



YEAR 1 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 1 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
f, l, s, z, k spelt ff, ll, ss, zz and ck after a single vowel letter in short words.	Off, well, miss, buzz, back	If, pal, us, bus, yes
The sound spelt n before k.	Bank, think, honk, sunk	
Division of words into syllables.	Pocket, rabbit, carrot, thunder, sunset	
-tch. Usually comes straight after a single vowel letter.	Catch, fetch, kitchen, notch, hutch	Rich, which, much, such
The 'v' sound at the end of words. The letter e usually needs to be added.	have, live, give	
Added s and es to words. If the ending sounds like 's' or 'z' it is spelt -s. If 'z' and forms an extra syllable it is spelt -es.	Cats, dogs, spends, rocks, thanks, catches	
Adding -ing, -ed and -er to verbs where no change is needed to the root word.	Hunting/ hunted/ hunter buzzing/ buzzed/ buzzer	
Adding -er and -est to adjectives where no change is needed to the root word.	grander/ grandest Quicker/ quickest	
ai and oi. These digraphs are virtually never used at the end of words	Rain, train, paid, afraid, oil, join, coin, point	
ay and oy. These are used at the end of words and at the end of syllables.	Day, play, say, way, boy, toy, enjoy, annoy	
The modifier e. a-e, e-e, i-e, o-e and u-e ('oo' and 'yoo' sounds can be spelt u-e)	Made, same, these, theme, ride, side, home, hole, June, tube	
ar	Car, start, park, arm, garden	
ee	See, tree, green, meet, week	
ea (alternate 'ee' spelling)	Sea, dream, meat, each, read (present tense)	
ea (alternate 'e' spelling)	Head, bread, meant, instead, read (past)	
er (stressed sound)	Her, term, verb, person	
er (unstressed sound)	Better, under, summer, winter, sister	
ir (alternate 'er' spelling)	Girl, bird, shirt, first, third	





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Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
ur (alternate 'er' spelling)	Church, turn, hurt, burst, Thursday	
oo. Very few words end in 'oo' but some do, for example, zoo.	Food, pool, moon, zoo, soon	
oa. Very rare at the end of a word.	Boat, coat, road, coach, goal	
oe (alternate 'oa' spelling)	Toe, goes	
ou	Out, about, mouth, around, sound	you
ow (as in how)	Now, how, brown, down, town	
ow (as in blow)	Own, blow, snow, grow, show	
ue (alternate 'oo' spelling)	Blue, clue, true, rescue, Tuesday	
ew (alternate 'oo' spelling)	New, flew, few, grew, drew, threw	
ie (alternate 'igh' spelling)	Lie, tie, pie, cried, tried, dried	
ie (alternate 'ee' spelling)	Chief, field, thief	
igh	High, night, light, bright, right	
or	For, short, born, horse, morning	
ore (alternate 'or' spelling)	More, score, before, wore, shore	
aw (alternate 'or' spelling)	Saw, draw, yawn, crawl	
au (alternate 'or' spelling)	Author, August, dinosaur, astronaut	
air	Air, fair, pair, hair, chair	
ear	Dear, hear, beard, near, year	





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Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
ear (alternate 'air' spelling)	Bear, pear, wear	
are (alternate 'air' spelling)	Bare, dare, care, share, scared	
Words ending in -y	Very, happy, funny, party, family	
ph and wh. As alternate spellings for 'f' and 'w' spellings	Dolphin, alphabet, elephant, when, where, which, while	
K as the 'c' sound before e, i and y.	Kent, sketch, kit, skin, frisky	
Adding the prefix -un. The prefix -un is added when there is no change to the spelling of the root word.	Unhappy, undo, unload, unfair, unlock.	
Compound words. Two words are joined together to make one word.	Football, playground, farmyard, bedroom	
Common exception words.	See Year One Common misconception words.	





