

**TEACHER'S MANUAL  
and  
ANSWER KEY**

# **VAK Tasks**

**for Vocabulary and Spelling**

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## A Multisensory Approach to Writing

It may be difficult to get students who fail constantly to put thoughts on paper. I have found that it is sometimes necessary to say, "Write three sentences that tell about the football game last night and don't worry about spelling. Just spell it the way it sounds." If I use a topic they know something about (the first rule in writing is speaking), they will feel able to comply. When they are finished, I ask them to read what they have written — not what they think they have written but what they actually have written. When students read a sentence and make a mistake, they will have to be reminded again to read what is on the paper. After they read what is on the paper, ask them which they liked better — what they read or what they said. Another way of making it is, "Which is smarter, your voice or your pencil?" (The voice will win every time.)

At this point, the teacher has introduced a new procedure, that of reading aloud each sentence written. The biggest problem will be getting the students to do this before they bring their completed assignments to you. The teacher has to remember that students often have ten years (more or less) of failure and bad habits to reverse. As they see they can begin to proofread and correct errors in prefixes, suffixes, tense, or agreement, they will be more likely to write more and more.

Many times students will have trouble formulating a sentence at the outset. If you notice that the pencil is in hand, but nothing is being written, it is time for you to intervene. Go to the students and say, "Tell me, what happened last night at the ball game." They will proceed to explain some of the highlights. After they have gone through enough of the highlights, give some quiet encouragement: "Many times it is easier to talk about something and then write it down." The correcting or proofreading procedure is still the same. Either way, students' needs are met and you've successfully added the auditory to the visual-kinesthetic writing process.

Too many times students have been "turned in" because of a delay between writing and positive reinforcement, or writing and receiving an explanation of what has been done wrong. For learning to take place, writing assignments should be short, i.e., sentence and paragraph oriented. Then reinforcement can be immediate and serve as an opportunity to explain a particular problem, why it exists, and how it can be changed. Then students no longer rely on a group of red, shorthand symbols, but can discuss with their teacher what they are attempting to do.

Remember, students read aloud what they have written before bringing it to you. Then they read it aloud to you. If they catch an error, then it is a free error. If you catch an error that they miss, that's the time to discuss it.

The following example is the first written work turned in to me by a junior in high school. At first glance one would think it was clever, until a closer examination is made and language deficits become more obvious. The student has high-average intelligence, but he had low scores in English and social studies, a very low level of frustration, and a low opinion of himself.