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English spelling can be a tricky aspect of learning the language, especially for EAL (English as an Additional Language) learners. This guide aims to clarify the key English spelling rules related to verbs, nouns, and adjectives. By understanding these rules, youll improve your spelling skills and feel more confident in your writing. 1. Spelling Rules for Verbsa. Adding -s or -es for Third Person SingularWhen forming the third person singular (he, she, it) in the present simple tense, most verbs simply add an -s. However, verbs that end in -ch, -sh, -s, -x, or -z add -es.Rule: Add -s to most verbs.Example: run runs (He runs every morning.)Rule: Add -es to verbs ending in -ch, -sh, -s, -x, or -z.Example: watch watches (She watches TV at night.)b. Doubling the Final ConsonantWhen a one-syllable verb ends in a single vowel followed by a single consonant, double the final consonant before adding -ed or -ing.Rule: Double the final consonant if the verb is one syllable and follows the vowel-consonant pattern.Example: stop stopped (They stopped talking.)Example: run running (He is running fast.)c. Dropping the Final -eFor verbs ending in a silent -e, drop the -e before adding -ing or -ed.Rule: Drop the final -e before adding -ing or -ed.Example: make making (She is making a cake.)Example: live lived (They lived in Spain for a year.)d. Changing -y to -iWhen a verb ends in a consonant + -y, change the -y to -i before adding -ed or -es.Rule: Change -y to -i before adding -ed or -es.Example: carry carried (He carried the bags.)Example: study studies (She studies hard every day.)2. Spelling Rules for Nounsa. Forming PluralsThe most common way to form plurals in English is by adding -s. However, there are several exceptions:Rule: Add -s to most nouns.Example: cat cats (There are three cats.)Rule: Add -es to nouns ending in -ch, -sh, -s, -x, or -z.Example: box boxes (She bought two boxes.)Rule: Change -y to -ies if a noun ends in a consonant + -y.Example: baby babies (The babies are sleeping.)Rule: Change -f or -fe to -ves for some nouns.Example: leaf leaves (The leaves are falling.)b. Possessive FormTo show possession, add an apostrophe and -s to singular nouns and just an apostrophe to plural nouns ending in -s.Rule: Add s to singular nouns.Example: dog dogs (The dogs bone.)Rule: Add to plural nouns ending in -s.Example: dogs dogs (The dogs owner.)3. Spelling Rules for Adjectivesa. Comparative and Superlative FormsTo form the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives, different rules apply based on the adjectives length and ending.Rule: For one-syllable adjectives, add -er for the comparative and -est for the superlative.Example: small smaller smallest (This room is smaller than that one. This is the smallest room.)Rule: For adjectives ending in -e, add -r for the comparative and -st for the superlative.Example: nice nicer nicest (She is nicer than her sister. She is the nicest person here.)Rule: For adjectives ending in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, double the final consonant before adding -er or -est.Example: big bigger biggest (This box is bigger. This is the biggest box.)Rule: For adjectives with two syllables ending in -y, change -y to -i and add -er or -est.Example: happy happier happiest (She is happier now. She is the happiest person I know.)b. Spelling Changes in Adjective EndingsWhen adding suffixes like -ly to form adverbs, or -ness to form nouns, be mindful of spelling changes.Rule: For adjectives ending in -y, change -y to -i before adding -ly.Example: happy happily (She smiled happily.)Rule: For adjectives ending in -e, keep the -e before adding -ly.Example: complete completely (He finished the task completely.)ConclusionMastering these spelling rules will significantly improve your English writing skills. Remember, practice is key. Pay attention to these rules as you read and write, and over time, they will become second nature. Keep practicing, and youll find that English spelling becomes much easier to manage. Happy learning! Think of Modern English as a brightly colored mosaica large artwork formed of smaller pieces put together. The small pieces are the several languages that helped create the English language, such as Latin, Greek, German, and French, to name a few.The mosaic is beautiful and easy to interpret from afar. But if you get close enough to examine the intricate pieces and rules that hold the language together, youll easily get overwhelmed. This is because many of the rules are fluid and workexcept when they dont. What makes this even more confusing is that English language rules differ across regions. What may be the norm in the United States, might not be in Britain, Canada, or Australia. Its enough to frustrate native speakers and English language learners alike. Below, well examine three of the most common spelling rules and their exceptions.What makes English a difficult language to learn is that it is influenced by several languages. Credit: Shorter Oxford Dictionary (1973)I Before E, Except After CThis rule is one of the first ones taught to those learning the English language, but mostly because it rhymes and is easy to remember, not because its immaculate (its not). It explains that when the letters i and e appear next to each other, i is written before e in most cases, except if the two letters immediately follow the letter c. I before E Except after C Believe Receive Piece Deceit Thief Receipt Field Perceive However, this is a perfect example of a common spelling rule that doesnt always hold true and has a multitude of exceptions:Efficient, neither, ancient, foreign, caffeineThis