

Annie's Spelling Test



By Nancy Rogers Cluff

(Based on a true story)

Always tell the truth—and love it (Children’s Songbook, 112–13).

Annie’s eyes popped open Friday morning. She hurried downstairs and poured a bowl of cereal just as the sun peeked over the mountains.

“What’s the rush, early bird?” Dad asked.

“Today’s my spelling test, Dad,” Annie said. “Mrs. Page promised a prize to everyone who gets 100 percent.”

“Are you ready for the test?” Dad asked.

“Yes,” Annie said. “I’ve studied the list all week. The words are hard, but I’m ready.” She patted a paper lying on the table. “I’m going to study them again while I eat breakfast.”

“I’m sure you’ll do great,” Dad said. “Just do the best you can.”

Annie studied the spelling words again as Mom drove her to school. Finally, it was time for the test.

“*Impatient*,” Mrs. Page began.

Annie heard soft sounds of pencils on paper around the classroom. She filled her lungs with air, slowly let it out, and began to write.

“Word number two: *weird*,” Mrs. Page said.

“Easy,” Annie thought. She quickly wrote it on her paper.

Twenty-three words later, Mrs. Page collected the tests. “I’ll correct the tests during lunch,” she told the class.

“I hope, I hope,” Annie whispered to herself. “I hope I got a hundred percent on the test.”

After lunch Mrs. Page said, “Several of you earned a prize today for perfect test scores.”

Annie held her breath as Mrs. Page read the names.

“Tressa, Jonas, Olivia, and

Annie all scored 100 percent!”

Annie grinned as she walked to the front of the room. Mrs. Page presented each student with a fancy pencil. Annie’s was silver, pink, and blue—her favorite colors. She held it high, her cheeks pink, while the class clapped.

“This is one of my best days ever,” Annie thought as she sat down.

Mrs. Page handed back the tests and Annie read the words over, proud of the hard words she had spelled. She paused at the word *weird*. It didn’t look right. Annie pulled out the study list of spelling words and compared her test to it. “W-i-e-r-d,” she whispered. She felt like a leaky balloon, with all the happiness whooshing out of her. She had spelled *weird* wrong.

“What should I do?” Annie wondered. “I want my class to think I’m a great speller. If I tell Mrs. Page I’ll have to give back my prize.”

Annie stared at the test with the big red “100%!” written at the top. The words of the thirteenth article of faith popped into her head: “We believe in being honest.”

Slowly, Annie raised her hand. “Mrs. Page, I didn’t get 100 percent on the test. I missed a word.” She stood up and handed her teacher the beautiful pencil and her test paper. “I spelled *weird* with ‘i-e’ instead of ‘e-i.’”

Annie could feel the eyes of her classmates on her as she walked back to her desk. Mrs. Page held up Annie’s test. “Class,” she said, “Annie did something even more important than spelling every word correctly on a test.” Mrs. Page smiled at Annie. “She taught us all a lesson on being honest.”

Annie looked around. Her best friend, Keely, smiled at her. Khalil gave her a thumbs-up. Even shy Ava smiled at her.

“Annie, I want you to have this pencil because of your good example to all of us,” Mrs. Page said.

Annie took the beautiful silver, pink, and blue pencil from her teacher. “Thank you, Mrs. Page.”

She couldn’t wait to show it to her dad. ♦

Annie did great on her test—but something looked weird.

