



**Spelling
for Life**

**ONLINE
MANUAL**

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Introduction

This manual contains lesson plans and example lessons for classroom, small group and individual implementation of Spelling for Life.

Each lesson plans contain a skill level, specifying what students need to know before embarking on the lesson. The plans indicate what materials will be needed, including reference to the worksheets document. The plan also contains an indication of the patterns and error patterns covered in the lesson and a suggested duration for each lesson.

The example lessons contain a suggested script to help you know how to start off. Student answers are in bracketed capitals.

BROKEN RULES AND WORD STORIES

Lesson plan

Skill level

This lesson can be done as soon as students start reading and writing words.

Materials

- Mouth picture
- Book picture
- Word stories blank worksheet.

Pattern

When words appear to break the rules, it is because they entered our language by one of seven major paths. These paths are the word's 'story'.

Error pattern

Defeatism, or the belief that spelling is random.

Duration

10 minutes per word story. Not all stories have to be done at once.

Step 1

You can either have a target word in mind when you deliver this lesson, or you can just use the lesson to introduce the idea that there are exceptions to rules in spelling.

Distribute a word stories blank worksheet. Explain that examining how a word entered our language (their story) helps us understand why some words don't 'play fair'.

Step 2

Brainstorm the word stories and write them in the worksheet with examples. You might only come up with a couple of stories at this point. Refer back to this sheet as they occur. You can print multiple sheets for all the different lessons and you may also want to create a large, central word stories worksheet for display in the classroom.

Step 3

This is a visual way of explaining why some of our most common words are exceptional. Establish the relative rates of change of spoken v. written communication using a picture of a mouth and a book, to represent spoken v. written communication.

Example Lesson

To help us understand why some words look like they don't play fair, let's look at their stories.

Brainstorm any stories your students already know and write examples. When it comes to number six, the 'old' category, a little more discussion is required.

There are two main ways in which we use language. What are they? (SPEAKING AND WRITING)

Draw or project a picture of a mouth and a book side by side.

NOTE: Body language is often suggested as an answer to this question. Point out that body language is mostly used to assist with spoken language and cannot convey complex notions, such as your time, place, etc. There isn't a body language version of Waiting for Godot.

Languages are like people. They change throughout time. They also change more when they are used more.

Imagine you were given a brand new bicycle for Christmas. If you took it out every day and rode it, what changes might there be by Easter? (MUD, SCRATCHES, GENERAL WEAR AND TEAR)

Imagine that same bike at Christmas again, and this time, think what it would be like at Easter if you left it in its box that whole time and didn't use it at all. Would it have changed much? (NO)

Language is like that bike. The more you use a word, the more likely it is to change. Our language is very old and has changed a lot over time.

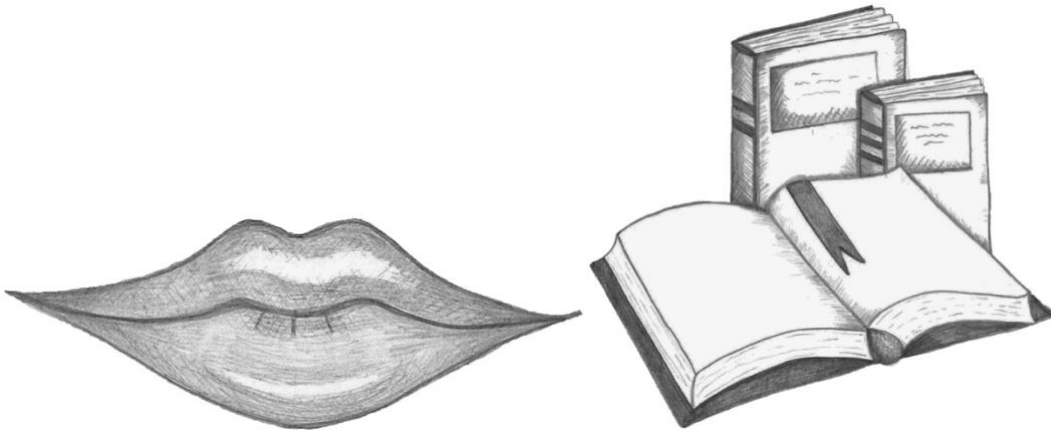
But one way in which we use language has changed faster than the other because we use it much more.

Which way of using language happens more? Speaking or writing? (SPEAKING)

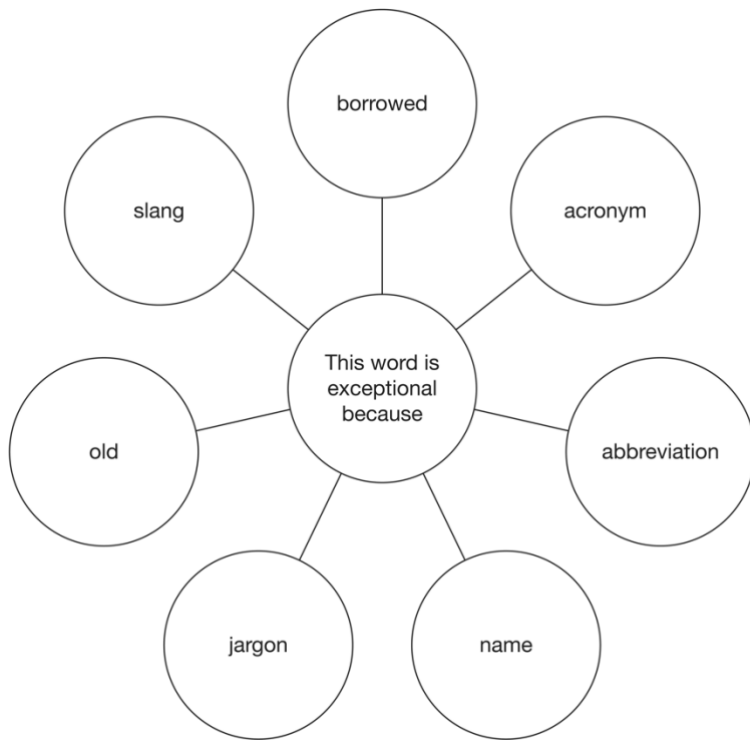
Draw or project an arrow downwards from the mouth to show spoken language changing. Then draw a shorter arrow downwards from the book to show written language changing.

The one we use more, speaking, changes faster. So sometimes the spelling hasn't caught up with the speaking. This is why we sometimes have letters in words that we no longer use and it is also why many of our old, common words have different spelling and speaking.

Let's think of some examples and write them into the word stories worksheet.



Speaking changes faster than spelling.



MORPHOLOGY

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Handwriting
- Phonic skills to the multi-syllable level
- Knowledge of the parts of speech (optional but handy for suffixes)

Materials

- Prefix, suffix and base element worksheets
- Dictionary

Duration

5 minutes per affix

Step 1

If not already known, introduce the concept of prefixes with the word 'unhappy', drawing attention to un- and asking for other un- words.

Step 2

Distribute the prefix worksheet and work through the suggested prefixes. You can also work on prefixes of your own choosing. The list here is a suggestion only. NOTE: The prefixes con- and com- mean the same thing. As an extension exercise, your students can figure out where to use con- v. com-. The answer is all about the base. If the pronunciation of the base ends at the front of the mouth /b, m, p/, then com- is much more easy to say. Contrast 'combustion/ conbustion', 'communicate/communicate', 'compliance/conpliance'.

