

English Appendix 1: Spelling

Most people read words more accurately than they spell them. The younger pupils are, the truer this is.

By the end of year 1, pupils should be able to read a large number of different words containing the GPCs that they have learnt, whether or not they have seen these words before. Spelling, however, is a very different matter. Once pupils have learnt more than one way of spelling particular sounds, choosing the right letter or letters depends on their either having made a conscious effort to learn the words or having absorbed them less consciously through their reading. Younger pupils have not had enough time to learn or absorb the accurate spelling of all the words that they may want to write.

This appendix provides examples of words embodying each pattern which is taught. Many of the words listed as ‘example words’ for years 1 and 2, including almost all those listed as ‘exception words’, are used frequently in pupils’ writing, and therefore it is worth pupils learning the correct spelling. The ‘exception words’ contain GPCs which have not yet been taught as widely applicable, but this may be because they are applicable in very few age-appropriate words rather than because they are rare in English words in general.

The word-lists for years 3 and 4 and years 5 and 6 are statutory. The lists are a mixture of words pupils frequently use in their writing and those which they often misspell. Some of the listed words may be thought of as quite challenging, but the 100 words in each list can easily be taught within the four years of key stage 2 alongside other words that teachers consider appropriate.

The rules and guidance are intended to support the teaching of spelling. Phonic knowledge should continue to underpin spelling after key stage 1; teachers should still draw pupils’ attention to GPCs that do and do not fit in with what has been taught so far. Increasingly, however, pupils also need to understand the role of morphology and etymology. Although particular GPCs in root words simply have to be learnt, teachers can help pupils to understand relationships between meaning and spelling where these are relevant. For example, understanding the relationship between *medical* and *medicine* may help pupils to spell the /s/ sound in *medicine* with the letter ‘c’. Pupils can also be helped to spell words with prefixes and suffixes correctly if they understand some general principles for adding them. Teachers should be familiar with what pupils have been taught about spelling in earlier years, such as which rules pupils have been taught for adding prefixes and suffixes.

In this spelling appendix, the left-hand column is statutory; the middle and right-hand columns are non-statutory guidance.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is used to represent sounds (phonemes). A table showing the IPA is provided in this document.

Spelling – work for year 1

Revision of reception work

Statutory requirements

The boundary between revision of work covered in Reception and the introduction of new work may vary according to the programme used, but basic revision should include:

- all letters of the alphabet and the sounds which they most commonly represent
- consonant digraphs which have been taught and the sounds which they represent
- vowel digraphs which have been taught and the sounds which they represent
- the process of segmenting spoken words into sounds before choosing graphemes to represent the sounds
- words with adjacent consonants
- guidance and rules which have been taught

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|--|---|
| The sounds /f/, /l/, /s/, /z/ and /k/ spelt ff, ll, ss, zz and ck | The /f/, /l/, /s/, /z/ and /k/ sounds are usually spelt as ff , ll , ss , zz and ck if they come straight after a single vowel letter in short words. Exceptions: if, pal, us, bus, yes. | off, well, miss, buzz, back |
| The /ŋ/ sound spelt n before k | | bank, think, honk, sunk |
| Division of words into syllables | Each syllable is like a 'beat' in the spoken word. Words of more than one syllable often have an unstressed syllable in which the vowel sound is unclear. | pocket, rabbit, carrot, thunder, sunset |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--|--|---|
| -tch | The /tʃ/ sound is usually spelt as tch if it comes straight after a single vowel letter. Exceptions: rich, which, much, such. | catch, fetch, kitchen, notch, hutch |
| The /v/ sound at the end of words | English words hardly ever end with the letter v , so if a word ends with a /v/ sound, the letter e usually needs to be added after the 'v'. | have, live, give |
| Adding s and es to words (plural of nouns and the third person singular of verbs) | If the ending sounds like /s/ or /z/, it is spelt as -s . If the ending sounds like /ɪz/ and forms an extra syllable or 'beat' in the word, it is spelt as -es . | cats, dogs, spends, rocks, thanks, catches |
| Adding the endings -ing, -ed and -er to verbs where no change is needed to the root word | -ing and -er always add an extra syllable to the word and -ed sometimes does. The past tense of some verbs may sound as if it ends in /ɪd/ (extra syllable), /d/ or /t/ (no extra syllable), but all these endings are spelt -ed . If the verb ends in two consonant letters (the same or different), the ending is simply added on. | hunting, hunted, hunter, buzzing, buzzed, buzzer, jumping, jumped, jumper |
| Adding -er and -est to adjectives where no change is needed to the root word | As with verbs (see above), if the adjective ends in two consonant letters (the same or different), the ending is simply added on. | grander, grandest, fresher, freshest, quicker, quickest |

