

Top 15 Spelling Rules for Kids (Free Printable List)

1. Every syllable has at least one vowel, which may be a y.

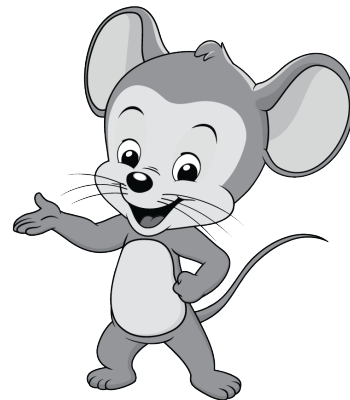
Examples: **re**-mem-ber, un-der-stand, **bi**-cy-cle

2. Q is always followed by u.

Examples: **q**ueen, **q**uestion, **q**uest

3. Apostrophes can take the place of a missing letter.

Examples: it's (it **is**), don't (do **not**)



4. Floss Rule: When a word ends in a short vowel sound followed by f, l, s, or z, double the final consonant.

Examples: floss**ss**, ball**ll**, miss**ss**, buzz**zz**

Exceptions: bus, focus

5. Gentle Cindy Rule: C and g are pronounced with their hard sounds (/k/ and /g/) unless they're followed by i, e, or y. Then, they use their soft sounds (/s/ and /j/).

Examples: creek (hard c), going (hard g), cereal (soft c), giant (soft g)

Exceptions: G tends to have more exceptions, often when followed by i. Words pronounced with a hard g include *gift*, *girl*, *give*, and *get*.

6. I Before E, Except After C: In most words, use -ie. If the vowel team comes after a c, use -ei.

Examples: **f**ierce, **f**riend, **re**ceipt, **ce**iling

Exceptions: There are many exceptions to this rule, such as *seize*, *leisure*, *weird*, *neither*, *their*, *neighbor*, *height*, etc. These words must simply be memorized.

7. S makes a word plural. Apostrophe + s makes a word possessive.

Examples: three girls**s**, the girl'**s** clothes, many schools**s**, the school'**s** rules

Exceptions: its, yours, ours, theirs

8. Add -es for nouns ending in s, x, z, ch, or sh.

Examples: buses**es**, taxes**es**, boxes**es**, riches**es**, wishes**es**

9. If a word ends in a consonant + y, change the y to i and add -es.

Examples: puppy-puppies**ies**, baby-babies**ies**, city-cities**ies**

10. When a word ends in a silent -e, drop the -e before adding a suffix that starts with a vowel. Keep the -e when adding a suffix that starts with a consonant.

Examples: flame-flaming**ing**, brake-brakes**es**, fine-fin**er**

Exceptions: judgment

11. For single syllable words ending in a single vowel + consonant, double the final letter before adding a suffix that starts with a vowel.

Examples: win-win**ning**, fun-fun**nier**

12. -tch vs. -ch: When the /ch/ sound is at the end of a word or syllable and is preceded by a short vowel sound, use -tch. Otherwise, use -ch. Note: -tch is never found at the beginning of a word.

Examples: **witch**, **catch**, **kitchen**, **peach**, **teacher**

Exceptions: rich, which, sandwich, much, such

13. *-dge* vs. *-ge*: English words never end in *j*. When the /j/ sound is at the end of a word or syllable, use *-dge* if it's preceded by a short vowel. Otherwise, use *-ge*. Note: *-dge* is never found at the beginning of a word.

Examples: **wedge**, **badger**, **cage**, **huge**

14. *-able* vs. *-ible*: If the root word can stand alone, use *-able*. If it cannot, use *-ible*.

Examples: enjoy**able** (enjoy), vis**ible** (root word cannot stand alone)

15. *-al* vs. *-el*: Most adjectives end in *-al*, while nouns end in *-el*.

Examples: mag**ical**, form**al**, hot**el**, lab**el**