Step 3

Write down the rule:

When reading and spelling long words, look out for prefixes.

Step 4

Repeat with suffixes but this time draw attention to the fact that suffixes often show the part of speech a word is. If the concept of parts of speech is unfamiliar, it is best to pre-teach these. You can simplify things by not mentioning the connection between suffixes and parts of speech and letting your students work out the common function of the words they use as examples.

Step 5

Write down the rule:

When reading and spelling long words, look out for suffixes.

Step 6

Repeat for base elements, making sure to point out the difference between a bound and unbound base.

Step 7

Write down the definition:

Base elements carry the main meaning of words.

Example lesson: Prefixes

Write the word 'unhappy' on the board.

What word? (UNHAPPY)

How many syllables? (THREE)

One of the best ways to break words down is to look for familiar parts, that is, parts that you've seen or heard in other words. In the word 'unhappy', have you seen the beginning of that word before? (YES, UN-)

Un- is a common beginning. The name we will use for a common beginning is prefix. You see this prefix at the beginning of lots of words in English.

Can you think of any more words with more than one syllable that begin with un-?

To show that we have found a prefix, we will underline the whole prefix:

Unhappy

When spelling this word, if you already know what the prefix is, now you really only have to deal with the sounds in two syllables instead of three.

Write this in the rule box on your worksheet.

RULE: When reading and spelling long words, look out for prefixes.

We are now going to look at a list of prefixes and come up with a definition and examples for each one. Write them on your worksheet and put a hyphen straight after them to show that there is at least one syllable to follow:

un-, re-, de-, pre-, pro-, con-, com-, ex-, sub

Prefix	Definition	Examples
un-	not	unable, unhappy
re-	back, again	return, replay
de-	down, away from	depend, defend
pre-	before	prefix, prepare
pro-	in front of, for	produce, protect
con-	with, together	contrast, confidence
com-	with, together	company, committee
ex-	out, away from	exit, extension
sub-	under	subway, submarine

RULE: When reading and spelling long words, look out for prefixes.

Example lesson: Suffixes

Our next word is 'repeated'.

There are three syllables in this word.

Now let's look for familiar parts, that is, parts that you've seen or heard in other words.

In the word 'repeated', have you seen the beginning of that word before? (YES, RE)

Re- is a prefix. It means back or again. You see this prefix at the beginning of lots of words in English.

Can you think of any more words that begin with re-?

There is also a common ending on this word. Do you know what it is? (-ED)

-ed is used at the end of many words in English to show past tense. The name for a common ending is suffix.

Can you think of any more words with the suffix -ed?

Now you actually only have one syllable left to deal with, making the word much easier to work out.

What syllable? (THE MIDDLE ONE, SPELT 'P-E-A-T')

Let's write the rule:

RULE: When reading and spelling long words, look out for suffixes.

We are now going to look at a list of suffixes and come up with a definition and examples for each one. Write them on your worksheet and put a hyphen straight before to show that there is at least one syllable before it:

-ly, -al, -ship, -er(one who does), -er (more),-ful, -ed, -est, -ist

There are two suffixes that are spelt the same but mean different things, the suffixes -er. We will put their meanings in brackets.

Fill in the prefix and suffix worksheets before tackling bases.

Suffix	Definition	Examples	Part of speech
-ly	in a certain manner	ably, happily	adverb
-al	associated with, like	final, comical	adjective
-ship	to do with status, how something is	friendship, hardship	noun
-er	one who does	carer, trader	noun
-er	more	bigger, shorter	adjective
-ful	having qualities of	beautiful	adjective
-ed	in the past	painted, complained	verb
-est	most	tallest, kindest	adjective
-ist	one who does	artist, dentist	noun

RULE: When reading and spelling long words, look out for suffixes.

Example lesson: Bases

All those prefixes and suffixes wouldn't have any work to do if we couldn't add them to what we call bases.

Bases are like the heads of families. They carry the main meaning of words. We add prefixes and suffixes to adjust the meaning.

For example, the word 'painfully' can be broken down, or reduced, by taking off the suffix -ly.

What word is left? (PAINFUL)

Can we break the word down any more? (YES, BY REMOVING THE SUFFIX -FUL)

What word is left? (PAIN)

Can this be reduced any further? (NO)

Could we add any other suffixes to the base 'pain'? (YES, -ED OR -LESS FOR EXAMPLE)

There are two kinds of base, those that are words on their own and those that are not words unless a prefix and/or suffix is added to them.

If we take the word 'play', it's the base for the word 'replay'. Is 'play' a word on its own? (YES)

'Replay' is a different word. How is it different? (WE ADDED THE PREFIX RE- AND THE NEW WORD NOW MEANS TO PLAY AGAIN)

Do the words 'play' and 'replay' have different meanings? (YES, BUT THEY ARE VERY CLOSE IN MEANING.)

So that's how a prefix can change a base that stands on its own as a word.

Now let's consider a word like 'reject'. What is the prefix? (RE-)

What does that make the base? (JECT)

Is that a word on its own? (NO)

It's a base meaning 'to throw'. We see -ject- in lots of words. Can you think of other words with the base -ject-? (INJECT, SUBJECT, CONJECTURE)

The base contains the basic meaning of the word which remains the same even though the overall meaning of the word can be changed by prefixes and suffixes.

Let's write that and figure out all the prefixes, bases and suffixes in the next worksheet.

Word	Prefix	Base	Suffix
hopeless			
unable			
reviewer			
inject			
quickly			
walking			
complexity			
widen			
uninterested			

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

Lesson plan

Skill level

Any. No reading or writing is required. These principles are fundamental to literacy and because they require no reading or writing, can be taught from pre-school onwards.

Materials

To assist your students to get a full, conceptual understanding of the difference between vowels and consonants, it helps to demonstrate how we use our body to make speech sounds.

By discovering, then drawing/projecting the human articulatory mechanism and moving various letters through this, your students notice the way vowels and consonants feel and in doing so, they can determine their differences. You will also need some magnetic letters, both vowels and consonants.

Duration

30 minutes.

TIP: Vowels are what is termed in linguistics as 'universals'. They are present in every language on the planet. Another universal is the presence of verbs in sentences. At my children's primary school, the children, in their third year of schooling, draw big superheroes in the shape of a 'v' and talk about 'v-power'. Through this they are taught that every sentence must have a verb; an example of wonderfully sophisticated yet very accessible linguistics in school.

Step 1

Start by asking your students to come up with the different parts of the articulatory mechanism (the machine that humans use to make speech sounds). You will end up drawing or projecting a picture of the lungs, trachea, throat, tongue, teeth and lips on the board. It doesn't have to be anatomically perfect, you just have to get the idea of these body parts across to the students.

Step 2

Confirm which are the moving, sound-producing parts (the articulators). These are the tongue, the moving jaw and the lips.

This can be done by having students try to say their names without first moving their tongues, then without their jaws, then without their lips.

Step 3

Show how /p/ is articulated by moving the magnetic letter 'p' through the hollow tube starting in the lungs and moving into the mouth. Discover which articulators are moving (the lips) and focus particularly on the fact that the passage of the air was

blocked by the two lips coming together, forcing the air to push its way past in order to make the sound.