rule can serve as a more accurate guide if you know the full rhyme: I before e, except after c, or when sounding like a /e/, as in Neighbor or Weigh.Freight, eight, sleigh, weightThe Three-Letter RuleContent words (verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and most nouns) communicate meaning, definition, or explanation in the sentence in which they occur. A function word (pronouns, preposition, conjunctions, etc.), on the other hand, performs grammatical functions and helps structure sentences. The Three-Letter Rule states that most content words have at least three letters, whereas one or two-letter words are mostly function words. This rule is especially helpful when trying to figure out how to spell a single-syllable word or when trying to decide which of two homophones to use. Content words (verbs, nouns, etc.) Function words (prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, etc.) Buy By Inn In Eye I Oar Or The main exception to this rule is when be and do are used as main verbs. In that case, they would be considered content words. A few other two-lettered content words are go, no, and up (when used as an adjective).Doubling a Final ConsonantWhen adding a suffix to a word, knowing when to double a final consonant or not can be tricky. The rule of thumb is to double the consonant when a single vowel precedes the consonant in a single-syllable word.Bar Barred, barringHop Hopped, hopping, hopperRob Robbed, robbing, robberStop Stopped, stopping, stopper, stoppableThe consonant should also be doubled when a two-syllable word ends with a vowel before the consonant and is stressed on the second syllable.Admit Admitted, admittingForget Forgettable, forgettingOmit Omitted, omittingThere are exceptions, of course. A few of them are:1) Dont double a consonant that follows another consonant.(back = backed, not backked)2) Dont double X or W.(tax = taxed, not taxxed)3) Dont double consonants after two vowels.(foul = fouled, not foulled)Avoiding Common Mistakes in SpellingThese are just three of many common spelling rules. Trying to remember all of them (plus their spelling exceptions) might seem like an impossible feat. Thats why its a smart idea to have a writing assistant like LanguageTool that double-checks your writing for spelling and grammar mistakes, suggests stylistic improvements, and helps enhance your texts with powerful synonyms. Gina Gina holds a Bachelor of Arts in English. With a passion for creating art with words, she spends her free time reading and writing. And no, we didnt force her to say that. You can find her strolling the shorelines with her loyal canine companion, Mango, or (painfully) cheering on her favorite team, the Miami Dolphins. Weve made a mistake, forgotten about an important detail, or havent managed to get the point across? Lets help each other to perfect our writing. Qvasimodo / iStock / Getty Images Plus Used under Getty Images license Spelling rules can take the mystery out of spelling by demonstrating patterns among seemingly unrelated words. Learning these rules will help you see connections between unfamiliar words as well as words you already know. Of course, there's no such thing as a hard-and-fast spelling rule. There are many exceptions because English borrows from many languages and is constantly changing and adopting new words. Still, it's important to master these basic spelling rules. They might not work every time, but theyll apply often enough to help you succeed. The letter "q" is almost always followed by "u," as in words like queen, earthquake and equity. When used in this way, the "u" is not considered to be a vowel. There are a few exceptions to this rule, but the words they apply to are not commonly used words most people are likely to encounter. A number of words are pronounced with an /s/ sound after the letter "x," which often leads to spelling mistakes. The rule is that the letter "s" never follows "x" in a word. Instead, the letter "c" is used to achieve the /s/ sound in the word, as is the case with words like excise and excite. Every syllable of every word includes at least one vowel. Most one-syllable words with a short vowel sound need only one vowel. When you're spelling a word, say it out loud to identify the number of syllables. Then, look at what you've written to verify that each syllable has at least one vowel. If not, rethink the way you have spelled it. Some syllables may have a vowel diagraph, which is a pair of vowels that form a single sound. In many words that include an "i" and an "e" side-by-side, the "i" comes first. Words that illustrate this concept include niece, belief, cashier and achieve. It is generally true that "i" comes before "e," unless the vowel pair follows the letter "c" (such as with conceit, ceiling), or if the vowel pair makes a long /a/ sound, such as in neighbor or weigh. However, there are quite a few special-case exceptions, as with words like leisure, height and heist. For words that end with a /k/ sound, you'll need to know when to use "ck" vs. just a "k" on its own. The rule is to use "ck" immediately after a short vowel, such as with duck, sick, or tick. Otherwise, the word should end with a "k," as with silk, balk, beak, or peak. If the letters "f" or "l" fall at the end of a one-syllable word, they should usually be doubled. Examples include words like stiff and stall. The only exception is words that that end with a consonant blend, such as whirl or wharf. Do not double "f" or "l" with such terms. The letter "s" is also usually doubled at the end of a single-syllable word, though there are more exceptions for "s" than for "f" and "l." Words like bliss, kiss and class are examples of terms that require two s's at the end. There are quite a few exceptions. Get familiar with these exceptions, so you'll know whether to use one "s" or two at the end of a word. Words that end with an "s" that's pronounced as /z/ end with one "s." (his or was) Plural words that end in "s" have only one "s". (cats, dogs burgers)Present tense verbs that end with an "s" have only one. (dances, sings, climbs)Words that have three or fewer letters have only one. (gas, yes)The word "this" is a special case that has only one "s" at the end. Many words end with a silent "e." When adding a suffix that starts with a vowel, the silent "e" should usually be removed in American English. For example, the word race would become racing when adding -ing. When adding -ed to bake, the new word would be baked. Get familiar with the exceptions so you can always correctly decide whether to drop the silent "e" or keep it. Keep silent "e" when adding -able (manageable). Keep silent "e" when a word ends with two e's (fleeing).The suffix -y is a special case. The silent "e" is removed for shiny, but kept with dicey. When adding a suffix to a word that ends with a vowel and a "y," just add the suffix to the original word. You won't need to drop or change any letters. For example, jockey simply becomes jockeying or jockeyed, because the last two letters of the original word are a vowel followed by a "y." With a vowel followed by a "y" at the end of a word, you can add any suffix without having to adjust the original term. The same is true for toy (toying, toyed) and journey (journeying, journeyed), as well as other terms that end with a vowel and "y" combination. The word all has two l's at the end when written alone, but the prefix -al has only one "l." Words that begin with the prefix -al should not be spelled as if they are compound words that feature the full word "all." Words with -al as a prefix include almost, also, altogether, and always. As such, they correctly feature only one "l" in the first syllable. The rule for adding prefixes to a word is much simpler than adding a suffix, from a spelling perspective. Generally, adding a prefix to a word does not change the correct spelling. So, adding de- to "activate" results in "deactivate." Similarly, and adding non- to "fiction" becomes "nonfiction." Proper apostrophe placement in contractions is an important part of spelling. An apostrophe should be placed in the exact spot where there is a missing letter (or multiple missing letters). For example, the apostrophe in the word "cant" signifies the missing letters "n" and "o" from the word cannot.People sometimes shorten the word old to ol. Have you ever seen someone write it as ol? If so, that apostrophe was placed in error, because the apostrophe stands in place of the "d" that is missing from old. There are no commonly used words that end with the letter "v" or "j." If you're spelling a word that ends with a /v/ sound, you can be sure that there's a silent "e" on the end, as with hive or jive. Words that end with a /j/ sound are typically spelled with -dge and the end, such as judge or edge. If you're writing a word that is used in ordinary communication, it won't end with a "v" or "j." Its tough to encompass all the twists and turns of the English language into one concise list. Rules is a tough word to use in this context, because grammar rules tend to shift, depending on the situation. Still, everyone needs to know the basic spelling rules. Want to do more to improve your spelling? Review lists of 100 commonly misspelled words. Then, explore another 150 often misspelled words! Within these lists, youll discover helpful tips and additional rules thatll help you commit these tricky terms to memory. You'll be able to rise above over-reliance on autocorrect before you know it! Words in English are not always spelled as they are pronounced as there are spelling rules. Spelling in English follows some basic rules and the majority of English words (around 75%) follow these rules. You can learn the rules but there are always exceptions to the rules that need to be learned too.The main basic spelling rules of English relate to: prefixes and suffixes; spelling and plurals; doubling letters; dropping and adding letters; verb forms. This section focuses on British English but also covers some basic differences in spelling between British and American English.Spelling Rule 1: I Before E, Except After CThe rule goes like this:I before E, Except after C, unless it sounds like A, as inneighbororweighThere are many exceptions to this rulemaybe its better to think of it as a guidelinebut it can be helpful with words like the ones below.I before ECorrect: Would you like apieceof cake? Jerry willbelieveanything. Theyre planting new grass on the footballfield. Except before CCorrect: Darnellreceivedan A on his spelling test. Jeremy spotted a spider on theceiling. I never expected suchdeceitfrom you! Unless it sounds like ACorrect: Ourneighborslive in abeigehouse. How much does the kittenweigh? Heres a tip:Its a good idea to memorize these common exceptions to the rule:seize, either, weird, height, foreign, leisure, conscience, counterfeit, forfeit, neither, science, species, sufficientSpelling Rule 2: Adding Suffixes to Words that End in YWhen you add a suffix that starts with E (such as-ed, -er,or-est) to a word that ends in Y, the Y usually changes to an I.Cry cried crierDry dried drierLay laid (note the irregular spelling: no E)Baby babiesFamily familiesUgly ugliestCorrect: This is thedustiestold house Ive ever seen. The best bakers make theflakiestpie crusts. The