



How to Spell spelling patterns & pronunciation *masterclass*

[Howtospell](#)

[home](#) [Patterns](#) [Exercises](#) [Spelling Tests](#) [Videos](#) [Brit v Amer](#) [Your Space](#) [Glossary](#) [log out](#)

Module 1

Spelling Rules

by Joanne Rudling
from
www.howtospell.co.uk

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Vocabulary of Spelling	3
Silent 'e' Magic 'e'	12
Drop the 'e' rule	17
The 1:1:1 doubling up rule	26
Adding -es to words	34
Words ending in O	41
-y to -ies or -s Rule	47
-f /-fe to -ves or -s Rule	54
Words ending in -ful	59
Adding -ly to words	61
Drop the 'L' when adding all or till	74
-ise or -ize	78
Words ending in -le Rule	80
Words ending in -k, -ke, -ck, -ic	91
Changing the "y" to "i" when adding suffix endings	75
"ie" or "ei" Rule	101
Silent Letter Rules	117

Vocabulary of Spelling

The key words and terms you should know to help you learn spelling rules.

Vowels are **a, e, i, o, u**

y is sometimes a vowel depending on its position in a word, especially in spelling rules

- **short vowel sounds:** - pan, pen, pin, pun, ant, engine, igloo, octopus, upset, apple, bread

(It doesn't matter how many vowels are together it's about the sound.)

- **long vowel sounds:** bean, cheese, table, equal, ice, old, use, seize, eith height ... (They say their alphabet name and usually the first vowel is an indication of the sound. But there are exceptions - eight, height)

Consonants: are the rest of the alphabet letters - b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z

The letter 'y' can be a consonant as in the word 'yes' or a vowel at the end of happy.

We can have hard and soft sounds with "c" and "g"

"c" can be a hard "k" - can, come, basic

or a soft "s" - cinema, centre/center, advice

The letter "g" can be a hard "g" get, got, go
or a soft "j" - generous, giant, manage

(We'll see how spelling rules change to keep these soft "c" and "g" sounds, especially in the drop the 'e' rule.)

Root words, prefixes and suffixes - knowing these can help your spelling and reading by understanding how words are built, especially long words.

We also need to know these terms because they come up again and again in some of the rules.

Root word, or sometimes called a base word or stem, is a word on its own:

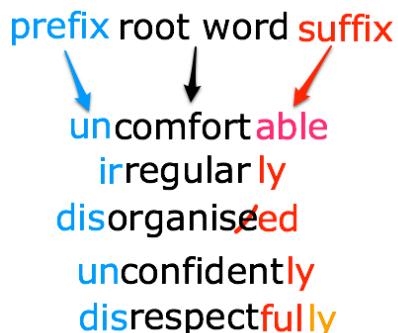
understand
comfort
honest
legal
happy

We can add a prefix and suffix to these words to make another word.

Can you see the prefixes and suffixes? What are they?

uncomfortable
irregularly
disorganised /disorganized
unconfidently
disrespectfully

Answers



Prefixes are little words or a letter that go before a word or root word to change it to a related meaning or the opposite meaning.

Some prefixes are: un, il, im, in, ir, a, pre, ex, anti, dis...

happy - unhappy, regular- irregular, import-export, honest - dishonest, misunderstood, illegal, irresponsible, atypical, pre-booked...

Suffixes or common endings are little words that are added to the end of a word to change the way that a word is used.

In spelling rules we need to know about vowel suffix endings and consonant suffix endings:

Some **vowel suffixes** are: -ing, -ed, -er, -est, -ise/-ize, -or, ary/ery, -ur, -ent/-ence, ant/ance, -ous, -age, ive, -al...

Some **consonant suffixes** are: -s, ly, -ment, ful, -cian, -tion,-sion, -less, -ful, -ward...

Suffixes are extremely useful little words:

- we can change the grammar - walk - walks, walked, walking, smaller, smaller, smallest, fall - fallen, smiling, learned...
- we can make verbs - simple - to simplify, sharp - to sharpen, real - to realise/realize
- to make job descriptions - teach - teacher, electric - electrician, assist - assistant, doctor, dentist...
- we can make adjectives - beauty - beautiful, fame - famous, self - selfish, wonderful, marvellous/marvelous...

What are verbs, adjectives, nouns, adverbs?

Nouns are words, which name things or somebody: table, chair, London, Joanne, pen, computer, dog, cat, man, woman...

A memory trick to remember what a noun is to use
the letter **n** in **noun** = **name**

- A **proper noun** is the actual name of the person, place, thing and begins with a capital - Toronto, London, Heathrow Airport, Harry Potter, Lady Gaga, Pride and Prejudice, Sunday Times, Monday, January...
- a **singular noun** = one of anything - a party, one computer, an egg, the man, the woman...
- **plural nouns** = more than one - parties, 2 computers, some girls, men, women... (more in the plural rules video)

Adjectives describe nouns - **blue** bag, **happy** baby, **boring** life, **healthy** person, this is **easy**

Also there are adjectives with -ing and -ed suffix endings :
She's excited, This is interesting, I hope this is not boring.

Verbs - a word showing action or being - work, to work, I watched, are they are, to be, listen, read, you're learning and reading this...

Adverbs - a word describing a verb - speak slowly, do this quickly, listen carefully, work hard on your spelling, you look well, don't drive fast (well, hard and fast = irregular adverbs)

Syllables / syllable breakdown is good for spelling long words and you need to know them for some spelling rules.

Breaking a word down into syllables means:

- you break a word down into little spoken chunks and
- each chunk is called a syllable
- each chunk usually has a vowel or vowel sound in it.

1 syllable - trick

2 syllables paper - pa/per

3 syllables computer - com/pu/ter

4 syllables application - ap/pli/ca/ tion

5 syllables examination - ex/am/in/a/tion

Syllable stress

Sometimes the stress can be on the:

- first syllable - 'careful
- middle syllable - vo'cabulary
- end syllable- for'get / be'gin (this is important in the 1:1:1 doubling up rule)

Letter patterns or letter strings are a sequence of letters commonly found in words - ight, -ui- ible, ough, ate, -oi-...

Good spellers know these patterns and this helps them see if their spelling looks right.

When you're trying to spell you might forget the spelling rule but you might be able to remember the pattern instead - that's great.

Handwriting and punctuation language

Always write in **lower case** with capitals for proper nouns. It's easier to write in and you can see the shape of the word:

*Joanne, family, computer, lesson, Britain,
Canada, Monday, Wednesday, January,
happy, interesting, handwriting...*

Writing or typing a lot improves your muscle memory and soon you'll be almost doing automatic writing and feel the spelling write itself.

Don't forget your capital letters for proper nouns and for I and I'm

Block capitals are ALL CAPITALS. Never write in block capitals unless it's on a form

Compound words are two words together that make one word:

time + table = timetable, hair + dresser = hairdresser, toothbrush,
football, armchair, scriptwriter, breakdown, handbag, newspaper...

Recognizing compound words is useful, particularly when there is a silent letter involved: cupboard

Which brings us to **hyphens**. Sometimes we put a hyphen between compound words and for more than two words: brother-in-law, ex-husband, three-year-old...

e-book or ebook, e-mail or email, multi-storey or multistorey,
anticlockwise or anti-clockwise, lower case or lower-case?

All these spellings are correct. Some dictionaries have just the hyphen spelling, some say both are OK.

Hyphens - hyphen usage is in a confusing state!

Sometimes there can be three ways to write a word

- bookshop, book-shop, book shop
- skiboots, ski-boots, ski boots
- headmaster, head-master, head master

Hyphens come and go in words. When it's a new word it usually starts with a hyphen so as not to confuse people then soon the hyphen is dropped (e-mail now email) - this has been going on for centuries!

British English uses hyphens more than American English

You must use an hyphen:

- when the prefix comes before a capital letter, anti-British, pro-European, because a capital letter can't appear inside a word ~~proEuropean~~.
- for single letter prefixes - X-ray, T-bone, e-commerce, e-book, e-mail but this changes with time! Now we have email, ebook.
- if there are two vowels together and causes confusion: re-align, de-ice, but in British English we have co-operate, co-operation, co-ordinate but these words have no hyphen in American cooperate, cooperation, coordinate
- if a word looks the same as another - re-cover (cover something again) not recover from a illness.

Hyphens are becoming less common in modern English.

Apostrophes - a punctuation mark which shows:

1. missing letters in contractions/short forms - don't (do not), I'm I'll, they're, she's, it's, we're, it'll, we've, I've, you've...
2. ownership, possession
 - singular owner possession - Emma's car, Jon's book, Joanne's website, the country's problems, the child's ball, the woman's coat
 - plural owner possession - the students' tutor, the nurses' room, the children's ball, the women's room.

Homophones are words that have the same sound but different spelling and different meaning: there/their/they're, to/too/two, bare/bear, be/bee, its/it's, I'll/aisle/isle, stationary/stationery...

Exercise

Can you remember what the following are?

1. red, happy, bored, fat, tall are all _____
2. computers, phones, Manchester are all _____
3. ir, dis, im, in, mis, re are all _____
4. breakfast, laptop, waterfall are all _____
5. -ing, -ed, -s, -able, -ly, -tion are all _____
7. b,c,d,f,g,h,j,k,l,m,n,p,q,r,s are _____
8. have, write, read, went, watched are all _____
9. parties, children, women, pens are all _____
10. L G Q M T A B D E H are all _____
11. a b d i l p q h are all in _____
12. a, e, i, o, u are all _____
13. a man, a laptop, one lesson are all _____
14. U-turn, mother-in-law, spine-chilling, (-) this punctuation mark is the _____

Don't beat yourself up if you've already forgotten the terms.

Learning anything takes a little effort by going over it again and again to put it in the long term memory.

So watch the video again, and read this info sheet.

The language of spelling can't be learnt in one session so don't get disheartened. You will see these terms again in the spelling rules

Exercise Answers

1. red, happy, bored, fat, tall are all adjectives
2. computers, phones, Manchester are all nouns
3. ir, dis, im, in, mis, re are all prefixes
4. breakfast, laptop, waterfall are all compound words
5. -ing, -ed, -s, -able, -ly, -tion are all suffixes/word endings
7. b,c,d,f,g,h,j,k,l,m,n,p,q,r,s are consonants
8. have, write, read, went, watched are all verbs
9. parties, children, women, pens are all plural nouns
10. L G Q M T A B D E H are all capitals / block capitals
11. a b d i l p q h are all in lower case or lower-case
12. a, e, i, o, u are all vowels
13. the man, a laptop, one lesson are all singular nouns
14. U-turn, mother-in-law, spine-chilling, (-) this punctuation mark is the hyphen



Silent 'e' Magic 'e'

The silent 'e' magic 'e' is all about the 'e' at the end of words and how it makes a huge difference to the spelling, pronunciation and meaning of them: name, site, wife, gate, time, nose, volume...