Example questions:

Is the air obstructed or unobstructed?

Did the air come out freely, or did you have to make some effort to get it out?

Did something get in the way?

Was there something momentarily stopping that air from coming out?

Did it have to push its way out?

Step 4

Once students have grasped the fact that there was obstruction there, they can be told that when the air has to force, push or get through a narrow opening whilst causing friction (e.g. /s/), then that is a consonant.

Step 5

Try other consonants.

Step 6

Choose the vowel /æ/ as in 'cat'. Show the path the air takes by moving a magnetic letter 'a' from the lungs and through the hollow tube. When the air reaches the mouth, ask students to feel and describe how the air leaves the mouth.

This time the example questions above will result in different answers. Once students have grasped that the production of /a/ occurs without obstruction, they can be told that when the air doesn't have to force, push or get through a narrow opening with friction, then that is a vowel.

Step 7

Try other vowels to reinforce this concept.

Extension exercises

Students choose from a range of vowel and consonant phonemes and represent to each other/the class, how each one is formed.

Students test various consonants and determine whether they are voiced or voiceless.

Students discover mouth shape and jaw position when articulating selected vowels. Consonants can either be voiced or unvoiced, and sometimes go in pairs. Below, there is a guide as to how the major consonants of English are made. Example words containing these sounds are in brackets.

Consonants not in pairs

The final five consonants in this chart ('l', 'r', 'w', 'h' and 'wh') are considered by some to be tricky. This is because, by nature of their production, they function like consonants in that some turbulence is produced, but the obstruction in the tube is minimal in comparison with the other consonants.

Vowel construction



Vowels in the majority of accents of English fall into four broad categories: rounded, unrounded, open and diphthongs.

Example lesson

How many letters are in the alphabet? (26)

How many of those are vowels? (5, POSSIBLY 6)

What are they? (A, E, I, O, U, POSSIBLY Y)

So all the rest are consonants.

But have you ever wondered why these five letters, 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o' and 'u' are different to the others?

What we're going to do is a scientific experiment to work out the difference between vowels and consonants.

We are going to show the parts of the body that make speech sounds.

First, when I make a sound, what does it travel through to reach your ears? (AIR)

When you take air into your body, where does it go? (LUNGS)

So we need to start with a pair of lungs.

Did you know that the air travels from your lungs through a hollow tube in your throat and up into your mouth? In fact there are two hollow tubes there. One for food and water and the other for air. It's horrible when you get them mixed up isn't it?

Along this hollow tube, you have a set of muscles that vibrate and make sounds. Do you know what they're called? (VOCAL CORDS, LARYNX, VOICE BOX. CHOOSE WHICHEVER IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR STUDENTS)

Continuing up the hollow tube, the air from the lungs reaches the mouth. What things do you use in your mouth to make speech sounds? (TONGUE, TEETH, LIPS)

You can also demonstrate the importance of the tongue, teeth and lips by asking the students to try and speak without using these various parts.

If you are confident that you can show how any consonant is made, let the students choose any consonant sound. If not, choose the sound you make for the letter 'p'.

This is the sound you make at the end of the word 'tap'.

Making a consonant sound

Take the magnetic letter 'p' and place it on the lungs. As you demonstrate how the sound is made, move it through the hollow tube.

When you make the sound /p/, the air starts in your lungs, and comes up through the hollow tube. Does it pick up a sound at your voice box? (FOR /P/ THE ANSWER IS NO, FOR SOME CONSONANTS THE ANSWER WILL BE YES)

The air reaches your mouth, and then what happens to it? (IT PRESSES AGAINST YOUR LIPS AND IS RELEASED IN A POPPING MANNER)

Take a magnetic letter 'p' and move it from the lungs through to the mouth, showing what the tongue, teeth and lips do to make that particular sound. With /p/, the air moves freely through the hollow tube until it hits the closed lips and has to force its way between them.

You can then ask some or all of the following questions:

Did the air come out freely, or did you have to make some effort to get it out?
(EFFORT)

Did something get in the way? (YES, THE LIPS)

Was there something momentarily stopping that air from coming out? (YES, THE LIPS)

Did it have to push its way out? (YES)

Because you answered yes to the last three questions and said that some effort had to be made to get the sound out, we call this sound a consonant.

What you are trying to get the students to understand is that when making a consonant sound, there was some obstruction in the hollow tube. When they have answered some or all of the questions above, tell them that that is the definition of a consonant.

You can repeat this with other consonants until the students are confident. It is often an advantage to contrast it with a vowel straight away. Take a magnetic letter 'a' and move it from the lungs through to the mouth, showing that the air moves through unobstructed.

Now let's make a vowel sound. We'll make the sound /a/ as in 'at'.

The air starts in the lungs and moves along the hollow tube. Does it pick up a sound at the voice-box? (YES)



When it moves into your mouth, does anything get in the way or does it come out just like singing? (IT COMES OUT JUST LIKE SINGING)

This is a vowel.

CONSONANT CLUSTERS

The Consonant Start and End Cards

Read the following lesson plan and arm yourself with a pile of index cards (4"X6" cards) for your students before you tackle the lesson. Each student should have two cards each.

Lesson plan

Materials

Two 4" x 6" index cards for each student, or any sturdy, lined card. Size can vary according to student age.

Duration

1–2 hours per card.

Step 1

Distribute a Consonant Start Card and write all the consonants in the alphabet on the top line and the digraphs underneath.

Digraphs have two letters but one sound. The common digraphs below the first line are all written with the letter 'h'. You can ask your students to figure out what they are. So far, their cards should look like this:

Consonant Starts

b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x y z

ch, ph, sh, th, wh

NOTE: Digraphs here are not to be confused with two-letter graphemes where one letter is silent, like the 'mb' in 'dumb'.

Rather, with the exception of 'ph', which entered our language via the Roman and Greek alphabets, the digraphs 'ch', 'th', 'sh' and 'wh' are an Anglo-Saxon solution to a Roman problem. When adopting the Roman alphabet, Anglo-Saxon scribes had to invent symbols for the sounds /ch/, /th/, /sh/ and /wh/.

The digraph /wh/ occurs only in some accents of English now and has, in many cases, reverted to a /w/ sound, rendering words like 'weather' and 'whether' homophones.

Step 2

Systematically generate all the legal word-initial consonant clusters in English. Begin, if you have to, by taking the first consonant, the letter 'b' and combining it with the letter 'c'. Ask if this combination can begin words. You may have to keep doing this all the way through to the first legal cluster, 'bl' and again until the next one, 'br'.

Moving on to the letter 'c', a pattern starts to emerge, i.e. 'cl' and 'cr' are legal word-initially. The letter 'd' also blends with 'r' and the letter 'f' blends with 'l' and 'r' and so on.

This might be a quick process, this might be slow, depending on what your students already know. What is important here is that students start to notice the patterns, i.e. that there is a small, limited set of word-initial consonants that blends with an even smaller, limited set of second consonants ('l', 'r', 'w' for all consonants, excepting a slightly bigger set with the letter 's').

Why do you think this is? What do you notice about those second consonants?[†]

On the next line, figure out the following clusters:

bl, br, cl, cr, dr, dw, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr

and on the next line these clusters:

sc, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, tr, tw

and the uncommon clusters

chr, phl, phr, thw

There are, arguably, other possible ones, such as 'cz' and 'ts'. They aren't included here, as they appear in a tiny family of words, usually borrowed from other languages where such clusters are common ('czar', 'tsunami').

