## Units 1 to 5 Spelling Rules

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

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## Units 6 to 13 Spelling Rules

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 usually spelled -tch:
watch etch itch much thatch
Words beginning with wa usually have an "ah" sound as in water instead of the expected short a sound:

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want water watch
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## Units 14 to 20 Spelling Rules

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

## late Pete nine home cube

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 $1, t$, or $d$ in them.

## wild child old told both post host kind find mind roll colt

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 a will have their long a sound, as in "ma-ker" and "pa-per.")
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
Short words with another consonant sound before the k sound will be spelled with a k :
dark pink perk thank
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## Units 21 to 27 Spelling Rules

Long a sound is spelled with an ai within the word and an ay at the end: mail, paid; say stay
Words with ea normally have a long e sound ( $67 \%$ of the time.) However, they sometimes ( $32 \%$ of the time) have a short e sound, and occasionally ( $1 \%$ of the time) will have a long a sound.

Long e ( $67 \%$ ): seat meal bean seat; Short e ( $32 \%$ ): bread breath; long a (1\%) steak
Short words with ie have a long i sound, longer words with ie have a long e sound
Long i: pie cried tie dries; long e: grief field thief yield
When y is a vowel, it normally has the same sound as i. However, at the end of long words, it is normally a long e sound:

Short i: gym; Long i: try my type; end of word, long e: happy puppy army
Long o is spelled oa within the word and oe at the end: boat goat loaf; toe Joe

## Units 28 to 36 Spelling Rules

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

Usually, ou says ou as in out, however, it can also have a long o sound ( $11 \%$ of the time), a long oo sound ( $8 \%$ of the time), or a short oo sound ( $1 \%$ of the time, but common words)

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\begin{array}{ll}
\text { ou (81\%): out found } & \text { Long o }(11 \%) \text { : soul } \\
\text { Long oo }(8 \%) \text { : you soup } & \text { Short oo }(1 \%) \text { could should would }
\end{array}
$$

The sound of oi is spelled with oi within the word and oy at the end: oil, coin; boy, troy
The sound of au is spelled with au within the word, aw at the end (aw can also be used withinh the word):
faun, autumn; lawn, hawk; raw, claw
Unaccented syllables are often mushed to the schwa sound of uh (shown in the dictionary as an upsidedown e.) This happens especially often with words beginning with an a: apart, alike.

## Unit 37 Spelling Rules

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 $\mathrm{a}, \mathrm{o}$, 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. When it is before an e or an i at the end of a word, it will sometimes say "sh."
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
c as k before $\mathrm{a}, \mathrm{o}$, u and all consonants: cap, cot, cube, club, crash
c as sh before i or e: special, ocean
The c syllables:
ca, ce, ci, co, cu, cy; sca, sce, sci, sco, scu, scy
(pronounced kay, see, sigh, ko, cue, sigh; ska, see, sigh, sko, sku, sigh)

## Unit 38 Spelling Rules

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 aj. 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 $\mathrm{e}, \mathrm{i}$, or y : gem, ginger, gypsy
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
$g$ as $g$ before $e, i$, or $y$ as an exception--a few common words: get, girl
The g syllables: ga, ge, gi, go, gu, gy (pronounced gay, gee, gigh, go, goo, guy)

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## Units 39 to 40 Spelling Rules

The letter team igh says long i. The letters gh are not truly silent, it is part of a team of letters making the i long: high bright

At the end of words, gh occasionally says f: rough laugh
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
The letter $L$ is not exactly silent, it changes the sound of the vowel: calf, half

## Units 41 to 44 Spelling Rules

The letters s and z are consonant pairs. They are pronounced with the mouth in the same position. The letter s often has its z sound, especially at the end of a word: has, is; nose wise

Words ending in le divide 1 letter before le: ta-ble, ket-tle
Words ending in el divide directly before el: lev-el, reb-el
The letters ed at the end will be pronounced like the name "Ed" after a d or a t: added acted Otherwise, ed will be pronounced " d " or " t " with no vowel sound for the e : saved baked ( d and t are also consonant pairs)

## Extra rules 1:

Vowel teams that don' $t$ make a sound on their own 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)