Vowel digraphs and trigraphs

Some may already be known, depending on the programmes used in Reception, but some will be new.

| Vowel digraphs and trigraphs | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| ai, oi | The digraphs ai and oi are virtually never used at the end of English words. | rain, wait, train, paid, afraid oil, join, coin, point, soil |
| ay, oy | ay and oy are used for those sounds at the end of words and at the end of syllables. | day, play, say, way, stay boy, toy, enjoy, annoy |
| a–e | | made, came, same, take, safe |
| e–e | | these, theme, complete |
| i–e | | five, ride, like, time, side |
| o–e | | home, those, woke, hope, hole |
| u–e | Both the /u:/ and /ju:/ ('oo' and 'yoo') sounds can be spelt as u–e . | June, rule, rude, use, tube, tune |
| ar | | car, start, park, arm, garden |
| ee | | see, tree, green, meet, week |
| ea (/i:/) | | sea, dream, meat, each, read (present tense) |
| ea (/ɛ/) | | head, bread, meant, instead, read (past tense) |
| er (/ɜ:/) | | (stressed sound): her, term, verb, person |
| er (/ə/) | | (unstressed <i>schwa</i> sound): better, under, summer, winter, sister |
| ir | | girl, bird, shirt, first, third |
| ur | | turn, hurt, church, burst, Thursday |

| Vowel digraphs and trigraphs | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| oo (/u:/) | Very few words end with the letters oo , although the few that do are often words that primary children in year 1 will encounter, for example, <i>zoo</i> | food, pool, moon, zoo, soon |
| oo (/ʊ/) | | book, took, foot, wood, good |
| oa | The digraph oa is very rare at the end of an English word. | boat, coat, road, coach, goal |
| oe | | toe, goes |
| ou | The only common English word ending in ou is <i>you</i> . | out, about, mouth, around, sound |
| ow (/aʊ/) ow (/əʊ/) ue ew | Both the /u:/ and /ju:/ ('oo' and 'yoo') sounds can be spelt as u–e , ue and ew . If words end in the /oo/ sound, ue and ew are more common spellings than oo . | now, how, brown, down, town own, blow, snow, grow, show blue, clue, true, rescue, Tuesday new, few, grew, flew, drew, threw |
| ie (/aɪ/) | | lie, tie, pie, cried, tried, dried |
| ie (/i:/) | | chief, field, thief |
| igh | | high, night, light, bright, right |
| or | | for, short, born, horse, morning |
| ore | | more, score, before, wore, shore |
| aw | | saw, draw, yawn, crawl |
| au | | author, August, dinosaur, astronaut |
| air | | air, fair, pair, hair, chair |
| ear | | dear, hear, beard, near, year |
| ear (/ɛə/) | | bear, pear, wear |
| are (/ɛə/) | | bare, dare, care, share, scared |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Words ending –y (/i:/ or /ɪ/) | | very, happy, funny, party, family |
| New consonant spellings ph and wh | The /f/ sound is not usually spelt as ph in short everyday words (e.g. <i>fat</i> , <i>fill</i> , <i>fun</i>). | dolphin, alphabet, phonics, elephant when, where, which, wheel, while |
| Using k for the /k/ sound | The /k/ sound is spelt as k rather than as c before e , i and y . | Kent, sketch, kit, skin, frisky |
| Adding the prefix –un | The prefix un– is added to the beginning of a word without any change to the spelling of the root word. | unhappy, undo, unload, unfair, unlock |
| Compound words | Compound words are two words joined together. Each part of the longer word is spelt as it would be if it were on its own. | football, playground, farmyard, bedroom, blackberry |
| Common exception words | Pupils’ attention should be drawn to the grapheme-phoneme correspondences that do and do not fit in with what has been taught so far. | the, a, do, to, today, of, said, says, are, were, was, is, his, has, I, you, your, they, be, he, me, she, we, no, go, so, by, my, here, there, where, love, come, some, one, once, ask, friend, school, put, push, pull, full, house, our – and/or others, according to the programme used |

Spelling – work for year 2

Revision of work from year 1

As words with new GPCs are introduced, many previously-taught GPCs can be revised at the same time as these words will usually contain them.

