

# Spelling Rules and Techniques

## Common Spelling Rules

### **1. Use *i* before *e* except after *c* or when sounded like “ay” as in neighbour and weigh.**

i before e   relieve, believe, sieve, niece, fierce  
e before i   receive, deceive, sleigh, freight, eight  
exceptions    seize, either, weird, height, foreign, leisure

### **2. Generally, drop a final silent *e* when adding a suffix that begins with a vowel. Keep the final *e* if the suffix begins with a consonant.**

desire, desiring; remove, removable  
achieve, achievement; care, careful  
exceptions    words such as changeable, judgment [can also be spelled judgement], argument, truly

### **3. When adding *-s* or *-ed* to words ending in *y*, ordinarily change *y* to *i* when the *y* is preceded by a consonant but not when it is preceded by a vowel.**

comedy, comedies; dry, dried  
monkey, monkeys; play, played

### **4. If a final consonant is preceded by a single vowel and the consonant ends a one-syllable word or a stressed syllable, double the consonant when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel**

bet, betting; commit, committed; occur, occurrence

### **5. Add *-s* to form the plural of most nouns; add *-es* to singular nouns ending in *-s*, *-sh*, *-ch*, and *-x*.**

table, tables; paper, papers  
church, churches, dish, dishes

## Spelling Techniques

### **1. Traditional**

- Look it up
- Learn the rules
- Study a list of commonly-misspelled words
- Write out troublesome words over and over

### **2. Latent Study (visual)**

- write the word in the centre of a card
- highlight the troublesome area by using another colour

- put the card in your line of vision for at least a week

### **3. Nonsense words (auditory)**

- have someone dictate a list of nonsense words -- or unfamiliar words -- to heighten your awareness of the relationships between spelling and sound

### **4. Phonics (auditory)**

- learn basic sound-spelling patterns of English
- break words into syllables and “sound out” each syllable

### **5. Delayed Copying - SEE, SAY, HEAR AND FEEL (visual, auditory and tactile)**

- look at the correctly-spelled word
- look away and pronounce it
- write it from memory, noticing how your hand moves
- visualize a blackboard and you writing the word in white chalk
- check the original to see if you are correct

### **6. Tracing (tactile)**

- trace the word with your fingertip
  - in sand
  - on sandpaper
  - on your palm
  - on the subway walls

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