You can call this 'e' the magic 'e', the bossy 'e', or the final silent 'e'.

But I like the magic 'e' silent 'e' - it's magic because it changes the meaning and sound, and it's silent! (We'll see this silent 'e' again in drop the 'e' rule)

The magic 'e' silent 'e' is called a marker. That means it doesn't represent a sound but tells us the sounds of the other letters in the word.

It's a marker of a long vowel sound. It makes the nearest vowel to it say its name - say it's alphabet name - **a e i o u**) but we have exceptions which we'll see later

Look at **these** words: age, alone, date, wine, life, shine, write, volume, those, twice, marmalade... they all have a long vowel sound

*notice the pattern:

vowel + consonant + silent e = long vowel sound

age, alone, date, wine, life, shine, write, volume, those, twice, marmalade...

Exceptions: There are a few exceptions of words that have an 'e' at the end of the word and it's pronounced: be, me, see

Let's look at how one simple 'e' at the end of a word can change the pronunciation and meaning of short vowel sound words to long vowel sounds:

I want you to read the following words out loud:

tap / tape
them / theme
slim / slime
not / note
us / use
breath / breathe
rag / rage

Did you notice the first column of words are short vowel sounds and the second column with the 'e' have a long vowel sound?

Short vowel sound / long vowel sound
tap / **tape**
them / **theme**
slim / **slime**
not / **note**
us / **use**
breath / **breathe**
rag / **rage**

So adding the magic 'e' silent 'e' makes the vowel say its alphabet name but there are exceptions: bar/bare, car/care, far/fare, (they're both long sounds but the 'e' words don't say their name), moral/morale (short sounds) , on/one (doesn't say its name)

For more short to long vowel sound words check the list on the next page

More short to long vowel words.

at / ate	fin / fine	hop / hope	us / use/ used
mat / mate	win / wine	cop / cope	cut / cute
hat / hate	pin / pine / pineapple	slop / slope	tub / tube
fat / fate	din / dine	pop / pope	cub / cube
rat / rate	sit / site	cod / code	plum / plume
cap / cape	quit / quite	rod / rode	nud / nude
scrap / scrape	bit / bite	bod / bode	hug / huge
tap/tape	kit / kite	not / note	
gap /gape	spit / spite	dot / dote	
mad / made	writ / write	rob / robe	
fad / fade	pip / pipe	ton / tone	
pan/ pane	rip / ripe		
can / cane	strip / stripe		
van / vane	rid/ ride		
man / mane	hid / hide		
plan / plane	Sid / side		
dam / dame	slim / slime		
pal / pale	Tim / time		
rag / rage			
wag / wag			
stag / stage			

pet / Pete / Peter
them / theme
her / here

breath / breathe, cloth / clothe, bath / bathe,
+ loathe, lathe, writhe, seethe, soothe,

The magic 'e' silent 'e' also makes the 'g' soft as in:
rag / rage, hug / huge, wag /wage, stag/stage

It also makes the final "th" more voiced and a long vowel sound:
breath / breathe, cloth/ clothe, bath/ bathe,
and also loathe, lathe, writhe, seethe, soothe,

Other uses of the magic 'e' silent 'e'

1. It makes the hard c into a soft c "s" sound in (but it sometimes doesn't make the vowel long)
: these words are long: vice, advice, ace, place, mice, nice, piece/peace, but choice (says it's -oi- pattern "oy"),
: fence, glance, dance - notice these don't have the vowel + consonant + silent 'e' pattern
2. The silent 'e' distinguishes homophones - be/bee, bell/belle, by/bye, for/fore, laps/lapse
3. It's also there to show the final 's' isn't a plural: house, mouse, nurse, purse...

Notice the difference between the **-se** "s" and **-s** "zuh" sound in:
tense / tens dense / dens fence/ fens curse/curs
The 'e' makes a difference to the s sound.

4. We have some longer words - the magic 'e' makes the final syllable a longer vowel sound - the vowel nearest the magic e

vowel + consonant + silent 'e'

mistake

fascinate

Chinese

realise/realize

intrude

divide

phone

quote

outside

electrode

astute

Exceptions and strange spellings with the silent 'e' that aren't magic!

English words don't end in v and u* because centuries ago they didn't want to double these letters at the end of words because they'd look like w so 'e' was added to words like: - have, give, due, clue, love

*(exceptions are menu - a foreign word & flu and rev - abbreviations)

-ue words have a long vowel sound: due, clue, glue, clue

but love/ glove/ above/ have /come/ some/ none / oven/ cover/ glove/ to live have short vowel sounds.

but there is a long sound in: gave, save, clove, life, live, live wire, alive.

All this confusion comes from the 1580s when Richard Mulcaster tried to standardised spelling by adding 'e' to words to indicate a long vowel sound but then neglected to reform love, come, have, etc.

Knowing the reasons why English spelling is the way it is, is a great strategy to improve and learn spelling.

Conclusion

Just one little silent 'e' changes the sound and meaning of a word! That's why it's so important to be careful about adding 'e' on the end of words. And also not to forget the 'e'.

It's generally a reliable rule: a silent 'e' at the end of a word following a single vowel and a consonant usually makes the preceding vowel long.

vowel + consonant + silent 'e' = long sound

but there are plenty of exceptions.

This rule can help you pronounce or spell words. All these words have vowels that say their name: swede, rote, mule, flute, cline, hose, kale, eve, zero, music

**If you're not sure about a pronunciation of a word you can go to these excellent online dictionaries, and hear the pronunciation in British or American

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com>

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/>



Drop the 'e' rule

The drop the 'e' rule is a great little rule to know but be warned like all English spelling rules there are exceptions, which we'll look at too.

Do you know which is correct and why?

writeing or writing?

excitemet or excitement?

nerveous or nervous?

lovely or lovly?

The correct spellings are:

writing

excitement

nervous

lovely

write + ing (drop the 'e' with -ing) = writing

excite + ment = excitement

nerve + ous (drop the 'e') = nervous

love + ly = lovely

We usually drop the 'e' when adding a vowel suffix ending:

-ing, -ous, -ed, -er, -est, -ise/-ize, -or, ary/ery, -ish, -ur, -ent/-ence,
ant/ance, -age, ive, -al... (there are a few exceptions)

but we keep the 'e' with consonant suffixes - ly, -ment, -s, -ful, -ness:
lovely, excitement, hopeful, makes (but there are a few exceptions)

Y sometimes is used as a vowel. When we add y to the end of words it becomes a vowel suffix and we drop the 'e' with:

ease + y = easy,

laze + y = lazy,

stone + y = stony,

shake + y = shaky

BUT keep the 'e' in matey

Rules and patterns of drop the 'e'

drop the 'e' with -ing

make - making
have - having
write - writing
love - loving
come - coming
use - using
move - moving
blame - blaming
give - giving
size-sizing
notice- noticing
manage- managing
notice - noticing
persuade - persuading
receive - receiving

achieve - achieving
amuse - amusing
believe - believing
become - becoming
create - creating
cure - curing
debate - debating
describe - describing
evade - evading
excuse - excusing
forgive - forgiving
frame - framing
grieve - grieving
improve - improving
shake - shaking
shine - shining
solve - solving

Exceptions:

singe +ing = singeing (means scorching not singing)
whinge - whingeing - stressing the soft g (not winging)
binge - bingeing (not binging)
tinge - tingeing (not tinging)
dye - dyeing (not dying)

also: both spellings are correct in:

queue - queueing or queuing,
cue - cueing or cuing

BUT don't drop the 'e' with :

be - being, eyeing
see - seeing, agree - agreeing, decree - decreeing,
foresee - foreseeing, guarantee - guaranteeing, flee - fleeing,
referee - refereeing

also: hoe+ ing = hoeing, shoe +ing = shoeing, toe +ing toeing

drop the 'e' with -ible (to avoid having an -ei- pattern)

collapse- collapsible (~~collapseible~~)

sense- sensible

response - responsible

reverse - reversible

reduce - reducible

drop the 'e' with -ed (to avoid having 2 or 3 e's)

age- aged (~~ageed~~)

excited - excited

balance - balanced

love - loved

use - used

guarantee - guaranteed (we can't have 3 e's guaranteed x)

agree - agreed

drop the 'e' with -acy (to avoid an -ea- pattern)

conspire - conspiracy (~~conspireacy~~)

supreme - supremacy

words ending in -ate loses the 'te' and converts to -cy

accurate - accuracy

pirate - piracy

delicate - delicacy

Dropping the 'e' or keeping the 'e' with the -able ending

drop the 'e' with -able

adore - adorable
advise - advisable
believe - believable
conceive - conceivable
drive - drivable
desire - desirable
excite= excitable
excuse - excusable
forgive - forgivable...

