



Spelling - English (Draft)

This summary includes all of the rules and guidelines listed in Appendix 1 of the National Curriculum for English Key Stages 1 and 2 – Draft. It does not include the extensive lists of example words. These can be found in the full version of the publication.

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Revision of Reception Work										
Consonant-vowel-consonant (cvc) words	Cvcc	Cvcc	Cvcc	Words with consonant digraphs	Words ending 'nk' The /ng/ sound is spelt as n before k	Words ending 'ff', 'll', 'ss', 'zz', 'ck' The /ff/, /ll/, /ss/ and /zz/ sounds are usually spelt as ff, ll, ss and zz straight after the /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/ sounds in short words. Exceptions: if, pal, us, bus, yes	Words of more than one syllable Each syllable is like a 'beat' in the word			
New work for Year 1										
Tch If the /ch/ sound comes straight after a vowel sound spelt with a single vowel letter, it is usually spelt as tch . Exceptions: rich, which, much, such	The /v/ sound at the end of words English words hardly ever end with the letter v, so if a word ends with a /v/ sound, the letter e usually needs to be added after the 'v'.	Adding s and es to words (plural of nouns and the third person singular of verbs) If the ending sounds like /s/ or /z/, it is spelt as -s . If the ending sounds like /iz/ and forms an extra syllable or 'beat' in the word, it is spelt as -es			Adding the endings -ing, -ed and -er to verbs where no change is needed to the root word -ing and -er always add an extra syllable to the word and -ed sometimes does. The past tense of some verbs may sound as if it ends in /id/ (extra syllable), /d/ or /t/ (no extra syllable), but all these endings are spelt -ed if the verb ends in two consonants (the same or different), the ending is simply added on.		Adding -er and -est to adjectives where no change is needed to the root word As with verbs (see left), if the adjective ends in two consonants (the same or different), the ending is simply added on.			
Vowel digraphs and trigraphs:										
Some should already be known, depending on the programme used, but some will be new. The endings -ing, -ed, -er and -est , if relevant, can be added straight on to all the words which can function as verbs or adjectives, except for those in italics.										
ai The digraphs ai and oi are never used at the end of English words	oi	ay ay and oy oy are used for those sounds at the end of words and at the end of syllables	oy	a-e	e-e	i-e	o-e	u-e Both the /yoo/ and /oo/ sounds can be spelt u-e	ar	
ee	ea (ee/)	ea (le/)	er (stressed sound)	er (unstressed schwa sound) Saying the /er/ in <i>butter</i> etc. as a clear /er/ sound (as in <i>her</i>) helps in remembering how to spell it			ir	ur	oo Very few words end with the letters oo	
oa The digraph oa is rarely used at the end of an English word	oe	ou The only common English word ending in ou is <i>you</i>	ow (lou/)	ow (loa/)	ue Both the /oo/ and /yoo/ sounds can be spelt as u-e, ue and ew . If words end in the /oo/ sound, ue and ew are more common spellings than oo		ew	ie (igh/)	ie (lee/)	igh
or	ore	aw	au	air	ear	ear (air/)	are (air/)			
Words ending -y (ee/ or /i/ depending on accent)	New consonant spellings ph and wh The /f/ sound is not usually spelt as ph in short everyday words (e.g. fat, fill, fun)		Using k for the /k/ sound The /k/ sound is spelt as k rather than as c before e, i and y		Adding the prefix -un The prefix un- is added to the beginning of a word without any change to the spelling of the root word		Compound Words Compound words are two words joined together. Each part of the longer word is spelt as it would be if it were on its own.		Common exception words	
New work for Year 2										
The /j/ sound spelt as ge and dge at the end of words, and sometimes spelt as g elsewhere in words before e, i and y The letter j is never used for the /j/ sound at the end of English words. At the end of a word, the /j/ sound is spelt -dge straight after the /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/ sounds ('short' vowels). After all other sounds, whether vowels or consonants, the /j/ sound is spelt as -ge at the end of a word. In other positions in words, the /j/ sound is often (but not always) spelt as g before e, i, and y. The /j/ sound is always spelt as j before a, o and u.				The /s/ sound spelt c before e, i and y	The /n/ sound spelt kn and (less often) gn at the beginning of words The 'k' and 'g' at the beginning of these words was sounded hundreds of years ago.		The /r/ sound spelt wr at the beginning of words This spelling probably also reflects an old pronunciation.		The /l/ or schwa-/l/ sound spelt -le at the end of words The -le spelling is the most common spelling for this sound at the end of words.	
