

The letter "q" is almost always followed by "u," as in words like queen, earthquake and equity. When used in this way, the "u" is not considered to be a vowel.

R1

U Always Follows Q

A number of words are pronounced with an /s/ sound after the letter "x," which often leads to spelling mistakes.

The rule is that the letter "s" never follows "x" in a word. Instead, the letter "c" is used to achieve the /s/ sound in the word, as is the case with words like excise and excite.

R2

S Never Follows X

Every syllable of every word includes at least one vowel. Most one-syllable words with a short vowel sound need only one vowel. When you're spelling a word, say it out loud to identify the number of syllables. Then, look at what you've written to verify that each syllable has at least one vowel.

R3

**Every Syllable
Includes a Vowel**

Words that include an "i" and "e" side-by-side, the "i" comes first. Words include niece, belief, cashier and achieve. Unless the vowel pair follows the letter "c" (such as with conceit, ceiling), or if the vowel pair makes a long /a/ sound, such as in neighbor or weigh. However, there are quite a few special-case exceptions, like leisure, height and heist.

R4

**I Before E Except
After C**

For words that end with a /k/ sound, you'll need to know when to use "ck" vs. just a "k" on its own. The rule is to use "ck" immediately after a short vowel, such as with duck, sick, or tick. Otherwise, the word should end with a "k," as with silk, balk, beak, or peak

R5

**Use -ck After a Short
Vowel**

If the letters "f" or "l" fall at the end of a one-syllable word, they should usually be doubled. Examples include words like stiff and stall. The only exception is words that end with a consonant blend, such as whirl or wharf. Do not double "f" or "l" with such terms.

R6

**End 1-Syllable Word
With Double F/ L**

An apostrophe should be placed in the exact spot where there is a missing letter (or multiple missing letters). For example, the apostrophe in the word "can't" signifies the missing letters "n" and "o" from the word cannot.

R7

**' Go Where Letters
Are Removed**

There are no commonly used words that end with the letter "v" or "j." If you're spelling a word that ends with a /v/ sound, you can be sure that there's a silent "e" on the end, as with hive or jive.

Words that end with a /j/ sound are typically spelled with -dge and the end, such as judge or edge.

R8

**Do Not End a Word
With V or J**

