

# 8 GUIDELINES FOR BETTER SPELLING

**1. The "i before e except after c" rule:** "i before 'e' except after 'c' but not when sounding like 'a' as in neighbor or weigh."

believe – receive

Exceptions: "Neither has leisure to seize the weird man."

## 2. Changing "y" to "ies"

You might not know the spelling rule but you might know the spelling pattern - most people do. When the word ends in a vowel + y just add 's'

key → keys

delay → delays

trolley → trolleys

If the word has a consonant before the 'y': take off the 'y' and add 'ies'

baby → babies

company → companies

difficulty → difficulties

## 3. Adding -es to words ending in -s, -ss, -z -ch -sh -x

Soften the "spitty" ending with an 'e' before the final 's' sound:

bus → buses

business → businesses

watch → watches

box → boxes

quiz → quizzes

## 4. 1:1:1 doubling up rule

When a word has one syllable + 1 vowel next to 1 consonant, double the final consonant with a vowel suffix:

put – putting; big-bigger; quiz - quizzes, swim – swimming; sit – sitter; big – biggest; tap – tapping; shop - shopper/shopping; fat - fatten, fattening, fatter, fattest

The same rule applies to longer words when the stress is on the final syllable:

begin (beGIN) - beginner, beginning

refer (reFER) - referring, referred

occur (ocCUR) - occurring, occurred, occurrence

commit (comMIT) – committed, committing

## 5. Drop the 'e' rule

We usually drop the final silent "e" when we add vowel suffix endings, for example:

write + ing → writing

**hope + ed = hoped (vs. hop + ing = hopping)**

excite + able = excitable

joke - joker

large - largish

close - closing

sense + ible = sensible

imagine + ation = imagination

judge + ment = judgment

We keep the 'e' if the word ends in –CE or –GE to keep a soft sound, with

able/ous

courage + ous = courageous

outrage + ous = outrageous

notice + able = noticeable

manage + able = manageable

## 6. Changing the "y" to "i" when adding suffix endings.

If a word ends in a consonant + Y, the Y changes to I before the suffix

beauty+ful > beauti+ful =beautiful, beautify  
happy + ness = - happiness, happily, happier, happiest  
angry + er = angrier, angriest, angrily,  
pretty: prettier, prettiest but prettyish  
dry: dried, dries (BUT drying, dryish)  
try: tried, tries (BUT trying)  
defy: defies, defied (BUT defying)  
apply: applies, applied (BUT applying)

### **7. "-f" to "-ves" or "-s"**

Most words ending in "-f" or "-fe" change their plurals to "-ves"

half - halves

knife - knives

leaf - leaves

life - lives

wife - wives

thief - thieves

yourself - yourselves

Some words can have both endings -ves or -s:

scarf - scarfs/scarves

dwarf - dwarfs/dwarves

wharf - wharfs/wharves

handkerchief - handkerchiefs/handkerchieves

### **8. Words ending in -ful**

The suffix -FUL is always spelled with one L, for example:

grate + ful = grateful

faith + ful = faithful

hope + ful = hopeful

careful

helpful

useful

grateful

beautiful (notice the "y" becomes "i")