The cards now look like this:

Consonant Starts

b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x y z

ch, ph, th, sh, wh

bl, br, cl, cr, dr, dw, fl, fr, gl, gr, kr, pl, pr

sc, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, squ, st, sw, tr, tw

chl, chr, phl, phr, thr, thw

NOTE on the letter 'y': Word-initially, the letter 'y' can be classed as a consonant, but the moment it appears word-internally or word-finally it usually represents a vowel. Therefore, when trying to generate clusters, skip 'y' as a second letter.

Step 3

There is a consonant card for endings too. It differs slightly from the Consonant Start Card because different rules apply to word-endings. This brings us into the intriguing world of Illegal Letters and their solutions (Chapter 13).

Turn to the Consonant End Card and write the single consonants on the first line. To show that they are word-final, add a dash before each consonant. Be sure to point out that 'j', 'q' and 'v' do not appear word-finally in English words and that 'y' is only a consonant at the start of a word.

'Q' can appear word-finally, but only in the presence of the letters 'u' and 'e'. More on that in the q rule in Lesson 2 in Chapter 13.

The top row will look like this:

Consonant Ends

-b -c -d -f -g -k -l -m -n -p -que -r -s -t -x -z

Step 4

Now look for consonants that can double up at the ends of words and write them on line 2. These are referred to in my practice as 'The Doublers' and *commonly* appear together at the ends of words. They are 'ff', 'll' and 'ss'.

I have not included uncommon doublers, such as -bb ('ebb') -dd ('add', 'odd'), -gg ('egg'), -nn ('inn'), -rr ('err', 'burr', 'purr'), -tt ('matt', 'watt', 'butt', 'putt', 'batt'), -zz ('jazz', 'buzz', 'whizz', 'fizz', 'fuzz'). They are better learned in word families with the feature 'uncommon doubler'.

Now the card looks like this:

Consonant Ends

-b -c -d -f -g -k -l -m -n -p -que -r -s -t -x -z -ff, -ll, -ss,

Step 5

Systematically generate the third line using 'h' and including the 'ck' and 'ng' digraphs.

Consonant Ends

b -c -d -f -g -k -l -m -n -p -que -r -s -t -x -z

-ff, -ll, -ss,

-ch -sh -th -ph -ck -ng

NOTE: The letter 'h' appears word-finally in two main ways:

- as part of a consonant digraph ('ch', 'th', 'sh'), and
- as part of a vowel digraph to generate a very small set of interjections ('ah', 'eh', 'oh', 'uh')

It does not make a /h/ sound word-finally.

Similarly, the letter 'w' does not appear word-finally unless it is part of a vowel digraph ('aw', 'ew', 'ow').

Step 6

Now generate the fourth and fifth lines. As you can see, the pattern of word-final clusters is really quite limited.

Consonant Ends

-b -c -d -f -g -k -l -m -n -p -que -r -s -t -x -z

-ff, -ll, -ss,

-ch -sh -th -ph -ck -ng

-ct -ft -lb -ld -lf -lk -lm -ln -lp -lt -mp -nd -nk -nt -pt

-sc -sk -sp -st

NOTE about the letter 's': You can also add the letter 's' to many of these endings to form a plural noun ('lamps') or a third person singular verb ('costs'). I have not included this because it is a suffix, and follows a different set of rules. By all means, have your students note the flexibility of the letter 's' and get them to work out for themselves the reason for its prevalence.

Other clusters

There are other legal, uncommon consonant clusters (e.g. 'mt' in 'dreamt'), including three-letter ones ('str' in 'string', 'spr' as in 'spring' 'scr' as in 'scratch' etc.). For simplicity at this stage, only two-letter clusters have been included here, but by all means, teach the three-consonant clusters at your discretion.

I have also not included graphemes such as -dge ('edge') or tch ('witch'). Examples of these are grouped in families and generated using the Consonant Starts plus a vowel. Fascinating patterns emerge when generating these families.

Once the cards have been filled in, they provide a stable framework for understanding and generating reliable spellings for a great many other words.

‡ The consonants *l*, *r* and *w* can also be classified as *semi-vowels* or *glides*, due to the nature of their articulation. They are 'frictionless', that is they can be articulated continuously and so lend themselves to blending with other consonants in the second position.

THE Q RULE

The letter 'q' didn't exist in the English alphabet prior to the Norman invasion. 'Queen' was spelled 'cwen' and 'quick' was spelled 'cwic'. French scribes started inserting their 'qu' version in such words and then inconsiderately stopped pronouncing the /w/ sound, leaving English with words like 'unique' and 'quiche'. By then, many words containing /kw/ sounds in English had been standardized to be spelled 'qu', thus giving us the first consonant rule:

RULE: q is always written with the letter u.

Students then find three words which follow this rule. Students write these directly into their exercise books. Any exceptions can be examined using a word stories worksheet. There is a small list of 'q-rule' exceptions at the end of this chapter.

THE C RULE

Draw attention to the letter 'c' and discuss the sounds it can make.

RULE: when c comes before e, i or y, it MUST say /s/.

Students find three words which follow this rule. Students write these and any exceptions directly into their notebooks.

THE G RULE

Draw attention to the letter 'g' and discuss the sounds it can make.

RULE: when g comes before e, i or y, it MAY say /j/.

NOTE: There are few exceptions to this rule, as g has the option of saying either of its two sounds before 'e', 'i' or 'y'.

Pattern

- The same three letters, 'e', 'i' and 'y', influence 'c' and 'g'.

For younger learners

In the Lindamood-Bell clinic where I first learned to teach this lesson, we used the image of a train to represent the 'c' and 'g' rules.

We called it the C-Train. It went chugging along the track from left to right saying /k/k/k/k/ as it went. When it came to the signal containing the letters 'e', 'i' and 'y', it went down a different track, saying /s/s/s/s/ instead.

The same can be done with the G-Train. It went chugging along saying /g/g/g/g/ until it came to that same signal: 'e', 'i' and 'y'. This time, though, instead of only having one track to go down, it had the choice of two: it could carry on saying /g/g/g/g/ but could also veer off and say /j/j/j/j/.

There is a video lesson on presenting the C and G rules on the Lifelong Literacy YouTube channel.

Summary

RULE: q is always written with the letter u.

RULE: when c comes before e, i or y, it MUST say /s/.

RULE: when g comes before e, i or y, it MAY say /j/.

Exceptions to the q, c and g rules

The following is a list of words which break the q and c rules. They are rare words and in most cases are borrowed from other languages or have very specialised, medical or scientific definitions. They are, however, acceptable for *Spelling for Life* in that they serve to demonstrate exceptions, an important tool for reinforcing rules. They also provide vocabulary enrichment and satisfy many a practitioner and student's curiosity regarding possible exceptions.

Because of their relative obscurity, definitions have been provided.

