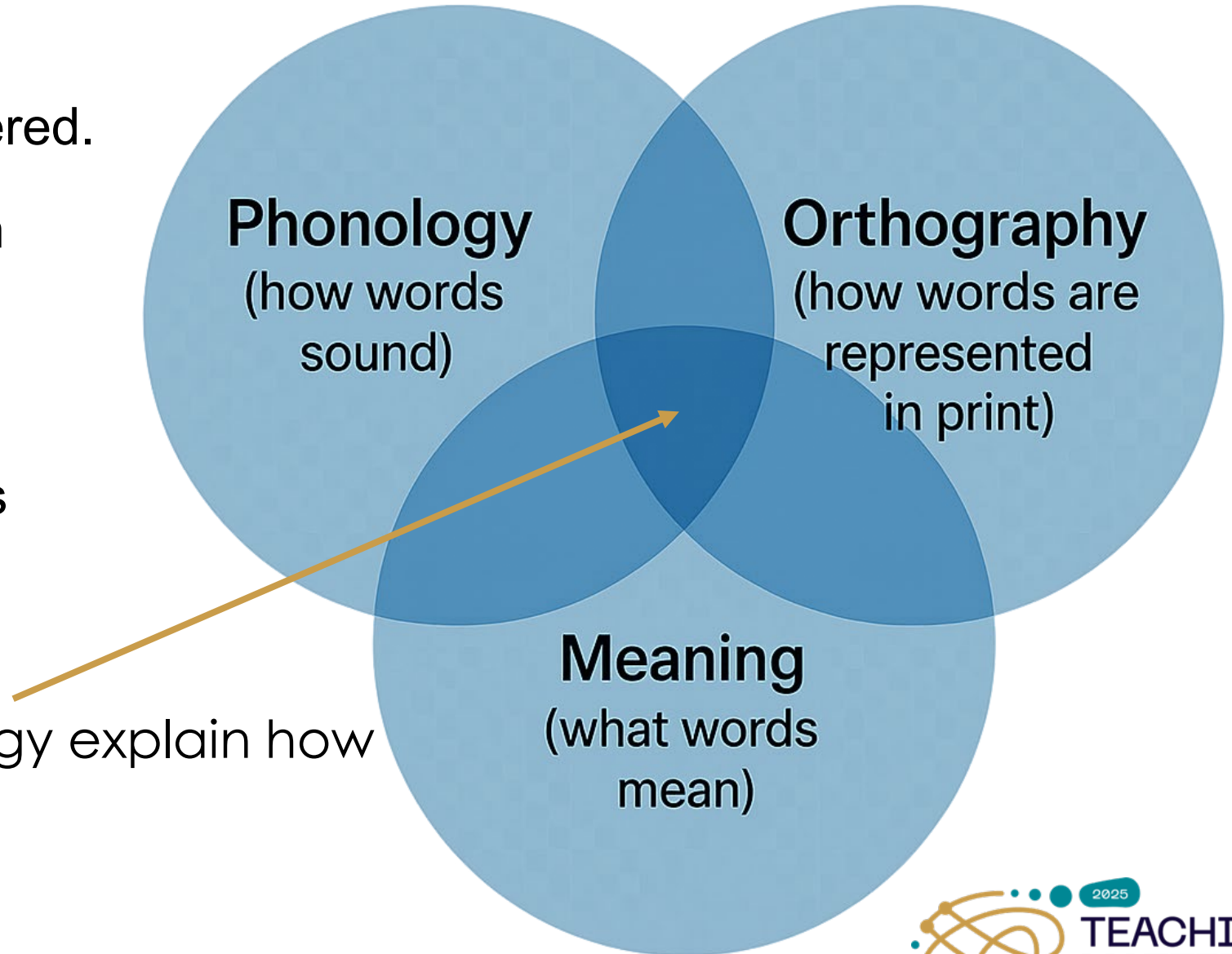
LEXICAL WHY TEACHING BEYOND PHONICS MATTERS

English words are multi-layered.

Predictability emerges when these layers are understood together.