But be careful, there are some differences between British and American spelling:

British English we keep the 'e' in blameable but in American English we drop the 'e' with blamable

British English = sizeable but drop the 'e' in American English = sizable
British = hireable drop the 'e' in American English = hirable

Some words have two possible forms before -able:

like - likeable/likable
move - moveable/movable
love - loveable/lovable
name - nameable or namable
live - liveable/livable
sale - saleable / salable

but we drop the 'e' with -ing with all these liking, naming, loving, blaming, giving, naming, sizing

always check in a good dictionary

With words ending in '-ge' and '-ce' we keep the 'e' before 'able' and 'ous' to keep the soft 'g' and 'c' sounds:

manage - manageable,
change- changeable,
marriage - marriageable
knowledge - knowledgeable
advantage - advantageous,
outrage - outrageous,
notice - noticeable,
replace - replaceable
service - serviceable
trace - traceable
peace- peaceable

Another exception to the rule is the final -e is **not** dropped from words ending in: -ee, -oe, -ye. (to avoid the -ei-, -oi- patterns)

see - seeing, (~~seing~~)
agree - agreeing, agreeable,
canoe - canoeist, canoeing, (~~canoeing~~)
dye - dyeing, (keep the 'e' or it'll be dying = dead)
flee - fleeing
foresee- foreseer, foreseeing, foreseeable,

Words ending in -ue we drop the 'e' with -ly

due - duly true - truly, subtle - subtly

truly is one of the most misspelled words according to the Oxford Dictionary

We drop the 'e' in argument - argue + ment = **argument (another common misspelt word)**

acknowledgement and acknowledgment - both spellings are correct

judgement usually keeps the 'e'
but lawyers spell it without the 'e' judgment

****Good spellers usually see what looks right - so keep practicing and using the words, and notice the rule and spelling patterns in ads, in magazines, online etc****

Exercises

Exercise 1

Complete the words (drop the 'e' or keep the 'e')

1. care + ing = _____
2. use + ful = _____
3. close + ed = _____
4. shade + y = _____
5. shake + ing = _____
6. manage + able = _____
7. achieve + able = _____
8. argue + ment = _____
9. safe + ty = _____
10. excite + ment = _____
11. amuse + ing = _____
12. true + ly = _____

answers on the next page

Exercise 1 Answers

Complete the words

1. care + ing = caring (drop the 'e')
2. use + ful = useful (keep the 'e')
3. close + ed = closed
4. shade + y = shady
5. shake + ing = shaking
6. manage + able = manageable
7. achieve + able = achievable
8. argue + ment = argument
9. safe + ty = safety
10. excite + ment = excitement
11. amuse + ing = amusing
12. true + ly = truly

Exercise 2

Which is correct?

1. a. argument b. arguement
2. a. using b. useing
3. a. writing b. writting
4. a. noticeable b. noticable
5. a. responseible b. responsible
6. a. haveing b. having
7. a. involvement b. involvment
8. a. agreed b. agreed
9. a. lovly b. lovely
10. a. peaceable b. peacable
11. a. excusable b. excuseable
12. a. guaranteed b. guaranteed

Exercise 2 Answers

Which is correct?

1. a. argument b. arguement
2. a. using b. useing
3. a. writing b. writting
4. a. noticeable b. noticeable
5. a. responsible b. responsiblē
6. a. haveing b. having
7. a. involvement b. involvement
8. a. agreed b. agreed
9. a. lovly b. lovely
10. a. peaceable b. peacable
11. a. excusable b. excuseable
12. a. guaranteed b. guaranteed



The 1:1:1 doubling up rule

put - putting, big - bigger, stop - stopped, begin - beginning swim - swimming, flat - flatten...

Do you know when and why we double up the end consonant?

Let's revise some spelling language we need for this rule:
Can you remember what vowels, consonants, suffixes, syllables are?

- **vowels**- a.e.i.o.u (y is sometimes classed as a vowel)
- **consonants** are the other letters in the alphabet - b, c,d,f,g,k...
- **suffixes** are little words added to the end of a word:
consonant suffixes are -s, -ment, -ful, -ly, -ness...
vowel suffixes are -ing, -ed, -ary, -er, -ant, -ance, -ent...
- **syllables**: breaking a word down into syllables means you break a word down into little spoken chunks and each chunk is called a syllable. Each chunk usually has a vowel or vowel sound in it and different bits can be stressed:
qua/li/fi/ca/tion be/gin, swim/ming
- **syllable stress** is also important to know but don't worry if syllables and stress is hard for you to figure out. Use your visual memory and words-within-words to help instead.
Stress on first syllable: 'CAREful
Second syllable stress: vo'CABulary
Last syllable stress, which is important for this rule in these words: be'GIN , for'GET, preFER, occUR

The 1:1:1 doubling up rule

put - putting, big-bigger, stop-stopped, fat- fatten, run - running,
thin - thinner, sit - sitting, get - getting, stop-stopping, hot-hotter,
swim - swimming, shop - shopper...

Do you know when we double up the last consonant?

Say these words to yourself: put/sit/run/swim/thin/get

Notice they all have **1** syllable.

Notice they all have **1** consonant at the end of the word.

Notice they all have **1** vowel next to the consonant: **vowel + consonant**

With the 1:1:1 rule we usually double the end consonant when we add the following vowel suffixes (-ing,-ed,-er, -est, -en, -ish, -ery, -y)

put - putting, big-bigger, stop-stopped, fat- fatten, run - running, thin -
thinner, sit - sitting, get - getting, stop-stopping, hot-hotter,
swim - swimming, quiz - quizzed, quit - quitting...

The reason why we double up the consonant is to keep the short vowel sound.

Let's look at why knowing all about the magic 'e' silent 'e,' drop the 'e' rule and the doubling up rule is important.

Look at these pairs of words:

Read them out loud - when you read them you should be able to distinguish between the short vowel and the long vowel sound.
(Remember we double up to distinguish a short vowel)

hoping and hopping
hoped and hopped
rating and rassing
rated and rassed
taping and tapping
taped, tapped

hoping = hope + ing (drop the 'e') hoping (long sound)
hoping = hop + ing (double the p) = hopping short sound
rating = rate + ing (drop the 'e') = rating (long sound)
ratting = rat + ing (double t) = ratting
taping = tape + ing (drop the 'e') = taping (long sound)
tapping = tap + ing (double up) = tapping

Let's look at the confusion with write, writing, written

Lots of people mistakenly double up the t in writing (writting x) maybe because of written

write to writing = write + drop the 'e' with -ing = writing
write to written

The magic 'e' silent 'e' makes the i in write a long vowel sound
but when we double up the 't' it makes the i a short vowel sound.

So we double up the final consonant when words have one syllable ending in one vowel + one consonant and it makes the vowel sound short

But we never double up the final consonant when it's c, w, x, v, u, or y.

The 1:1:1 doubling up rule is also used for longer words.

Notice the second syllable is stressed and you can hear a clear short vowel sound

begin (beGIN) - beginner, beginning
forget (forGET) - forgetting, forgettable
regret (reGRET) - regrettable, regretting, regretted
forbid - forbidden
submit - submitting, submitted,
upset - upsetting
expel - expelled, expelling
equip - equipped. equipping
acquit - acquitted, acquitting, acquittal
admit - admitting, admittance, admitted

We also double up the r in:

prefer - preferred, preferring (BUT NOT preference, preferable, preferential)

refer - referred, referring, (BUT NOT reference, referendum, referential)

defer - deferred, deferring (BUT NOT deference, deferent, deferential)

occur - occurring, occurred, occurrence

When the stress doesn't fall on the final syllable don't double up:

budget - budgeting, budgeted

burmur murmuring, murmuring

cater catering catered

perform - performer performing (the second syllable is stressed but it's a long vowel sound with -or- before the m

Check in a dictionary or use a spell checker if you're not sure of the spelling. Use whatever helps you spell well.

Remember there are always exceptions to English spelling rules!!!

Focus can be spelled with either a single or a double s

focused / focussed,

focusing / focussing

Exercise

Which of these are right?

Use your visual memory for what looks right or the rule.

1. shoper or shopper?
2. foxes or foxxes?
3. beginner or beginer?
4. fatest or fattest?
5. sleeping or sleepping?
6. forgettable or forgetable?
7. quicker or quickker?
8. planning or planing?
9. budgetting or budgeting?
10. quizzed or quized?

Answers

1. shop - shoper or **shopper**?
2. fox - **foxes** or foxxes? (add -es to x rule)
3. begin - **beginner** or beginer?
4. fat - fatest or **fattest**?
5. sleeping - **sleeping** or sleeppling? (2 vowels before final consonant so 'p' not doubled)
6. forget - **forgettable** or forgetable ?
7. quick - **quicker** or quickker? (2 consonants at end so 'k' not doubled.)
8. plan - **planning** or planing?
9. budget - budgetting or **budgeting**? (stress is on the bud so 't' not doubled)
10. quiz - **quizzed** or quized?

How did you do?

Remember spelling only improves if you practise (American practice)

Exercise

Proofread this paragraph and write it out correctly. There are 12 mistakes

(thanks to Shireen Shuster and her Spelling Essentials book)

On the hotest day of last summer we went swiming in the river. My skiny friend steped on the slime-covered rocks which were hiden under the surface. He skided across the rocks, yeling for help. As he fell he bumpped his backside on some jaged rocks and ended up a lot weter than he intended. We thought it was quite funy and that made him even mader.

Exercise Answers

Proofread this paragraph and write it out correctly. There are 12 mistakes

(thanks to Shireen Shuster and her Spelling Essentials book)

On the hottest day of last summer we went swimming in the river. My skinny friend stepped on the slime-covered rocks which were hidden under the surface. He skidded across the rocks, yelling for help. As he fell he bumped his backside on some jagged rocks and ended up a lot wetter than he intended. We thought it was quite funny and that made him even madder.



Adding -es to words

Adding -es to the end of words makes plurals and third person verbs:

singular nouns:	plural nouns are:
box -	boxes
watch -	watches
business -	businesses

third person means **he/she/it + verb**

I watch - **she watches**

You teach - **he teaches**

They brush - **it brushes**

buses, addresses, washes, peaches, foxes, quizzes

Can you see the letter or letters next to the -es? What are they?

We add -es to words ending in s / ss / sh/ ch / x / z

bus - buses, address - addresses, wash - washes, peach- peaches,
fox - foxes, quiz - quizzes

Let's look at some more words that we add -es to:

bus - buses	cross - crosses
atlas - atlases	ass - asses
gas - gases	pass - passes
census - censuses	carcass - carcasses
	harness- harnesses
box - boxes	
fix - fixes	
flex - flexes	
fox - foxes	
mix - mixes	

bush - bushes
crash - crashes
crush - crushes
dash - dashes
rush - rushes
varnish - varnishes
flush - flushes
wish - wishes

bench - benches	crutch - crutches
bunch - bunches	despatch - despatches
church - churches	witch - witches
hunch - hunches	watch - watches
lunch - lunches	match - matches
porch - porches	

waltz - waltzes
quiz - quizzes (note this word has the doubling up rule too)
buzz - buzzes
whizz - whizzes
fizz - fizzes

Let's look at why -es was added to these words.

All these words end in a 'hissing' sound so we add -es to soften the sound to a /z/ sound. And we can't have 3 S's together - businesss x glassss x

Look at these misspelled words:

boxs watchs finishs busss quizzs - centuries ago they thought these looked and sounded strange so added the 'e' to aid pronunciation and reading.