RULE: q is always written with u.

faqir A Muslim or Hindu monk

qanat A subterranean tunnel used for irrigation

qat Pronounced /cot/, a plant used for social chewing in parts of Africa and the Middle East

qawaali or **qawwali** Sufi devotional songs

qigong Chinese meditation system

qindar/qintar Unit of currency in Albania

qiviut Musk ox woollen undercoat

qoph The 19th letter of the Hebrew alphabet

qwerty The top row of letters on a modern keyboard

suq Variation of 'souk', a marketplace

tranqs Abbreviation for 'tranquillisers'

RULE: When c comes before e, i or y it MUST say /s/

caesarean Surgical delivery of offspring

caesura A break in the flow of sound usually in the middle of a line of verse

cephalic Of or relating to the head

coeliac Of or relating to the abdominal cavity

RULE: when g comes before e, i or y, it MAY say /j/.

gaol Place of imprisonment, spelled this way in older literature e.g. *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*

ILLEGAL LETTERS

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Middle primary: dictionary use and higher order vocabulary is necessary here. This is not to stop any discussion of Illegal Letters to younger learners, but the worksheets can only be fully done by older learners.

Materials

- Illegal Letters worksheet
- Dictionary
- Word stories worksheet

Duration

20 minutes per letter.

Step 1

Brainstorm the five Illegal Letters and write them alphabetically on the work-sheet.

Step 2

Review each Illegal Letter and work out possible solutions for each one, e.g. for the letter 'i', the /ie/ sound at the end of a word is spelled with a 'y' or 'ie'.

Step 3

Find exceptions for each Illegal Letter (if possible) and write them in the 'exceptions' column. In the column adjacent to that, write each word story, i.e. why the word is exceptional by referring to a dictionary. If students have begun a word stories worksheet they can add words to this during the lesson.

RULE: You may not use the letters i, j, q, u or v at the end of English words. They are illegal.

ALTERNATIVE CATCHY RULE: i, j, q, u, v...at the end of a word they cannot be!

LETTER	SOLUTION	EXAMPLES	EXCEPTIONS	STORY
i	-y, -ie	my pie	ski alibi I hi fungi	Norwegian Latin/legal common slang scientific
j	-ge, -dge	cage badge	haj raj	Arabic Indian
q	-que	pique unique	qwerty suq	acronym Arabic
u	-ue	glue true	flu menu you	abbreviation French common
v	-ve	love give weave	spiv rev	slang abbreviation

THE SINGLE VOWELS

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Handwriting
- Phonemic awareness
- The difference between vowels and consonants

Materials

- Single vowels worksheet

Duration

10–15 minutes per vowel.

Step 1

Discuss the importance of vowels by having students write their names, cross out the vowels and then try to shout their vowel-free names.

Step 2

Distribute the single vowels worksheet. Tell students that the most common sound that 'a' makes is /a/ as in 'bat'. Write 'bat' in the 'sound' column next to the letter 'a'.

Step 3

Ask for the name of the letter, and write the example word, 'bacon', in the second column. Tell students why 'a' says its name at the end of the syllable and write the rule:

RULE: When a vowel is at the end of a syllable it says its name.

Step 4

Tell students the other sounds 'a' can make and write example words in the 'extra sounds' boxes. The sounds are /ah/ as in 'bath', /aw/ as in 'ball' and /o/ as in 'swan'. These extra sounds are based on a standard English accent called Received Pronunciation.

NOTE: I have not included rules for these extra sounds, though their existence is rule-based. For instance, the letter 'a' often says /ar/ ('bath', 'father', 'lava') when followed by 'th' or 'v'.

The reason for this is that, though interesting, it is sometimes necessary to draw the line as to how many rules are presented. I have used my judgement in this case and

prefer to include examples rather than more rules, as their application is usually limited to a small set of words.

If my students do spot the patterns in these words, all the better. There is no reason not to discuss them if they come up, but formally teaching them at this level can be distracting.

Step 5

Repeat the process for the rest of the vowels.

EXAMPLE LESSON

Now that you know what vowels and consonants are, I want you to tell me why we need vowels. Why can't we have a language with consonants only?

To answer this fully, I'm going to take a name, such as Sam, and take away the vowel. What would that name be now? (SM)

Let's write Sam down, but because we live in a world without vowels, we'll cross out the 'a'.

What if this 'Sm' person were walking across the street ... listening to some loud music through his headphones ... and not looking where he was going ... and there was a truck coming ... and you tried to call out to him to watch out ... but his name is 'Sm', so all you could do is shout ... 'SM!!!' What would happen? ('SM' WOULD GET HIT BY THE TRUCK!)

Shout 'Sm!' as loud as you can. Without the vowel, it will sound muffled and short, as if someone is holding their hand over your mouth.

You can also repeat this using your name or your students' names. In a group setting, get students to come up to the board and cross out the vowels in their name and have the other students try to shout the new word.

My favourite student for this exercise was a boy called Hamish. His name became 'Hmsh!', the sort of name you would give a pet dinosaur. He loved that.

Why can't we shout people's names when there are no vowels? (BECAUSE VOWELS CARRY THE MOST SOUND IN WORDS BECAUSE THEY ARE UNOBSTRUCTED. YOU CANNOT SHOUT A CONSONANT.)

For vowels, the hollow tube that carries your speech sounds is open, letting the air carry the sound without anything getting in the way.

So that's why we need vowels. We need vowels in every word, and not only in every word, but in every syllable in every word.

If students have some understanding of what a syllable is, you are ready to move on.

Distribute the single vowels worksheet.

What is the first vowel in the alphabet? (A)

Write it in the first square on the first line. We are going to show all the sounds that the letter 'a' can make by writing some example words.

The first and most common sound that 'a' makes is /æ/. And the example word we are going to write is 'bat'. Write it in the second square.

The next sound that 'a' makes is its name, /ei/. The example word is 'bacon'. Write it next to 'bat'.

We are going to look at why the 'a' says its name, /ei/ in the word 'bacon'.

The first syllable in 'bacon' is ba-.

NOTE: We split the word at this point because, when breaking words in English, our minds automatically tend to start syllables with consonants. Syllable breaking is rule-based and all mature readers and spellers have internalised these rules whether they're conscious of them or not.

Is the vowel at the beginning or at the end of the syllable? (AT THE END)

So the rule here is that 'a' will say its name, /ei/, at the end of a syllable. Vowels never say their name for no reason. There is always something making a single vowel say its name. In this word, it's as if the letter 'a' is on the edge of a cliff, and without a consonant to support it, it falls off the cliff and shouts its name, 'aaaaaaaaaay' as it falls. Draw an arrow underneath the letter 'a' to show it falling off the cliff.

Now write down the rule.

RULE: When a vowel is at the end of a syllable it says its name.

NOTE: This section is for Received Pronunciation and its close relatives only. Scottish, Irish, Cornish, Canadian and General American accents are amongst those who not distinguish vowels in these words from the first sound that 'a' makes. If this is not relevant for your accent, please skip the next two sounds of the letter 'a' and go to the last sound.

The next sound that 'a' makes is /ɑ:/. The example word is 'bath'. Write it next to 'bacon'.

The next sound that 'a' makes is /ɔ:/. The example word is 'ball'. Write it next to 'bath'.

NOTE: All accents of English can use this part of the lesson again.

The next sound that 'a' makes is /o/. The example word is 'swan'. Write it next to 'ball'.

Repeat this process for the rest of the vowels, making sure you note the sound/name distinction.

THE LETTER Y

Lesson plan

Materials

The letter 'y' worksheet.