soup needs thetiniestpinch of salt, and then its perfect. Seawaterdriesout your skin.The Y doesnt change for the suffix-ing.Correct: The baby has beencryingfor almost an hour. The minute we brought in the new puppy, our mother beganlayingdown sheets of newspaper. We should spend some timetidyingbefore the guests arrive.If the word in question has two consonants before the Y, change the Y to I before adding the suffixly.Sloppy sloppilyHappy happilyScary scarilyCorrect: Funnilyenough, I said the same thing just yesterday.Of course, there are always exceptions:Correct: Funny, he saiddryly. Spelling Rule 3: The Silent ETypically, an E after a consonant at the end of a word is silent, but it does affect the way you pronounce the vowel that comes before the consonant. The E makes the vowel sound of the word (or syllable) long (like the I sound in kite) instead of short (like the I sound in kitten). Its important to get the silent E right, because its presence or absence can change the meaning of a word.Example: The monkeybitme. Keep your fingers out of the cage: the monkeysbite.By adding the E to the end of bit, the word is changed from past to present tense. Example: Dontcutyourself on the sharp knives. The kitten is reallycute.In this case, the silent E creates a completely different word.When adding a suffix like-ed, -eror-est, the silent E is usually dropped from the end of the root word.Example: The dogbaredhis teeth at the mail carrier. The babys eyes were thebluestId ever seen. Spelling Rule 4: Double ConsonantsWatch out for double consonants. It can be difficult to hear them when a word is said aloudespecially if the word has only one syllable. Double consonants are frequently found in words that have suffixes added to them:Example: Idroppedthe heavy bags to the floor. Someonecalledfor you earlier.Some words can be pronounced as either one or two syllables, but the spelling remains the same:Example: Blessedare the meek for they shall inherit the Earth.In this sentence, which is a fixed expression,blessedis pronounced as two syllables:bless-edExample: The fatherblessedhis son before the wedding.In this sentence, blessed is pronounced as one syllable:blest.Be particularly careful with words where a double consonant can change the pronunciation and the meaning of the word.Example: Cacti are native to thedesert. Would you like ice cream fordessert? Spelling Rule 5: Plural SuffixesWhen do you addsand when do you addesto make a plural? Its not quite as arbitrary as it may seem. The rule is this: if a word ends ins,sh,ch,x, orz, you addes.Correct: I only had to take one bus; you had to take two buses. I only get one wish; you get two wishes. I have a splotch on my shirt; you have two splotches. Im carrying one box; youre carrying two boxes. Would you like a spritz of perfume? Two spritzes, please.For all other endings, adds.Correct: I have one cat; you have two cats. I have one cup; you have two cups. I have one shoe; you have two shoes. Where is my other shoe? I have one ski; you have two skis. How am I supposed to ski? I have one toque; you have two toques.Be careful of words that dont change when theyre pluralized (e.g., fish, sheep, moose). If youre unsure, check the dictionary. We tend to use the wordbugloosely for any very small creature with legs. However, a truebugis defined as belonging to the orderHemiptera. These creatures characteristically have tough forewings and lack teeth. Truebugshave a stylet (a mouth shaped like a straw) that they use to suck juices from plants. Bugs are a type of insect, whichbelong to the classInsecta,and they are characterized by three-part bodies, usually two pairs of wings, and three pairs of legs, (e.g., bees and mosquitoes). Arthropods (spiders, ticks, centipedes, etc.) is a separate phylum frombugsandinsects. All of this does not mean that you are wrong to call various insectsbugs; because of the common usage of this meaning, it is certainly acceptable. homesitemapcommon errors spelling rules At first glance, spelling in English looks complicated. However, with practice, you will soon discover that it is not as bad as it initially looks. This lesson covers 10 important spelling rules that will help you master English spelling. Learning to spell correctly is important for the following reasons: Correct spelling ensures that written messages are clear and easily understood, preventing confusion and misinterpretation. It helps improve overall writing skills. Confident spellers can focus on expressing their ideas, rather than being hinderd by constant corrections and revisions. It reflects professionalism and attention to detail, whether in academic, professional, or personal contexts. It fosters language appreciation and a deeper understanding of English, allowing appreciation of the rich history and etymology of words Table of Contents (1) Adding a suffix to word ending "-y" (2) Adding "-es" to a word ending "-s," "-ss," "-z," "-ch," "-sh", or "-x" (3) Dropping the "-e" (4) Writing "i" before "e" except after "c" (5) Changing "-f" to "-ves" (6) Doubling the final consonant (7) Adding the suffix "-ful" (8) Adding the suffix "-ly" (9) Adding the prefix "al-" (10) Adding "-s" or -"-es" to a word ending "-o" If the suffix starts with e, change the y to an i. word ending -ysuffixcorrect spelling cry-edcried ugly-estugliest family-esfamilies If the suffix is -ing, leave the y. words ending -ysuffixcorrect spellings cry, try, tidy-ingcrying, trying, tidying If suffix is -ly and the word ends [two consonants] + y, change the y to an i. words ending [two consonants] + ysuffixcorrect spellings happy, funny, jolly-lyhappily, funnily, jollily