Careful though - when a word ends in -se or -ze we just add -s

amaze - amazes

blaze - blazes

advise - advises

surprise - surprises

There's one exception to this rule. If the -ch ending is pronounced with a 'k' sound, you add -s rather than -es:

singular plural

stomach stomachs

epoch epochs

Exercise 1

Add -es or -s to these words

1. dish -
2. business -
3. amaze -
4. tablet -
5. class -
6. phone -
7. witness -
8. torch -
9. crush -
10. six -
11. lunch -
12. buzz -

Exercise 1

Add -es or -s to these words

1. dish - dishes
2. business - businesses
3. amaze - amazes
4. tablet - tablets
5. class - classes
6. phone - phones
7. witness - witnesses
8. torch - torches
9. crush - crushes
10. six - sixes
11. lunch - lunches
12. buzz - buzzes

Exercise 2

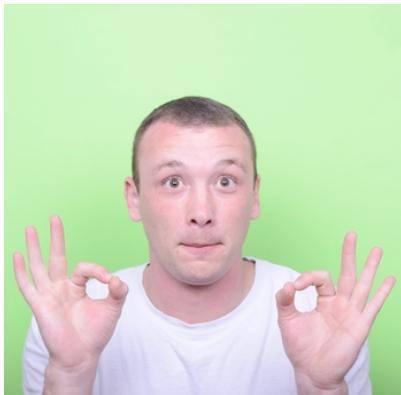
Which is correct?

1. varnishes or varnishs?
2. buses or busses?
3. buseneses or businesses?
4. foxes or foxs?
5. despatches or despatchs?
6. buseneses or businesses?
7. mackintoshs or mackintoshes?
8. richs or riches?
9. addresses or adreses?
10. pases or passes?

Exercise 2 Answers

Which is correct?

1. varnishes or ~~varnishs~~
2. buses or ~~busses~~
3. ~~businesses~~ or businesses
4. foxes or ~~foxs~~
5. despatches or ~~despatchs~~
6. ~~businesses~~ or businesses
7. mackintoshs or mackintoshes
8. richs or riches
9. addresses or ~~addreses~~
10. pases or passes



Words ending in O

radios, tomatoes, potatoes, pianos, photos, mangos & mangoes

1. We also add -es to some third person verbs and nouns ending in O

I go - she goes / he goes / it goes
I do - he does / she does/ it does

2. Add -es to these two commonly misspelled words:

one potato - lots of potatoes
one tomato - some tomatoes

3. Words ending with a vowel + O we always add -s

(If we add -es we'll have 3 vowels in a row - not good - radioes x, zoos x)

radio - radios
patio - patios
zoo - zoos
kangaroo - kangaroos
tattoo - tattoos
audio- audios
cameo- cameos
cuckoo- cuckoos
ratio- ratios
stereo- stereos
video- videos
studio - studios
scenario - scenarios

Some of these words are new words - videos, stereos, radios

4. When a word ends in a consonant + O we can add -es or -s or both - there's no rule about this.

We always add -s to the following words:

solo - solos

piano - pianos

hippo- hippos

egos - egos

tornado - tornados

5. We add -es to the following words:

tomato - tomatoes

potato - potatoes

hero - heroes

mosquito - mosquitoes

veto - vetoes

echo - echoes

domino - dominoes

torpedo - torpedoes

embargo - embargoes

6. We have some words ending in O that can be spelled with either -s or -es

cargo - cargos or cargoes

mango - mangos or mangoes

motto - mottos or mottoes

memento - mementos or mementoes

banjo - banjos or banjoes

volcano - volcanos or volcanoes

buffalo - buffalo or buffaloes

tornado - tornados or tornadoes

flamingo - flamingos or flamingoes

fresco - frescos or frescoes

ghetto - ghettos or ghettoes

halo - halos or haloes

tuxedo - tuxedos - tuxedoes

zero - zeros or zeroes (some dictionaries allow -es)

Exercise 1

Add -s or -es to these words.

1. radio - _____
2. tomato - _____
3. photo - _____
4. echo - _____
5. memo - _____
6. potato - _____
7. hero - _____
8. stereo - _____
9. soprano - _____
10. kilo - _____
11. zero - _____
12. typo - _____

Exercise 1 Answers

Add -s or -es to these words.

1. radio - radios
2. tomato - tomatoes
3. photo - photos
4. echo - echoes
5. memo - memos
6. potato - potatoes
7. hero - heroes
8. stereo - stereos
9. soprano - sopranos
10. kilo - kilos
11. zero - zeros (or zeroes)
12. typo - typos

Exercise 2

Which is correct?

1. videos or videoes?
2. kilos or kiloes?
3. tomatos or tomatoes?
4. photos or photoes?
5. memos or memoes?
6. heros or heroes?
7. echos or echoes?
8. radios or radioes?
9. potatos or potatoes?
10. mangos or mangoes?

Exercise 2 Answers

Which is correct?

1. **videos** or **videoes**
2. **kilos** or **kiloes**
3. **tomates** or **tomatoes**
4. **photos** or **photoes**
5. **memos** or **memoes**
6. **heros** or **heroes**
7. **echos** or **echoes**
8. **radios** or **radioes**
9. **petates** or **potatoes**
10. mangos or mangoes both are correct



-y to -ies or -s Rule

baby - babies, country - countries, party - parties

toy - toys, buy-buys, journey- journeys

These rules change:

1. singular nouns to plurals:

a country - 4 countries , a boy - some boys, a party - 2 parties

2. And change verbs to third person verbs (he/she/it + verb)

I buy - he buys, she buys. They cry - she cries, he cries, it cries

-y to -ies or -s spelling rule

Sometimes we add an -s to words:

boy - boys

tray - trays

journey - journeys

and sometimes we change the -y to -ies:

cry - cries

party - parties

country - countries

Why do we add -s to some words and change -y to -ies in others?

Can you see a pattern, a rule going on with the letter next to the -y in these singular words?

boy, tray, journey
baby, party, country

boy, tray, journey all have vowels next to the -y so we just add -s:
boys, trays, journeys

If we change the -y to -ies it'll look strange with 3 vowels in a row:
boy - boies x tray- traies x

There are patterns you can remember if you can't remember the rule:

- rays, trays, frays, prays, strays, sprays, X-rays...
- plays, delays, relays, underlays...
- pays, says, bays...
- ways, byways, subways...
- alleys, valleys, volleys, trolleys...
- keys, monkeys, donkeys, turkeys...
- journeys, chimneys, attorneys ...
- boys, toys, ploys, envoys...
- buys, guys...

(add to this list)

Notice these words have a consonant next to the end -y:

baby, party, country.

So we change the -y to -ies:

babies, parties, countries

But the exception is why - whys

We have some patterns around the endings:

- baby - babies, ruby - rubies...
- try - tries, country - countries, ministry - ministries...
- party - parties, city - cities, beauty - beauties, eighty - eighties, opportunity - opportunities, calamity-calamities, empty-empties...
- cry-cries, story-stories, battery-batteries,

- carry-carries, hurry-hurries, curry-curries, worry-worries, marry-marries, scurry-scurries, ferry-ferries, berry-berries, lorry-lorries, cherry-cherries, strawberry-strawberries, raspberry-raspberries, blueberry-blueberries,...
- bully-bullies, family- families, fly-flies, jelly-jellies
- reply-replies, supply-supplies, apply-applies...
- sky- skies
- body - bodies, remedy- remedies, lady-ladies, study-studies, candy-candies...

Just a quick note about proper nouns.

If we add -s to a surname/ name we don't change the -y or it'd change the name!

The Jollys have gone on holiday.

The Parrys are moving house.

Exercise 1

Change these to plurals - add -s or change -y to -ies:

1. factory - _____
2. trolley - _____
3. empty - _____
4. play - _____
5. story - _____
6. guy - _____
7. pastry - _____
8. turkey - _____
9. ninety - _____
10. responsibility - _____
11. subway - _____
12. family - _____

Exercise 1 Answers

1. factory - factories
2. trolley - trolleys
3. empty - empties
4. play - plays
5. story - stories
6. guy - guys
7. pastry - pastries
8. turkey - turkeys
9. ninety - nineties
10. responsibility - responsibilities
11. subway - subways
12. family - families

Exercise 2

Rewrite this and add the plurals

A note and shopping list

4 Danish (pastry) _____

2 vegetable (curry) _____

2 frozen (turkey) _____

Box of paper (hanky) _____

4 AA (battery) _____

Pack of disposable (nappy) _____

Some (strawberry) _____ and (raspberry) _____

and some (cherry) _____

2 (loaf) _____ of bread

Park next to where the _____ (trolley) are - that's where the bottle recycling bin is so you can throw away the _____ (empty). And could you get two new _____ (key) cut for the gate. And also could you find a DVD with children's _____ (story) on it please? Thanks.

Exercise 2 Answers

Rewrite this and add the plurals

A note and shopping list

4 Danish (pastry) pastries

2 vegetable (curry) curries

2 frozen (turkey) turkeys

Box of paper (hanky) hankies

4 AA (battery) batteries

Pack of disposable (nappy) nappies

Some (strawberry) strawberries and (raspberry) raspberries

and some (cherry) cherries

Park next to where the trolleys (trolley) are - that's where the bottle recycling bin is so you can throw away the empties (empty). And could you get two new keys (key) cut for the gate. And also could you find a DVD with children's stories (story) on it please? Thanks.

Thanks to Catherine Taylor - A Useful Spelling Handbook for Adults



-f / -fe to -ves or -s Rule

knife-knives, half-halves, roof-roofs, cliff-cliffs, chief-chiefs

Why do we change some of these words that end in -f / -fe to -ves and some we just add -s?

The **-f to -ves** or **-s** rule is an easy rule but with many exceptions that you need to learn.

1. Most words ending in **-f** or **-fe** change their plurals to **-ves**:

half - halves

knife - knives

leaf - leaves

loaf - loaves

life - lives

wife - wives

shelf - shelves

thief - thieves

self - selves

yourself - yourselves

himself, herself - themselves, ourselves

wolf-wolves

calf - calves

2. Some words can have both endings **-ves** or **-s**:

scarf - scarfs / scarves

dwarf - dwarfs / dwarves

wharf - wharfs / wharves

handkerchief - handkerchiefs / handkerchieves (looks a bit strange though!)