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## Extra rules 2:

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 team gh usually says g , and the letter team gn usually says n : ghost, spaghetti; gnat sign
The letter $h$ is often silent at the beginning of words: honor, herb
Longer words ending in a k sound are usually spelled with a single c : music, celiac, republic
(review: short words ending in a k sound are usually spelled with a ck: duck, pick, lack and with another consonant sound before the k sound, spelled with a k : dark, think, perk)

Divide before prefixes and after suffixes: pre-fix, be-fore; na-tion, use-ful; pre-ven-tion Common prefixes: re- dis- over- un- mis- out- be- co- de- pre- fore- inter- sub- transCommon suffixes: -tion -ize -ate -en -ity -er -ness -ism -ment -ant -ship -ive -ful -less

## Extra rules 3:

The letters ei normally say long a as in rein. After a c, they say long e as in receipt. They also sometimes just say long e as in neither. It sometimes says short i as in forfeit or long i as in feisty. long a (66\%) rein After c: long e receipt long e (9\%) neither short i (13\%) forfeit long i (12\%) feisty
ear followed by a consonant usually ( $61 \%$ of the time) says "er" as in earl but sometimes says "ar" as in heart ( $39 \%$ of the time): er (61\%) earth earn ar (39\%) heart hearth ear at the end of a word or syllable usually says "eer" as in fear ( $79 \%$ of the time) but sometimes says "air" as in bear ( $21 \%$ of the time): eer ( $79 \%$ ) fear appear air ( $21 \%$ ) bear swear
ere usually ( $93 \%$ of the time) says eer as in here, but sometimes ( $7 \%$ of the time) says air as in there: eer ( $93 \%$ ) here mere air (7\%) there where

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

## A few important exceptions

A few words with a $u$ after the $s$ are pronounced with $s$ as sh: sugar, sure
Words with one vowel mushed to the schwa sound of uh (occurs especially often in words that begin with a or with the letter o followed by $\mathrm{m}, \mathrm{n}$, or v ):
again, about, around, away, what, from, come, some, done, love
Words with consonant pair substitutions ( z sound for $\mathrm{s}, \mathrm{v}$ sound for f ).
as, has, is, his, was, use, does, of (does and was also have the vowel sound mushed to uh)
These words have one vowel sound off from their expected sound, oo as in moo instead of long o:
to, do, who More words vowel one sound off:
because, been, could, pretty, said, shall, you; never, seven, upon, only
The or in wor is normally pronounced er as in her, the a in words starting with wa is pronounced ah as in saw, and the ar sound in words like warm is pronounced like or in for.
word, work, worth; want, wash; warm, ward, war

## Webster's Speller Rules

Unaccented syllables are often mushed to the schwa sound of uh. This is especially common at the end of words. However, e's often mush to short i: rur-al fill-et (pronounced rurul and fillit)

When the last syllable is accented, the sounds will not schwa: com-pel, la-ment (accented syllables underlined)

The letter $u$ is already a relaxed sound, so it is already mushed! The letter i usually holds its sound, or at least some of its sound. The letters o and a are most likely to "mush" to a schwa uh sound.
(as noted above, e's will generally mush to a short i if they schwa, especially at the end)
At the end of a word, the letter $y$ will have its normal long $i$ sound when it is accented, but will have a long e sound in an unaccented syllable (accented syllables underlined):
de-ny, mis-ap-ply; cru-el-ty

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## Rules important for ESL students and students with speech/language difficulties:

u , eu, 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
Adding ed: Words that end in a d or a $t$ will say "ed:" ended, added; fasted, listed
Words ending in the sound of a vowel, $\mathrm{b}, \mathrm{g}, \mathrm{l}, \mathrm{n}, \mathrm{m}, \mathrm{r}, \mathrm{s}$ as a z sound, v or z will end with the sound of $d$ :
mobbed, logged, hauled, claimed, barred, closed, loved
Words ending in the sounds of $\mathrm{ch}, \mathrm{sh}, \mathrm{f}, \mathrm{k}, \mathrm{p}, \mathrm{s}$, or x will end with the sound of t :

laughed, kicked, hopped, bossed, boxed