Duration

30–60 minutes.

Step 1

Distribute the worksheet and introduce the concept of 'stunt doubles' in movies, and how their jobs are similar to those of the letter 'y', i.e. they go where others cannot (see example dialogue below).

Step 2

Write 'laze' on the board and work out why that is the wrong spelling for 'lazy'. Find more examples of 'y' substituting for an /ee/ sound in the place that 'e' cannot make a sound (i.e. word-finally). Students write 'lazy' in column 1.

Step 3

Write 'fli' on the board and ask why you don't spell 'fly' this way. Ask for a solution, which is 'use y'. Find other examples of 'y' substituting for an /ie/ sound where the letter 'i' cannot go (i.e. word-finally again).

Step 4

Write 'gym' in column 3 and explain Greek-derived words. Finding examples will be trickier, since words that we borrowed from Greek are typically (there's one) literary and scientific terms. Younger students don't have to completely fill in the whole column.

Example lesson

Before we look at the next vowel in the alphabet, I want you to think about the film industry. In particular, the actors that play the big parts in the big films.

Now most of these people are very good-looking and their famous faces and bodies are worth millions of dollars. The problem is, in many of their films they have to do dangerous things like leaping out of planes and being blown up and so forth. How do these beautiful people still manage to do all this dangerous stuff without being in danger? (THEY USE STUNT DOUBLES)

These people sometimes can't be in a scene, because it's too dangerous, so they have specially trained stunt doubles to stand in for them. The same thing happens with the vowels 'e' and 'i'. There are certain places in words that 'e' and 'i' cannot be. So we have to use the stunt-letter 'y'. It actually makes three vowel sounds and takes the place of 'e' and 'i' at the end of words and sometimes stands in for 'i' inside words too.

The first vowel sound that 'y' makes is /ee/. The example word that we are going to use for its first sound is 'lazy'.

Write 'laze' on the board and ask why 'lazy' can't be written this way.

Most students say, 'Because it doesn't look right', which is true enough. A more accurate answer is that the letter 'e' is silent at the end of words. More on this in the Final Silent E lesson.

The letter 'e' is silent at the end of words so it can't be there. But we need something to make the /ee/ sound at the end of 'lazy'. What is the solution to this problem? (WRITE Y INSTEAD OF E)

Yes, use the stunt-letter 'y', not the letter 'e', nor the letters 'ey', 'ie', or 'ee'. There are only a few words in English that end in 'ey' compared to thousands that end in 'y'. A great thing to remember is that if you can get away with using one letter instead of two, then use one. This is the first lesson in keeping it simple.

This is an opportunity to erase the common, erroneous placing of 'ey' at the end of unfamiliar words (e.g. 'ladey', 'angrey', 'happy').

Doing this is a common coping strategy. There are only two words in the Fry 1000 List ('money' and 'valley') that end in 'ey', so drill into your students' minds that 'y' is a much more common ending when an /ee/ sound is needed word-finally.

You may also want to study an 'ey' word family based on this feature. This is a list of words that do end in these two letters. This family will be smaller and easier to learn than the family of words containing only 'y' at the end.

Write 'lazy' in the next box.

The next sound that 'y' makes is /ie/. The example word is 'fly'. Write it next to 'lazy'.

Do you know why we use the letter 'y' in this word? Why can't we write it f-l-i?

The reason we can't do this is because 'i' is an Illegal Letter. That means that you cannot use it at the end of a word in English.

Another sound that 'y' makes is /i/. The letter 'y' also replaces the letter 'i' in words that we borrowed from Greek. So if it's a Greek root and an /i/ sound, chances are you need a 'y' there. Our example word is 'gym'. Write it next to 'fly'.

It's now time to write the 'y' rule.

RULE: When you cannot use the letter e or i, use y.

Why?	1. When 'e' cannot be there	2. When 'i' cannot be there	3. Greek 'i'
	lazy	fly	gym
	baby	why	analyse
	angry	by	hyphen
	every	try	synonym
	fifty	spy	type

RULE: When you cannot use the letter 'e' or 'i', use 'y'.

Letter 'y' worksheet example

FINAL SILENT E JOBS 1-3

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Handwriting
- Sound-symbol skills
- The difference between a letter sound ('short sound') and a letter name ('long sound')
- Illegal Letters

Materials

- Final Silent E 1–3 worksheet
- Final Silent E wordlist

Error pattern

'If in doubt, put an e at the end.'

Duration

30–45 minutes for the entirety of Jobs 1–3, including No Job E.

Final Silent E Job 1

Step 1

Distribute Final Silent E worksheet.

Step 2

Add Final Silent E to the words and compare the vowel sound from old to new.

Step 3

Write Job 1: Final Silent E makes a vowel say its name, even if it has to jump over a consonant to do it.

Step 4

Find other examples and write them in the spaces provided.

Final Silent E Job 2

Step 1

Go to 'dance' and 'large' in the next two squares.

Step 2

Students attempt to pronounce the words omitting Final Silent E.

Step 3

Write Job 2: Final Silent E makes 'c' say /s/ and 'g' say /j/.

Step 4

Find other examples and write them in the spaces provided.

Final Silent E special note

Step 1

Students attempt to pronounce the words 'race' and 'rage' omitting Final Silent E.

Step 2

Write:

NOTE: Final Silent E can do two jobs at the same time.

Step 3

Find other examples and write them in the spaces provided.

Final Silent E Job 3

Step 1

Work out why 'due' and 'give' don't look right when omitting 'e'.

Step 2

Write Job 3: Final Silent E stops words from ending with Illegal Letters.

Step 3

Find other examples and write them in the spaces provided.

Example lessons

Final Silent E Job 1

What is the most common letter in the English language? (THE LETTER 'E')

Did you know that the letter 'e' is very powerful? You may have heard it called 'Magic E' or 'Bossy E' before, because of all the things it does. Now we are going to look at 'e' at the ends of words and all the things it can do there.

On your worksheet, there are five words in the first column. Let's see what sound the vowels are making in those words.

Now let's add Final Silent E. What word? (CANE)

Which vowel is making a sound? ('A')

What sound? (/AY/)

Is that its first sound or its name? (NAME)

If I take away the 'e' at the end of 'cane', what does it say now? (CAN)

What sound does the vowel make? (/A/ AS IN CAT)

Is that its sound or its name? (SOUND)

So what does the 'e' do to that word? (IT MAKES THE A SAY ITS NAME)

Where did the 'e' come in this word? (AT THE END)

That is why we call it Final E.

Did 'e' make a sound of its own in this word? (NO)

That is why we call it Final Silent E.

In 'cane', Final Silent E is doing its first job. Let's write it down:

JOB 1: Final Silent E makes a vowel say its name, even if it has to jump over a consonant to do it.

We are now going to add Final Silent E to each of these words. Let's see what happens when we do.

Final Silent E Job 2

Let's take the word 'dance'. What would this word sound like if you took the Final Silent E away? (DANC)

But the word we want is 'dance'.

So can you tell me what the Final Silent E is doing in the word dance? (FINAL SILENT E IS MAKING THE C SAY /S/)

This is the first part of the next job. Write it down.

JOB 2: Final Silent E makes c say /s/

Now let's look at the word 'large'. What would this word sound like if you took the Final Silent E away? (LARG)

But the word we want is 'large', isn't it?