(or we usually say hanky - hankies)

hoof - hoofs / hooves

turf - turfs / turves (looks a bit strange though!)

3. Words ending in **-ff** you just add **-s** to make the plural.

(or else you get **-fves** - **clifves** and that looks strange)

cliff - cliffs

toff - toffs

scuff - scuffs

sniff - sniffs

bluff - bluffs

gaff - gaffs

scoff - scoffs

whiff - whiffs

sheriff - sheriffs

tariff - tariffs

bailiff - bailiffs

4. Some words ending in **-f** / **-fe** add **-s**:

gulf-gulfs

safe-safes

chef-chefs

chafe-chafes

5. Words which end in two vowels + **-f** usually we add **-s**

roof - roofs

belief- beliefs

brief- briefs

proof-proofs

spoof-spoofs

reef-reefs

chief-chiefs

Exceptions: leaf - leaves, loaf-loaves, thief - thieves

Look at the difference between the noun and the verb in these words

nouns			
singular - plural	related verb	third person (She/He/ It)	
belief - beliefs	to believe	She/He believes	
half - halves	to halve	She/He halves	
life - lives	to live	She/He lives	
safe - safes	to save	She/he saves	
thief - thieves	to thieve	She/He thieves	
shelf - shelves	to shelve	She/He shelves	

Exercise 3

Make these to plurals - change to -ves or just add -s

1. leaf - _____
2. scarf - _____
3. roof - _____
4. sniff - _____
5. shelf - _____
6. chief - _____
7. wife - _____
8. yourself - _____
9. scoff - _____
10. knife - _____
11. thief - _____
12. shelf - _____
13. belief - _____
14. cliff - _____

Exercise 3 Answers

1. leaf - leaves
2. scarf - scarves or scarfs
3. roof - roofs
4. sniff - sniffs
5. shelf - shelves
6. chief - chiefs
7. wife - wives
8. yourself - yourselves
9. scoff - scoffs
10. knife - knives
11. thief - thieves
12. shelf - shelves
13. belief - beliefs
14. cliff - cliffs



Words ending in -ful

The suffix -FUL is always spelt with one L:

grate + ful = grateful

faith + ful = faithful

hope + ful = hopeful

By adding -ful to words we can make adjectives like:

wonderful

useful

successful

dreadful

careful

helpful

frightful

delightful

forgetful

beautiful (change the y to i) beauty + ful = beautiful

bountiful (change the y to i) bounty + ful = bountiful

We can also add -ful to nouns like:

bucketful

mouthful

handful

cupful

spoonful

pocketful

bagful

headful

But we only use **full** when **full** when it's alone.

Full up

Full on

Full marks

A full sandwich

A full train etc

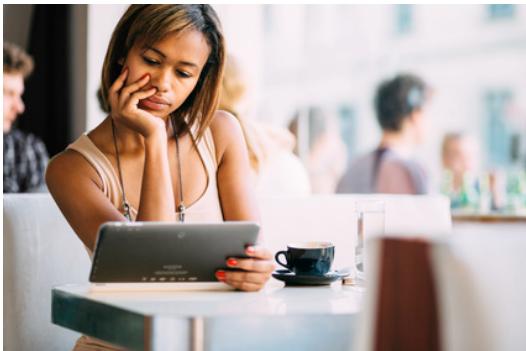
When we add another suffix -ly this is when the -ful has a double l

hopefully = hope + ful + ly

carefully = care + ful + ly

successfully

beautifully



Adding -ly to words

slowly, possibly, uneasily, lovely, gently, beautifully, basically

The rules are quite simple and reliable but some of the words are tricky to spell: definitely, probably, absolutely, likely, reasonably and hopefully

But when do we spell a word with -ly, or -lly, or -ily, or -ely? And what about the -ally ending?

Some key language we need for this rule:

- nouns are names of things - table, computer, man, woman
- adjectives describe nouns - a big table, a new computer.
- -ly adjectives: lovely, friendly, lonely, deadly, costly, ugly, silly, likely, unlikely, lively, daily, elderly, yearly, monthly, weekly, early. a lovely man, a friendly woman, a lonely dog, a deadly virus, a costly mistake, an ugly car...
- verbs are doing/being words - go, drive, have, be, read, listen, learn...
- adverbs describe the verb.

We usually add -ly to adjectives to make adverbs, and they're great words for describing how something, or how often, something is done.

Verb + adverb

slow + ly = slowly

Speak slowly, carefully, quickly, suddenly,

sudden + ly = suddenly

I stopped suddenly, abruptly, immediately...

careful + ly = carefully

Drive carefully, slowly, quickly...

The Rules

Rule 1

Add -ly to words ending in -ful = -fully (with double l)

careful + ly = carefully
wonderful + ly = wonderfully
beautiful + ly = beautifully
faithful + ly = faithfully
peaceful + ly = peacefully
successful + ly = successfully

But when we add -ly to the whole word full + ly we drop one "l" because we can't have triple "l"

full + ly = fully
dull + ly = dully

Rule 2

The same rule applies to other words ending in "l" it makes a double "l"

accidental + ly = accidentally
cool + ly = coolly
cruel + ly = cruelly
especial + ly = especially
final + ly = finally
financial + ly = financially
formal + ly = formally
general + ly = generally
lethal + ly = lethally
occasional + ly = occasionally
total + ly = totally
social + ly = socially
usual + ly = usually
dreadful + ly = dreadfully
playful + ly = playfully
hopeful + ly = hopefully
thoughtful + ly = thoughtfully
helpful + ly = helpfully
real + ly = really
eventual + ly = eventually

Rule 3

Add -ly to the whole word

slow + ly = slowly
endless + ly = endlessly
week + ly = weekly
stupid + ly = stupidly
immediate + ly = immediately
friend + ly = friendly
fortunate + ly = fortunately
unfortunate + ly = unfortunately
independent + ly = independently
quick + ly = quickly
quiet + ly = quietly
vivid + ly = vividly

Rule 4

Keep the 'e' in:

lone + ly = lonely
love + ly = lovely
live + ly = lively
complete + ly = completely
definite + ly = definitely
desperate + ly = desperately
extreme + ly = extremely
immediate + ly = immediately
separate + ly = separately
sincere + ly = sincerely
sole + ly solely

Also rarely, homely, approximately, entirely...

Exceptions: We drop the 'e' in:

true + ly = truly
due + ly = duly
whole + ly = wholly

Rule 5

We change the "e" to "y" in words ending in consonant + le
(-ble, -ple, -tle, -gle, -dle, -kle)

gentle - gently
simple - simply
terrible - terribly
wrinkle - wrinkly
miserable - miserably
possible - possibly
incredible - incredibly
fiddle - fiddly
subtle - subtly
idle - idly
single - singly
humble - humbly
probable - probably
responsible - responsibly
ample - amply
capable - capably
irresistible - irresistibly
remarkable - remarkably
supple - supply
horrible - horribly
unforgettable - unforgettably
uncontrollable - uncontrollably
unforgettable - unforgettably
favourable (British) - favourably
favorable (American) - favorably

Rule 6

When we add -ly to words ending in -y we change the "y" to "i" if more than one syllable:

easy - easily, uneasily
happy - happily, unhappily
busy - busily
crazy - crazily
lazy - lazily
necessary - necessarily, unnecessarily
shabby - shabbily
steady - steadily, unsteadily
greedy - greedily
fancy - fancily
flabby - flabbily
hazy - hazily
hungry - hungrily
merry - merrily
momentary - momentarily
ordinary - ordinarily
ready - readily

But we keep the "y" in one syllable words

shy + ly = shyly

sly + ly = sly

coy + ly = coyly

grey + ly + greylly

exceptions:

day + ly = daily (change the "y" to "i")

gay + ly = gaily

Rule 7

When we add -ly to words ending in -ic we add -ally

basic + ally = basically (the pronunciation helps)
critic - critically
drastic - drastically
analytic - analytically
comic - comically
frantic - frantically
historic - historically
horrific - horrifically
hysteric - hysterically
specific - specifically
automatic - automatically
dramatic - dramatically
economic - economically
problematic - problematically

BUT not public - publicly (not publically)

But if a word already ends in -cal with just add -ly

practical + ly = practically
chemical - chemically
political - politically

Notice how these words are built:

music - musical - musically
critic - critical - critically
medic - medical - medically
magic - magical - magically
electric - electrical - electrically
economic - economical - economically
mechanic - mechanical - mechanically
history - historic - historical - historically

CONCLUSION

We looked at 7 rules around adding -ly

1. Add -ly to words ending in -ful and it makes -fully

careful + ly = carefully

beautiful + ly = beautifully

2. Add -ly to other words ending in "l"

total + ly = totally

faithful + ly = faithfully

3. Add -ly to whole words

slow + ly = slowly

quick + ly = quickly

4. We usually keep the "e"

lone - lonely

love- lovely

Exceptions:

Drop the "e" in these words

true - truly

due - duly

whole - wholly

5. We change the end "e" to "y" in words ending in consonant + -le

(ble, tle, ple, gle, kle...)

simple - simply

possible - possibly

6. Words ending in -y we change the "y" to "i"

happy- happily

crazy- crazily

7. Words ending in -ic we add -ally

basic- basically

comic - comically

EXERCISE 1

Add -ly to these words

1. love
2. careful
3. basic
4. true
5. slow
6. happy
7. day
8. lazy

EXERCISE 1 Answers

Add -ly to these words

1. love - lovely
2. careful - carefully
3. basic - basically
4. true - truly
5. slow - slowly
6. happy - happily
7. day - daily
8. lazy - lazily

Exercise 2

Add -ly to these words

1. definite
2. probable
3. absolute
4. like
5. reasonable
6. hopeful

Exercise Answers

1. definitely (de + finite + ly so keep the 'e' definite + ly = definitely)
2. probably (probable change the "e" to "y" = probably)
3. absolutely (absolute + ly keep the "e" = absolutely)
4. likely (like + ly keep the "e")
5. reasonably (reasonable change the "e" to "y" = reasonably)
6. hopefully (hope + ful + ly just add everything to make hopefully)

Exercise 3

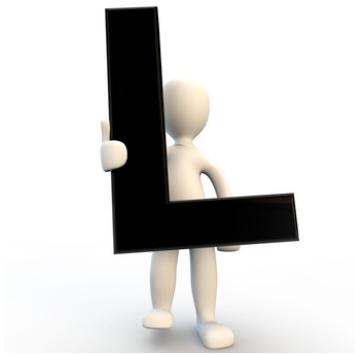
Add - ly to these words

1. thankful
2. perfect
3. graceful
4. unnecessary
5. hearty
6. argumentative
7. magic
8. high
9. true
10. day
11. angry
12. separate
13. practical
14. knowledgeable

Exercise 3 Answers

Add - ly to these words

1. thankfully
2. perfectly
3. gracefully
4. unnecessarily
5. heartily
6. argumentatively
7. magically
8. highly
9. truly (drop that "e")
10. daily
11. angrily
12. separately
13. practically
14. knowledgeably



Drop the 'L' when adding all or till

Dropping one L also occurs when we add **all** and **till** to words

un+ till = until

We can use "till" on its own.

until and till mean the same, but till is more informal

When we add "all" to the beginning of words we drop one L

all + so = also

all + most = almost

although

always

almighty

already

alright (all right as two words is used in formal English)

altogether (Note that **altogether** and **all together** do not mean the same thing. **Altogether** means 'in total', as in *there are six bedrooms altogether*, whereas **all together** means 'all in one place' or 'all at once', as in *it was good to have a group of friends all together; they came in all together.*)

Thanks to Oxford Dictionaries online.



