

Spelling Bee Preparation Guide

Comprehensive Rulebook & Dictionary Extraction Strategies

How to Use This Guide: This document maps essential English spelling rules directly to dictionary selection patterns. Use the structural search criteria (*Beginning with*, *Containing*, *Ending with*, *Excluding*) in physical dictionary lookups, digital regular expressions, or online word-list tools (such as OneLook, Wordnik, or Merriam-Webster) to build targeted study drills for competition preparation.

1. SUFFIX ATTACHMENT & STEM TRANSFORMATION RULES

SPELLING RULE	EXPLANATION	DICTIONARY SELECTION STRATEGY	5 EXAMPLE WORDS
1-1-1 Doubling Rule	Double the final consonant before a vowel suffix (-ing, -ed, -er, -est) if the base word has 1 syllable, 1 vowel, and ends in 1 consonant.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Double consonant + suffix Ending: -ing, -ed, -er, -est Excluding: Multi-syllable stems	- Running - Flatter - Stopped - Winning - Biggest
2-1-1 Accent Doubling Rule	In multi-syllable words, double the final consonant before a vowel suffix ONLY if the primary stress falls on the final syllable of the root (e.g., re-FER → referring vs. VIS-it → visiting).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Double r/r, t/t, p/p + suffix Ending: -red, -ring, -ted, -ting Excluding: Stress on 1st/2nd syllable	- Occurred - Referring - Transmitted - Compelling - Acquitted
Drop Final Silent -E	Drop the silent final -e when adding a suffix that begins with a vowel (-ing, -able, -ous, -ed). Keep the -e if the suffix starts with a consonant (-ful, -ment, -ness).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Root minus -e + vowel suffix Ending: -ing, -able, -ous, -ation Excluding: Words retaining final -e	- Driving - Famous - Pleasurable - Creation - Believing
Soft Consonant Preserving -E	Retain the final -e when adding suffixes starting with 'a' or 'o' (-able, -ous) to base words ending in -ce or -ge, to keep the soft /s/ or /j/ sound.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: -ceable, -geable, -geous Ending: -able, -ous Excluding: Hard -c or -g roots	- Noticeable - Courageous - Changeable - Outrageous - Peaceable
Change Y to I Rule	If a word ends in a consonant + y, change the 'y' to 'i' before adding any suffix except those beginning with 'i' (e.g., -ing, -ism).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Consonant + i + suffix Ending: -iness, -ied, -iful, -iest Excluding: -ying endings	- Happiness - Beautiful - Relied - Heaviest - Loneliness
Keep Y After Vowels	If a word ends in a vowel + y, keep the 'y' when adding any suffix without modification.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Vowel + y + suffix Ending: -yed, -ying, -yful, -yment Excluding: -ied, -iness endings	- Playful - Annoyed - Enjoyment - Employing - Payment
C-to-CK Insertion	Add the letter 'k' after a final letter 'c' before adding suffixes starting with 'e', 'i', or 'y' to maintain the hard /k/ sound rather than changing to /s/.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: -cki-, -cke-, -cky- Ending: -cking, -cked, -cker, -cky Excluding: -cing, -ced	- Panicking - Picnicker - Trafficking - Mimicked - Frolicking