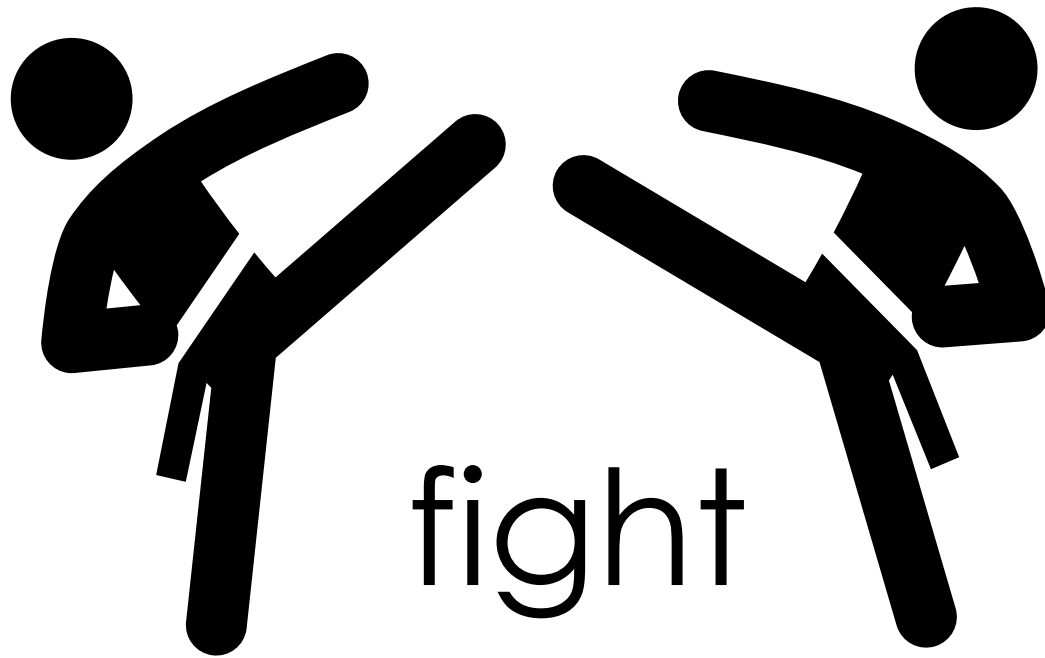
English orthography weaves comprehension throughout.

Morphology and etymology explain how these parts intersect.



ENGLISH ORTHOGRAPHY HAS *NEVER* BEEN A 1:1 TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM

- Among provincial early Modern English spellings*:



- faight
- fate
- fecht
- feeght
- feight
- feit
- feyght
- feyt
- feort
- foight

*Harper, D. (n.d.). *Online etymology dictionary*.

ASIDE FROM EXPLICIT PHONICS TEACHING, WE HAVE TO FIND WAYS OF:

1. Accounting for schwa vowels (*upon, was, of*)
2. Accounting for uncommon letter sequences (*one, two*)
3. Explaining orthographic conventions (*funny, always*)
4. Helping to build schemas around word families (*they/their, paid/laid/said*)
5. Signaling etymological information (*could, any, sign, night*)
6. Dealing with syllable elision (*Wednesday, chocolate, every*)
7. Explaining coarticulation (*train, cupboard, grandpa*)

1. Accounting for schwa vowels: *upon*

upon: up + on → upon

2. Accounting for uncommon letter sequences: *two*

two: the <w> is pronounced in other languages (*twee*, *zwei*) and is retained in *twain*, *twelve*, *twenty*, *twice*, *twig*, *twilight*, *twin*, *twist*

3. Explaining orthographic conventions: *funny*

funny: fun + y → funny

4. Helping to build schemas around word families: *paid/laid/said*

THE BAT SAID SIT

Spelling practice

lay + ed → laid

pay + ed → paid

say + ed → said

The
The cat
The cat said,
The cat said, "If
The cat said, "If I fit,
The cat said, "If I fit, I sit!"

Comprehension questions
Who is this sentence about? [The cat.]
Have you ever seen a cat sit in something that's too small?

3

Dictation sentence:
The bat said, "Sit!"

5. Signaling etymological information:
could

would (will)

should (shall), so...

unetymological <|>

could

6. Dealing with syllable elision: *Wednesday*



Woden's day
“Wed - nes - day”