Changing the "y" to "i" when adding suffix endings

If a word ends in a consonant + Y, the Y changes to i (unless the ending already begins with an i then not with -ing, -ish /ible suffixes)

beauty + ful → beauti+ful = beautiful, beautify, beautician

happy + ness → happiness, happily, happier, happiest,

angry + er → angrier, angriest, angrily

pretty: prettier, prettiest

ready: readily, readiness

but: dry: dried, driest, but drying, dryish (keep the "y" because we don't want two i's together)

defy: defies, defied, but defying

apply: applies, applied, application but applying

but: day - daily, gay - gaiety, gaily, lay - laid, pay - paid, say - said, slay - slain (the pronunciation helps)

Also: Change these words that end in "ie" to "y"

die + ing = dying (dieing X too many vowels in a row!)

tie + ing = tying

lie + ing = lying

Also: "y" or "i" is correct

dry + ly = either dryly or drily

Exercise

Are these words correct or incorrect? Why?

1. applyed

2. daily

3. compliance

4. dryest

5. paid

6. easyer

7. hungrily

8. relyable

9. necessarily

10. paiment

11. joyous

12. marriedy

Exercise

Which is correct?

1. applied X applied √
2. daily √
3. compliance √
4. dryest X driest √
5. paid √
6. easier X easier V
7. hungrily √
8. relyable X reliable V
9. necessarily √
10. paiment X payment √
11. joyous √
12. married X married√



-ise or -ize

realise /realize
apologise /apologize
organise/ organize
recognise/recognize
finalise / finalize

Choosing between the endings depends whether you're using British English or American English.

Which one do you use? Do you know which is the American English ending?
Do you know which we can use in British English?

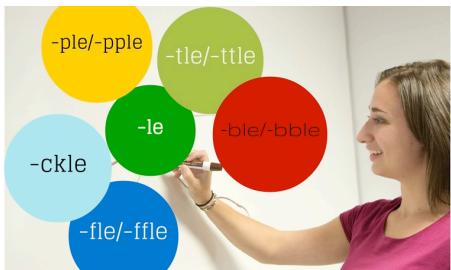
British English -ise/ize	American English -ize
realise or realize	realize
apologise or apologize	apologize
organise or organize	organize
recognise or recognize	recognise or recognize
finalise or finalize	finalize

As you can see from the table British English can use both endings but American English can't. Canadians use the American English endings too.

According to the Oxford Dictionary both endings are correct in British English but only one way in American. They recommend you choose one and make sure you stick to it within a piece of writing.

The Oxford Dictionary use the **-ize** ending on their website maybe because the **-ize** ending is older and preferred by some as it's closer to its Greek roots. But **-ise** is more widely used.

CAREFUL a few words must only be spelled with - ise:
advertise, advise, chastise, compromise, despise, devise, disguise,
excise, exercise, improvise, prise(open), promise.



Words ending in -le Rule

**apple, staple, title, kettle, trifle, shuffle, cycle, tickle,
whistle...**

Why do we spell some of these with a single consonant before the -le and some with double letters?

idle / middle
maple / apple
Google / goggle

Read these pairs of words aloud.

The words in the first column have long vowel sounds.
And the second column words have short vowel sounds.

And look at the letters by the -le endings.
The first column words have a single consonant next to the -le.
The words in the second column have a double letter.

We double up letters after a short vowel sound. Remember in the 1:1:1 doubling up rule? We double up the end consonant when we add suffix endings to keep the vowel short:

put - putting
tap - tapped
begin - beginner

idle and middle

idle is a long vowel sound so it has a single consonant -dle

middle is a short vowel sound so we have a double consonant -ddle.

maple and apple

maple has a long vowel sound so spelt -ple

apple is a short vowel sound so -pple

Both these examples have single vowels but one vowel is long the other short.

Google and goggle

Google is long so -ggle

goggle is short so -gle (and in goggle-box and goggle-eyed)

But don't get too stressed if you can't hear the short or long vowel sounds just make sure you keep a beady eye on the patterns.

Let's look at the letter patterns with -le and the exceptions.

✓ These consonants are used before the -le : b / c / d / f / g / k / p / st / t / z

x We **never** have these letters before -le: h / m / n / r / v / w

x We **never** have these patterns -hle, -jle, -qle, -qule, -mle, -nle, -rle, -vle, -wle

Long vowel sound letter patterns:

-ble, -dle, -gle, -ple, -tle, -fle, -kle, -sle, -cle

table, idle, Google, staple, title, trifle, sparkle,
measle(s), treacle

-ble

able
table
stable
cable
bible
noble
bauble
marble
warble

-dle

idle
sidle
bridle
cradle
ladle
doodle
noodle
poodle
needle
hurdle
dawdle

-fle

trifle
rifle
stifle

-gle

Google
eagle
beagle
bugle
ogle
burglary
gurgle

-kle

sparkle

-ple

maple
staple
people
steeple
purple

-sle

measle(s)

tousle

(isle and aisle have a silent "s" and the -le isn't a separate syllable - all the words in this rule have two or more syllables)

-tle

title
beetle
the Beatles
startle
hurtle
turtle

-cle

treacle
circle
cycle

Short vowel sound patterns:

-bble, -ddle, -ffle, -ggle, -pple, -ssle, -ttle -zzle

bubble, middle, ruffle, giggle, tipple, hassle, little, dazzle

Note that no letters are doubled if there are two different consonants before -le: ankle, sprinkle, stumble, bundle, gargle, bangle, bungle...

-bble

bobble
wobble
hobble
babble
scrabble
dribble
nibble
scribble
bubble
stubble
hobble

Exceptions with single "b" are: treble, trouble, double

The -mble pattern with 2 consonants so we never double the consonant:

amble, gamble, ramble, scramble
assemble
tumble, grumble, crumble

-ddle

paddle
straddle
saddle
waddle
meddle
peddle
riddle
middle
fiddle
cuddle
huddle
muddle
puddle

Exceptions with single "d" in the -ndle pattern:

candle, handle
bundle
dwindle, swindle
fondle

-ffle

raffle
baffle
snaffle
sniffle
shuffle
scuffle
truffle
muffle
ruffle
duffle
snuffle

-gle

haggle
straggle
struggle
squiggle
giggle
jiggle
wiggle
wriggle
joggle
smuggle
snuggle

Exceptions with the -ngle pattern:

angle, bangle, jangle, strangle
jingle, mingle, single, tingle
bungle, jungle

-pple

dapple
grapple
ripple
cripple
tipple
topple
supple
principle

Exception with single "p" is couple

Exceptions with the -mple pattern:
ample, sample, example, trample
temple
simple, dimple, pimple
crumple

-ssle

hassle
tussle

-ttle

battle
rattle
cattle
kettle
nettle
settle
little
brittle
skittle
bottle
throttle
shuttle
scuttle

Exception: gentle

-zzle (we don't have any single -zle words)

dazzle
frazzle
nozzle
drizzle
frizzle
guzzle
muzzle
nuzzle
puzzle
embezzle

-cle and -kle endings

English words don't end in -ccle or -kkle

So for short vowel sounds we add a "c" before the "k" to make -ckle

tackle
cackle
crackle
shackle
freckle
heckle
speckle
fickle
tickle
pickle
prickle
buckle
chuckle
suckle
knuckle

Some short and long sounds in: -ngle, -kle, -nkle, -rkle,

uncle
circle
rankle
crinkle
sprinkle
twinkle
wrinkle
sparkle

3 syllable words with the -icle and -acle patterns

article	obstacle	
chronicle	miracle	muscle
icicle	pinnacle	silent "c"
particle	spectacle	
cubicle	tentacle	
vehicle	manacle	

-stle letter pattern - the "t" is silent

These are mostly short vowel sounds but in some accents "castle" is long.

castle

wrestle, nestle

whistle, bristle, thistle gristle

jostle apostle

bustle

We only have one word with **-xle**

axle (it's a short vowel sound and should be axxle but we hate doubling up the "x" in English!)