New work for year 2

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|---|--|
| The /dʒ/ sound spelt as ge and dge at the end of words, and sometimes spelt as g elsewhere in words before e, i and y | <p>The letter j is never used for the /dʒ/ sound at the end of English words.</p> <p>At the end of a word, the /dʒ/ sound is spelt –dge straight after the /æ/, /ɛ/, /ɪ/, /ɒ/, /ʌ/ and /ʊ/ sounds (sometimes called ‘short’ vowels).</p> <p>After all other sounds, whether vowels or consonants, the /dʒ/ sound is spelt as –ge at the end of a word.</p> <p>In other positions in words, the /dʒ/ sound is often (but not always) spelt as g before e, i, and y. The /dʒ/ sound is always spelt as j before a, o and u.</p> | <p>badge, edge, bridge, dodge, fudge</p> <p>age, huge, change, charge, bulge, village</p> <p>gem, giant, magic, giraffe, energy jacket, jar, jog, join, adjust</p> |
| The /s/ sound spelt c before e, i and y | | race, ice, cell, city, fancy |
| The /n/ sound spelt kn and (less often) gn at the beginning of words | The ‘k’ and ‘g’ at the beginning of these words was sounded hundreds of years ago. | knock, know, knee, gnat, gnaw |
| The /r/ sound spelt wr at the beginning of words | This spelling probably also reflects an old pronunciation. | write, written, wrote, wrong, wrap |
| The // or /əl/ sound spelt –le at the end of words | The –le spelling is the most common spelling for this sound at the end of words. | table, apple, bottle, little, middle |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|--|--|
| The // or /ə/ sound spelt –el at the end of words | The –el spelling is much less common than –le . The –el spelling is used after m, n, r, s, v, w and more often than not after s . | camel, tunnel, squirrel, travel, towel, tinsel |
| The // or /ə/ sound spelt –al at the end of words | Not many nouns end in –al , but many adjectives do. | metal, pedal, capital, hospital, animal |
| Words ending –il | There are not many of these words. | pencil, fossil, nostril |
| The /aɪ/ sound spelt –y at the end of words | This is by far the most common spelling for this sound at the end of words. | cry, fly, dry, try, reply, July |
| Adding –es to nouns and verbs ending in –y | The y is changed to i before –es is added. | flies, tries, replies, copies, babies, carries |
| Adding –ed, –ing, –er and –est to a root word ending in –y with a consonant before it | The y is changed to i before –ed, –er and –est are added, but not before –ing as this would result in ii . The only ordinary words with ii are <i>skiing</i> and <i>taxiing</i> . | copied, copier, happier, happiest, cried, replied ... but copying, crying, replying |
| Adding the endings –ing, –ed, –er, –est and –y to words ending in –e with a consonant before it | The –e at the end of the root word is dropped before –ing, –ed, –er, –est, –y or any other suffix beginning with a vowel letter is added. Exception: <i>being</i> . | hiking, hiked, hiker, nicer, nicest, shiny |
| Adding –ing, –ed, –er, –est and –y to words of one syllable ending in a single consonant letter after a single vowel letter | The last consonant letter of the root word is doubled to keep the /æ/, /ɛ/, /ɪ/, /ɒ/ and /ʌ/ sound (i.e. to keep the vowel ‘short’). Exception: The letter ‘x’ is never doubled: <i>mixing, mixed, boxer, sixes</i> . | patting, patted, humming, hummed, dropping, dropped, sadder, saddest, fatter, fattest, runner, runny |
| The /ɔ:/ sound spelt a before I and II | The /ɔ:/ sound (‘or’) is usually spelt as a before I and II . | all, ball, call, walk, talk, always |
| The /ʌ/ sound spelt o | | other, mother, brother, nothing, Monday |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--|---|---|
| The /i:/ sound spelt –ey | The plural of these words is formed by the addition of –s (<i>donkeys, monkeys, etc.</i>). | key, donkey, monkey, chimney, valley |
| The /ɒ/ sound spelt a after w and qu | a is the most common spelling for the /ɒ/ ('hot') sound after w and qu . | want, watch, wander, quantity, squash |
| The /ɜ:/ sound spelt or after w | There are not many of these words. | word, work, worm, world, worth |
| The /ɔ:/ sound spelt ar after w | There are not many of these words. | war, warm, towards |
| The /z/ sound spelt s | | television, treasure, usual |
| The suffixes –ment, –ness, –ful, –less and –ly | <p>If a suffix starts with a consonant letter, it is added straight on to most root words without any change to the last letter of those words.</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <p>(1) <i>argument</i></p> <p>(2) root words ending in –y with a consonant before it but only if the root word has more than one syllable.</p> | <p>enjoyment, sadness, careful, playful, hopeless, plainness (plain + ness), badly</p> <p>merriment, happiness, plentiful, penniless, happily</p> |
| Contractions | <p>In contractions, the apostrophe shows where a letter or letters would be if the words were written in full (e.g. <i>can't</i> – <i>cannot</i>).</p> <p><i>It's</i> means <i>it is</i> (e.g. <i>It's</i> raining) or sometimes <i>it has</i> (e.g. <i>It's</i> been raining), but <i>it's</i> is never used for the possessive.</p> | can't, didn't, hasn't, couldn't, it's, I'll |
| The possessive apostrophe (singular nouns) | | Megan's, Ravi's, the girl's, the child's, the man's |
| Words ending in –tion | | station, fiction, motion, national, section |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Homophones and near-homophones | It is important to know the difference in meaning between homophones. | there/their/they're, here/hear, quite/quiet, see/sea, bare/bear, one/won, sun/son, to/too/two, be/bee, blue/blew, night/knight |
| Common exception words | <p>Some words are exceptions in some accents but not in others – e.g. <i>past</i>, <i>last</i>, <i>fast</i>, <i>path</i> and <i>bath</i> are not exceptions in accents where the a in these words is pronounced /æ/, as in <i>cat</i>.</p> <p><i>Great</i>, <i>break</i> and <i>steak</i> are the only common words where the /eɪ/ sound is spelt ea.</p> | <p>door, floor, poor, because, find, kind, mind, behind, child, children*, wild, climb, most, only, both, old, cold, gold, hold, told, every, everybody, even, great, break, steak, pretty, beautiful, after, fast, last, past, father, class, grass, pass, plant, path, bath, hour, move, prove, improve, sure, sugar, eye, could, should, would, who, whole, any, many, clothes, busy, people, water, again, half, money, Mr, Mrs, parents, Christmas – and/or others according to programme used.</p> <p>Note: ‘children’ is not an exception to what has been taught so far but is included because of its relationship with ‘child’.</p> |

