



SPELLING WIZARDS

An Adventure Simulation Using Spelling and Language Arts Skills

FRANK WHITE taught fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in the San Diego Unified School District until his retirement in 2000. He served as a demonstration teacher, in-school resource teacher, and presenter of teaching strategies at educational conferences. He worked for 17 years in the district's seminar program for the highly gifted. For Interact, Frank has written CARAVANS, and co-authored MATH QUEST and SLEUTH. All of these simulations were created to meet specific needs for his classes. Frank believes, "School should be fun. Fun does not preclude hard work or a challenging curriculum but provides the energizing force to accomplish learning."

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SPELLING WIZARDS is a role-playing simulation game that helps students increase spelling scores and develop their vocabularies. It is designed to reinforce students' basic language arts skills while they travel on a treasure quest through a fantasy land of dragons, spelling wizards, and monsters. Your students will also use and refine group decision-making skills as they encounter obstacles and opportunities while journeying to the enchanted castle atop Treasure Mountain.

During the simulation your students experience the following:

Knowledge

- Spelling more words correctly
- Expanding vocabulary

Skills

- Making individual and small group decisions
- Increasing spelling accuracy
- Following oral and written directions
- Writing creatively
- Using dictionaries
- Defining words
- Writing complete sentences
- Alphabetizing
- Improving handwriting
- Identifying parts of speech

Attitudes

- Positive attitude toward spelling and related language arts activities
- Appreciation of the benefits of teamwork

SPELLING WIZARDS begins when students read about and study a map they have inherited from an elderly wizard. This map shows them the way to Treasure Mountain where a treasure was hidden long ago.

Based on a word list, students in groups complete language arts activities which earn them travel dots used while crossing the map and gaining treasure. The speed at which each group travels depends upon the points (travel dots) students earned for all classwork.

Travel dots are awarded as a result of four situations:

1. **Spelling tests** A student-corrected pre-test helps students determine which words they will need to study. A trial test and a final test are teacher-graded, and each student scoring a 100% earns ten travel dots for his/her group. A student scoring a 100% on a trial test does not take the final test. No travel dots are awarded for scoring a 100% on the pre-test.
2. **Activities** At the beginning of the week, the teacher selects two or three activities for students to use to reinforce their learning of the words. As these activities are completed, travel dots are awarded to the group for each student's work. (The higher the quality and the completeness of the student's work, the more travel dots the student earns for his/her group.) Students who finish their work early may select additional activities to complete for extra credit and extra travel dots.
3. **Fate Cards** Each group receives a random Fate Card daily. Some Fate Cards deal with movement and may direct a group to move a specific number of dots forward or backward.
4. **Behavior** Travel dots may be used as a form of reward for any number of positive behaviors, such as (but not limited to) the following:
 - Following directions and working quietly
 - Moving quickly to the group work area
 - Helping others and leaving the area neat
 - Remembering to bring all work materials

Each week introduce a different list of words and the students complete different activities and earn travel dots for their groups. The game ends when a certain pre-determined date is reached (possibly eight weeks). ***The team with the highest number of gold pieces is the winner.*** (Precious stones may be turned into gold pieces and thus be counted in the total only if the group has a wizard who can cast the spell of exchange or if a spell of exchange Fate Card has been drawn during the game.)

Differentiated Instruction

Like all Interact units, SPELLING WIZARDS provides differentiated instruction through its various learning opportunities. Students learn and experience the knowledge, skills, and attitudes through all domains of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Adjust the level of difficulty as best fits the needs of your students. Assist special needs students in selecting activities that utilize their strengths and allow them to succeed.

Note: This Teacher Guide is written to help the first time user get the simulation started. Modify it to best suit your classroom needs.

INITIAL PREPARATIONS AND SETUP - 1

Before you begin SPELLING WIZARDS a certain amount of preparation is necessary.

1. **Preparation Reading** Read this entire Teacher Guide and the Student Guide. Decide how you will use SPELLING WIZARDS in your classroom. Decide on the amount of time you will devote to this unit and select the specific activities most appropriate for your students.
2. **Timing Options** Schedule eight weeks for the simulation. Students earn a new level of spelling power with each score of 100% on their spelling tests, and there are eight levels of spelling power. If you find your students are progressing so slowly that no one will make the Enchanted Castle by the date you have set, either start giving double travel dots or continue the simulation for an extra week or two. If you continue beyond eight weeks, consider adding ninth and tenth levels of spelling power such as "Wizard Deluxe" and "Wizard Supreme." Let the students help write what powers these special Wizards will possess.
3. **Preparing Your Classroom** Generate interest and enthusiasm by decorating your classroom.

Bulletin Board

- a. Write the names of all members on each Group Progress chart and post on a bulletin board.
- b. Consider copying images from the Student Guide, Fate Cards, and map for students to color. Then post on the bulletin board.
- c. Add your own images related to the time period (castles, dragons, trolls, etc.).

Classroom Map

The Isle of Secrecy Map provided with the unit is black and white.

Have students make the map as colorful as possible and then post it on a bulletin board.

- a. Apply watercolor wash for large land and sea areas.
- b. Use a black marker to outline and highlight specific features on the map (e.g., dots, creatures, landmarks).
- c. Use felt-tipped colored pens to color the map (e.g., color in the creatures and other objects).

