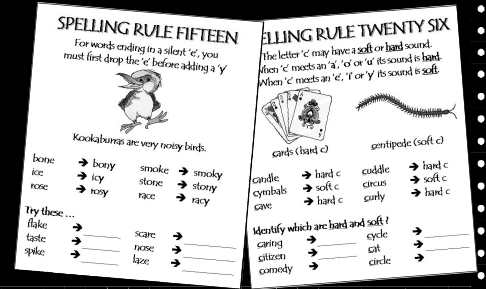


S
 ɛs = /ɛs/

Spelling by the Rules



Memorizing (the pronunciation and/or spelling of) lists of items is *not* the most efficient, effective way to acquire word-level vocabulary or to increase language proficiency. Instead, it makes good sense to spend time and energy on productive principles, patterns, and rules that apply to oral and written language *systems*. Basic “spelling rules” for one-syllable items and accented syllables appear in *Ideas B-P* on pages 19-108. Here are rules that can make phonics/spelling instruction more manageable in regard to items of all lengths, including those with added affixes, at higher levels of language proficiency.

1. In normal English words, *the consonant letters j, k, w, x, y are never doubled; -c (= s) or -y (without -e) cannot end a word. The letters b, c, h, k, l, n, p, s, t, w are occasionally “silent,”* as in *comb, science, honest, know, psalm, column, island, listen, wrong*.
2. *A well-known rule that usually works is to put “i before e except after c”—or when it makes the /ei/ sound within a syllable.”* Some word examples are *friend (= ɛ), thief (= iʲ), pies (= ɔʲ); receive (= iʲ), beige (= ei)*. But there are many exceptions to the rule, like *weird*. And it doesn't apply to vowels in separate syllables, as in *soci•ety*.
3. *The letter -y (= iʲ) replaces -i at the end of accented syllables after consonants,* as in *body, family, happy, beauty, company, vary*. *But it becomes -i- again before any added suffix.* Examples include *bodily, familiar, happiness, beautiful, companion, various*.
4. *A word ending in final silent -e after a consonant drops the -e before a suffix that begins with a vowel.* For instance, *hope + -ing = hoping; nose + -y = nosy; use + -ual = usual; pure + -ity = purity*. The rule may *not* apply to words ending in *-ce (= s) or -ge (= j)*—as in *notice + -able = noticeable; outrage + -ous = outrageous*.
5. *Words or accented syllables ending in a single consonant letter (except -k, -y, or -x) after a single (simple) vowel spelling double the final letter before adding a vowel ending.* Some examples are *rob + -ed = robbed; upset + -ing = upsetting; begin + er = beginner; big + -est = biggest; refer + al = referral; star + -y = starry*.
6. Generally, *adding a prefix or a consonant-suffix to a word does not change its correct spelling.*

Slow Down or Speed Up? Multi-Level Pointers

For review, here is a brief summary of phonics patterns that apply to the most frequent, “regular” spellings of one-syllable words and accented syllables. (The phonetic symbols used to represent sounds below are common in American dictionaries.)

- Most often, the *simple* (“short”) vowel sounds ă ě ĩ ō ô ũ are spelled with one letter a, e, i, o, u in “closed” syllables that end in consonants. The *complex* (“long”) vowel sounds and diphthongs ā ē ī ō ū ou oī are spelled by two letters together inside a syllable—or a final silent -e after consonants that makes the previous vowel “complex.”
- Whether they appear at the beginning or end of syllables, the consonant sounds b p d t g v ʃ th s sh are regularly spelled by the (sometimes doubled) letters and digraphs b, p, d, t, g, v, th, s, sh. The k f z j ch sounds have different spellings according to their positions: c/k/ck, f/ph*/gh**, z/s, j/g(e)/dge, ch/tch.
- The letters b, c, ch, d, f, g, l, p, r, s, sh, t, th can be blended in clusters without vowels in between.
 - “Word-family spelling patterns”—*rimes* consisting of a vowel (+ consonants) result in rhyming words.

Following are suggestions for ways to incorporate the benefits of generally helpful *spelling patterns and rules* into lessons, activities, and games that maximize time and energy use:

1. Use *"spelling test items" as learning tools*. Language students working with sound and letter *systems* may benefit from *selecting* correct spellings from multiple choices; from *identifying* correct spellings while *fixing* wrong ones; from *completing* words with blanks to fill in; and from *spelling* items from their sounds and meanings.