7. Explaining coarticulation: *train*

/t/ + /r/ can sound like /ch/



T+R /CH/

train

truck

tree

trap

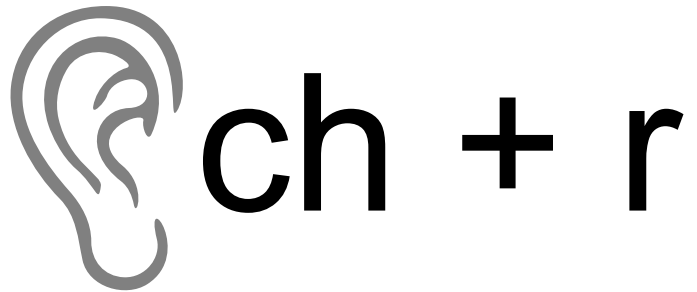
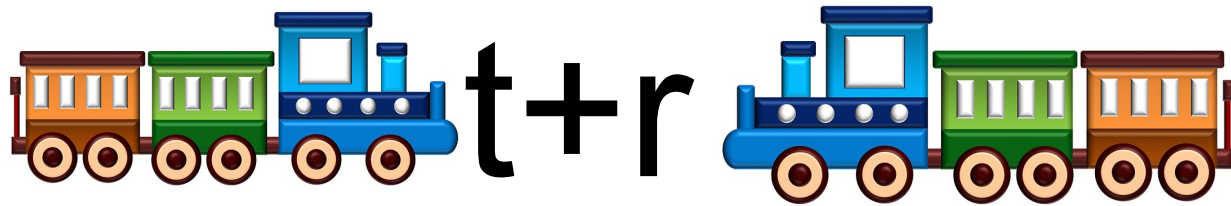
777 words in
English begin this
way!



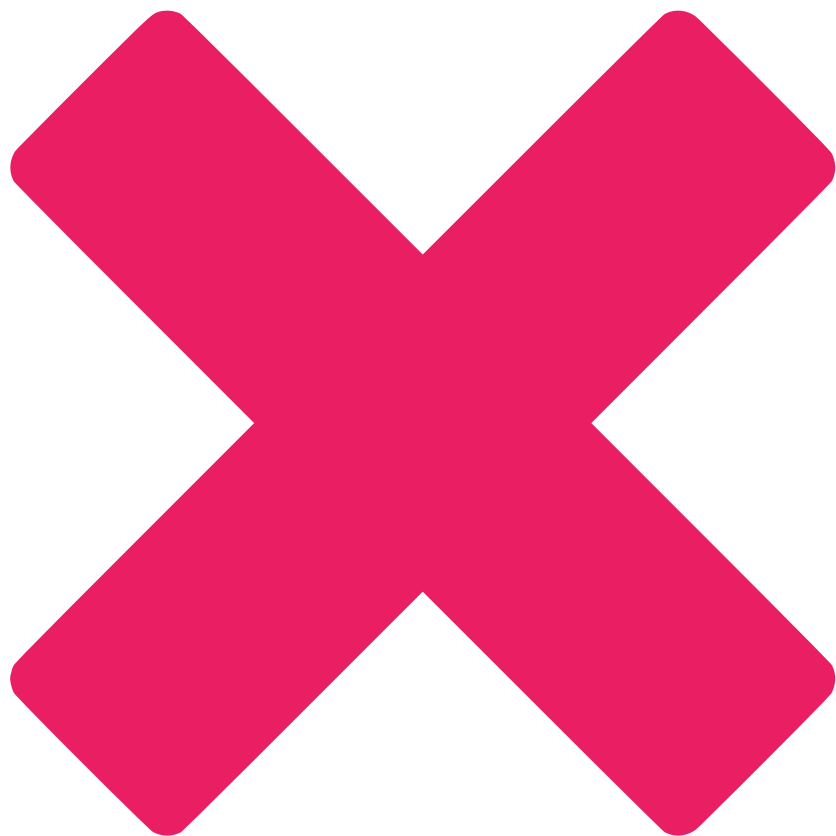
HERE'S THE
POSH WORD
FOR THAT

coarticulation





can sound like
ch + r
BUT...



IS NEVER
SPELLED THAT
WAY



AND COMES
AT THE
BEGINNING OF
LOTS OF
WORDS
ABOUT
TRAVEL...



train
tram
truck
trip
trail
trek

A close-up, artistic photograph of a clock face. The clock face is a vibrant blue color. It features silver-colored hands and hour markers. The hour markers are rectangular blocks with a silver top and a dark base. The hands are also silver, with a simple, modern design. The clock is set against a dark, possibly black, background. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic surfaces of the hands and markers.

“YES BUT WE DO THAT LATER...”

Why wait?

WHEN AND HOW DO WE START WEAVING THE OTHER LAYERS IN?

