

Spelling Lessons

Helpful Spelling Guidelines and Patterns

The following spelling lessons directly teach helpful spelling guidelines and patterns. Each lesson presents and explains a guideline and includes a list of applicable words (or reference to the reading lesson the words are located in). Read the guideline, look at the words, notice the specific spelling pattern. Have the student practice writing/spelling words meeting the guideline. Writing/spelling these words allows the student to ‘see’ and practice the expected patterns. The majority of these lessons are not memorizing a rule but rather learning the guideline or pattern and understanding how and why it works.

Spelling Lesson 1:

Every syllable has a vowel

Syllables are simply the hunks of sound within a spoken word that we say with a single puff of air. It is important to know **every syllable has a vowel**. Knowing that every syllable has a vowel is a fundamental element of spelling English words.

- Knowing every syllable has a vowel helps in spelling words where the final e is silent.

Practice Words: little sparkle struggle handle angle apple article triple principle
flexible possible table tumble riddle puzzle fiddle single grumble tumble saddle
raffle simple bubble terrible brittle cattle jungle stable dazzle dribble candle scribble

- Knowing every syllable has a vowel also helps the student look at a word and ‘see’ if it ‘looks right’. If a syllable doesn’t have a vowel then something is missing.

Spelling Lesson 2:

‘Silent e’: Learning the 5 types of ‘silent e’ and knowing when to use the ‘silent e’.

“Silent-e” is found at the end of many words. It is important to realize in most cases this ‘silent-e’ is *not* randomly added to the end of words. Although the ‘e’ is ‘silent’, it has very important purposes. There are five ways the ‘silent-e’ occurs. Spelling is easier when you understand the important functions of this ‘silent e’. The five primary functions of ‘silent-e’ are:

1. In the vowel-consonant-e combinations the ‘e’ is needed to make the first vowel say its name. This is the most common occurrence of ‘silent e’ when the ‘e’ is acting as a necessary partner of the other vowel. It is not ‘magic’. This ‘e’ has a specific function. The final, silent ‘e’ is the hardworking partner for the vowel in the vowel-consonant-e combination. (tim-time, bit-bite, at-ate, not-note, rob-robe, cod-code, home, strike, graze, flute)
Practice Words: See Reading Lessons # 22 - 26.
2. In words with ‘ce’ and ‘ge’ where the ‘e’ is necessary to make the ‘c’ have the /s/ sound (as in dance, chance, fence, justice, sentence, prance, prince, peace) or the ‘g’ have the /j/ sound (large, charge, manage, change, edge, fridge). This ‘silent-e’ is necessary to make the ‘soft c’ /s/ or ‘soft g’ /j/ sound.
Practice Words: See Reading Lesson # 27.

3. In words ending in **ve**: In the English language words do *not* end in **v**. Therefore, the ‘e’ is added to the end simply to prevent the word from ending in ‘v’. This ‘e’ often does not change the sound of other letters in the word.
Practice Words: have, give, love, above, live, active, native, captive, passive, massive, active, negative, motive, relative, expensive, aggressive, descriptive, detective, sensitive, informative
See Reading Lesson #64 for additional words.
4. In words with ending consonant blend and **le** ending, the ‘e’ is necessary because every syllable needs a vowel. This was explained in Spelling Lesson 1.
Practice Words: See words listed in Spelling Lesson #1 on the preceding page.
5. And of course, some words have a final ‘**silent-e**’ for no apparent phonetic reason. Maybe it is just to make spelling difficult and confusing! Although the ‘e’ is not needed phonetically, a spelling pattern does exist for many of these words. Notice most of the ‘no-reason’ silent-e words end in the /s/ or /z/ sound spelled with the letter ‘s’. These ‘no-reason’ silent-e words do need to be practiced and learned. Grouping by similar spelling patterns helps the student learn these words.
Practice Words: (house, mouse, grouse, louse);(please, crease, lease, tease, grease, decrease, increase, release); (geese, cheese); (cruise, bruise); (cause, pause, because, clause); (loose, choose, goose); (some, come, done), horse, promise, noise.

Spelling Lesson 3:

No English words end with the letter i

No *English* words end with the letter ‘i’. It is very helpful to remember this in spelling because **you must spell the word in a pattern that does NOT end in ‘i’.**

- The /oy/ sound at the *end* of words is always spelled with ‘oy’ (boy, toy, ploy, destroy) as ‘oi’ can never be used at the end of a word. See Reading Lesson 30 for practice words.
- In the same way the /ay/ sound at the end of a word cannot be spelled with ‘ai’. It must be ‘ay’ (play, away, stay) or another pattern (sleigh, they). See Lesson 20 for practice words.
- In spelling the ‘ie’ ending of words such as brownie, collie, cookie, rookie, and auntie you know the ‘i’ must come first as ‘e’ must end the word. See Lesson 38 for practice words.

Exceptions are words from *other* languages and proper names.

- taxi (short for taxicab);
- macaroni, manicotti, rigatoni, (The Italian ‘noodle’ words)
- radii, nuclei, (the plurals of some Latin words found mostly in math and science)
- alkali (French from an Arabic word); zucchini (Italian); chili (Spanish); kiwi (Maori)
- lei, Maui, Hawaii, Molokai (You guessed it; these are Hawaiian words.)
- Proper names can always provide exceptions. For example: location names (Cincinnati, Missouri, Mississippi...), personal names (Jeni, Heidi, Toni...), and numerous surnames. There are also a few common nouns originating from proper names ending in ‘i’. For example the wildland firefighting tool, ‘pulaski’ was named after Edward Pulaski, a US Forest Service Ranger and firefighter hero of the ‘Big Burn’ that raged though Idaho and western Montana in 1910.

While this trivia on word origination and search for exceptions may be interesting, the guideline “No English words end in the letter i” remains a very useful spelling guideline.

Spelling Lesson 4:

No English words end with the letter v

As previously discussed in the ‘silent e’ section, no English words end with the letter ‘v’. If a word ends in the /v/ sound, you *must* add the ‘silent e’ to the end just so that the word does *not* end in ‘v’. This is most common in the -tive and -ive suffixes.

Practice Words: See Spelling Lesson #2 “Silent e” words ending in -ve and Reading Lesson #64.

Spelling Lesson 5:

No English words end in the letter j

No English words end in the letter ‘j’. Therefore if a word ends in the /j/ sound, you must spell the /j/ ending with either the ‘ge’ or ‘dge’ ending.

Practice Words: charge, barge, rage, strange, range, edge, ledge, pledge, stage, page, fridge, change, large, cottage, savage, engage, package and words from Reading Lesson 27 and 57.