

Ringle's Rules of Spelling

Avoid Spelling Mistakes

MCLENNAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE - WRITING CENTER

2007

Writing Center (SC-222)
McLennan Community College
1400 College Dr.
Waco, Texas 76708



Ringle's Rules of Spelling

Avoid Spelling Mistakes

Rule 1 - IE or EI?

Learn the following jingle to help you remember:

Write I before E
Except after C,
Or when sounded like "a"
As in neighbor and weigh.

Other exceptions:

When the sound is I
As in height or foreign or forfeit
If the sound is "sh"
Use I before E
As in the "cient" words
(efficient, sufficient, etc.)
Other words: either, neither, leisure,
Friend, protein, seize, weird, and plebian

Practice for Rule 1

We have found that a var__ty of our pat__nts bel__ve that they have w__rd problems relating to their w__ght, d__ts, or hyg__ne. We rec__ve dozens of calls each month from gr__f-stricken cl__nts. Without sounding too conc__ted, I will say we have ach__ved considerable success with our effic__nt techniques.

Use the following section to check answers.

We have found that a **variety** of our **patients** **believe** that they have **weird** problems relating to their **weight**, **diets**, or **hygiene**. We **receive** dozens of calls each month from **grief**-stricken **clients**. Without sounding too **conceited**, I will say we have **achieved** considerable success with our **efficient** techniques.

Rule 2 - Silent E

Drop the silent E when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel. (ing, ed, ible, able, ous, al)

love + able = lovable

fame + ous = famous

come + ing = coming

Exceptions

Keep the silent E after C and G (soft sounds), and Y, O, and E.

notice + able = noticeable

courage + ous = courageous

eye + ing = eyeing

hoe + ing = hoeing

agree + ing = agreeing

Keep the silent E if confusion is added by dropping it.

dye + ing = dyeing (not dying)

singe + ing = singeing (not singing)

Keep the silent E if the suffix begins with a consonant. (ful, ness, less, ly, ment)

care + less = careless

require + ment = requirement

definite + ly = definitely

Exceptions

truly, ninth, wholly, judgment, argument, acknowledgment, awful, mileage, acreage, wisdom

Rule 3 – Double Consonant

Double the final consonant before a suffix beginning with a vowel in words of one syllable, and in words accented on the last syllable if:

1. the word ends in a single consonant
2. the consonant is preceded by a single vowel

plan + ed = planned
confer + ed = conferred
occur + ence = occurrence

Exceptions

Words ending in X, confused words:

- indexed
- perplexed

Words that cause problems:

- hopped vs. hoped
- tapped vs. taped

Words which contract the rule:

- busing, gases, transferable (not doubled)
- handicapped, transferred (doubled without accent on the last syllable)
- acquittal, acquitted (preceded by 2 vowels)

Rule 4 – Changing Y to I

Change the Y to I before a suffix (except suffixes beginning with I) – es, ed, ly, ful, al (but not ing).

happy + ness = happiness

busy + ly = busily

bury + al = burial

heavy + est = heaviest

Note:

modify + ing = modifying

play + ing = playing

Exceptions:

Do not change the Y to I when the Y is preceded by a vowel (making three vowels together).

joy + ful = joyful

attorney + s = attorneys

enjoy + ment = enjoyment

Do not change the Y to I in proper names.

Kennedy + s = Kennedys

Betty + s = Bettys

Troublesome words:

day/daily

gay/gaily

pay/paid

say/said

Rule 5 – Cede, Ceed, Sede

By memorizing only four words, you can solve this spelling problem.

1. Only one word ends in sede – supersede
2. Only three words end in ceed – exceed, succeed, and proceed
3. All the rest of these words end in cede – concede, intercede, precede, etc.

Use these mnemonic devices to help you remember these words:

There is only one SUPERman!

If you will PROCEED with caution,
and do not EXCEED the speed limit,
you will SUCCEED as a driver!

ALL OTHER WORDS IN THIS FAMILY END IN “CEDE.”

Rule 6 – IZE, ISE, YZE

Remember: IZE is the most common

1. When the first part of the word is a word in itself, the ending is usually IZE.

apology – apologize
emphasis – emphasize

2. When the first part of the word is not a word, the ending is usually ISE.

Advertise
enterprise

3. Only four words end in YZE.

analyze
paralyze
dialyze
catalyze

Practice for Rule 6

What ending goes on each of these questions.

1. standard + _____
2. super + _____

For answers, highlight below.

1. standard + _____
2. super + _____

Rule 7 – ABLE or IBLE

To determine whether an adjective should end in ABLE or IBLE, call to mind the noun form.

1. Usually if the noun form ends in –ation, use ABLE.
application – applicable
consideration – considerable
2. If the noun form ends in –ion or –tion, use IBLE.
collection – collectible
deduction – deductible
3. Many times what precedes IBLE is not a word.
Plausible
edible
4. Many words are not governed by this rule at all; therefore, when in doubt, consult a good dictionary.

Practice for Rule 7 (Also apply Rule 2 to determine whether to drop the E.)

1. imagination _____
2. permission _____
3. conceive _____
4. excite _____
5. notice _____

Highlight below for answers.

1. imagination _____
2. permission _____
3. conceive _____
4. excite _____
5. notice _____