When three conditions
are met:

1. WHEN STUDENTS CAN RELIABLY:

			form
	+		transcribe
	+		read

a m t s i f d r o g l h u c b n k v e w j p y T L M F D I N A R H G B x q z J E Q

2. WHEN STUDENTS CAN RELIABLY:

count up to three syllables orally

1 2 3

3. WHEN STUDENTS HAVE STUDIED THE WORD 'DO' AND ITS FAMILY

Dolch 220 Basic Word (listed by frequency)

Words 1-25	Words 26-50	Words 51-75	Words 76-100	Words 101-125	Words 126-150	Words 151-175	Words 176-200	Words 200-220
the to and he a I you it of in was said his that she for on they but had at him with up all	look is her there some out as be have go we am then little down do came could when did what so see not were	get them like one this my would me will yes big went are come if now long no came ask very an over your its	ride into just blue red from good any about around want don't how know right put too got take where every pretty jump green four	away old by their here saw call after well think ran let help make going sleep brown yellow five six walk two or before eat	again play who been may stop off never seven eight cold today fly myself round tell much keep give work first try new must start	black white ten does bring goes write always drink once soon made run gave open has find only us three our better hold buy funny	warm ate full those done use fast say light pick hurt pull cut kind both sit which fall carry small under read why own found	wash show hot because far live draw clean grow best upon these sing together please thank wish many shall laugh

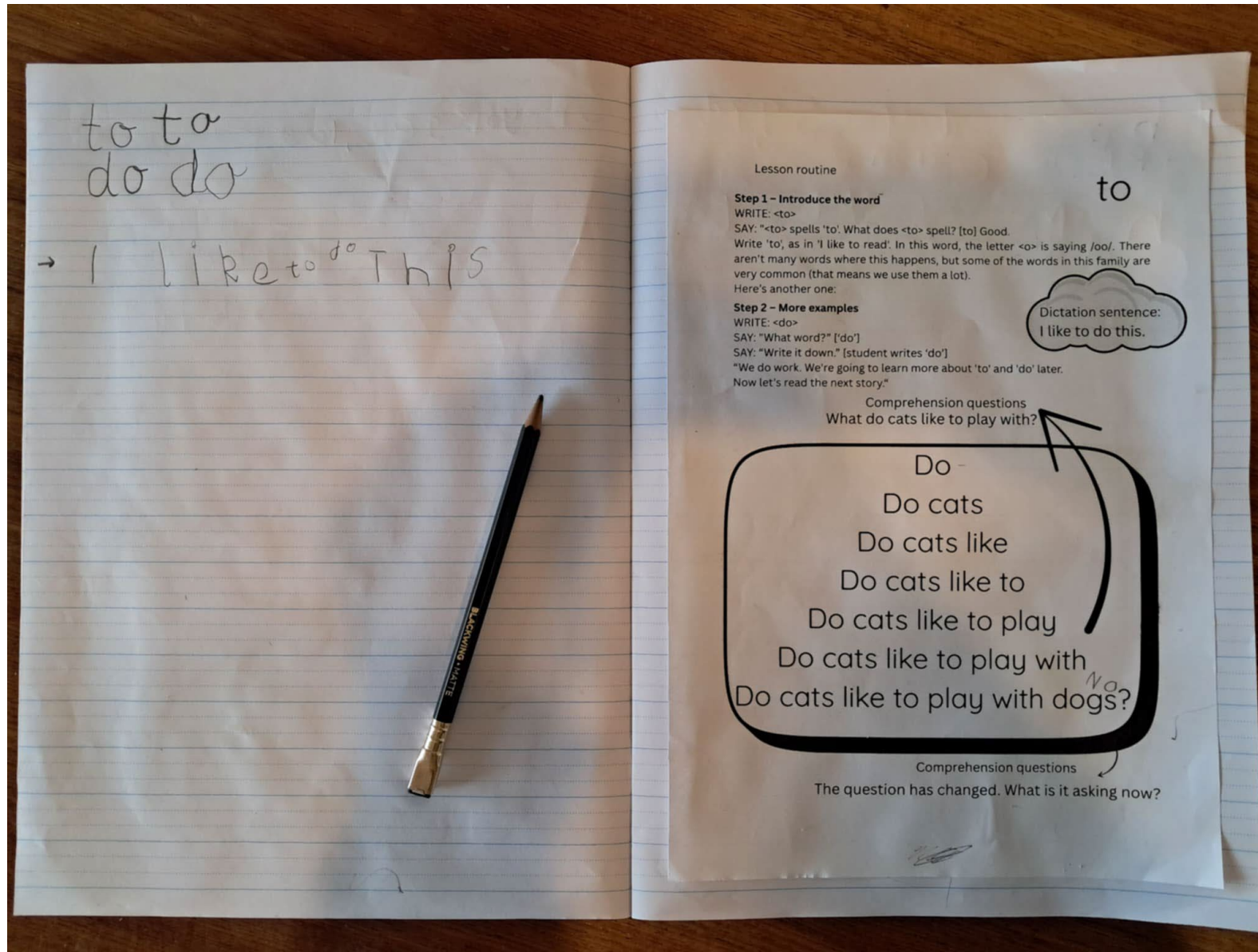
Pressley, M. (2005). *Dolch professional development guide*. Columbus, OH: SRA.

