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Further Guidance and Spelling Rules Which May Be Covered In Years 3 or 4



adding suffixes (word endings)

This year, your child may learn that if the last syllable of the word is stressed and ends in one consonant with a vowel before it, the final consonant is doubled before any ending (beginning with a vowel letter) is added, e.g forget – forgetting and prefer – preferred.

We use 'dge' after a short vowel sound but 'ge' after any other sound.

At other points within the word, a letter 'g' is used before letters y, i or e, such as gem and magic. A 'j' is used before u, o or a, such as join and adjust.

adding '-ation'

Children may be taught spellings with this suffix which can be added to verbs to create a noun, e.g prepare – preparation.

adding 'ly'

In years 3 or 4, children may be encouraged to create adverbs from adjectives by adding 'ly', e.g quick – quickly or thoughtful – thoughtfully. This is usually straightforward but with English, there are often exceptions!

Exceptions include:

- If the root word (original word) ends in a 'y' with a consonant letter before it, e.g lazy, then the 'y' is changed to an 'i', if the root word has more than one syllable, changing lazy to lazily.
- If the word ends in 'ic', then 'ally' is added instead of 'ly', e.g artistic – artistically.
- If the root word ends in 'le', then this ending becomes 'ly', e.g responsible – responsibly.
- Having said all this, there are some more exceptions. Watch out for publicly, wholly and truly.

adding 'ous'

In years 3 or 4, children may be taught that when wanting to add 'ous' to a word ending in 'our'. The 'our' becomes 'or' before adding the suffix, e.g humour – humorous.

Also, for words ending in 'ge' such as courage, the 'ge' must be kept before adding the 'ous' – courageous. If there is an 'i' before the 'ous', it is usually spelt as an 'i' but sometimes changed to 'e', e.g serious and hideous.

adding 'ion' and 'ian'

Usually the last letter of the root word can give us a hint as to whether we put the letters 't', 'c', 's' or 'ss' before these suffixes:

- 'cian' is used if the root words end in 'c' or 'cs' e.g magic – magician.
- 'tion' is the most common and used if the words ends in 't' or 'te', e.g hesitate – hesitation.
- 'ssion' is used when the word ends in 'mit' or 'ss', e.g confess – confession and permit – permission.
- 'sion' is used if the root word ends in 'd' or 'se' (exception intend – intension and attend – attention). E.g comprehend – comprehension.

'sure', 'ture' or '(t)cher'

Your child may learn words with these different spelling patterns, e.g treasure, nature and butcher.

Children might also look into words ending in 'sion', e.g collision and mission.

At other points within the word, a letter 'g' is used before letters y, i or e, such as gem and magic. A 'j' is used before u, o or a, such as join and adjust.

words with a 'y'

Your child may be taught the spelling of words with a letter 'y' which occurs at any point within the word, e.g myth and cygnet.

If adding the endings listed above to one syllable words ending in a consonant but preceded by a vowel, we must double the last consonant first, e.g pat – patting and hum – hummed.

An exception to this rule is that the letter 'x' must never be doubled, e.g mix – mixing.

words with 'ou'

Children may work on words with the 'ou' () spelling pattern such as young and country.

prefixes (addition to the beginning of the word)

Your child may learn that prefixes such as 'in' (meaning 'not'), 'dis', 'mis' and 'un' have a negative meaning, for example, disagree, misunderstand, unacceptable and inactive.

When adding 'in-' to a word, if the word already begins with a 'l' then 'in' becomes 'il', e.g legal – illegal.

In a similar way, if the word begins with a letter 'm' or 'p', 'in' becomes 'im', e.g possible – impossible.

Where the word begins with a letter 'r', 'in' becomes 'ir', e.g responsible – irresponsible.

Children may learn spellings of words with other prefixes such as 'sub' (meaning under), 'inter' (meaning between or among), 'super' (meaning above), 're' (meaning again/back), 'auto' (meaning self or own) and 'anti' (meaning against).

possessive apostrophes with plural words

When we are trying to make it clear that a group owns something, we put the apostrophe after the plural word e.g boys', ladies'. If the plural form doesn't already end in a letter 's' then it is added, e.g mice's and children's.

For single proper nouns (names) ending in 's', use the 's suffix, e.g Wales' population.

alternate spellings for sounds

Your child may also be taught how to spell words with the /k/ sound, but spelt with a 'ch', as in chemist.

In addition to this children might learn how to spell words ending in 'gue' and 'que', such as colleague and technique and words containing 'sc' such as conscience. Also, learning the spelling pattern of words spelt 'ei', 'eigh' and 'ey' is likely to be covered this year, e.g sleigh and obey.