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## A magical spell

Ananya Revanna, Bengaluru: Feb 23, 2015, DHNS:



While most people struggle to spell even the most basic of words, eight-year-old Udit Shivaram has tucked away in his mind thousands of antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, homophones and homographs.

The youngster is a safehouse for a mind-boggling number of combinations that are the fundamentals of the English language.

The teenybopper from Vidyashilp Academy recently showcased his mastery over the language when he won a scholarship for Rs 50,000 at the national finals of the 'MaRRS International Spelling Bee'.

In May, he will be flying to Abu Dhabi for the finals of the competition. He has worked hard to get to where he is now. Along with taking part in the oral round of the national finals, he also wrote the written round that helped him qualify for the international level.

How does the youngster remember over 14,000 words (which is the basic for grade 1 students)? "I have a good memory and I read a lot of books. My favourite books are Geronimo Stilton, Amar Chitra Katha and the Time Life series. I store the words in my mind and I work hard. I practice one hour everyday. Once I even worked for seven and a half hours – this was two days before the competition," says Udit. What technique does he use while practising? "I try my best to spell a word and take my time over it. My mother helps me while practising, she asks me a word and I say it." While there isn't extensive research material available online, his parents help prepare a special course for him to work on.

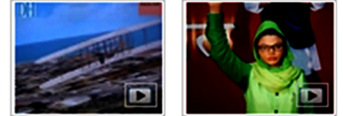
His school is just as supportive. "In school, they push you on stage and make you

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