

Spelling rules from Spelling Lessons

Spelling Lesson 1

Syllables and words ending in a consonant will have their short sound:

at in on up, en (as in en-ter); man met lip hop tug

Short (1-syllable) words ending in a K sound are usually spelled with a ck:

lack peck sick rock truck

Short (1-syllable) words ending in a L, F, or S sound usually have doubled letters:

fall well mill doll pull; gaff tiff doff muff; mass hiss less toss fuss

Words usually divide between two consonants (ck & doubled letters count as 1 consonant):
(remember the rule that syllables ending in a vowel are short)

nap-kin rab-bit ad-mit well-ness son-net bob-cat

Words ending in hissing sounds add -es in the plural, all others just add s.

keeps farms fishes boxes

Words usually divide between consonant blends:

hand-craft lip-stick dust-pan

The letter groups sh, th, wh, ng, and nk count as one letter for syllable division, and will stay together when dividing words.

Words ending in a CH sound are often spelled -tch:

watch etch itch thatch

Unaccented syllables are often mushed to the schwa sound of uh (shown in the dictionary as an upside-down e.) This happens especially often with words the vowels o or a.

The letter c is pronounced as an s before e, i, and y, but with a k sound before all other letters. (Before the vowels a, o, and u and before all consonants.) The letter c is often followed by a silent e whose purpose is to keep the sound of the c "soft," as its s sound is called.

c as s before e, i, or y: **cell, city, cyber, ace, dice, mice**

c as s with a silent e to keep the "soft" sound: **prince, fleece**

The letter g is pronounced as a j before e, i, and y, but with a g sound before all other letters. (Before the vowels a, o, and u and before all consonants.) English words will not end with a j.

The letter g is often followed by a silent e whose purpose is to keep the sound of the g "soft," as its j sound is called. A letter d is added before the ge to keep the vowel short (2 consonants, short vowel: 1 consonant, long vowel.) A few common words such as girl and get have a hard g where a soft g "j" sound would be expected.

g as j before e, i, or y: **gem, ginger, gypsy**

g as g before e, i, or y as an exception--a few common words: **get, girl**

Longer words ending in a k sound are usually spelled with a single c:

music, celiac, republic

Short words ending in a k sound are usually spelled with a ck:

duck, pick, lack

With another consonant sound before the k sound, spelled with a k:

dark, think, perk

Spelling Lesson 2

Words and syllables ending in a vowel will have their long sound:

be hi go mu my; ma-ker me-ter si-ding mo-tor cu-pid

(Words ending in an a are exceptions, they will say "ah," ma, pa. Syllables ending in the letter a will have their long a sound, as in "ma-ker" and "pa-per.")

Words with a vowel followed by a consonant followed by a letter e will have their long sound.
(Silent e rule.)

late Pete nine home cube

Words usually divide before 1 consonant (**mi-ner, o-bey, to-ma-to**)

Exception: Latin words divide after consonant (**lim-it, met-al**)

Long a sound is spelled with an ai within the word and an ay at the end:

mail, paid; say stay

The long a sound can also be spelled ei within a word and ey at the end:

vein, weigh; they, grey

(Native English words will not end in an i, so the i changes to a y at the end.)

u, eu, ui, ue, and ew can be pronounced either "yoo" or "oo" depending on the letter that comes before the vowel. Words that start with a ch, d, j, l, r, or s will say "oo," t can say either sound except for a few words which can only be pronounced "oo." Words starting with all other letters will say "yoo."

oo: **due, chew, june, lute, rue, Sue, blue, brew** yoo: **butane, cube, feud, mew**

The long u sound (yoo or oo) is spelled with ui within the word and ue at the end:

fruit, ruin; blue, true

(Native English words will not end in an i, so the i changes to an e at the end.)

Divide between 2 words (**sail-boat, lip-stick, bee-hive, way-laid**)

Words in English will not end in v, so words with ve at the end may be either short or long:
give, live, have; save, hive
(Live can be pronounced either long or short depending on its usage.)

Long o is spelled oa within the word and oe or ow at the end:
boat goat loaf; toe Joe; row slow

Some short words with o and i will have a long sound, they used to have a silent e at the end of the word. This often happens when these o and i words have the letters l, t, or d in them.
wild child old told both post host kind find mind roll colt

Spelling Lesson 3

The sound of au is spelled with au within the word, aw at the end
(aw can also be used within the word):
faun, autumn; lawn, hawk; raw, claw

The sound of ou as in out or how is spelled with a ou within the word and ow within the word or at the end of the word. It will not end spelled with a ou.
out south; howl; now plow

(Words of native English origin will not end in u, so the u changes to a w at the end.)