THE 'DO' FAMILY

Words 1-25	Words 26-50
the to and he a I you it of in was said his that she for on they but had at him with up all	look is her there some out as be have go we am then little down do came could when did what so see not were

who
shoe
move
prove
lose

AGE 6

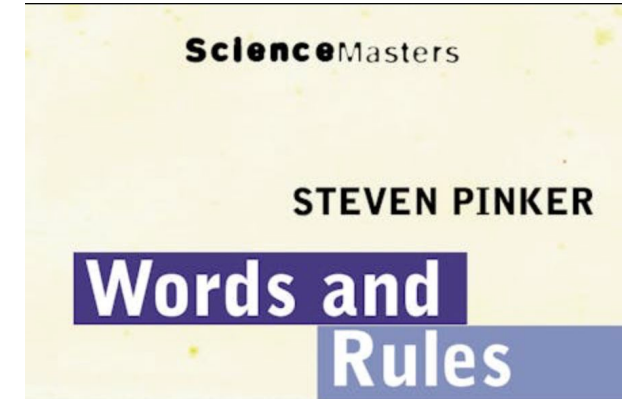


THE DO FAMILY



WHY CHOOSE 'DO'?

- It's irregular!!!
- Well yes. All the better.
- It's also one of the top 4 verbs in English
- *be, have, say* are the others
- "Every irregular tells a story." (Pinker 1999)



THE BE, DO, HAVE PROJECT

to be (present tense)				
	singular	verb	plural	verb
FIRST: The Speaker	I	am	we	are
SECOND: Spoken to	you	are	you	are
THIRD: Spoken about	he/she/it	is	they	are

been
being

be

are
were

is
was

to be (past tense)				
	singular	verb	plural	verb
FIRST: The Speaker	I	was	we	were
SECOND: Spoken to	you	were	you	were
THIRD: Spoken about	he/she/it	was	they	were

goes
does

do

gone
done

to
who

RULE

have_x

Final Silent E

FAMILY
give
love

have

PAST TENSE

has
had

WORD SUMS

having
giving
loving

FOUNDATION LESSON 1

do

re + do -> redo

un + do -> undo

WHY CHOOSE PREFIXES FIRST?

- Surely -ing, -s, -ed?
- NO.
- Prefixes are grammatically simpler and require less alteration around morphemic boundaries (having, getting, rides, jumped) .
- Prefixes precede other elements, so can be processed first in WM.



re + act -> react

re + pay -> repay

re + boot -> reboot

un + fit -> unfit

un + kind -> unkind

un + like -> unlike

LEARNING IS HARD. UNLEARNING IS HARDER.

- high frequency families
- excellent etymons
- morphological maps

Dolch 220 Basic Word (listed by frequency)