YEAR 2 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 2 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
-ge and -dge (alternative 'j' spelling). 'j' never used at the end of a word. -dge comes after a short vowel sound and -ge for all other words.	Badge, edge, fudge, age, huge, bulge, change	
g and j as the same sound. 'g' is often used before e, i and y. 'j' is always used before a, o and u.	Gem, giant, magic, jacket, jar, join, jog	
c (alternative 's' sound) before e, i and y.	Race, ice, cell, city, fancy	
kn and gn. The k and g at the beginning of these words was sounded out hundreds of years ago.	Knock, know, knee, gnome, gnaw	
wr as the r sound at the start of a word.	Write, written, wrote, wrong, wrap	
-le. The most common 'l' spelling at the end of a word.	Table, apple, bottle, little, middle	
-el. Used after m, n, r, s, v, w, and more often than not s.	Camel, tunnel, squirrel, travel, towel, tinsel	
-al. Not many nouns end in -al but many adjectives too.	Metal, pedal, capital, hospital, animal	
Words ending in -il.	Fossil, pencil, nostril	
-y at the end of words with the 'igh' sound.	Cry, fly, dry, fry, try, reply, July.	
Adding -es to nouns and verbs ending in 'y'. The y is changed to i before -es is added.	Flies, tries, replies, copies, babies, carries.	
Adding -ed, -ing, -er, -est, -y to a root word ending in -y with a consonant before it. The -y at the end of a word is dropped for all except for -ing.	Copied, copier, happier, happiest, cried, replied copying, crying, replying	Skiing, taxiing
Adding -ed, -ing, -er, -est and -y to a root word ending in -e with a consonant before it. The -e at the end of the root word is dropped.	Hiking, hiked, hiker, nicer, nicest, shiny	being
Adding -ing, -ed, -er, -est and -y to words of one syllable ending in a single consonant letter after a single vowel letter. The last consonant letter of the root word is doubled.	Patting, patted, humming, hummed, dropping, dropped, sadder, saddest, runner, runny	The letter 'x' is never doubled: mixing, mixed, boxer, sixes.
The 'or' sound spelt as 'a' before l and ll.	Ball, all, call, tall, walk, talk, always	
The 'u' sound spelt 'o'.	Other, mother, brother, nothing, Monday	

Don't forget the spelling rules from the years before!





YEAR 2 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 2 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
The 'ee' sound spelt -ey. The plural of these words is formed by the addition of -s (donkeys, monkeys)	Key, donkey, monkey, chimney, valley	
'a' as an alternative spelling for the 'o' sound after a 'w' and 'qu'.	Want, watch, wander, quantity, squash	
The 'er' sound spelt 'or' after 'w'. There are not many of these words.	Work, world, worm, worth, word	
The 'or' sound spelt 'ar' after w. There are not many of these words.	War, warm, towards.	
The /3/ sound spelt 's'.	Television, treasure, usual	
The suffixes -ment, -ness, -ful, -less and -ly. If a suffix starts with a consonant letter, it is added straight on to most root words without any change. If a root word ends in -y it is changed to 'i' with a consonant before it but only if the root word has more than 1 syllable.	Enjoyment, sadness, playful, hopeless, badly, plainness	Argument. Merriment, happiness, happily, plentiful, penniless
Contractions. An apostrophe shows where a letter or letters would be if the letters would be if the words were written in full.	Can't, didn't, hasn't, couldn't, it's, I'll	
The possessive apostrophe.	Megan's Ravi's, the girl's, the boy's	
Words ending in -tion.	Station, fiction, motion, national, section	
Homophones and near homophones.	There/their/they're, here/ hear, quite/quiet, see/sea, bare/bear, one/won, sun/son, to/too/two, be/bee, blue/blew, night/knight	

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YEAR 3 AND 4 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 4 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words of more than one syllable. If the last syllable of a word is stressed and ends with one consonant letter (with a vowel before it) the final letter is doubled before any suffix starting with a vowel. The consonant is not doubled if the syllable is unstressed.	Forgetting, forgotten, beginning, beginner, prefer, preferred gardening, gardener, limiting, limited	
The 'i' sound spelt with a y.	Myth, gym, Egypt, pyramid, mystery.	
The 'u' sound spelt 'ou'.	Young, touch, double, trouble, country	
The un-, dis- and mis- prefixes. These have negative meanings.	Disappoint, disagree, unlikeable, untidy, misbehave, misspell	
The in- prefix. This can mean both 'not' and 'in'/'into'. Before a root word starting with l, in- becomes im-. Before a root word starting with r, in- becomes ir-.	Inactive, incorrect immature, immortal, impossible, imperfect irregular, irrelevant, irresponsible.	
The re- prefix means 'again' or 'back'.	Redo, refresh, return, reappear, redecorate	
The sub- prefix means 'under'.	Subdivide, subheading, submarine.	
The inter- prefix means 'between' or 'among'.	Interact, intercity, interrelated.	
The super- prefix means 'above'.	Supermarket, superman, superstar.	
The anti- prefix means 'against'.	Antiseptic, anticlockwise, antisocial	
The auto- prefix means 'self' or 'own'.	Autobiography, autograph, autopilot	
The suffix -ation. -ation is added to verbs to form nouns.	Information, adoration, sensation, preparation.	
The suffix -ly. -ly is added to an adjective to form an adverb. It starts with a consonant and so it is added straight onto most words. Exceptions will be if the root word ends in -y it is changed to i. If the root word ends in -le it is changed to -ly. If the root word ends in -ic, -ally is added.	Sadly, completely, usually, finally, comically happily, angrily gently, simply, humbly basically, dramatically	Truly, duly, wholly, publicly.