-lle French borrowed words

belle

braille

gazelle

Spelling Rules

When we make these -le words into adverbs we change the end "e" to "y"

idle - idly

single - singly

wobble - wobbly

giggle - giggly

bristle - bristly

prickle - prickly

When we add -ing we drop the "e." Remember to drop the "e" with -ing

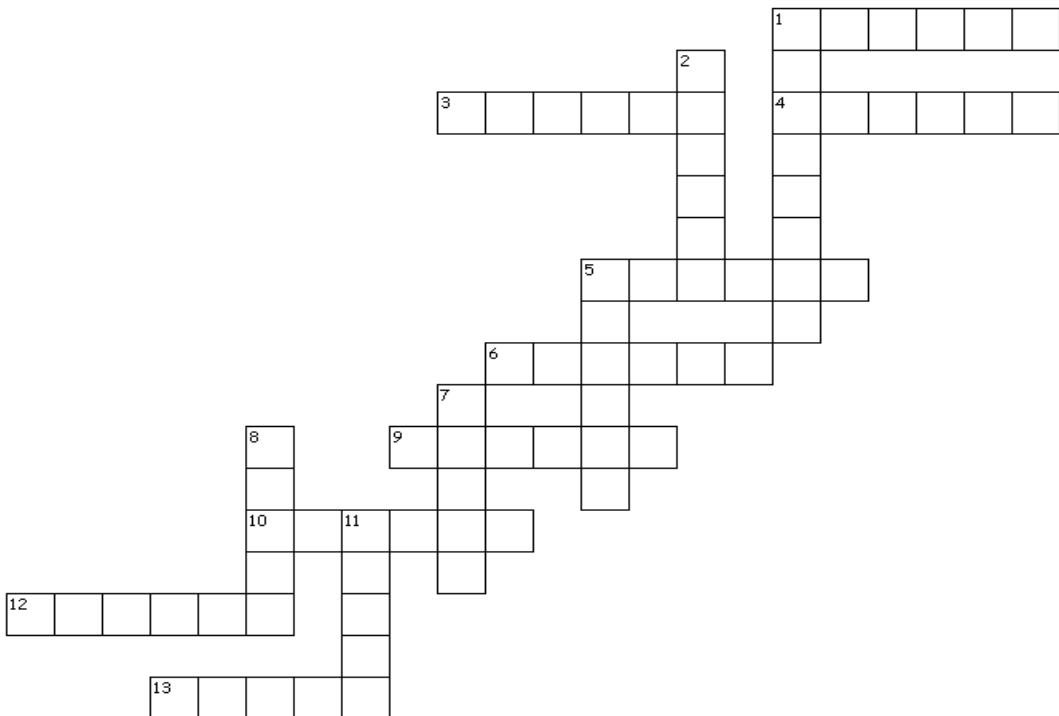
chuckle - chuckling

giggle - giggling

shuffle - shuffling

stifle - stifling

Crossword write in the squares with words ending in -le from the clues below



Across

1. When something is easy to do.
3. Put your arms round someone and hold them close to show that you like or love them
4. You buy a ticket and if it's chosen you win a prize.
5. An insect.
6. You boil water in this.
9. Only one.
10. A baby sleeps in this.
12. A small pool of water on the ground after rain.
13. A piece of fruit.

Down

1. To write something quickly and carelessly.
2. The plural of person.
5. This is a glass or plastic container to hold liquid.
7. Another word for gun.
8. Auntie and _____
11. The part of the body where your foot joins your leg.

Crossword answers

Across

1. When something is easy to do - **simple**
3. Put your arms round someone and hold them close to show that you like or love them - **cuddle**
4. You buy a ticket and if it's chosen you win a prize - **raffle**
5. An insect - **beetle**
6. You boil water in this - **kettle**
9. Only one - **single**.
10. A baby sleeps in this - **cradle**.
12. A small pool of water on the ground after rain - **puddle**.
13. A piece of fruit - **apple**.

Down

1. To write something quickly and carelessly - **scribble**.
2. The plural of person - **people**.
5. This is a glass or plastic container to hold liquid - **bottle**.
7. Another word for gun - **rifle**.
8. Auntie and **uncle**
11. The part of the body where your foot joins your leg - **ankle**.



Words ending in -k, -ke, -ck, -ic

-ck, -k, -ke, -ic
pick, seek, bake, panic

Words ending in -ck

attack, sack, snack, black, lack, flack, shack, whack...
neck, wreck, heck, peck...
sick, brick, click, flick, trick...
lock, dock, block, rock, shock, crock...
stuck suck, luck, muck, duck...

Notice they all have short vowel sounds next to the -ck ending.

We also have words with more than one syllable ending with -ck and with the short vowel sound next to the -ck:

attack, Cossack, ransack, shamrock, shylock, paddock, gimmick

Remember when we have a short vowel sound we usually double up the end consonant when we add suffixes to indicate the short vowel sound:

sit sitting
pat patter
nip nipped

Unfortunately, centuries ago they hated a double "c" and double "k" at the end of words, and they also hated a single vowel + "k" at the end of words too. So they put a "c" next to the "k" to indicate a short vowel sound, and that's why we have these short vowel sound -ck words.

The exceptions to the single vowel + "k" endings are in foreign borrowed words: trek/trekking, anorak, Bolshevik, yak, yuk

We also have a short vowel sound before -ck- in the middle of words:

jacket, package, packet, bracket, lackadaisical, lackey, mackerel...
reckon, beckon...
chicken, ticket, wicked, snicker cricket, picket, hickory...
sprocket, docket, hockey...
tucker, pucker...

We never see -ck at the beginning of words!

Words ending in -ke

As we saw in the silent 'e' magic 'e' lesson the 'e' at the end of words makes the preceding vowel long:

make, bake, cake, take, flake, awake, mistake...
puke, fluke, duke, rebuke...
choke, artichoke, joke, smoke...
like, hike, bike, dike, Mike...
eke...

We drop the 'e' with -ing, -ed, -er, able, ible etc

making, maker
baking, baker, baked
taking, taker
mistaken
flakey
puking, hiking, choking, joking
hiker, joker, biker

Words ending in -k

After two vowels we write -k:

week/weak, cheek, leek/leak, sleek, peek/peak, geek, seek
oak, croak, soak
break, peak/peek, beak, streak
shriek, sheik

We can add suffixes to these: weekly, peeking, breakable, shrieking, croaky, croakily...

These all have a long vowel sound but there are some important short vowel sound exceptions: book, look, brook, cook, took (These used to be pronounced with a long "oo" sound and some accents still say these with a long sound)

We have an end -k after a consonant in these patterns: -nk, -rk, -sk, -lk

-nk

bank, sank, flank, blank, plank, yank, rank, stank, Hank, shrank...
pink, link, sink, rink, shrink, stink, wink...
honk, monk, wonky...

-rk

ark, park, hark, bark, embark, spark, lark...
berserk, clerk...
irk, quirk, shirk...
York, dork, pork...

-sk

ask, task, bask, mask, flask ...
risk, brisk, whisk, frisk...
tusk, rusk...

-lk

walk, talk, stalk, chalk, balk, calk...
folk, yolk...
milk...

We can add suffixes to these: Yorkshire, banker, risky, riskier, walking, irksome...

Words ending in -ic

These words have two or more syllables:

2 syllables: magic, music, static, traffic, panic, frolic, mimic, picnic, critic, frantic, ethic, tonic, tropics, clinic, public, rustic, graphic

3 syllables: electric, acoustic, ballistic, dramatic, genetic, hysterics, politics, semantics, Atlantic, Pacific, mechanic, heroic, poetic, athletic, angelic, atomic, authentic, melodic, dogmatic, traumatic, erratic, eccentric, elastic, domestic, organic, hypnotic, fantastic

4 syllables: cybernetic, economic, mathematics, aromatic, problematic, periodic, sympathetic

History lesson

Most of these -ic words used to be spelled with a "k" at the end of the word -ick but academics didn't like words ending in "k" so dropped the "k".

According to spelling expert, David Crystal, "music" was written in over 40 ways by the 18th Century. Some of the spellings were: musique, musik, musicck, musicke, musickque...

But then the brilliant American dictionary man, Noah Webster, knocked the "k" off the end of these -ick words and now we're left with -ic.

We also have some words ending in -ac

lilac

maniac

bivouac

almanac

zodiac

shellac (a type of varnish for nails you see on manicure places in shop windows)

When we add a suffix ending that begins with "e", "i", or "y" (er, ed, ing, y...) we add a "k" to -ic and -ac to -make -ick /-ack.

This is to maintain the hard "c"/ "k" sound otherwise it'll be "s"

picnic - picnicked, picnicking, picnicker

panic - panicked, panicking, panicky

traffic - trafficked, trafficking, trafficker

bivouac - bivouacked, bivouacking

When we add other suffixes we don't add "k."

frolicsome, mimicry, picnics

We add -ally to -ic to make adverbs:

automatic - automatically

frantic - frantically

dramatic - dramatically

Exception is publicly (**not** publically x)

But if the word already ends in -cal then we just add -ly

Look at how these words are built:

music - musical - musically

magic - magical - magically

electric - electrical - electrically

economic - economical - economically

mechanic - mechanical - mechanically

Exercise 1

What endings can you put on these words?

Use k, ke, ck, or ic

1. pan____

2. brea____

3. ban____

4. wal____

5. sho____

6. mechan____

7. mista____

8. picn____

9. quir____

10. atta____

11. gimmi____

12. shran____

13. smo____

14. ca____

Exercise 1 Answers

What endings can you put on these words?

Use k, ke, ck, or ic

1. panic

2. break

3. bank

4. walk

5. shock

6. mechanic

7. mistake

8. picnic

9. quirk

10. attack

11. gimmick

12. shrank

13. smoke

14. cake

Exercise 2

Fill in the letter or letters to complete these words

Use k, ke, ck, ic or ick

1. pani____ing

2. dramat____ally

3. sho____ing

4. chi____en

5. ris____y

6. ban____er

7. jo____ing

8. ja____et

9. wee____ly

10. brea____able

11. mista____n

12. mus____ally

Exercise 2 Answers

Fill in the letter or letters to complete these words

Use k, ke, ck, ic or ick

1. panicking

2. dramatically

3. shocking

4. chicken

5. risky

6. banker

7. joking

8. jacket

9. weekly

10. breakable

11. mistaken

12. musically



"ie" or "ei" Rule

There are 7 sounds of 'ie' and 'ei'

1. the "ee" sound as in "green" (relief)
2. the "ay" sound as in "pay" (weigh)
3. the "i" sound as in "hit" (foreign)
4. the "eye" sound as in "ice" (height)
5. the "eh" sound as in "best" (leisure)
6. the "uh" sound as in "hunt" (patient)
7. the "oo" sound as in "shoe" (view)

1. The "ee" sound

The famous 'i before e except after c' rule applies to this sound.

"i before e except after c when it's a long c"

belief

receive

There are exceptions to this rule so be careful.

'i before e except after a long c' applies to the following common words:

achieve grief relief

belief grievance reprieve

besiege grievous retrieve

brief hygiene shield

cashier niece shriek

chief piece* siege

diesel pier* wield

field pierce yield

fierce priest

ie / "ee" sound letter patterns

- ief

belief
brief
chief
grief
relief
thief
mischief

-ieve

achieve
believe
reprieve
retrieve
relieve
relieved

-ield

field
yield
shield
wield

-iece

piece
niece

exceptions to i before e with "ee" sound rule!!!!

either*

neither*

protein

seize

seizure

Sheila

Keith

weird

i before e except after a long c

c + ei = "cee"

-ceive

ceiling	conceive
conceit	deceive
deceit	perceive
receipt	deceive

(exception: species)

*This rule is with a long "cee/cei". But look at: **ancient, science, society, efficient** - not long C's but "sh" or "s" sound.

