

Explanations

Common spelling problems

- Words ending in *-ful*
There is only one *l* when *-ful* is a suffix.
useful helpful
- Doubling of consonants
Adjectives form adverbs by adding *-ly*.
usefully helpfully
Words with one syllable, ending in one vowel and one consonant, double the consonant when adding *-ing*, *-ed* or *-er*.
swim swimming fit fitted thin thinner
Most two-syllable words ending in one vowel and one consonant also double the last consonant, especially when the stress is on the second syllable.
prefer preferred BUT bother bothering
A common exception is *travel traveller*.
- Words ending in *-y*
One syllable nouns ending *-y* change *-y* to *-i* in plurals. One-syllable verbs ending *-y* also change *-y* to *-i* in the present simple and past simple.
spy spies
try tries tried
But one-syllable words ending in one vowel and *-y* do not change.
boy boys
One-syllable words do not change when we add *-ful* and *-ness*.
joy joyful shy shyness
Two-syllable words change.
reply replies replied
happy happiness
beauty beautiful
But two-syllable words ending in one vowel and *-y* do not change.
destroy destroyed
These rules do not apply when we add *-ing*.
try trying study studying annoy annoying
- Words with *ie* and *ei*
The general rule is *i* before *e* except after *c*, as long as the sound is /i:/.
receive relief
BUT *feign* (the sound is not /i:/)

Spelling and pronunciation

In English, one spelling can have different sounds, and the same sound can have different spellings. Note the ways of spelling the underlined sounds in each list below.

If you check the pronunciation of the whole word by looking at the phonetic script in a dictionary you will find that the sound / ə / (called schwa) is very common in English. It is always unstressed. If you beat the rhythm of a word with your hand then / ə / is often the 'up' (unstressed) beat.

■ Vowel sounds

/ ʌ /	love	sudden	blood	cuff	Rough	London	brother
/ əʊ /	boat	post	although	know	toe		
/ eə /	air	there	bare	wear			
/ ɑ: /	heart	part	staff	ask			
/ ɜ: /	word	heard	further	expert	hurt		
/ aʊ /	now	shout	plough	drown			
/ ɒ /	lot	stop	off				
/ eɪ /	wait	gate	weight	great	lay		
/ aɪ /	bright	height	site	eye			
/ ɔ: /	door	pour	daughter				
schwa / ə /	potato	around	suggest	perhaps	necklace		

■ Consonant sounds

/ ʃ /	shame	delicious	position	insurance
/ tʃ /	church	furniture	watches	
/ ʒ /	leisure	confusion	measure	

■ Words ending in -ough

Like now	plough	bough	
Like cuff	enough	rough	tough
Like toe	though	dough	
Like off	cough		

■ Words containing -st where t is not pronounced

listen	glisten	hasten	fasten
castle	whistle	bristle	mistletoe

■ Words containing -mb and -bt where b is not pronounced

plumber	thumb	comb	lamb	dumb	tomb
debt	doubt	subtle			

Practice

1 Correct any words spelled incorrectly.

- a) studing *studying*
- b) destroying
- c) donkies
- d) flys
- e) niece
- f) hurried
- g) furnichure
- h) enough
- i) wellcome
- j) hotter
- k) reciept
- l) wonderfull
- m) swimming
- n) regreted
- o) hopefully
- p) applying
- q) heard
- r) inshurance
- s) happily
- t) advertisement

2 Find a word from the box which rhymes with each word given.

home go white ~~search~~ store stuff come plumber wait cow

- a) church *search*
- b) hate
- c) rough
- d) throw
- e) comb
- f) dumb
- g) plough
- h) height
- i) summer
- j) pour

3 Write each word ending in the suffix given.

- a) supply (ing) *supplying*
- b) destroy (ed)
- c) apply (ed)
- d) lonely (ness)
- e) employ (s)
- f) cry (s)
- g) silly (ness)
- h) annoy (s)
- i) beauty (ful)
- j) pretty (ness)

4 Find one word in each group of words which does not have the same vowel sound (sounds are underlined in two-syllable words).

- a) become sung company cold flood *cold*
- b) plate treat wait weight great
- c) lose used choose blouse few
- d) doubt bough ought now shout
- e) lost post toast ghost host
- f) mist missed list iced kissed
- g) love done gone sunk won
- h) bird search heart word church
- i) two show though go owe
- j) about wonder uppose refer our colour

5 Correct any words spelled incorrectly.

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
| a) sincerely | <i>sincerely</i> | dictionry | ..... |
| b) different | ..... | intresting | ..... |
| c) lovely | ..... | necessary | ..... |
| d) writing | ..... | unninteresting | ..... |
| e) pulover | ..... | definitly | ..... |
| f) friend | ..... | responsible | ..... |
| g) holliday | ..... | quantity | ..... |
| h) likelihood | ..... | lugage | ..... |
| i) impatient | ..... | student | ..... |
| j) finaly | ..... | pavement | ..... |