Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (USI)

The Upper-Level Spelling Inventory (USI) can be used in upper elementary, middle, high school, and postsecondary classrooms. The 31 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.

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