The /l/ or schwa-/l/ sound spelt el at the end of words The -el spelling is much less common than -le . The -el spelling is used after m, n, r, s, v, w	The /l/ or schwa-/l/ sound spelt al at the end of words Not many nouns end in al, but many adjectives do.		Words ending -il There are not many of these words	The /igh/ sound spelt y at the end of words This is by far the most common spelling for this sound at the end of words.		Adding -es to nouns and verbs ending in consonant -y The y is changed to i before -es is added.		Adding -ed, -ing, -er and -est to root words ending in consonant-y The y is changed to i before -ed, -er and -est are added, but not before -ing as this would result in <i>ix</i> . The only ordinary words with <i>ix</i> are <i>sking</i> and <i>taxiing</i> .		
Adding the endings -ing, -ed, -er, -est and -y to words ending in vowel consonant- e The -e at the end of the root word is dropped before -ing, -ed, -er, -est, -y or any other suffix beginning with a vowel is added.			Adding -ing, -ed, -er, -est and -y to words of one syllable ending in a single consonant letter after a single vowel letter The last consonant of the root word is doubled to keep the /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/ sound (i.e. to keep the vowel 'short'). Exception: The letter 'x' is never doubled: <i>mixing, mixed, boxer, sixes</i> .			The /aw/ sound spelt a before l and ll The /aw/ sound is usually spelt as a before l and ll.	The /u/ sound spelt o	The /ee/ sound spelt ey The plural of these words is formed by the addition of -s (<i>donkeys, monkeys</i> etc.).		
The /o/ sound spelt a after w and qu a is the most common spelling for the /o/ sound after w and qu.	The /ur/ sound spelt or after w There are very few of these words	The /aw/ sound spelt ar after w There are very few of these words	The /zh/ sound spelt s	The suffixes -ment, -ness, -ful and -less If a suffix starts with a consonant, it is added straight on to most root words without any change to the last letter of those words. Exceptions: (1) <i>argument</i> (2) root words ending in a consonant followed by y - see above			Contractions In contractions, the apostrophe shows where a letter or letters would be if the words were written in full (e.g. <i>can't - cannot</i>). <i>It's</i> means <i>it is</i> (e.g. <i>It's raining</i>) or sometimes <i>it has</i> (e.g. <i>It's been raining</i>), but <i>it's</i> is never used for the possessive.			
The possessive apostrophe (singular nouns)	Words ending in -tion	Homophones and near-homophones It is important to know the difference in meaning between homophones.		Common exception words Some words are exceptions in some accents but not in others - e.g. <i>past, last, fast, path</i> and <i>bath</i> are not exceptions in accents where the a in these words is pronounced as in <i>cat</i> . <i>Great, break</i> and <i>steak</i> are the only common words where the /ai/ sound is spelt ea .						
New work for Years 3 and 4										
Adding suffixes beginning with vowels to words of more than one syllable If the last syllable of a word is stressed and ends with one consonant which has just one vowel letter before it, the final consonant is doubled before any ending beginning with a vowel is added. The consonant is not doubled if the syllable is unstressed.		The /i/ sound spelt y elsewhere than at the end of words These words should be learnt as needed.	The /u/ sound spelt ou These words should be learnt as needed.	More prefixes Prefixes are added to the beginning of root words without any changes in spelling. Like un- , the prefixes dis- and mis- have negative meanings. The prefix in- can mean both 'not' and 'in/into'. In the words given here it means 'not'. Before a root word starting with l, in- becomes il- . Before a root word starting with m or p, in- becomes im- . Before a root word starting with r, in- becomes ir- . re- means 'again' or 'back'. sub- means 'under'. inter- means 'between' or 'among'. super- means 'above'. anti- means 'against'. auto- means 'self' or 'own'.			The suffix -ation The suffix -ation is added to verbs to form nouns. The rules already learnt still apply.	The suffix -ly The suffix -ly is added to an adjective to form an adverb. The rules already learnt still apply. The -ly suffix starts with a consonant, so it is added straight on to most root words unless they end with y. If the root word ends with y, the y is changed to i. Exceptions: 1. If the root word ends with -le , the -le is changed to -ly . 2. If the root word ends with -ic , -ally is added rather than just -ly , except in the word <i>publicly</i> . 3. The words <i>truly, duly, wholly</i> ,		
