

Help Centres – English Support



Helpful English Spelling Rules

Rule One: i before e except after c OR when it's a long a sound as in neighbour or weigh

1. **(i before e):** thief, grief, mischief, fierce, pierce, tier, pier, field
2. **(after c):** receive, perceive, receipt, ceiling
3. **(long a):** sleigh, freight, eight

➤ **Exceptions to the ie – ei Rule:**

neither leisure foreign seized weird height

Words with sh sound: ancient, sufficient, patient, efficient

Rule Two: Words ending in y

1. **When the y comes after a consonant, change it to an i before adding a suffix except when the suffix is -ing**

carry → carried dry → driest spy → spied

But: copy → copying carry → carrying dry → drying

2. **When the y comes after a vowel do not change it to an i**

enjoy → enjoyed play → played

➤ **Exceptions:** day → daily lay → laid pay → paid say → said

➤ **Also: Adjectives with one syllable keep the y before suffixes -ly and -ness**

shy → shyness/shyly sly → slyness/slyly dry → dryness/dryly

Rule Three: Words ending with a silent e

1. **Drop the e when you add a suffix beginning with a vowel**

argue → arguing create → creator force → forcible love → loveable

2. **Keep the e when the suffix begins with a consonant**

fate → fateful safe → safety amuse → amusement fine → finely

3. **Keep the e in words ending with ce or ge before suffixes -able and -ous**

courage → courageous notice → noticeable entice → enticeable

Rule Four: The doubling rule for words with one syllable

- 1. Double final consonants in one-syllable words before a suffix that begins with a vowel**
tan → tanning wrap → wrapping tan → tanned fat → fatter
- 2. Do not double when:**
 - a) When the word ends in a double consonant: want → wanting
 - b) When there are two vowels before the consonant: fear → feared
 - c) When the suffix begins with a consonant: ship → shipment

Rule Five: The doubling rule for words with more than one syllable

- 1. Double the final consonant before a suffix that begins with a vowel – if the stress is on the second syllable**
admit → admitted refer → referred plan → planned
- 2. Do not double when:**
 - a) When the word ends in a double consonant: enchant → enchanted
 - b) When there are two vowels before the final consonant: refuel → refueled
 - c) When the suffix begins with a consonant: enchant → enchantment

Rule Six: Adding -s or -es for plurals

- 1. When the word ends in s, sh, ch, x, or z, you add the -es ending to make a plural**
bus → buses wish → wishes match → matches tax → taxes quiz → quizzes
- 2. For all other words, add the -s ending**
cat → cats river → rivers monkey → monkeys town → towns