Exceptions: There are exceptions, which must be learned separately. For example: word ending [two consonants] + ysuffixcorrect spelling sly-lyslyly not slyily There are two reasons to add -s or -es to the end of a word: To make a noun plural (e.g., cat > cats, tree > trees) To make a verb fit with "he," "she," or "it" (e.g., he looks, she thinks, it likes) If the words ends -s, -ss, -z, -ch, -sh, or -x, use -es (not -s). example wordreason to add "-s" or "-es"correct spelling busmake pluralbuses foxmake pluralfoxes businessmake pluralbusinesss catchverb changehe catches washverb changeit washes boxverb changehe boxs Changing a verb to fit is called verb conjugation. Drop the silent e to add a suffix that starts with a vowel (e.g., -ing, -ed, -er, -est, -able). example wordvowel suffixcorrect spelling write-ingwriting imagine-ableimaginable loose-estloosest opposite-ionopposition promote-ablepromoteable Exceptions: Some words that end -ge or -ce, keep the e to maintain the soft sound of the g or c. example wordvowel suffixcorrect spelling courage-ouscourageous notice-ablenoticeable Not all words that end -ge or -ce follow this rule: example wordvowel suffixcorrect spelling stage-ingstaging splice-ingsplicing If you're unsure whether to use ie or ei, follow this well-known rhyme: i before e except after c uncertaintycommentcorrect spelling believe or beleive?i before ebelieve recieve or receive?after c, so switchreceive cieling or ceiling?after c, so switchceiling Exceptions 1: Keep i before e when the c sounds like sh. uncertaintycommentcorrect spelling ancient or anceint?c sounds like shancient efficient or efficeint?c sounds like shefficient Exceptions 2: Keep i before e except when the pairing sounds like A. uncertaintycommentcorrect spelling weigh or wiegh?pairing sounds like Aweigh freight or frieght?pairing sounds like Afreight Exceptions 3: There are some noteworthy exceptions: conscience, counterfeit, either, foreign, forfeit, height, leisure, neither, science, seize, species, sufficient, weird When pluralizing a word ending -f, use the -ves ending. example wordscorrect spellings leaf, knife, shelfleaves, knives, shelves Exceptions 1: If the word ends -rf, a normal -s might also be acceptable. example wordcorrect spellings dwarfdwarves, dwarfs scarfscarves, scarfs Exceptions 2: Some words that end [two vowels] + f just add -s. example wordscorrect spellings chief, roof, beliefchiefs, roofs, beliefs Some words that end [two vowels] + f use the -ves ending (e.g., thief > thieves, leaf > leaves). Exceptions 3: If the word ends -ff, add -s. example wordscorrect spellings cliff, sniffcliffs, sniffs (6) Doubling the final consonant If a one-syllable word ends vowel + consonant, double the final consonant before a vowel suffix. example wordvowel suffixcorrect spelling sit-ingsitting big-erbigger tap-abletappable thin-estthinnest A one-syllable word is also called a monosyllabic word. With multi-syllable words, apply the same rule if the final syllable is stressed. example wordvowel suffixcorrect spelling refer-ingreferring begin-erbeginner tap-abletappable Note the end syllable must be stressed. Look at these examples with "offer" and "develop," which are not end-stressed. example wordvowel suffixcorrect spelling offer-ingoffering develop-erdeveloper (7) Adding the suffix "-ful" The suffix -ful always has one l. example wordscorrect spellings faith, carefaithful, careful Note that the suffix "-fully" has two Ls (e.g., faithfully, carefully). (8) Adding the suffix "-ly" If a word ends -e, add -ly. example wordscorrect spellings love, live, definitelovely, lively, definitely Exception: True becomes truly not truely . If a word ends -le, remove the -e and add -y. example wordscorrect spellings gentle, subtlegently, subtly (9) Adding the prefix "al-" The prefix al- comes from "all," but it always has one l. correct spellings also, always, almighty, already Do not confuse the prefixed words with the two-word phrase (e.g., already/all ready, alright/all right, altogether/all together). (10) Adding "-s" or -"-es" to a word ending "-o" The he/she/it version of go and do are goes and does. verbreason to add "-s" or "-es"correct spelling doverb changehe does goverb changeit goes The following words add -es. For everything else, add -s. words for "-es"correct spellings domino, echo, embargo, hero, mosquito, potato, tomato, torpedo, vetodominoes, echoes, embargoes, heroes, mosquitoes, potatoes, tomatoes, torpedoes, vetoes For the rest of the words ending -o, you can just add -s. Nevertheless, here are some additional rules for added confidence: If the word ends vowel + o, add -s. example wordscorrect spellings patio, video, tattoopatios, videos, tattoos If the word is a musical term or instrument, add -s. example wordscorrect spellings solo, soprano, banjo, cello, pianosolos, sopranos, banjos, cellos, pianos If the word is an abbreviated version of a longer word, add -s. example wordlong formcorrect spelling photophotographphotos hippohippopotamushippos kilokilogramkilos typotypographical errortypos If the word is "foreign," add -s. example wordscorrect spellings stiletto, kimono, taco, infernostilettos, kimonos, tacos, infernos Exceptions: The following common words ending -o can be pluralized with -s or -es. example wordacceptable plurals buffalobuffalos or buffaloes cargocargos or cargoes frescofrescos or frescoes ghettoghettos or ghettoes halohalos or haloes mangomangos or mangoes mementomementos or mementoes mottomottos or mottoes tornadotornados or tornadoes volcanovolcanos or volcanoes zerozeros or zeroes You might also like... Help us improve... Was something wrong with this page? Use #gm to find us quicker. Create a QR code for this, or any, page. XYouTubeFacebookmailing listgrammar forum Spelling is an important aspect of communication, as it allows us to convey our ideas and thoughts accurately. However, with so many words in the English language, it can be challenging to remember how to spell them all correctly. Fortunately, there are some basic spelling rules that can make the process easier. These rules are not only helpful for students learning to spell but also for individuals who want to improve their spelling skills. In this blog post, we will discuss some of the most important spelling rules that everyone should know.Download PDF What are the basic spelling rules?There are many spelling rules in the English language, but here are some of the most basic ones:i before e, except after c or when pronounced ay as in neighbor or weigh.For example:Achieve (c comes before i, so use ie)Receipt (c comes before e, so use ei)Weigh (pronounced with a long a, so use ei)Neighbor (pronounced with a long a, so use ei)Deceive (c comes before i, so use ie)Believe (no c, no long a sound, so use ei)When a word ends in a consonant and y, change the y to an i and add es to make it plural. For example, baby becomes babies.For example:Baby > BabiesCity > CitiesCherry > CherriesStory > StoriesPony > PoniesArmy > ArmiesParty > PartiesCountry > CountriesLady > LadiesFly > FliesWhen adding a suffix to a word that ends in a consonant followed by a single vowel followed by another consonant, double the final consonant. For example, the verb run becomes running.For example:Run -> RunningBig -> BiggerHop -> HoppingSwim -> SwimmingRob -> RobbedChat -> ChattingSlam -> SlammedBegin -> BeginningStop -> StoppedBat -> BattingNote that this rule only applies when adding a suffix that begins with a vowel (such as -ing, -er, or -ed) to a word that ends in a consonant followed by a single vowel followed by another consonant.Words that end in s, x, z, ch, or sh often form their plural by adding es instead of s. For example, box becomes boxes.For example:Box Boxes: I have two boxes of books.Fox Foxes: I saw two foxes in the woods.Buzz Buzzes: The bee buzzes around the flower.Church Churches: There are many churches in this city.Dish Dishes: Can you wash the dishes for me?Brush Brushes: I need to buy some new brushes for painting.Bench Benches: Lets sit on the benches in the park.Quiz Quizzes: We have two quizzes next week.As you can see, adding es to these words helps to maintain their pronunciation and make them easier to say in their plural form.C sounds like k when it comes before a, o, or u. It sounds like s when it comes before e, i, or y.For example:Cat [kt]Cop [kp]Cup [kp]However, when C is followed by the vowels e, i, or y, it produces a soft s sound, as in cent, city, and cycle.Examples:Cent [sent]City [sti]Cycle [sakl]This difference in pronunciation is due to the historical development of the English language, which borrowed words from various sources, including Latin and French. In these languages, C before e, i, or y was pronounced as s, while before a, o, or u it was pronounced as k. Over time, English adopted this distinction in its own pronunciation of the letter C. The letter G in English can have two different sounds: the hard // sound (as in goat) and the soft /d/ sound (as in gem). The pronunciation of G depends on the vowel that follows it.When G is followed by the vowels a, o, or u, it usually has the hard // sound. Examples include garden, goat, and gum.Examples:Game /em/Goat /ot/Gut /t/When G is followed by the vowels e, i, or y, it usually has the soft /d/ sound. Examples include gentle, gin, and gyro.Examples:Gem /dem/Giraffe /drf/Gym /dm/There are, however, some exceptions to this rule, and certain words may have irregular pronunciations. For example, guitar is pronounced with a hard g sound, even though it is followed by the vowel u.Overall, the pronunciation of G in English can be somewhat tricky, but understanding this rule can help you improve your pronunciation and avoid common mistakes.I before e except after c, or when sounded like a as in neighbor or weigh.For example:Here are some examples where I comes before E after C:ReceiveDeceiveConceitReceiptDeceitConceivePerceiveAnd here are some examples where E comes before I but not after C:WeighNeighEightNeighborFreightDeignFeignReignAs you can see, there are many exceptions to this rule, and its important to remember that its not always reliable.When adding a suffix to a word that ends in e, drop the e before adding the suffix (unless the suffix starts with an e). For example, the word smile becomes smiling.For example:love + ed = lovedhope + ful = hopefuldance + ing = dancinglike + ly = likelyexcite + ment = excitementsmile + y = smileysurprise + ing = surprisinguse + less = uselesscome + ing = comingmove + ment = movementWhen a word ends in a consonant followed by le, the e is usually dropped before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel. For example, the word able becomes ability.For example:Able + ity = AbilityTangle + ed = TangledCrumble + ing = CrumblingJingle + y = JinglyMingle + er = MinglerSparkle + es = SparklesIn each of these examples, the final e in the base word is dropped before adding the suffix that begins with a vowel.Words that end in y preceded by a consonant usually change the y to i before adding a suffix. For example, happy becomes happiness.For example:Happy HappinessBusy BusinessBaby BabiesCandy CandiesCarry CarriedApply AppliedFry FriedSpy SpyingBeauty BeautifulMercy MercifullyNote that this rule does not always apply. For example, words that end in y preceded by