Spelling – work for years 3 and 4

Revision of work from years 1 and 2

Pay special attention to the rules for adding suffixes.

New work for years 3 and 4

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|---|---|
| Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words of more than one syllable | If the last syllable of a word is stressed and ends with one consonant letter which has just one vowel letter before it, the final consonant letter is doubled before any ending beginning with a vowel letter is added. The consonant letter is not doubled if the syllable is unstressed. | forgetting, forgotten, beginning, beginner, prefer, preferred gardening, gardener, limiting, limited, limitation |
| The /ɪ/ sound spelt y elsewhere than at the end of words | These words should be learnt as needed. | myth, gym, Egypt, pyramid, mystery |
| The /ʌ/ sound spelt ou | These words should be learnt as needed. | young, touch, double, trouble, country |
| More prefixes | <p>Most prefixes are added to the beginning of root words without any changes in spelling, but see in- below.</p> <p>Like un-, the prefixes dis- and mis- have negative meanings.</p> <p>The prefix in- can mean both 'not' and 'in'/'into'. In the words given here it means 'not'.</p> | <p>dis-: disappoint, disagree, disobey</p> <p>mis-: misbehave, mislead, misspell (mis + spell)</p> <p>in-: inactive, incorrect</p> |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| | <p>Before a root word starting with l, in- becomes il-.</p> <p>Before a root word starting with m or p, in- becomes im-.</p> <p>Before a root word starting with r, in- becomes ir-.</p> <p>re- means ‘again’ or ‘back’.</p> <p>sub- means ‘under’.</p> <p>inter- means ‘between’ or ‘among’.</p> <p>super- means ‘above’.</p> <p>anti- means ‘against’.</p> <p>auto- means ‘self’ or ‘own’.</p> | <p>illegal, illegible</p> <p>immature, immortal, impossible, impatient, imperfect</p> <p>irregular, irrelevant, irresponsible</p> <p>re-: redo, refresh, return, reappear, redecorate</p> <p>sub-: subdivide, subheading, submarine, submerge</p> <p>inter-: interact, intercity, international, interrelated (inter + related)</p> <p>super-: supermarket, superman, superstar</p> <p>anti-: antiseptic, anti-clockwise, antisocial</p> <p>auto-: autobiography, autograph</p> |
| The suffix -ation | The suffix -ation is added to verbs to form nouns. The rules already learnt still apply. | information, adoration, sensation, preparation, admiration |
| The suffix -ly | <p>The suffix -ly is added to an adjective to form an adverb. The rules already learnt still apply.</p> <p>The suffix -ly starts with a consonant letter, so it is added straight on to most root words.</p> | sadly, completely, usually (usual + ly), finally (final + ly), comically (comical + ly) |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>Exceptions:</p> <p>(1) If the root word ends in –y with a consonant letter before it, the y is changed to i, but only if the root word has more than one syllable.</p> <p>(2) If the root word ends with –le, the –le is changed to –ly.</p> <p>(3) If the root word ends with –ic, –ally is added rather than just –ly, except in the word <i>publicly</i>.</p> <p>(4) The words <i>truly</i>, <i>duly</i>, <i>wholly</i>.</p> | <p>happily, angrily</p> <p>gently, simply, humbly, nobly</p> <p>basically, frantically, dramatically</p> |
| Words with endings sounding like /ʒə/ or /tʃə/ | <p>The ending sounding like /ʒə/ is always spelt –sure.</p> <p>The ending sounding like /tʃə/ is often spelt –ture, but check that the word is not a root word ending in (t)ch with an er ending – e.g. <i>teacher</i>, <i>catcher</i>, <i>richer</i>, <i>stretcher</i>.</p> | <p>measure, treasure, pleasure, enclosure</p> <p>creature, furniture, picture, nature, adventure</p> |
| Endings which sound like /ʒən/ | <p>If the ending sounds like /ʒən/, it is spelt as –sion.</p> | <p>division, invasion, confusion, decision, collision, television</p> |
| The suffix –ous | <p>Sometimes the root word is obvious and the usual rules apply for adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters.</p> <p>Sometimes there is no obvious root word.</p> <p>–our is changed to –or before –ous is added.</p> <p>A final ‘e’ of the root word must be kept if the /dʒ/ sound of ‘g’ is to be kept.</p> <p>If there is an /i:/ sound before the –ous ending, it is usually spelt as i, but a few words have e.</p> | <p>poisonous, dangerous, mountainous, famous, various</p> <p>tremendous, enormous, jealous</p> <p>humorous, glamorous, vigorous</p> <p>courageous, outrageous</p> <p>serious, obvious, curious</p> <p>hideous, spontaneous, courteous</p> |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--|--|--|
| Endings which sound like /ʃən/, spelt –tion, –sion, –ssion, –cian | <p>Strictly speaking, the suffixes are –ion and –ian. Clues about whether to put t, s, ss or c before these suffixes often come from the last letter or letters of the root word.</p> <p>–tion is the most common spelling. It is used if the root word ends in t or te.</p> <p>–ssion is used if the root word ends in ss or –mit.</p> <p>–sion is used if the root word ends in d or se.</p> <p>Exceptions: <i>attend – attention, intend – intention.</i></p> <p>–cian is used if the root word ends in c or cs.</p> | <p>invention, injection, action, hesitation, completion</p> <p>expression, discussion, confession, permission, admission</p> <p>expansion, extension, comprehension, tension</p> <p>musician, electrician, magician, politician, mathematician</p> |
| Words with the /k/ sound spelt ch (Greek in origin) | | scheme, chorus, chemist, echo, character |
| Words with the /ʃ/ sound spelt ch (mostly French in origin) | | chef, chalet, machine, brochure |
| Words ending with the /g/ sound spelt –gue and the /k/ sound spelt –que (French in origin) | | league, tongue, antique, unique |
| Words with the /s/ sound spelt sc (Latin in origin) | In the Latin words from which these words come, the Romans probably pronounced the c and the k as two sounds rather than one – /s/ /k/. | science, scene, discipline, fascinate, crescent |
| Words with the /eɪ/ sound spelt ei, eigh, or ey | | vein, weigh, eight, neighbour, they, obey |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|---|--|
| Possessive apostrophe with plural words | The apostrophe is placed after the plural form of the word; –s is not added if the plural already ends in –s , but <i>is</i> added if the plural does not end in –s (i.e. is an irregular plural – e.g. <i>children’s</i>). | girls’, boys’, babies’, children’s, men’s, mice’s (Note: singular proper nouns ending in an s use the ‘s suffix e.g. Cyprus’s population) |
| Homophones and near-homophones | | accept/except, affect/effect, ball/bawl, berry/bury, brake/break, fair/fare, grate/great, groan/grown, here/hear, heel/heal/he’ll, knot/not, mail/male, main/mane, meat/meet, medal/meddle, missed/mist, peace/piece, plain/plane, rain/rein/reign, scene/seen, weather/whether, whose/who’s |