So can you tell me what the Final Silent E is doing in the word 'large'? (FINAL SILENT E IS MAKING THE G SAY /J/)

This is the second part of job 2. Write it down.

JOB 2: Final Silent E makes c say /s/ and g say /j/.

NOTE: Final Silent E with two jobs

Now let's look at the word 'race'. What would this word sound like if you took the Final Silent E away? (RAC, RHYMING WITH SACK)

But the word we want is 'race', isn't it? So can you tell me what Final Silent E is doing in the word 'race'? (FINAL SILENT E IS MAKING THE A SAY ITS NAME AND MAKING THE C SAY /S/)

In this word, Final Silent E is doing two jobs. It is such a powerful letter that it can do that. Another example is the word 'rage'.

What would this word sound like if you took away the Final Silent E? (RAG)

But the word we want is 'rage', isn't it? So can you tell me what Final Silent E is doing in the word 'rage'? (FINAL SILENT E IS MAKING THE A SAY ITS NAME AND THE G SAY /J/)

In this word, Final Silent E is doing two jobs. It is such a powerful letter that it can do that. This should be noted. Let's write it down.

NOTE: Final Silent E can do two jobs at the same time.

Final Silent E Job 3

Let's take a look at the word 'due'. What would this word sound like if you took the Final Silent E away? (DUE)

It would sound the same, because we know that 'u' at the end of a syllable will say its name. But what would be wrong with the word? (YOU MAY NOT USE THE LETTER U AT THE END OF A WORD. IT IS ILLEGAL. CHAPTER 13)

So how do you fix that when there is a /ue/ sound but you cannot have 'u' at the end? (PUT A FINAL SILENT E ON THE END OF THE WORD)

Next we have 'give'. What would this word sound like if you took the Final Silent E away? (GIVE)

It would sound the same, wouldn't it? But what would be wrong with the word? (YOU MAY NOT USE THE LETTER V AT THE END OF A WORD. IT IS ILLEGAL)

So how do you fix that when there is a /v/ sound but you cannot have 'v' at the end? (PUT A FINAL SILENT E ON THE END OF THE WORD)

This is the next job. Write it down.

JOB 3: Final Silent E stops words from ending with Illegal Letters.

FINAL SILENT E JOB 4

Lesson plan

Materials

Final Silent E Job 4 worksheet

Skill level

Job 4 requires more analysis than Jobs 1–3. Minimally, a student needs to have the following knowledge in order to get the best out of this lesson:

- Counting syllables
- The difference between vowels and consonants
- The single vowels

Pattern

With the exception of 'h' and 'j', all consonant +le endings that are crossed out have alternative spellings. This is shown on the completed worksheet below.

Duration

This is a very dense lesson, with much scope for observation of several phenomena. 1–2 hours.

Step 1

Write all the consonants in the alphabet in the first column and add a dash (-) before each one and the letters 'le' after.

Step 2

Return to -ble and dictate 'able'. Figure out what Final Silent E is doing in this word and write the rule in the first rule box:

RULE: Final Silent E can give the last syllable a vowel.

Step 3

Next to 'able' write 'babble'. Compare and discuss the single v. double medial consonant in these words and brainstorm more examples. In so doing, the following rule emerges:

RULE: A consonant plus -le cannot be split up.

Step 4

Examine every consonant +le ending. Cross out the ones that don't exist and find examples for the ones that do.

Step 5

Depending on your students' tolerance of complexity, provide alternative spellings of the endings in the third column whilst looking at the consonant +le endings. If a simpler version is needed, go back to the beginning and look at the alternative spellings once all the consonant +le endings have been written.

Example lesson

Distribute the consonant plus -le worksheet and write the letters 'le' after each consonant.

The first line should look like this:

-ble

This is a very common word ending in English. When you see it in a word, what will it say? (BLE)

Let's write the word 'able' in the example box.

In the word 'able', how many syllables do you hear? (TWO)

What is the first syllable? (A-)

What is the second syllable? (-BLE)

What would the word sound like if we took away the Final Silent E? (ABLE)

That's right, it would sound the same, so Final Silent E is not changing the sound of anything here. Is it stopping the word from ending with an Illegal Letter? (NO)

That's right, so what would be wrong with the second syllable if we took away the Final Silent E? (IT WOULD HAVE NO VOWEL, AND EVERY SYLLABLE MUST HAVE A VOWEL)

We've seen this before, when examining the importance of vowels. Now it's time to write it down as a rule.

RULE: Every syllable must have a vowel.

So we can fix syllables that don't have a vowel by adding Final Silent E. This is the fourth job, write it down.

JOB 4: Final Silent E can give the last syllable a vowel.

Next to 'able', write 'babble'.

In 'babble', how many syllables do you hear? (TWO)

What is the first syllable? (BAB-)

What is the second syllable? (-BLE)

What would the word sound like if we took away the Final Silent E? (BABBLE)

That's right, it would sound the same, so Final Silent E is not changing the sound of anything here.

Is it stopping the word from ending with an Illegal Letter? (NO)

That's right, so what would be wrong with the second syllable if we took away the Final Silent E? (EVERY SYLLABLE MUST HAVE A VOWEL)

So how would we fix that? (ADD FINAL SILENT E)

There is something else you should know about words like this.

The word 'able' has one 'b' but 'babble' has two b's together. Let's see why this is.

What is the first syllable in 'babble'? (BAB-)

What's the second syllable? (-BLE)

Now let's take one of those b's away. The second 'b' belongs to the last syllable, so we can't take that away. The syllable -ble is a whole unit and can't be split up. That is the next rule. Write it down.

RULE: A consonant plus -le cannot be split up.

So let's take the first 'b' away. What would that first syllable now sound like? (BAY)

Why would it sound like that? (BECAUSE THE LETTER A WOULD BE AT THE END OF THE SYLLABLE AND THEREFORE WOULD SAY ITS NAME)

So what would that word sound like with just one 'b'? ('BABLE', WHICH RHYMES WITH 'TABLE')

So we fix the problem by doubling the 'b'. This is one of the main reasons why we have double consonants in some words and single consonants in others.

Repeat for endings -cle, -dle, -fle, -gle until you get to -hle.

When you get to the letter 'h', follow the procedure up to the point where the student writes -hle. Repeat for the rest of the endings, legal and illegal.

In English, you do not see these three letters at the end of a word. This is not a legal ending. Therefore, I would like you to cross it out.

There are some other illegal endings like this. Your job is to work out which ones are legal and which ones are illegal. For all the legal ones, you are to provide an example. Cross out all the illegal ones.

THE WACKY RS

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Handwriting
- Phonics
- Round the blend
- The single vowels

Materials

Wacky Rs worksheet.

Duration

20 minutes per Wacky R.

There is no step-by-step lesson plan for the first part. The worksheet is self-explanatory.



The Wicked Sisters

Example lesson

Distribute the Wacky Rs worksheet

When the letter 'r' comes after a vowel, it makes the vowel go a bit wacky. Do you know what the letter 'a' says when the letter 'r' comes after it? (AR)

This is the next rule. Write it down.

RULE: When a vowel comes before r, it goes wacky.

Let's use the Consonant Start and End Cards to generate examples of 'ar' words.