Fate Cards

Copy the 76 FATE CARDS on heavy stock paper.

- a. Color the Fate Cards with felt-tipped pens then laminate.
- b. If students color the Fate Cards, some of the surprise and fun will be taken away from the task of selecting supplies. However students may do the coloring.
- c. The classroom map and the Fate Cards should be finished **before** you start the game.



Some teachers prefer an even larger map than the one provided. The Isle of Secrecy Map on page 23 of this Teacher Guide can be projected onto butcher paper. The author used a 4' x 6' map on bulletin board material.

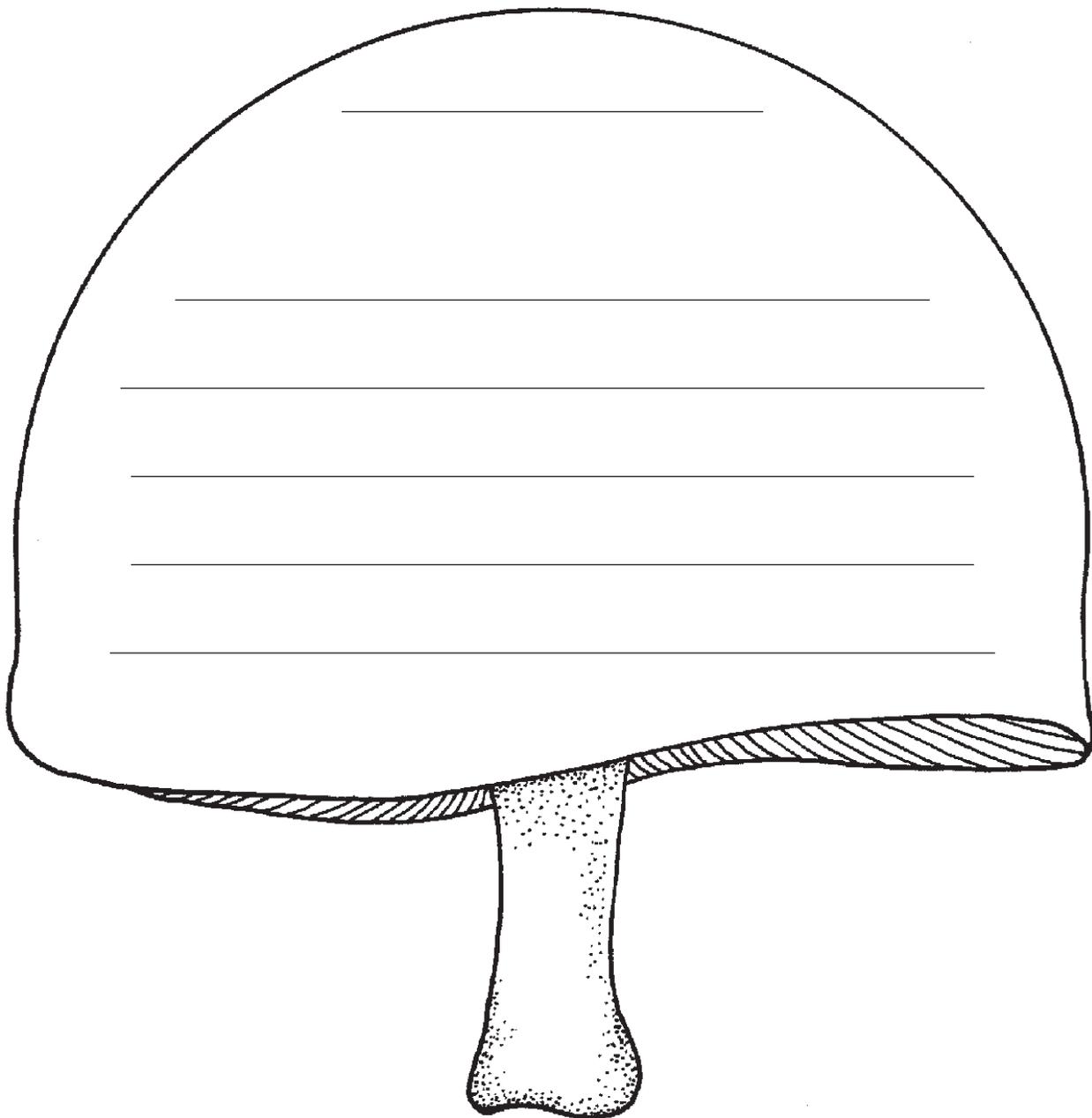
Since the FATE CARDS will be distributed and collected several times, consider laminating them for greater durability.

TEACHER REFERENCE AND RESOURCES

Poems

There once was a wizard named Roy,
Who learned about magic as a boy.
He became very good,
And learned all that he could,
And the dragons he does now annoy.

Try your hand at writing a limerick about one of the characters in the game.



TEACHER REFERENCE AND RESOURCES

Name: _____

One rainy afternoon, you stop to admire a beautiful rainbow. It seems so close! It looks like it ends behind a tree in a vacant lot. You know that the old tale of a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow is just a fantasy, but you decide to investigate anyway. What a surprise! You discover a small pot of gold coins.

Directions: Describe how you will use your new-found wealth. Use as many spelling words as you can.