Word list – years 3 and 4

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| accident(ally) | early | knowledge | purpose |
| actual(ly) | earth | learn | quarter |
| address | eight/eighth | length | question |
| answer | enough | library | recent |
| appear | exercise | material | regular |
| arrive | experience | medicine | reign |
| believe | experiment | mention | remember |
| bicycle | extreme | minute | sentence |
| breath | famous | natural | separate |
| breathe | favourite | naughty | special |
| build | February | notice | straight |
| busy/business | forward(s) | occasion(ally) | strange |
| calendar | fruit | often | strength |
| caught | grammar | opposite | suppose |
| centre | group | ordinary | surprise |
| century | guard | particular | therefore |
| certain | guide | peculiar | though/although |
| circle | heard | perhaps | thought |
| complete | heart | popular | through |
| consider | height | position | various |
| continue | history | possess(ion) | weight |
| decide | imagine | possible | woman/women |
| describe | increase | potatoes | |
| different | important | pressure | |
| difficult | interest | probably | |
| disappear | island | promise | |

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Teachers should continue to emphasise to pupils the relationships between sounds and letters, even when the relationships are unusual. Once root words are learnt in this way, longer words can be spelt correctly, if the rules and guidance for adding prefixes and suffixes are also known.

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**Examples:**

business: once *busy* is learnt, with due attention to the unusual spelling of the /i/ sound as 'u', *business* can then be spelt as **busy + ness**, with the **y** of **busy** changed to **i** according to the rule.

disappear: the root word *appear* contains sounds which can be spelt in more than one way so it needs to be learnt, but the prefix **dis-** is then simply added to **appear**.

Understanding the relationships between words can also help with spelling. Examples:

- *bicycle* is *cycle* (from the Greek for *wheel*) with **bi-** (meaning 'two') before it.
- *medicine* is related to *medical* so the /s/ sound is spelt as **c**.
- *opposite* is related to *oppose*, so the schwa sound in *opposite* is spelt as **o**.