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YEAR 3 AND 4 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 4 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
Words ending in –sure.	Measure, treasure, pleasure, enclosure	
Words ending in - ture. Check that the word is not a root word ending in (t)ch with an ‘er’ ending—e.g. teacher, catcher, richer, stretcher .	Creature, adventure, furniture, picture	
Words ending in –sion.	Division, invasion, confusion, decision	
The suffix –ous. Sometimes the root word is obvious and the normal rules apply. Sometimes there is no obvious root word. –our is changed to –or before adding –ous. A final ‘e’ of the root word must be kept if the ‘j’ sound of ‘g’ is being kept. If there is an ‘ee’ sound before the –ous ending, it is usually spelt as i, but a few words have e.	Poisonous, dangerous tremendous, jealous humorous, glamorous courageous, outrageous serious, obvious, hideous, spontaneous.	
Endings –tion, -sion, -ssion, -cian. –tion is the most common spelling for this sound. It is used if the root word ends in ‘t’ or ‘te’. -ssion is used if the root word ends in ss or -mit. -cian is used if the root word ends in c or cs.	Invention, injection, action, completion expression, permission musician, electrician	Attention, intention
Words with the ‘k’ sound spelt ch (Greek origin).	Scheme, chorus, chemist, echo, character	
Words with the ‘sh’ sound spelt ‘ch’ (mostly French origin).	Chef, chalet, machine, brochure	
Words ending with the ‘g’ sound spelt –gue.	League, tongue	
Words ending in the ‘k’ sound spelt –que (French origin).	Antique, unique	
Words with the ‘s’ sound spelt sc (Latin in origin). The romans probably pronounced the c and the k as two sounds rather than one.	Science, scene, discipline, fascinate	
Words with the ‘ei’, ‘eigh’ and ‘ey’ spelling	Vein, weigh, eight, neighbour, they, obey	
Possessive apostrophe with plural words. The apostrophe is placed after the plural form of the word. –s is not added if the plural word already ends in –s but is added if the plural does not end in –s—e.g. children’s	Girls’, boys’, babies’ children’s, men’s, mice’s	Singular proper nouns ending in an ‘s’ use the ‘s’ suffix e.g. Cyprus’s

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YEAR 3 AND 4 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 4 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
Homophones and near homophones.	Accept/ except affect/ effect ball/ bawl berry/ bury brake/ break Fair/ fare grate/ great groan/ grown Here/ hear heel/ heal/ he'll knot/ not mail/ male main/ mane meat/ meet medal/ meddle missed/mist peace/ piece plain/ plane rain/ rein/ reign scene/ seen, weather/ whether whose/ who's	

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YEAR 5 AND 6 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 6 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
<p>Words that end in –cious or –tious. Not many common words end like this.</p> <p>If the root word ends in –ce the ‘s’ sound is usually spelt c—e.g. vice—vicious</p>	<p>Vicious, precious, ambitious, cautious</p> <p>Gracious, spacious, malicious</p>	<p>anxious</p>
<p>Words that end in –cial and –tial. –cial is common after a vowel letter and –tial after a consonant but there are some exceptions.</p>	<p>Official, special, artificial, partial, essential</p>	<p>Initial, financial, commercial, provincial</p>
<p>Words that end in –ant and –ance/-ancy, -ent, -ence/-ency</p> <p>Use –ant and –ance/ancy if there is a related word with an ‘ai’ or ‘igh’ sound in the right position; -ation endings are often a clue—e.g. observant, observance (observ<u>a</u>tion).</p> <p>Use –ent and –ence/-ency after a soft c, soft g and qu or if there is a related word with a clear ‘e’ sound in the right position—e.g. confident, confidence (confid<u>e</u>ntial).</p>	<p>Observant, observance, expectant, hesitant, tolerant, tolerance, substance.</p> <p>Innocent, innocence, frequent, frequency, confident, confidence</p>	<p>There are many words where this guidance does not help. These words just have to be learnt.</p> <p>Assistant, assistance, obedient, obedience, independent, independence</p>
<p>Words ending in –able/-ible and –ably/-ibly. The –able/–ably endings are far more common than the –ible/–ibly endings.</p> <p>The –able ending is used if there is a related word ending in –ation.</p> <p>If the –able ending is added to a word ending in –ce or –ge, the e after the c or g must be kept as those letters would otherwise have their ‘hard’ sounds (as in cap and gap) before the a of the –able ending.</p> <p>The –able ending is usually but not always used if a complete root word can be heard before it, even if there is no related word ending in –ation. The first five examples opposite are obvious; in reliable, the complete word rely is heard, but the y changes to i in accordance with the rule.</p> <p>The –ible ending is common if a complete root word can’t be heard before it but it also sometimes occurs when a complete word can be heard (e.g. sensible).</p>	<p>adorable/adorably (adoration)</p> <p>changeable, noticeable, forcible</p> <p>dependable, comfortable, understandable, reasonable, enjoyable, reliable</p> <p>possible/possibly, horrible/horribly</p>	
<p>Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words ending in –fer</p> <p>The r is doubled if the –fer is still stressed when the ending is added.</p> <p>The r is not doubled if the –fer is no longer stressed.</p>	<p>referring, referred, referral, preferring, preferred, transferring, transferred</p> <p>reference, referee, preference, transference</p>	