Words with endings sounding like /zuh/ or /chuh/ The ending sounding like /zuh/ is always spelt -sure . The ending sounding like /chuh/ is often spelt -ture , but check that the word is not a root word ending in (t)ch with an er ending - e.g. <i>teacher, catcher, richer, stretcher</i> .	Endings which sound like /zhun/ If the ending sounds like /zhun/, it is spelt as -sion	The suffix -ous Sometimes the root word is obvious and the usual rules apply for adding suffixes beginning with vowels. Sometimes there is no obvious root word. -our is changed to -or before -ous is added. A final 'e' must be kept if the /j/ sound of 'g' is to be kept. If there is an /i/ sound before the -ous ending, it is usually spelt as i, but a few words have e (e.g. <i>spontaneous, hideous, piteous</i>)		Endings which sound like /shun/, spelt -tion, -sion, -ssion, -cian Strictly speaking, the endings are -ion and -ian . Clues about whether to put t, s, ss or c before these endings often come from the last letter or letters of the root word. -tion is the most common spelling. It is used if the root word ends in t (invent) or te (inflate). -ssion is used if the root word ends in ss (express) or -mit (permit). -sion is used if the root word ends in n or se (Exceptions: <i>attend - attention; intend - intention</i>) -cian is used if the root word ends in c or cs (e.g. <i>music - musician, politics - politician</i>).			Words with the /k/ sound spelt ch (Greek in origin)	Words with the /sh/ sound spelt ch (mostly French in origin)		
Words ending with the /g/ sound spelt -gue and the /k/ sound spelt -que (French in origin)	Words with the /s/ sound spelt sc (Latin in origin) The Romans probably pronounced the sc in the Latin words from which these words come as /sk/, so mentally pronouncing these words that way may help with spelling - e.g. the pronunciation /skene/ can be used when learning to spell <i>scene</i> .	Words with the /ai/ sound spelt ei, eigh, or ey	Possessive apostrophe with plural words The apostrophe is placed after the plural form of the word; -s is not added if the plural already ends in s, but is added if the plural does not end in s (i.e. is an irregular plural - e.g. <i>children's</i>).		Homophones or near-homophones	Words which are often misspelt when prefixes or suffixes are added				
New work for Years 5 and 6										
Endings which sound like /shus/ spelt -cious or -tious Not many common words end like this. If the root word ends in -ce , the /sh/ sound is spelt as c - e.g. <i>vicious, grace - gracious, space - spacious, malice - malicious</i> . Exception: <i>anxious</i>	Endings which sound like /shul/ -cial is common after a vowel and -tial after a consonant, but there are some exceptions. Exceptions: <i>initial, financial, commercial, provincial</i> (though the spelling of the last three could be said to come from <i>finance, commerce</i> and <i>province</i>).	Words ending in -ant, -ance/-ancy, -ent, -ence/-ency Use -ant and -ance/-ancy if there is a related word with a clear /a/ or /ai/ sound in the right position - -ation endings are often a clue. Use -ent and -ence/-ency after soft c (/s/ sound), soft g (/j/ sound) and qu, or if there is a related word with a clear /e/ sound in the right position. There are many words, however, where the above guidelines don't help. These words just have to be learnt.		Words ending in -able and -ible The -able ending is far more common than the -ible ending. As with -ant and -ance/-ancy , the -able ending is used if there is a related word ending in -ation . If the -able ending is added to a word ending in -ce or -ge , the e after the c or g must be kept as those letters would otherwise have their 'hard' sounds (as in <i>cap</i> and <i>gap</i>) before the a of the -able ending. The -able ending is usually but not always used if a complete root word can be heard before it, even if there is no related word ending in -ation . The first six examples opposite are obvious; in <i>reliable</i> , the complete word <i>rely</i> is heard, but the y changes to i in accordance with the rule. The -ible ending is common if a complete root word can't be heard before it but it also sometimes occurs when a complete word can be heard (e.g. <i>sensible</i>).			Adding suffixes beginning with vowels to words ending in -fer The r is doubled if the -fer is still stressed when the ending is added. The r is not doubled if the -fer is no longer stressed.			
Use of the hyphen to link words Hyphens can be used to join a prefix to a root word, especially if the prefix ends in a vowel and the root word also begins with one.	Words with the /ee/ sound spelt ei after c The 'i' before e except after 'c' rule applies to words where the sound spelt by ei is a clear /ee/. Exceptions: <i>protein, caffeine, seize</i> .	Words containing the letter-string ough ough is one of the trickiest spellings in English - it can be used to spell a number of different sounds.	Words with 'silent' letters (i.e. letters which cannot be predicted from the pronunciation of the word) Some letters which are no longer sounded used to be sounded hundreds of years ago: e.g. in <i>knight</i> , the k was sounded as /k/ and the gh used to represent the sound that 'ch' now represents in the Scottish word <i>loch</i> .			Homophones and other words that are often confused In these pairs of words, nouns end -ce and verbs end -se . <i>Advice</i> and <i>advise</i> provide a useful clue as the word <i>advise</i> (verb) is pronounced with a /z/ sound - which could not be spelt c.				