2. The "ay" sound

as in "say", "eight"

For this sound the spelling is usually with the **ei** pattern.
Some common words:

beige	eight	weigh
veil	freight	neighbour
reign	weight	
rein		
vein		

"before e, except after c or when
sounded like 'a' as in *neighbour* & *weigh*"

neighbor (American English)

3. The short "i" sound

as in "hit" "bit"

The spelling is usually with **ei**.

counterfeit

foreign

forfeit

sovereign

* **exceptions:** handkerchief, series, sieve, mischief

4. The long i "eye" sound
as in "nice"

The most common spellings are with ei:

eiderdown	height
either	sleight
neither	
Fahrenheit	

exceptions:

died, tied, lied, hierarchy

5. The "eh" sound
as in "left"/"best"

We can have **ie** in friends

And **ei** in leisure

6. The "uh" sound as in "hunt"/ "shunt"

The spelling is usually with **ie**.

ancient conscience patient

proficient patience

"i before e, except after c but not when c is a sh sound"

7. The "oo" or "yew" sound

The "oo" or "yew" sound is usually with ie

in lieu view

review

8. Separate sounds

In the previous 7 sounds they are single sounds.

Let's look at the ie/ei pattern in words where the i and e are separate sounds:

variety	reinforce
gaiety	reiterate
spontaneity	premier
copier	quiet
crier	
fiery	science
glacier	conscientious

i before e except after a long C but not after a C that sounds like "sh"

i before e except after a long C or when sounded like "a" in neighbour (neighbor - American) and weigh

Exercise 1

Which one is correct?

a. recieve b. receive

a. ancient b. anceint

a. friend b. freind

a. hieght b. height

a. reciept b. receipt

a. patient b. pateint

a. peice b. piece

a. believe b. beleive

a. relief b. releif

a. conceieve b. conceive

Exercise 1 Answers

Which one is correct?

a. recieve b. receive

a. ancient b. anceint

a. friend b. freind

a. hieght b. height

a. reciept b. receipt

a. patient b. pateint

a. peice b. piece

a. believe b. beleive

a. relief b. releif

a. conceieve b. conceive

Exercise 2

Fill in with either -ie- or -ei-

1. ach__ve
2. bel__ve
3. ch__f
4. pat__nce
5. for__gn
6. __ther
7. w__gh
8. __ght
9. rec__ve
10. conc__t
11. qu__t
12. n__ghbour (or n__ghbor American)

Exercise 2 Answers

Fill in either -ie- or -ei-

1. achieve
2. believe
3. chief
4. patience
5. foreign
6. either
7. weigh
8. eight
9. receive
10. conceit
11. quiet
12. neighbour (or neighbor American)



Silent Letter Rules

know, daughter, autumn, plumber, mate, fasten, Wednesday, could,
palm, doubt, receipt...

Silent letters are the letters in words that are not pronounced but make a huge difference to the meaning and sometimes the pronunciation of the word.

More than 60% of English words have silent letters in them, which can cause all sorts of problems spelling the word or looking for the word in a dictionary, reading the word and spelling it.

Silent letters aren't there to mess with your brain or make spelling and reading hard - honest. They're there for various reasons. They perform a lot of functions so understanding these reasons will definitely help your spelling, reading, pronunciation and confidence.

Let's go over some reasons why we have silent letters because it's always great to know why spelling is the way it is.

1. Most silent letters used to be pronounced but are left in the words to show the history of the word.
2. Some academics over the centuries chose to put silent letters in words to make the word more like their classical Latin and Greek roots: *debt, doubt, receipt*

Silent letters are very useful:

1. A silent letter can help us work out the meaning of the word and it also can change the pronunciation even though it's silent - sin/sign, rat/rate,

Sometimes a letter can be silent in one word but not in others. These letters help to connect different forms of the same word e.g.

resign/resignation

sign/signal

2. They help the reader to distinguish between homophones (homophones have the same sound but different meaning and different spelling and there are loads of these words in English)

in/inn, be/bee, to/too/two, know/no, whole/hole, knot/not, lent/leant,
whole / hole, plum / plumb, hour / our, etc

3. We saw in the Magic 'e' Silent 'e' lesson that if you add a silent 'e' at the end of short vowel sound words it usually makes the word into a long vowel sound - rid/ride, cop/cope, hat/hate, tap/tape, at/ate, mat/mate...

4 And some words with silent letters in them are loanwords from other languages. Silent 'h' in khaki, silent 's' in fracas, silent g in champagne,

5. Silent letters help to show 'hard' consonants e.g. the silent 'u' in guest/gest

6. Silent letters in words like: knock, plumber, island, gnat, daughter, night, doubt, receipt show the history and origins of the word.

Plumber is a Roman/Latin word from the Roman for lead pipe - plum bum.

Knife, knock, know, gnat, gnaw are all Viking words which used to be pronounced but not now but we leave the letters in there to see the origin and history of the word.

The difficult **-gh** letter patterns: **-ight, -gh-, -gh, -ough**, all come from Anglo-Saxon words (in brackets): daughter (**dohþor**), night (**niht**), light (**liht**), bright (**beorht**), dough (**dāg**), bough (**bōh**).

- The 'h' was a hard throaty sound like the Scottish sound in *loch*.
- Then around the 13th century the 'h' became 'gh' because of the French influence to try to indicate this throaty sound.
- Then in about the 17th century the 'gh' sound was either dropped or became 'f' sound: enough, cough, though, through, plough, rough, borough, slaughter, laugh...

-ough has seven sounds:

Have you thought this through thoroughly enough?

oo - /too/	through
off - /coff/	cough, trough
uff - /cuff/	enough, rough, tough
oh - /toe/	dough, though, although
ow - /how/	bough, doughty
u - /uh, up/	borough, thorough
or - /or/	bought, brought, fought, ought, sought, wrought, thought

-augh normally sounds like /or/ - door/nor
daughter, naughty, slaughter, taught, haughty

but laugh is pronounced with a long or short 'a' "laff" or "larff"

-eigh normally sounds like /ay/ - say, day

eight, neighbour, weigh, weight, sleigh

but height rhymes with bite!!

-igh sounds like i in tie

high, sigh, thigh, light, delight, sight, might, night, right, tight, flight

Patterns & Rules

'kn-' silent k before n - knee, know, knife, knives, knob, knot, knuckle, knock, knack, knave, knead, kneel, knew, knickerbocker, knight knit... (the k was pronounced but in the 17th century began to drop out of fashion.

'gn-' silent g before n - gnat, gnaw, gnash, gnarl, gnome...

'-gn' align, assign, benign, design, ensign, malign, reign, sign, campaign, poignant, champagne, cologne, foreign, sovereign,

'wr-' silent w before r - write, wrist, wrinkle, wring, wriggle, wrong, wrote, wrap, wrangle, wrath, wreck, wreath, wrench, wrestle - silent w, t, e, wretched, wry...

'ps-' silent p before s - psychic, psalm, psychology, psychiatry... These words have Greek origins

'-lk' silent l before k - folk, walk, talk, yolk..

'mb' silent b after m - plumber, numb, dumb, bomb, comb, climb, thumb, limb, crumb, numb, lamb, succumb, tomb, womb...

'mn' silent n after m - autumn, column, solemn, condemn, hymn...

'-lm-' silent l before m - palm, calm, psalm (silent p and l), qualm, alms, almond (sometimes people say al mond), balm, salmon...

'-st-' silent t after s - listen, fasten, glisten, moisten, hasten, chasten, christen...

'-stle' - bristle, bustle, castle, gristle, hustle, jostle, mistletoes, nestle, rustle, thistle, trestle, whistle, wrestle (silent w and t) .

Sometimes people might pronounce certain letters or they might not depending on their accent, for example the t in 'often' can be pronounced or not.

H is silent in a lot of accents. For me h is a difficult letter to pronounce because I grew up dropping the h and my muscle memory doesn't like it at all!

But the H is silent in some words from French - hour, honest, honour (honor American), heir, herb (in American English)

A list of silent letters in some common words, surnames, names and places:

A - artistically, dramatically, logically, musically, romantically

B - climbb, combb, crumbb, thumb, numb, subtle, debt, doubt

C - acquire, acquit, czar, muscle, scissors, Connecticut, Tucson

D - grandson, Wednesday handsome, handkerchief, landscape,

sandwich (some people pronounce the 'd')

E - We saw the silent 'e' in the Magic 'e' Silent 'e' lesson. When we add 'e' to the end of a word it changes the pronunciation of the word, but remains silent.

We also have silent 'e' in: Wednesday, "Wens day", vegetable "veg tabl"
bridgee, clothes, famee, lonely

G - align, champagne, diaphragm, high, reign, foreign...

-igh- alight, right, light, eight, weight

-ugh-though, through, thought, drought

H - hour, honour/honor, honest, heir choir, exhaust, exhibition, ghost, rhyme, rhythm thyme, Thames, Gandhi, Birmingham

I - business

J (none)

K - blackguard, knead, knell, knickers, knife, knight, knock, knot, know, Knox, Knowles...

L - calf, calm, chalk, folk, half, psalm, salmon, talk, yolk, Norfolk...

M - mnemonic

N - autumn, column, condemn, damn, hymn, solemn

O - colonel, people

P - corps, coup, pneumonia, pseudo, psychology, receipt, Thompson

Q (none)

R - butter, finger, garden, here, myrrh *myrrh* (in British English all r's are 'silent' before consonants as in *card* or before silence as in *car*)

S - aisle, bourgeois, debris, fracas, island, isle, viscount, Illinois...

T - asthma, ballet, castle, gourmet, listen, rapport, ricochet, soften, thistle, *Christmas*, tsunami...

U - catalogue, colleague, dialogue, guess, guest, guide, guilt, guitar, tongue

V (none)

W - answer, sword, two, whole, whore, wrist, writ, write, Greenwich, Norwich

X - faux *faux pas*, Sioux

Y (none)

Z - laissez-faire, rendezvous, chez