a vowel generally do not change the y before adding a suffix (e.g. play playing). Additionally, some words ending in y preceded by a consonant do not follow this rule (e.g. day days).When a word ends in c, k, r, f, or l preceded by a single vowel, and the stress is on the final syllable, double the final consonant before adding a suffix that starts with a vowel. For example, the verb refer becomes referred.For example:hop + ed = hopped (the stress is on the final syllable and the final consonant p is doubled because its preceded by a single vowel)jog + ing = jogging (the final consonant g is not doubled because the stress is not on the final syllable)chat + er = chatter (the final consonant t is doubled because its preceded by a single vowel and the stress is on the final syllable)big + er = bigger (the final consonant g is not doubled because its not preceded by a single vowel)plan + ing = planning (the final consonant n is not doubled because its not preceded by a single vowel)pat + ed = patted (the final consonant t is doubled because its preceded by a single vowel and the stress is on the final syllable)smell + y = smelly (the final consonant l is doubled because its preceded by a single vowel and the stress is on the final syllable)When two vowels are next to each other in a word, the first vowel is usually pronounced as a long vowel sound. For example, the word boat has a long o sound.For example:beatcoatdinefuelheatmoatneatpieroadsouptievialNote that while this is a general rule in English, there are many exceptions and variations in pronunciation depending on factors such as regional dialects and individual speech patterns.Some words have silent letters. For example, the k in knight is silent, and the h in hour is silent.For example:KnightHonestHourKneeWristPsychologyIslandSalmonTombDebtIn all of these words, one or more letters are not pronounced, but they are still written in the word. These silent letters often come from the words etymology, which is the study of its origin and history.Remember, spelling rules in English can be complex and there are many exceptions. However, by learning and practicing these rules, you can improve your spelling skills.Must Try: Hardest Words to Spell in EnglishHow to spell words correctly?Here are some tips for spelling words correctly:Learn the spelling rules and patterns for English words. This includes the basic spelling rules such as the ones I mentioned earlier, as well as more complex rules such as how to spell words with prefixes and suffixes.Practice, practice, practice. The more you practice spelling words correctly, the more natural it will become.Use mnemonics or memory tricks to help you remember difficult words. For example, to remember how to spell necessary, you could use the phrase one collar and two sleeves are necessary.Break down longer words into smaller parts to make them easier to spell. For example, the word maintenance can be broken down into main-ten-ance.Use a dictionary or spell-checker to check the spelling of words you are unsure of.Read a lot. The more you read, the more you will become familiar with the spelling of common words.Write regularly. Writing helps you practice your spelling and become more comfortable with using words correctly in context.However, by following these tips and continuing to practice, you can improve your spelling skills over time. One reason behind the confusing spelling of some words is that English borrows from different languages. But recognizing spelling patterns can reduce all the mystery and frustration.Here are 12 English spelling rules that every person should know. I also compiled a list of examples and a worksheet to guide you!Y turning into I when you add a vowel suffix that starts with E is a common spelling pattern. These suffixes include -est, -er, or -ed.Examples:Lay laid (irregular spelling for irregular plural form)Cry cried crier.Lovely lovelier loveliest.Family families.Deity deities.Dry dried drier driest.Baby babies.Ugly uglier ugliest.Heres a sentence example:Incorrect: The three familys gathered on New Years Eve.Correct: The three families gathered on New Years Eve.Some words are spelling rule breakers. The letter Y remains despite the suffix starting with E.Examples:Pray prayerPlay playerTake a look at these sentences:Incorrect: We praied all day for her recovery.Correct: We prayed all day for her recovery.The ie and ei pair of vowels are confusing spelling issues many people encounter. This pair of vowels are called vowel digraphs. Remember that if the letter before the vowels is C, the correct pair is ei.Examples:Receive.Deceit.Receipt.Deceive.Conceited.Ceiling.If the digraph does not have a C before it, the correct order is I, then E.Examples:Achieve.Believe.Chief.Cashier.Field.Grief.Relieved.Shriek.This spelling rule is probably the most essential. The vowel pair is one of the most common spelling mistakes we commit.But the age-old I before E, except after C is not the complete rule yet. Its more like, I before E, except after C, unless it sounds like A. That means words with ay sounds are standard exceptions.Examples:Vein.Neigh.Eight.Weight.Weigh.Neighbor.Veil.Sleigh.Here are more examples:The singer isnt conceited despite her fame and fortune.Help me pick a veil for my wedding.She cant wait to visit the strawberry field.Each syllable should be accompanied by at least one vowel, whether you have a mono- or multi-syllable word. One-syllable words with short vowel sounds sometimes only need one vowel. But this rule only applies to some commonly used terms.The trick is to say the word out loud and count the syllable. After this, check that each syllable