2. PHONETIC & ORTHOGRAPHIC RULES

SPELLING RULE	EXPLANATION	DICTIONARY SELECTION STRATEGY	5 EXAMPLE WORDS
I Before E Except After C	Use 'i' before 'e' for the long /ee/ sound, except immediately following the letter 'c', or when making an /ay/ or /eye/ sound (as in neighbor, height).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: -cie-, -cei-, -eigh- Ending: [Any suffix or root] Excluding: Non-standard roots	• Believe • Ceiling • Receive • Neighbor • Freight
Soft vs. Hard C	The letter 'c' makes a soft /s/ sound when directly followed by 'e', 'i', or 'y'. Before 'a', 'o', 'u', or consonants, it produces a hard /k/ sound.	Beginning: ce-, ci-, cy- Containing: -ce-, -ci-, -cy- Ending: [Any ending] Excluding: ca-, co-, cu- stems	• Cinema • Cylinder • Centimeter • Capacity • Decide
Soft vs. Hard G	The letter 'g' usually makes a soft /j/ sound when followed by 'e', 'i', or 'y'. Before 'a', 'o', 'u', or consonants, it yields a hard /g/ sound.	Beginning: ge-, gi-, gy- Containing: -ge-, -gi-, -gy- Ending: [Any ending] Excluding: Germanic words (get, girl)	• Geology • Giant • Gymnasium • Gentle • Fragile
The Q-U Rule	In English words of Latin, French, or Germanic origin, the letter 'q' is strictly paired with 'u' to form the /kw/ or /k/ sound. Single 'q' words are foreign borrowings.	Beginning: qu- Containing: -qu- Ending: -que, -quy Excluding: Non-u 'q' (qi, qat, qashqai)	• Eloquent • Sequester • Unique • Quorum • Vanquish
Terminal V and J Prevention	English words never end in standalone 'v' or 'j'. Words ending in a /v/ sound append a silent 'e'. Words ending in a /j/ sound use '-ge' or '-dge'.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: [Any stem] Ending: -ve, -dge, -ge Excluding: Words ending in raw -v, -j	• Active • Fugitive • Badge • Knowledge • Prestige
-CK vs -K vs -KE Ending	Use '-ck' immediately after a single short vowel. Use '-k' after consonants or vowel digraphs. Use '-ke' after a long vowel split digraph.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Short/Long Vowels + k Ending: -ck, -nk, -rk, -ke Excluding: Foreign loan words	• Paddock • Asterisk • Acrobatics • Forsake • Embark
-TCH vs -CH Ending	Use '-tch' immediately after a single short vowel sound. Use '-ch' after consonants or long vowel sounds (e.g., bench, preach).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Short vs Long vowel patterns Ending: -tch, -nch, -rch, -ach Excluding: Exceptions (rich, which, much)	• Dispatch • Kitchen • Research • Encroach • Stanchion

3. PLURALIZATION RULES

SPELLING RULE	EXPLANATION	DICTIONARY SELECTION STRATEGY	5 EXAMPLE WORDS
Sibilant Endings Plural (-es)	Add '-es' to form the plural of singular nouns that end in sibilant sounds: -s, -ss, -sh, -ch, -x, or -z, creating an extra syllable /iz/.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: -ses, -shes, -ches, -xes Ending: -es Excluding: Standard -s plurals	• Boxes • Churches • Compassionless • Bushy → Bushes • Quiz → Quizzes

SPELLING RULE	EXPLANATION	DICTIONARY SELECTION STRATEGY	5 EXAMPLE WORDS
Nouns Ending in -O	Nouns ending in a vowel + 'o' take '-s'. Nouns ending in a consonant + 'o' usually take '-es', except musical/Italian terms which take '-s'.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: [Consonant or Vowel] + o Ending: -oes, -os Excluding: Non-o plurals	• Heroes • Potatoes • Pianos • Silos • Echoes
Nouns Ending in -F / -FE	Nouns ending in '-f' or '-fe' frequently drop the f/fe and add '-ves' for plural. Foreign or double-vowel roots retain '-fs'.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: -ve-, -f- Ending: -ves, -fs Excluding: Regular -s nouns	• Leaves • Knives • Thieves • Roofs • Chefs

4. SUFFIX SELECTION (-ABLE VS -IBLE & -ANCE VS -ENCE)

SPELLING RULE	EXPLANATION	DICTIONARY SELECTION STRATEGY	5 EXAMPLE WORDS
-ABLE Suffix Selection	Use '-able' if the base word is a standalone, complete English word (e.g., adapt → adaptable, depend → dependable).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Complete stem + able Ending: -able Excluding: Incomplete Latin root stems	• Dependable • Adaptable • Predictable • Acknowledgeable • Comfortable
-IBLE Suffix Selection	Use '-ible' if the root is not a standalone English word (e.g., vis- → visible), or if the stem ends in a soft 'c' or 'g' (e.g., eligible, deducible).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Incomplete root + ible Ending: -ible, -cible, -gible Excluding: Standalone word stems	• Visible • Audible • Incredible • Eligible • Permissible
-ANCE / -ANT Selection	Use '-ance/-ant' if the preceding root ends in a hard 'c' or 'g' sound, or derives from Latin 1st conjugation verbs (-are).	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Hard c/g or Latin 1st conj. Ending: -ance, -ant, -gance Excluding: Soft c/g stems	• Elegance • Extravagant • Abundance • Reluctance • Assistance
-ENCE / -ENT Selection	Use '-ence/-ent' if the preceding root ends in a soft 'c' or 'g' sound, or derives from Latin 2nd, 3rd, or 4th conjugation verbs.	Beginning: [Any letter] Containing: Soft c/g or Latin 2nd-4th Ending: -ence, -ent, -cence Excluding: Hard c/g stems	• Innocence • Magnificent • Intelligence • Benevolence • Occurrence