Words beginning with wa usually have an “ah” sound as in water instead of the expected short a sound: **want water watch**

The sound of oi is spelled with oi within the word and oy at the end:
oil, coin; boy, troy

(Words of native English origin will not end in i, so the i changes to a y at the end.)

or will usually say “er” after a w and at the end of a word (or normally says “or” as in for):
word world work; doctor actor janitor

The letter team gh usually says g, and the letter team gn usually says n:
ghost, spaghetti; gnat sign

The letters wh normally are a letter team that makes the sound of w (or, in some regions, its unvoiced consonant pair sound of wh) However, before o, it often makes the sound of h:
when where which; who whose whole

The letter h is often silent at the beginning of words:
honor, herb

g as j with a silent e to keep the “soft” sound: **age huge**

g as j with a silent e to keep the “soft” sound and a d to keep the vowel short
(2 consonants, short vowel): **badge, ridge, edge, dodge, grudge**

The letter team kn is pronounced with the k silent: **knight, knee**

The letter team wr is pronounced with the w silent: **write, wrong**

The letter team mb is pronounced with the b silent: **lamb climb comb**

The letters b and t are sometimes silent: **debt, often**

Spelling Lesson 4

Divide after prefixes (**pre-fix, be-fore**)

Divide before suffixes (**hap-i-ness, faith-ful, sleep-ing**)

Common prefixes: re- dis- over- un- mis- out- be- co- de- pre- fore- inter- sub- trans-

Common suffixes: -tion -ize -ate -en -ity -er -ness -ism -ment -ant -ship -ive -ful -less

Most words ending in the cede sound are spelled –cede (**precede.**)

There is only 1 word that is spelled –sede (**supersede.**)

Only 3 words are spelled –ceed (**exceed, proceed, succeed.**)

-el and -le

Most words end in –le. You will divide 1 letter before –le (**ap-ple**)

-el often follows the letters s, z, or v. It will divide directly before –el (**lev-el**)

-ive

words in English will not end in v. It normally has a short sound, the e is merely to keep the v from ending the word.

Making plurals:

1. After hissing sounds, add –es
2. After non-hissing sounds, just add -s

Words ending in an o can add either -s or -es.

F/V consonant pairs

Some words will change from f to v when becoming plural, some just add an s to their f.

Leaf/leaves shelf/shelves; surf/surfs golf/golfs

Final e

Is normally dropped when adding a suffix that begins with a vowel. (**move, movable**)

- unless needed to keep c or g soft (**change, changeable**)

Will be kept if it is part of a letter team that end in e (ee, ue, oe, etc; i.e. see, seeing)

- exception: dropped after u or w (**true, truly; awe, awful**)

Will be kept if the suffix begins with a consonant. (**careful, lateness**)

Final y

Will change to an i when adding a suffix that starts with a vowel. (**cry, cries, cried**)

-except if the suffix starts with an i (**crying**)

or, a few other exceptions like adding -ness (**dryness, shyness**)

bury, buried, burying

try, ties, tried, trying

Spelling Lesson 5

Simple short vowel word, need to add consonant to word when ending a suffix to keep the vowel short. For a simple silent e word, you must not add a consonant to keep the word short:

hop, hopping; hope, hoping

Native English words do not end in the letters i, a, or u, so they will change to another vowel at the end:

i changing to y

ai/ay ei/ey oi/oy

mail, say; vein, they; boil, toy

a changing to e

oa/oe

boat toe

i changing to u

ui/ue

fruit blue

u changing to w

eu/ew ou/ow au/aw

Europe, flew; out, brown; pause, lawn

Vowel teams that don't make a sound divide between vowels

(ra-di-o, me-ow, cas-u-al)

Exception: some Latin words divide between 2 vowels that normally make another sound

(di-et, con-gru-ent)

2 syllable words with an accent on the last syllable will double the consonant when adding the syllable (us. words of OE origin)

omit, omitting; begin, beginning

Words with an accent on the first syllable will not add a consonant when adding a syllable. (us. words of Latin origin)

benefit, benefited; marvel, marveled