has at least one vowel.Examples:Raisin.Bar.Bartender.Chair.Deluded.Shenanigan.Excitement.Consider these sentences:The priest said a little pryr for the sick man. (This is incorrect because there are no vowels).The priest said a little prayer for the sick man.A common spelling rule is that some words with a consonant sound also have a silent E. However, this E does not affect the words pronunciation.The letter E only makes the vowel sound of the word longer instead of short. For example, the sound of the letter I in kite is long compared to the I in kitten.Examples:Rite.Bite.Bike.Pride.Cute.Prune.Bared.Plane.Tame.Blue.Mastering this spelling rule will help many language users in their writing.A hard-and-fast spelling rule does not exist. This rule also dismantles one of the most common false spelling rules. The myth is that the silent E in the end always gets omitted when you add a suffix.Examples:Mileage (not milage).Canoeing (not canoeing).Manageable (not manageable).Lovely (not lovly).Here are some sentence examples:Incorrect: The project is easily managable.Correct: The project is easily manageable.Mono-syllable words with a vowel in the middle usually have double consonants if the letter after is F, L, or S. This rule is also known as the floss rule.Examples:Staff.Stuff.Fill.Hiss.Ball.Pass.This single-syllable word hiss might be a tough-to-spell English word for some, especially those who dont know the word.You should also use double consonants when a multi-syllable word ends in a consonant and is preceded by a vowel. This vowel should be accented for the rule to apply.Examples:Control controlled.Begin beginning.Brat bratty.Here are some sentence examples:Incorrect: Jean is driving toward the tol gate.Correct: Jean is driving toward the toll gate.Incorrect: How does one pas this impossible test?Correct: How does one pass this impossible test?Regular plural forms use the suffixes -s or -es. But when do you use -es? This step is where many get confused. But the basic rule is to ad -es if the word ends in -x, -z, -ch, -sh, or -s.Examples:Bus buses.Church churches.Crash crashes.Quiz Quizzes.Miss misses.Box boxes.Bush bushes.Note how some words double the ending consonant before adding -es.Take a look at these examples of plural suffixes in sentences:Incorrect: After the first bus, you still need to ride three busses.Incorrect: After the first bus, you still need to ride three bus.Correct: After the first bus, you still need to ride three buses.Incorrect: The boxs are hidden in the basement.Correct: The boxes are hidden in the basement.One cause of spelling mistakes is the letter S sound after the letter x. Note that the letter S is never found after the letter X. Instead, C is the letter you must use for the s sound.Examples:Excite.Excise.Except.Exception.Excel.Excess.Excerpt.Lets try using excel in a sentence:Incorrect: These children will exsel in Mathematics.Incorrect: These children will exel in Mathematics.Incorrect: These children will ecxel in Mathematics.Correct: These children will excel in Mathematics.This guideline is a basic English spelling rule everyone will remember. When mono-syllable or one-syllable words include a vowel at the center, it should have a short vowel sound.Examples:Cat.Dog.Man.Dad.Mom.Got.Hat.-ck vs. -k is a common dilemma for words that end with k. Always use -ck after a short vowel.Examples:Duck.Tick.Back.Lack.Rack.Clack.Sick.Lick.Gimmick.Heres a sentence example to help you remember the rule:Incorrect: This trik will make your workout routine more efficient.Correct: This trick will make your workout routine more efficient.Otherwise, the ending of the word should only end in K.Silk.Peak.Reek.Meek.Beak.Break.Beak.Balk.Heres a sentence example to help you remember the rule:Incorrect: Rain leacked from the broken roof.Correct: Rain leaked from the broken roof.Keep all the letters if you plan to add a suffix to a word with a vowel and Y ending. The whole term stays because youre not dropping any letter.Examples:Jockey jockeyed jockeying.Toy toying toyed.Journey journeying journeyed.Heres a sentence example to help you remember the rule:Incorrect: The parents bought Tony and Travis trollies.Correct: The parents bought tony and Travis trolleys.The word all includes two Ls if you write it alone. But if you use the prefix, it should only have one L as in -al. Words that start with this prefix are not to be spelled as compound words that have the whole word all.Examples:Almost.Also.Always.Altogether.Incorrect: The kind woman allways offers him some food.Correct: The kind woman always offers him some food.In the vast English language, the letter Q is commonly followed by the letter U. Play it safe by always putting a U when you spell any word with a Q.Examples:Questions.Quill.Quit.Quite.Quiet.Bouquet.Banquet.Queer.Quaint.Acquaintance.However, an exception to this spelling perspective is not using QU in less common words.Examples:Now you know the 12 basic spelling rules to follow and a list of their examples. Ive also shown you that English spelling has its fair share of exceptions. For instance, we use ei instead of ie if a letter C comes before the digraph. What other spelling tips can you think of? If you want more help to hone your skills, check out our guide to the varieties of English spellings.Try the spelling tests on the printable worksheet I provided below!There are many English spelling rules that can seem confusing to spellers. This article will outline the most common English spelling rules and provide examples of how to apply them. After reading this post, youll be able to spell words correctly and catch your mistakes while proofreading