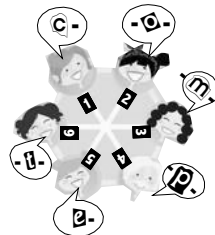
Sample "test items" of these kinds—arranged according to the spelling principles they exemplify—are offered on pages 133-135. After checking their responses, learners can try *stating* the patterns or rules that lead them to correct answers. To learn from their mistakes—or simply to imbed the principles in their consciousness, they can review and explain these to others.

Eventually, both teachers and learners may want and be able to make up their own (less elaborate) printed "spelling tests" with items of familiar or new types.

2. *Take advantage of spelling puzzles with items that follow useful rules*. These may be *Word Searches, Crosswords, Rebuses, Anagrams, Scrambled Words, Word Ladders/Pyramids, Mazes*, or other appealing puzzle types found in magazines, downloaded from sites like puzzlechoice.com/ or parenting-our-kids.com/word-puzzles or self-created—perhaps with direction from websites like discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzle-maker/. The best of these might be even more beneficial if they *target relevant knowledge, stimulate productive thinking, and provide practice in useful multi-level vocabulary and spelling without wasting time or effort*. Samples to (copy and) try and/or to use as models for puzzles with targeted content appear on pages 136-140. Reference lists with examples illustrating the rules are on pages 141 to 142.) (Templates and *how-to* instructions are in *Activity Ideas V: phonicspelling Puzzles* on pages 000 to 000.)

3. *Play the spelling game of "Ghost."* In an oral-spelling amusement that utilizes knowledge of *word parts* and *spelling by the rules*, players take turns saying *one letter* in sequence *without* coming to the end of a word. Someone who completes a word or cannot add a letter that keeps the process going loses the round and is considered "one-third (1/3) of a ghost." The competitor who defaults twice more in this way, becoming "2/3" and finally "3/3 of a ghost," *disappears* from the game.

If the game is played in *written* form, participants add one letter at a time to sequences they are printing on cards circulating around the group.



In the above *Game of Ghost*, if the first player says *-e*, s/he loses the round with the word *compete*. But if s/he says *"-i,"* (as in *competition* or *competitor*, the oral spelling process continues.

Slow Down or Speed Up? Multi-Level Pointers



Here are more advanced principles to consider when learning to *spell by the rules*:

- [1] When /i^y/ precedes a vowel suffix, it is spelled *-i-* as in *medium, ingredient*. As a suffix, it is spelled *-(e)y*, as in *copy, money*.
- [2] When *-y* makes the /i^y a^y/ sounds after a consonant, it changes to *-i-* before suffixes other than *-ing*, as in *carry* → *carries / carried / carrier* (but: *carrying*); *deny* → *denies / denied / denier* (but: *denying*);
- [3] When the /f/ sound comes before a vowel suffix, it is spelled *-ci-*, *-si-*, *-ti-*, as in *special, tension, ratio*; *-si-* may spell /z/, as in *fusion*).
- [4] The *-ist* suffix ends words for *people* (*chemist*); *-est* ends *superlatives* (*finest, longest*). The *-cian* suffix is for *people* (*musician, politician*); *-tion*, for roots ending in /t/ (*cite* → *citation*); *-sion*, for roots ending in /s d/ (*tense* → *tension*; *divide* → *division*). The *-mit* verb ending becomes *-ssion* in nouns (*permit* → *permission*).

[4] Between vowels, the /z/ sound is often spelled *-s-*, as in *present, result, noisy*; /s/ is usually spelled *-ss-* or *-c-*, as in *bossy, gossip, juice, dancing, bicycle*.

- [5] The *-le* suffix follows *two* consonants after *simple* vowels (*handle, little, puzzle*) but only *one* after *complex* sounds (*able, people, aisle*). Much less commonly, *-el* can end nouns (*label, jewel, hotel*).

Many websites—like www.dyslexia.org/spelling_rules.shtml—summarize spelling rules like the above.

Instructions for *Spelling by the Rules*

Here are *Spelling Test* questions of various kinds to assess understanding and use of valuable phonics/spelling patterns and principles. Each question type targets a different set of spelling rules, shown to the left. Follow Instructions for the items; check your answers.



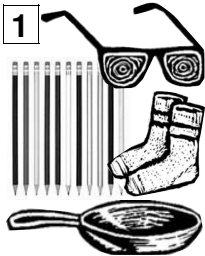
Can you explain how regular spelling patterns/principles lead to your correct responses?



Which correct spellings are examples of exceptions to spelling rules? In what ways?

