

Spelling Rules

The following 15 spelling rules are a supplement to the Word Windows by Language Works Spelling Program. These simple rules can be introduced over time to students one-on-one or in small groups as they progress through the Word Windows material. Specific word lists can be used to introduce each rule (applicable word lists are noted in *italics* at the top of the rule page). We recommend mounting and laminating these rules to display in the classroom.

Rules #1-8

Introduce using word lists from the *beginning level* Black Set (the sounds with a black spiral binding on the picture booklets).

Rule #1: Double Letters (f, l, s, z)

Rule #2: Silent “e” – Job #1

Rule #3: When to Use “ck”

Rule #4: Silent “e” – Job #2

Rule #5: Double the Consonant

Rule #6: Drop the “e”

Rule #7: Plural Forms - adding “es”

Rule #8: Verb Forms – adding “es”

Rules #9-15

Introduce using word lists from the *more advanced* White Set (the sounds with a white spiral binding on the picture booklets).

Rule #9: “i” before “e,” except after “c”

Rule #10: Soft “c” and Soft “g”

Rule #11: Long Vowels & Open Syllables

Rule #12: Sound of “y” at the End of Words

Rule #13: Silent “e” – Job #3

Rule #14: Change the “y” to “i”

Rule #15: Plural & Verb Forms for Words ending in “Vowel + y”

Double Letters

Introduce with short e and short o lists from black set.

Also see Teachers Guide Appendix Table 1.

The letters **f**, **l**, **s**, and **z** are doubled after a short vowel in a one-syllable word.

stff

off

bell

mill

mess

dress

fuzz

jazz

Common exceptions to this rule: gas, has, yes, this, bus, plus, us

Silent “e” - Job #1

Refer to the four silent e lists from black set and Teachers Guide Appendix Table 2.

Adding a silent **e** to the end of a short-vowel word makes the vowel say its long sound (VC+E pattern).

hop + e = hope

tap + e = tape

rip + e = ripe

cub + e = cube

When to Use “ck”

*Refer to **ck** list from black set.*

The phonogram **ck** is used after a short vowel sound. Compare the following:

rack vs. rake

pick vs. pike

back vs. bake

speck vs. speak

Silent “e” – Job #2

Words in their base form usually do not end in the letter **v** or a single letter **s**. Such words end in a silent **e**.

givee, livee, havee, lovee, abovee

horsee, housee, goosee, mousee

Exceptions include: has, bus

Note: Verbs in the third person singular form *do* end in a singular “s” (eats, gives, lives). Plural nouns also end in a single “s” (hats, horses, houses).

Double the Consonant

Use with short e and short o Lists from black set.

When a word ends in a short vowel CVC pattern (as in “sun”), double the final consonant before adding a vowel ending (y, ing, ed, er, en).

sun + y = sunny

run + ing = running

drop + ed = dropped

slip + er = slippeer

Drop the “e”

Use with silent e lists from black set.

When a base word ends in a silent **e**, drop the **e** before adding a vowel ending (ed, er, ing, y, en).

ride e	+ ing	=	riding
save e	+ ed	=	saved
shine e	+ y	=	shiny
bake e	+ er	=	baker

Do not drop the final **e** when adding a consonant ending (eg. like+ly=likely).

Plural Forms - adding “es”

*Use with **ch**, **sh**, and **tch** lists from black set.*

To make the plural of a noun ending in ss, sh, ch, tch, x, or zz, add **es**.

wish + es	=	wishes
bench + es	=	benches
box + es	=	boxes
toss + es	=	tosses
stitch + es	=	stitches

This rule does not apply to words ending in **th** (such as paths).

Verb Forms – adding “es”

*Use with **ch**, **sh**, and **tch** lists from black set.*

To change the form of a verb ending in ss, sh, ch, tch, x, or zz, add **es**.

I miss.

He misses.

I wash.

She washes.

I watch.

He watches.

I mix.

She mixes.

It buzzes.

“i” before “e” except after “c”

*Introduce with **ie** list from white set.*

The phonogram **ie** makes the long **e** sound:
chief, fiield, piier

These letters are reversed, however, when
preceded by the letter “c”: receieve, ceieling,
receiept

Soft “c” and Soft “g”

Use the soft c and soft g lists from white set.

When **c** is followed by **e**, **i** or **y**, it makes its soft sound /s/.

cent, city, cycle, fence, fancy

When **g** is followed by **e**, **i** or **y**, it *often* makes its soft sound /j/.

gentle, giant, gym, page, charge

Note: In the words “get,” “girl,” and “gift,” **g** makes its hard sound /g/.

Long Vowels & Open Syllables

*Use with **er** list and **y** (as in baby) list from white set and Teachers Guide Appendix Table 3.*

A long vowel sound, when heard at the end of a syllable, is usually spelled with the single vowel letter.

feu-ver

baa-by

roo-bot

vaa-caa-tion

spii-der

poo-taa-too

A syllable ending with a vowel is an “open” syllable, and the vowel is usually long; whereas a syllable ending with a consonant is a “closed” syllable making the vowel short (eg. sis-ter, pup-pet).

Sound of “y” at the End of Words

Use with the two y lists (one from black set; one from white set).

The letter **y** makes the long **i** sound at the end of a one syllable word.

by, fly, try, spy, cry

The letter **y** makes the long **e** sound at the end of a mutli-syllable word.

baby, funny, candy, happy

Silent “e” - Job #3

*Introduce using the **ang** and **ung** lists from white set and Teachers Guide Appendix Table 4.*

Every syllable needs a vowel. Therefore, a silent **e** is added to the following final syllables:

**-ble, -cle, -dle, -fle, -gle,
-kle, -ple, -tle, -zle**

apple, little, table, bubble, puzzle, ruffle, tangle,
tackle, jungle

Change “y” to “i”

Use with both y lists (one from black set; one from white set).

When a word ends in a consonant + **y**, change the **y** to **i** before adding the following vowel endings: es, ed, er, est

berry + es = berryies

sky + es = skies

carry + ed = carryied

try + ed = tried

tiny + er = tinier

funny + est = funniest

Do not change the **y** to **i** if the ending is **ing** (eg. carrying, trying).

Plurals & Verb Forms for **Words Ending in “Vowel + y”**

When a noun ends with a vowel + **y**, just add **s** to make its plural form.

chimneys, monkeys, toys, trays

When a verb ends with a vowel + **y**, just add **s** to change the form of the verb.

I play. She plays.

I obey. He obeys.