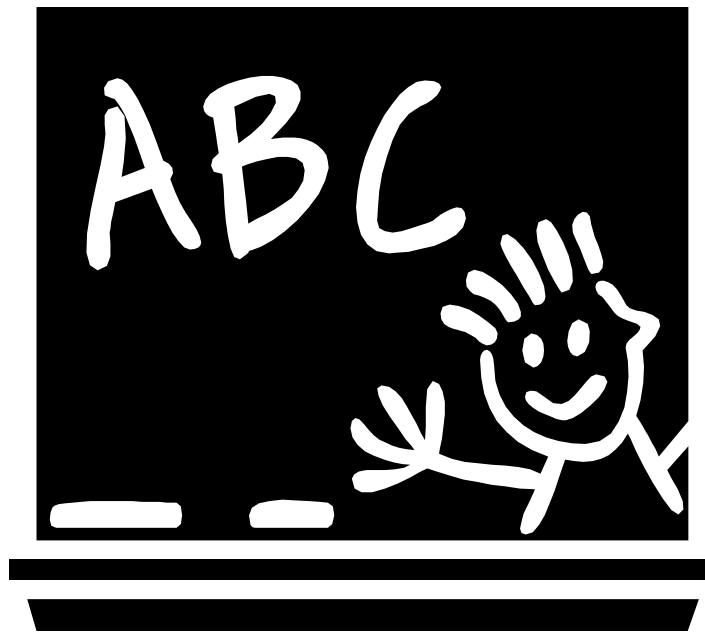


# A GUIDE TO SPELLING



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## **STRATEGIES FOR SPELLING**

Read this handout to help you plan your study in spelling. Come back to it later when you feel the need for variety in your study methods. As you read this, look at the examples closely.

### **STRATEGIES THAT WILL NOT WORK.**

1. Repeated copying of the words, writing them over and over, won't help you if it is the only strategy you use.
2. Trying to spell a word on the basis of sound – letter clues only occasionally result in a correct spelling. This strategy of “sounding out” words is especially ineffective with words from spelling tests or other lists of difficult to spell words.

### **STRATEGIES THAT WILL WORK.**

Develop study methods which enable you to form a clear visual image of the word and focus attention on the parts of the word that are misspelled.

1. When correcting your practice quizzes, highlight or underline in a bright color the specific error area in each word you misspelled.

EXAMPLES:

Misspelling  
equailty  
Feburary

Correct spelling  
equality  
February

2. Use the “Letter Mark-Out” method for studying missed words. Mark out any letter or letters missed in a word, write the correct letter or letters above the marked-out ones, and then re-write the complete word to the side of the original misspelling.

EXAMPLES:

visable→	i visable→	visible
equivlent→	a equivlent→	equivalent

3. Use a “Word Bank System”

This strategy is especially useful for the words you find most difficult, for words you may repeatedly misspell during practice.

Put each word on a separate 3x5 note card, along with a sentence using the word. On the back of the card, print the word again, this time leaving blanks in the specific parts of the word incorrectly spelled. This will help you to mentally image the letters belonging there.

Here is a sample card for the word management and the misspelled version, magement:

Side 1

Side 2

management She is a management trainee at Pennys.
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ma_____gement
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4. Imagine words as if they are on a movie screen – BIG letters in living color. Hold this image in your mind.

5. Use the memory device known as association. Look at the feature of the word you want to remember and connect it to something else, maybe something silly, that will fix the correct spelling in your memory.

EXAMPLES:

- To remember the silent g in sign, associate it with the word signature.
  - To remember all right, think of it as the opposite of all wrong.
  - To remember capacity, think of it as cap a city and get the mental image of a huge feed cap on top of a city.
6. Provide yourself enough practice to insure transfer of the conventional spelling into your long-term memory. Try to vary your practice to keep it interesting.

Here are some other spelling strategies that may help:

- Remember that short segments of study are more effective than long ones. Practice frequently, but not for long periods of time, so you can maintain concentration.
- Tape your words and play them back to give yourself practice quizzes.
- Practice typing your word lists.

Please try some of these techniques. Don't just fall back on old study strategies that may not work.

## TEN RULES FOR BETTER SPELLING

(Adapted from Online Handouts, The Writing Center, Arizona State University. [www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/spelling.html](http://www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/spelling.html))

### 1. Take Your Words Apart

Break down your words into their component parts. For example, look at the synonym for “rivalry,” which is “competition.” Why is it spelled “competition” rather than “compitition”? A competition is a petition of two or more people for the same thing; they seek the same objective. You get the conventional spelling by dividing the word into its two parts: **com-petition**.