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YEAR 5 AND 6 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 6 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
Use of the hyphen. Hyphens can be used to join a prefix to a root word, especially if the prefix ends in a vowel letter and the root word also begins with one.	co-ordinate, re-enter, co-operate, co-own	
Words with the 'ee' sound spelt ei after c. The 'i before e except after c' rule applies to words where the sound spelt by ei is 'ee'.	deceive, conceive, receive, perceive, ceiling	protein, caffeine, seize (and either and neither if pronounced with an initial 'ee' sound).
Words containing the letter-string ough. ough is one of the trickiest spellings in English – it can be used to spell a number of different sounds.	ought, bought, thought, nought, brought, fought rough, tough, enough cough though, although, dough through thorough, borough, plough, bough	
Words with 'silent' letters (i.e. letters whose presence cannot be predicted from the pronunciation of the word). Some letters which are no longer sounded used to be sounded hundreds of years ago: e.g. in knight, there was a /k/ sound before the /n/, and the gh used to represent the sound that 'ch' now represents in the Scottish word loch.	doubt, island, lamb, solemn, thistle, knight	
Homophones and other words that are often confused In the pairs of words opposite, nouns end –ce and verbs end –se. Advice and advise provide a useful clue as the word advise (verb) is pronounced with a /z/ sound – which could not be spelt c.	advice/advise, device/devise licence/license practice/practise prophecy/prophesy	

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YEAR 5 AND 6 SPELLING RULES

By the end of Year 6 you should be able to use these spelling rules...

Spelling Rule	Example Words	Exceptions
<p>Homophones and other words that are often confused continued...</p>	<p>farther: further father: a male parent guessed: past tense of the verb guess guest: visitor heard: past tense of the verb hear herd: a group of animals led: past tense of the verb lead lead: present tense of that verb, or else the metal which is very heavy (as heavy as lead) past: noun or adjective referring to a previous time (e.g. In the past) or preposition or adverb showing place (e.g. he walked past me) passed: past tense of the verb 'pass' (e.g. I passed him in the road) precede: go in front of or before proceed: go on principal: adjective – most important (e.g. principal ballerina) noun – important person (e.g. principal of a college) principle: basic truth or belief profit: money that is made in selling things prophet: someone who foretells the future stationary: not moving stationery: paper, envelopes etc. steal: take something that does not belong to you steel: metal wary: cautious weary: tired who's: contraction of who is or who has whose: belonging to someone (e.g. Whose jacket is that?) aisle: a gangway between seats (in a church, train, plane). isle: an island. aloud: out loud. allowed: permitted. affect: usually a verb (e.g. The weather may affect our plans). effect: usually a noun (e.g. It may have an effect on our plans). If a verb, it means 'bring about' (e.g. He will effect changes in the running of the business). altar: a table-like piece of furniture in a church. alter: to change. ascent: the act of ascending (going up). assent: to agree/agreement (verb and noun). bridal: to do with a bride at a wedding. bridle: reins etc. for controlling a horse. cereal: made from grain (e.g. breakfast cereal). serial: adjective from the noun series – a succession of things one after the other. compliment: to make nice remarks about someone (verb) or the remark that is made (noun). complement: related to the word complete – to make something complete or more complete (e.g. her scarf complemented her outfit). descent: the act of descending (going down). dissent: to disagree/disagreement (verb and noun). desert: as a noun – a barren place (stress on first syllable); as a verb – to abandon (stress on second syllable) dessert: (stress on second syllable) a sweet course after the main course of a meal. draft: noun – a first attempt at writing something; verb – to make the first attempt; also, to draw in someone (e.g. to draft in extra help) draught: a current of air.</p>	



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