Spelling – years 5 and 6

Revise work done in previous years

New work for years 5 and 6

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|---|--|
| Endings which sound like /ʃəs/ spelt –cious or –tious | <p>Not many common words end like this. If the root word ends in –ce, the /ʃ/ sound is usually spelt as c – e.g. <i>vice</i> – <i>vicious</i>, <i>grace</i> – <i>gracious</i>, <i>space</i> – <i>spacious</i>, <i>malice</i> – <i>malicious</i>.</p> <p>Exception: <i>anxious</i>.</p> | vicious, precious, conscious, delicious, malicious, suspicious, ambitious, cautious, fictitious, infectious, nutritious |
| Endings which sound like /ʃəl/ | <p>–cial is common after a vowel letter and –tial after a consonant letter, but there are some exceptions.</p> <p>Exceptions: initial, financial, commercial, provincial (the spelling of the last three is clearly related to <i>finance</i>, <i>commerce</i> and <i>province</i>).</p> | official, special, artificial, partial, confidential, essential |
| Words ending in –ant, –ance/–ancy, –ent, –ence/–ency | <p>Use –ant and –ance/–ancy if there is a related word with a /æ/ or /eɪ/ sound in the right position; –ation endings are often a clue.</p> <p>Use –ent and –ence/–ency after soft c (/s/ sound), soft g (/dʒ/ sound) and qu, or if there is a related word with a clear /ɛ/ sound in the right position.</p> <p>There are many words, however, where the above guidance does not help. These words just have to be learnt.</p> | <p>observant, observance, (observ<u>a</u>tion), expectant (expect<u>a</u>tion), hesitant, hesitancy (hesit<u>a</u>tion), tolerant, tolerance (toler<u>a</u>tion), substance (subst<u>a</u>ntial)</p> <p>innocent, innocence, decent, decency, frequent, frequency, confident, confidence (confid<u>e</u>ntial)</p> <p>assistant, assistance, obedient, obedience, independent, independ<u>e</u>nce</p> |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Words ending in –able and –ible</p> <p>Words ending in –ably and –ibly</p> | <p>The –able/–ably endings are far more common than the –ible/–ibly endings. As with –ant and –ance/–ancy, the –able ending is used if there is a related word ending in –ation.</p> <p>If the –able ending is added to a word ending in –ce or –ge, the e after the c or g must be kept as those letters would otherwise have their ‘hard’ sounds (as in <i>cap</i> and <i>gap</i>) before the a of the –able ending.</p> <p>The –able ending is usually but not always used if a complete root word can be heard before it, even if there is no related word ending in –ation. The first five examples opposite are obvious; in <i>reliable</i>, the complete word <i>rely</i> is heard, but the y changes to i in accordance with the rule.</p> <p>The –ible ending is common if a complete root word can’t be heard before it but it also sometimes occurs when a complete word <i>can</i> be heard (e.g. <i>sensible</i>).</p> | <p>adorable/adorably (adoration),</p> <p>applicable/applicably (application),</p> <p>considerable/considerably (consideration),</p> <p>tolerable/tolerably (toleration)</p> <p>changeable, noticeable, forcible, legible</p> <p>dependable, comfortable, understandable, reasonable, enjoyable, reliable</p> <p>possible/possibly, horrible/horribly, terrible/terribly, visible/visibly, incredible/incredibly, sensible/sensibly</p> |
| <p>Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words ending in –fer</p> | <p>The r is doubled if the –fer is still stressed when the ending is added.</p> <p>The r is not doubled if the –fer is no longer stressed.</p> | <p>referring, referred, referral, preferring, preferred, transferring, transferred</p> <p>reference, referee, preference, transference</p> |
| <p>Use of the hyphen</p> | <p>Hyphens can be used to join a prefix to a root word, especially if the prefix ends in a vowel letter and the root word also begins with one.</p> | <p>co-ordinate, re-enter, co-operate, co-own</p> |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--|---|---|
| Words with the /i:/ sound spelt ei after c | <p>The 'i before e except after c' rule applies to words where the sound spelt by ei is /i:/.</p> <p>Exceptions: <i>protein, caffeine, seize</i> (and <i>either</i> and <i>neither</i> if pronounced with an initial /i:/ sound).</p> | deceive, conceive, receive, perceive, ceiling |