### 2. Identify Prefixes

A prefix is a meaningful letter or group of letters at the beginning of a word. When a word has a prefix, imagine that there is a hyphen between the word and the prefix, and you will generally see the conventional spelling.

“Dissolve” consists of **dis-solve**. “Disappear” consists of **dis-appear**. So, a word that is combined with the prefix **dis-** is spelled with **ss** if the root word originally begins with **s**, but with a single **s** if it begins with any other letter.

*Examples:* dis-satisfy, dis-similar, dis-appoint, dis-believe, dis-locate, dis-regard; mis-step, mis-understand; over-rated, over-extend; un-natural, un-necessary, un-interesting; under-rate, under-estimate.

### 3. Identify Suffixes

When a word has a suffix (a meaningful letter or group of letters at the end), you can generally apply a test similar to the prefix test. Imagine a hyphen between the word and the suffix. Double the letter if the word ends and the suffix begins with the same letter, but do not double when the two letters are different.

*Examples:* Actual-ly, drunken-ness, soul-less; sincere-ly, clever-ness, heart-less.

#### **4. Double Consonants Before Suffixes –Part 1**

When a monosyllable (a word of one syllable) ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel letter, you double the consonant before adding **ing, ed, er, est**.

*Examples:* star, starr**ing**; tap, tapp**ed**; wrap, wrapp**er**; big, bigg**est**.

#### **5. Double Consonants Before Suffixes –Part 2**

When a word of more than one syllable ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel letter, and when the accent is on the last syllable, you double the consonant before adding **ing, ed, er, est**.

*Examples:* concur, concurr**ing**; commit, committ**ed**; forbid, forbidd**en**; compel, compell**ing**.

If you remember Rules 4 and 5, you will see why the following words are spelled with a single instead of a double consonant: beat, beat**ing**; heat, heater; conquer, conquer**ing**; soft, softest. “Beat” and “hear” end in a single consonant, but the consonant follows two vowel letters instead of a single vowel letter; “conquer” does not have the accent on the last syllable; “soft” ends in two consonants.

#### **6. Drop the E**

When a word ends in a consonant followed by a silent **e**, drop the **e** before you add **ing**.

*Examples:* bribe, brib**ing**; drove, driv**ing**; save, sav**ing**; urge, urg**ing**.

#### **7. Keep the Y Before Adding ING**

When a word ends in **y** preceded by a consonant, keep the **y** before adding **ing**, but change the **y** to **i** before adding **es** or **ed**.

*Examples:* cry, cry**ing**, cri**es**, cri**ed**; reply, repl**ying**, repl**ies**, repl**ied**.

## 8. Use *I* Before *E* Except After *C*...Usually

With words in which **ei** or **ie** are pronounced like the **ee** in seem, use **ei** after **c**, and **ie** after other consonants.

*Examples:* receive, perceive; field, believe, niece, siege.

There are, though, a number of exceptions to the rule: financier, neither, seize, weird.

This will not apply if **ei** is pronounced like the **a** in late.

*Examples:* eight, freight, reign, sleigh, weigh, neighbor.

## 9. Know the *Sedes* and the *Ceeds*

Only one word ends in **sedē**: supersede. Only three words end in **ceed**: exceed, proceed, succeed. All other words ending with the pronunciation use **cede**: concede, precede, recede, etc.

## 10. Learn Homophones

Common homophones (words sounding the same) are listed below.

Learn their meanings.

alter, altar

threw, through

to, too, two

dew, due

flour, flower

fore, four, for

write, right

eight, ate

steak, stake

hour, our

one, won

there, their, they're

be, bee  
eye, I  
night, knight  
blue, blew  
weigh, way  
not, knot  
loan, lone  
tied, tide  
weight, wait  
so, sew  
wave, waive  
red, read  
reed, read  
lain, lane  
ware, where, wear  
vary, very  
wry, rye  
might, mite  
sight, site, cite  
wight, white  
which, witch  
buy, bye  
right, rite  
brewed, brood  
choose, chews  
been, bin  
in, inn

sail, sale

ail, ale

bail, bale

mail, male

cent, sent

loan, lone

bough, bow

beaux, bow