

Common Spelling Rules

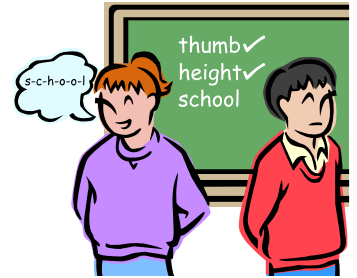
Spelling in American English is not always easy! There are many rules that can help students to improve their spelling. Here are a few tips and vocabulary words.

Definition of common terms:

Suffix: groups of letters attached to the end of a word to change the word's meaning

Prefix: groups of letters attached to the beginning of a word to change the word's meaning

Long and Short vowel sounds: When a vowel sounds like its name in a word, that is called a long vowel sound (example: The "o" in "go" makes an "oh" sound). When the vowel does not sound like its name, it is a short vowel sound.



Some Spelling Rules:

- 1) Use ***i*** before ***e***, except after ***c***, or when sounding like "a" as in "neighbor" and "weigh."

Examples: piece, chief, perceive, ceiling

Some exceptions: neighbor, weird, height, neither, weigh, foreign

- 2) **Drop the final *e*** in a word before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel (***a***, ***e***, ***i***, ***o***, ***u***) but not before a suffix beginning with a consonant.

Examples: ride + ing = riding, guide + ance = guidance,

like + ness = likeness, arrange + ment = arrangement

- 3) Change a **final *y*** to ***i*** before a suffix, unless the suffix begins with ***i***.

Examples: party + es = parties, try + es = tries, try + ing = trying,

copy + ing = copying

- 4) **Double a final single consonant** before adding a suffix when the word ends with a single vowel followed by a single consonant AND the consonant ends an accented syllable or a one-syllable word.

Examples: stop + ing = stopping, occur + ence = occurrence,

swim + ing = swimming

- 5) The letter ***q*** is usually followed by ***u***.

Example: queen, quick, quality

6) The letter **s** never follows **x**.

7) The consonants **v, j, k, w** and **x** are never doubled.

8) Adding a **prefix** to a word does not usually change the spelling.

Examples: bi + cycle= bicycle, re + act= react



9) To **make a word plural**, if the word ends with a consonant and **y**, change the **y** to an **i** and add **es**.

Example: “baby” plural is “babies”

10) To **make a long vowel sound**, you need to add a second vowel.

Examples: boat, cheap, paid

11) When **y** is at the end of a **2 syllable word**, it usually stands for the long **e** sound.

Example: baby, penny, candy

12) If a **one syllable word** has **2 vowels**, the first vowel is usually long and the second is usually silent.

Example: wheel, leaf, team

13) Words **ending in a vowel** and **y** can add the suffix **-ed** or **-ing** without making any other change.

Examples: buying, delaying, employed

14) When the **letters ey** are at the end of a **2 syllable word**, they usually stand for the long **e** sound.

Examples: donkey, valley, money

These are not all of the spelling rules in the English language, but these rules should help with many common mistakes. Learning English is a long process, but with lots of practice improvement can be made!