| Words containing the letter-string ough | <p>ough is one of the trickiest spellings in English – it can be used to spell a number of different sounds.</p> | <p>ought, bought, thought, nought, brought, fought</p> <p>rough, tough, enough</p> <p>cough</p> <p>though, although, dough</p> <p>through</p> <p>thorough, borough</p> <p>plough, bough</p> |
| Words with 'silent' letters (i.e. letters whose presence cannot be predicted from the pronunciation of the word) | <p>Some letters which are no longer sounded used to be sounded hundreds of years ago: e.g. in <i>knight</i>, there was a /k/ sound before the /n/, and the gh used to represent the sound that 'ch' now represents in the Scottish word <i>loch</i>.</p> | doubt, island, lamb, solemn, thistle, knight |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|--|---|---|
| Homophones and other words that are often confused | <p>In the pairs of words opposite, nouns end –ce and verbs end –se. <i>Advice</i> and <i>advise</i> provide a useful clue as the word <i>advise</i> (verb) is pronounced with a /z/ sound – which could not be spelt c.</p> <p><u>More examples:</u></p> <p>aisle: a gangway between seats (in a church, train, plane). isle: an island. aloud: out loud. allowed: permitted. affect: usually a verb (e.g. <i>The weather may affect our plans</i>). effect: usually a noun (e.g. <i>It may have an effect on our plans</i>). If a verb, it means ‘bring about’ (e.g. <i>He will effect changes in the running of the business</i>). altar: a table-like piece of furniture in a church. alter: to change. ascent: the act of ascending (going up). assent: to agree/agreement (verb and noun). bridal: to do with a bride at a wedding. bridle: reins etc. for controlling a horse. cereal: made from grain (e.g. breakfast cereal). serial: adjective from the noun <i>series</i> – a succession of things one after the other. compliment: to make nice remarks about someone (verb) or the remark that is made (noun). complement: related to the word <i>complete</i> – to make something complete or more complete (e.g. <i>her scarf complemented her outfit</i>).</p> | <p>advice/advise device/devise licence/license practice/practise prophecy/prophesy</p> <p>farther: further father: a male parent guessed: past tense of the verb <i>guess</i> guest: visitor heard: past tense of the verb <i>hear</i> herd: a group of animals led: past tense of the verb <i>lead</i> lead: present tense of that verb, or else the metal which is very heavy (<i>as heavy as lead</i>) morning: before noon mourning: grieving for someone who has died past: noun or adjective referring to a previous time (e.g. <i>In the past</i>) or preposition or adverb showing place (e.g. <i>he walked past me</i>) passed: past tense of the verb ‘pass’ (e.g. <i>I passed him in the road</i>) precede: go in front of or before proceed: go on</p> |

| Statutory requirements | Rules and guidance (non-statutory) | Example words (non-statutory) |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Homophones and other words that are often confused (continued)</p> | <p>descent: the act of descending (going down).</p> <p>dissent: to disagree/disagreement (verb and noun).</p> <p>desert: as a noun – a barren place (stress on first syllable); as a verb – to abandon (stress on second syllable)</p> <p>dessert: (stress on second syllable) a sweet course after the main course of a meal.</p> <p>draft: noun – a first attempt at writing something; verb – to make the first attempt; also, to draw in someone (e.g. <i>to draft in extra help</i>)</p> <p>draught: a current of air.</p> | <p>principal: adjective – most important (e.g. <i>principal ballerina</i>) noun – important person (e.g. <i>principal of a college</i>)</p> <p>principle: basic truth or belief</p> <p>profit: money that is made in selling things</p> <p>prophet: someone who foretells the future</p> <p>stationary: not moving</p> <p>stationery: paper, envelopes etc.</p> <p>steal: take something that does not belong to you</p> <p>steel: metal</p> <p>wary: cautious</p> <p>weary: tired</p> <p>who's: contraction of <i>who is</i> or <i>who has</i></p> <p>whose: belonging to someone (e.g. <i>Whose jacket is that?</i>)</p> |