Circle the correct spelling for each word. (**) = *less common or unusual spellings*. (You may want to *list* the words for later review.) Then read the sentences aloud, telling the spelling of the items you chose. *Can you explain them—and the exceptions?*

RULES ABOUT VOWEL SPELLINGS



1 May I please ****[hav/**have) some nice [glasez/glasses], [ten/tean] [pinsles/pencils], one [thick/thyk], ****[heavy/eviy]** [skillet/scilett], and a pair of [perfectly/purficley] [waurme/warm] ***[wull/wool]** [socks/saks]?

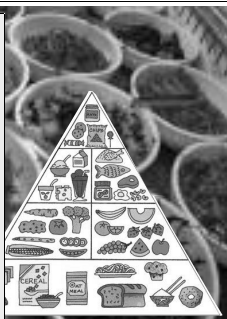


2 ****[**What)Wutt] ****[cullurr/color]** is ****[shooger/sugar]**? How about [salt/sauwit], [canied/canned] [broth/bruathe], and [dirt/duort]?

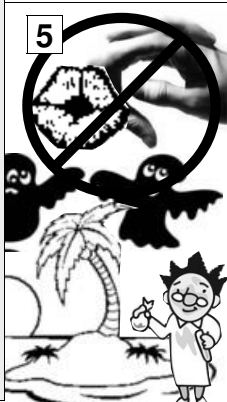


Our ***[maier/mayor]** is [estreml/estremely] [glumee/gloomy] about [crowded/croweddid] conditions on [esterets/streets], in the [schulls/schools], or at [stores/storrs] in [taun/town]. ****[Do/Doo]** ****[wiea/we]** [agree/agrea] with him?

RULES ABOUT CONSONANT SPELLINGS



Some ***[chines/kinds]** of [food/phut] are [meats/meedz], [fitch/fish], [dallee/dairy] products like [milk/mileck] and ***[cheese/tsheeze]**, [plotuss/produce]—***[which/witsh]** means ****[fruits/fluttres]** and [vveggees/vegies], ***[sirrialz/cereals]** and ***[bledes/breads]**, and many ***[udderr/other]** things.



5 What can ***[scientists/sighentiss]** do on a ***[dizzerded/deserted]** ****[ailland/island]**? They don't ****[wixxel/whistle]**, [towidel/twiddle] their ***[tums/thumbs]**, ***[tawk/talk]** or ****[rissin/listen]** to ****[ghosts/goass]**. Instead, they get ****[noulege/knowledge]** by asking ***[questions/kwestchuns]** and finding out the ****[wride/right]** instead of the ****[rawng/wrong]** ****[answers/andsirs]**.

Put ✓ [in the brackets] after the *correctly* spelled underlined words. Put ⊙ after the *incorrect* [wrong] spellings. [* **] = *less common or exceptional spellings*. You may want to ~~cross out~~ the mistakes. Print the correct letters above. Then read the sentences aloud, telling the spelling of the items you chose. ***Can you explain them—and the exceptions?*

RULES ABOUT -iē- vs. -ei-



6 Do you have friends** [✓] or neighbors** [✓] that are ^{reigning}~~rieigning~~** [⊙] monarchs, foriegn** [] shieks** [], conscientious** [] cheifes [] of poliece** [], or weis [] sceintists** on heigh** []-protein** [] meicrobiotic [] dieits* []? What about nieces [] that are heirs [], preists [] of conscience** [] that don't decieve [], feindish [] theives [] that pull hiests** [], or weirdly** [] concietid [] shreiekeng [] aliens [] that sieze** [] gient [] flies []? And do you believe [] you've copeed [] thees [] words correctly?

RULES ABOUT THE VOWEL -Y



7 Does a tipycal* [] couple in their twentyes [] really [] have to get marreed [] to be happay []? Whay [] do many* [] peuple** [] seek joiful [] alliances [] or simply [] companionship [] without rieing** [] themselves down with marryage [] and a loveyli [] family [] right away []? Mabee [] it's because they** [] are veriy [] shy [] or warey [] of hasty [] decisions made in a hurri []-especially [] if they don't make enough mony [] to paie [] for the necessitys [] of daily [] living.

RULES ABOUT FINAL SILENT -ē



8 What's a ^{definition}~~definiton~~ [⊙] of agism** []? The terme [] is somtims** [] used [] to describ [] prejudiceal [] attituds [] or negateivly [] discriminatory [] behavior [] against folkes [] of widly [] diverse [] ageas []. For instanc [], an elderly [] popularteion [] might be stereotypied [] as haveing [] decreasid [] or decreaseing [] mental capaceity [] or even senility []. Of course [], oldsteres [] over ninty may perceive [] teenageers [] as extremly [] inexperiecd [], boreing [], senseless [], crazy [], ridiculous, . . .