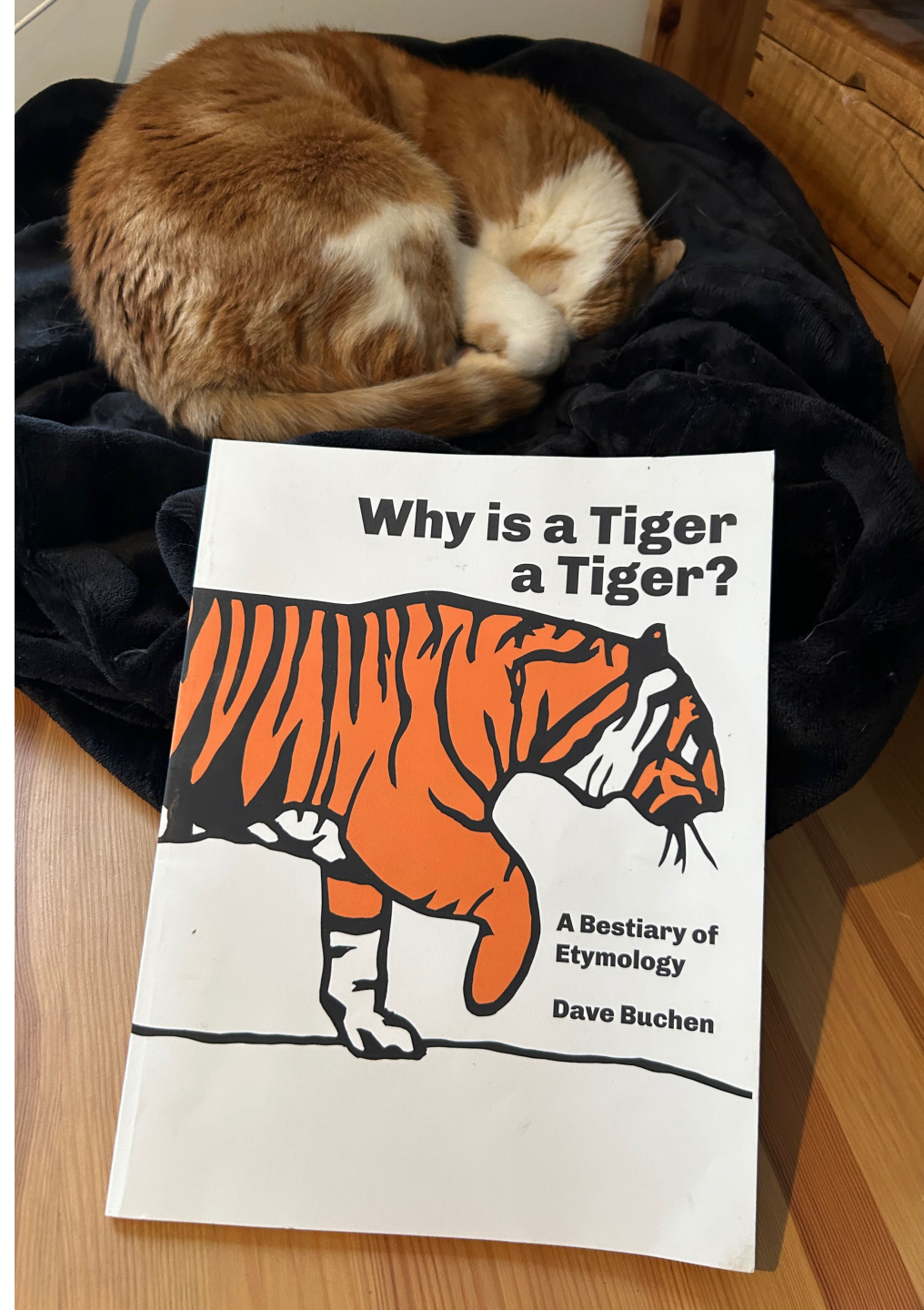
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the to and he a I you it of in was said his that she for on they but had at him with up all	look is her there some out as be me have go we am then little down do came could when did what so see not were	get them like one this my would me will yes big went are come if now long no came ask very an over your its	ride into just blue red from good any about around want don't how know right put too got take where every pretty jump green four	away old by their here saw call after well think ran let help make going sleep brown yellow five six walk two or before eat	again play who been does may stop off never seven eight cold today fly myself round tell much keep give work first try new must start	black white ten does bring gone write always drink once soon made run gave open has find only us three our better hold buy funny	warm ate full those done use fast say light pick hurt pull cut kind both sit which fall carry small under read why own found	wash show hot because far live draw clean grow best upon these sing together please thank wish many shall laugh

Presley, M. (2005). Dolch professional development guide. Columbus, OH: SRA.



EARLY YEARS ETYMOLOGICAL INSTRUCTION

- Start with animals
- The numbers
- Colours
- Days of the week
- Months of the year



Threads become tapestries; words connect us across time, space, and culture.



English is patterned, not chaotic.

Just like threads in a tapestry, its sounds, spellings, and meanings are interwoven with purpose.

Meaning, structure, and memory work together.

When we understand how these strands connect, we reveal the strength and beauty of the whole fabric.

Teaching words deeply transforms literacy.

Each word we teach with care becomes another strong thread, one that helps weave lifelong understanding and connects learners to the wider tapestry of language.

Thank you



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