Word list – years 5 and 6

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| accommodate | embarrass | persuade |
| accompany | environment | physical |
| according | equip (–ped, –ment) | prejudice |
| achieve | especially | privilege |
| aggressive | exaggerate | profession |
| amateur | excellent | programme |
| ancient | existence | pronunciation |
| apparent | explanation | queue |
| appreciate | familiar | recognise |
| attached | foreign | recommend |
| available | forty | relevant |
| average | frequently | restaurant |
| awkward | government | rhyme |
| bargain | guarantee | rhythm |
| bruise | harass | sacrifice |
| category | hindrance | secretary |
| cemetery | identity | shoulder |
| committee | immediate(ly) | signature |
| communicate | individual | sincere(ly) |
| community | interfere | soldier |
| competition | interrupt | stomach |
| conscience* | language | sufficient |
| conscious* | leisure | suggest |
| controversy | lightning | symbol |
| convenience | marvellous | system |
| correspond | mischievous | temperature |
| criticise (critic + ise) | muscle | thorough |
| curiosity | necessary | twelfth |
| definite | neighbour | variety |
| desperate | nuisance | vegetable |
| determined | occupy | vehicle |
| develop | occur | yacht |
| dictionary | opportunity | |
| disastrous | parliament | |

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Teachers should continue to emphasize to pupils the relationships between sounds and letters, even when the relationships are unusual. Once root words are learnt in this way, longer words can be spelt correctly if the rules and guidance for adding prefixes and suffixes are also known. Many of the words in the list above can be used for practice in adding suffixes.

Understanding the history of words and relationships between them can also help with spelling.

Examples:

- *Conscience* and *conscious* are related to *science*: *conscience* is simply *science* with the prefix *con-* added. These words come from the Latin word *scio* meaning *I know*.
- The word *desperate*, meaning 'without hope', is often pronounced in English as *desp'rate*, but the *-sper-* part comes from the Latin *spero*, meaning 'I hope', in which the **e** was clearly sounded.
- *Familiar* is related to *family*, so the /ə/ sound in the first syllable of *familiar* is spelt as **a**.

International Phonetic Alphabet (non-statutory)

The table below shows each symbol of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and provides examples of the associated grapheme(s).¹ The table is not a comprehensive alphabetic code chart; it is intended simply as guidance for teachers in understanding the IPA symbols used in the spelling appendix. The pronunciations in the table are, by convention, based on Received Pronunciation and could be significantly different in other accents.

| Consonants | | Vowels | |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| /b/ | bad | /ɑ:/ | father, arm |
| /d/ | dog | /ɒ/ | hot |
| /ð/ | this | /æ/ | cat |
| /dʒ/ | gem, jug | /aɪ/ | mind, fine, pie, high |
| /f/ | if, puff, photo | /aʊ/ | out, cow |
| /g/ | gum | /ɛ/ | hen, head |
| /h/ | how | /eɪ/ | say, came, bait |
| /j/ | yes | /ɛə/ | air |
| /k/ | cat, check, key, school | /əʊ/ | cold, boat, cone, blow |
| /l/ | leg, hill | /ɪ/ | hit |
| /m/ | man | /ɪə/ | beer |
| /n/ | man | /i:/ | she, bead, see, scheme, chief |
| /ŋ/ | sing | /ɔ:/ | launch, raw, born |
| /θ/ | both | /ɔɪ/ | coin, boy |
| /p/ | pet | /ʊ/ | book |
| /r/ | red | /ʊə/ | tour |
| /s/ | sit, miss, cell | /u:/ | room, you, blue, brute |
| /ʃ/ | she, chef | /ʌ/ | cup |
| /t/ | tea | /ɜ:/ | fern, turn, girl |
| /tʃ/ | check | /ə/ | farmer |
| /v/ | vet | | |
| /w/ | wet, when | | |
| /z/ | zip, hens, buzz | | |
| /ʒ/ | pleasure | | |

¹ This chart is adapted slightly from the version provided on the DfE's website to support the Year 1 phonics screening check.

© Crown copyright 2013

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/ or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.