Repeat for 'er', 'ir', 'or' and 'ur' and tell the Wicked Sister story if appropriate (which, personally, I deem appropriate for everybody).

More Wacky Rs

With the core Wacky Rs in place, this information can now be expanded to produce other spelling patterns. The addition of other letters to the original Wacky Rs can produce some interesting patterns. They are listed below, with word families to illustrate. The families are not intended as an exhaustive list of all possible words bearing these letter clusters. Compilation of such lists I will leave to online lexicographers and hopefully to your students.

Lesson plan

Skill level

Consonant Start and End Cards

Materials

More Wacky Rs worksheet.

Duration

60–80 minutes.

Step 1

Distribute the More Wacky Rs worksheet. Write 'ar' in the first square and check the sound (/ar/ as in 'car').

Step 2

Insert the letter 'e' before the 'ar' and, noting that it spells the word 'ear', figure out what sounds it can also make when inside words by using the Consonant Start and End Cards. Using the cards will derive three distinct word families:

EAR

BEAR

LEARN

Step 3

Sort the words generated.

Example lesson

We just looked at the Wacky R's, but there are some more patterns that we can generate.

Let's go to the next worksheet.

When we add 'e' to 'ar' we create three possible sounds. First, we have the word 'ear', so that's the first new sound. Let's put that word in the first 'new sound' box. Use your Consonant Start and End Cards to figure out the other e-a-r sounds.

Brainstorm this. If the students are using the cards alphabetically, at some point they will generate 'bear' and 'learn'. Along with 'ear', these words can be used as the heads of the three word families.

There is also a space provided for the uncommon sounds such as in 'heart'.

When we add 'w' to 'or', the 'or' often makes a Wicked Sister sound, for instance, 'word'. Let's use the Consonant Start and End Cards to find more words like 'word'.

When we add 'w' to 'ar', the 'ar' often makes an /or/ sound, for instance, 'war'. Let's use the Consonant Start and End Cards to find more words like 'war'.

Some word families

e + ar = BEAR, DEAR and LEARN word families:

Bear

wear, pear, tear, swear

Dear

nuclear, appear, arrears, beard, year, bleary, clear, dear, dreary, fear, gear, hear, near, rear, sear, shear, smear, spear, tear, weary

Heard

search, dearth, early, earn, earth, heard, hearse, pearl, earnest, rehearse, research, search, yearn

With three possible exceptions:

heart, hearth, hearken

If students suggest 'heart', 'hearth' or possibly even 'hearken', let them know that they are exceptional words (victims, in fact, of something called 'The Great Vowel Shift'). Their spelling survived their change in pronunciation.

The EAR and BEAR families can also be expanded to generate homo-phones. For instance, 'hear/here, dear/deer, shear/sheer' or 'bear/bare, pear/pare/pair'.

w + or = WORD words and WORN words:

WORM: word, work, world, worse, worship, worst, worth,

WORE: worn, wort

With 'worry' standing all on its own, I daren't even put it into a category based on its sound, it's so varied I'd get crucified for even suggesting where it might belong. The broad variations are due to its unusual status of being composed of very fluid sounds. Say it in your accent, noting your students' pronunciations based on their accents and then leave it alone. w + ar = WAR words:

award, ward, dwarf, warn, warm, reward, toward, sward, swarm, swarthy, thwart, warrant, warble, wardrobe, warp, warren, wart

Words that denote direction, such as 'westward', 'inward', 'downward' and 'forward' all contain 'ward', but they have emphasis on the first syllable. Therefore, in these words, w + ar + d are pronounced with a weak vowel sound in the second syllable. This is also a good opportunity to compile a word family.

FINAL SILENT E AND WACKY RS

Final Silent E combines with the five Wacky Rs, 'ar', 'er', 'ir', 'or', and 'ur' and forms different sounds. When Final Silent E is combined with 'or', many accents of English don't have a vowel sound change (Scottish does). It is still valuable to observe the words that can be generated by the addition of Final Silent E to Wacky Rs.

Common words with these sounds can be grouped together and learned as a family. Another interesting pattern emerges during these exercises, in that while students use the Consonant Start and End Cards they also become aware of rhyming words. For instance, the cards will yield words like 'bare/bear' but also 'lair', 'peer', 'tyre' and 'roar' which inevitably triggers questions about alternative spellings. This is why the 'alternatives' column is there.

With the 'er' row, the small, common and therefore orthographically irregular words 'there', 'where' and 'were' are also generated. Put these into a separate word family based on the feature -ere + uncommon sound, if they are not already known.

Lesson plan

Materials

Final Silent E and Wacky Rs worksheet.

Duration

60–80 minutes.

Example lesson

When you add Final Silent E to 'ar', aside from being the word 'are', it makes the sound /air/, as in the word 'bare'. Write this word in the 'new sound' box. There is a group of words spelled this way. See how many you can find by using your Consonant Start Card and write them into your 'examples' box.

Now say the sound /er/. Add Final Silent E. When you add Final silent E to this Wacky R, the sound it makes is /ear/, as in the word 'here'. Write this word in the 'new sound' box. There is a group of words spelt this way. See how many you can find by using your Consonant Start Card and write them into your 'examples' box.

You will also find words that sound the same but are spelt differently. Put them into the 'alternatives' column.

Repeat for Final Silent E + /ir/, /or/ and /ur/.

THE VOWEL GENERATOR

Lesson plan

Materials

- A printout of a blank Vowel Generator grid.
- Students can have their Consonant Start and End Cards out on the desk to help generate example words.

Skill level

- The Single Vowels

Duration

60–120 minutes.

Step 1

Distribute a blank Vowel Generator. Leave the first square blank and fill the first row and column with the five single vowels. Figure out the additional three letters ('r', 'w', 'y') and place them in the last squares of row 1.

Step 2

Combine the columns with the rows to generate possible and non-possible vowel digraphs. Write examples for the possible digraphs and strike out the squares for the non-possible digraphs.

Example lesson

Distribute a blank Vowel Generator

Leave the first square blank and write all the vowels across the first row.

Then ask your students to write all the vowels again down the first column. Their grid should look like this:

We are going to figure out all the possible two-letter combinations of vowels. We will do that by filling in this grid. This is called the Vowel Generator, because it generates all the two letter vowels in English.

Letters which combine to form one sound are called digraphs. 'Di' means 'two' and 'graph' means 'written or drawn'.

To generate all the digraphs, though, we need three more letters. There are three other letters that go with the vowels 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o' and 'u' to spell vowel sounds. Does anyone know any of them?

Once your students have answered, if there are any left that you need to discover, fill in the blanks. The letters are 'r', 'w' and 'y'.

Let's generate the first two-letter vowel. Starting with the first letter in the first column, the letter 'a', let's combine it with the first letter in the top row. This would give us the vowel combination 'aa'. Is that a common vowel digraph in English? (NO)

In that case we won't include it in our store of digraphs. Put a line through the 'aa' square.

Our next combination is what? (AE)

Common or not common? (NOT COMMON)

Next combination? (AI)

Common or not? (COMMON)

What sound? (/AY/, AS IN PLAY)

Write 'ai' in the next square of the grid, leaving some space for your example words.

Can you think of any words that have this combination? Let's use the Consonant Cards and see what we can come up with.

Write your examples in your notebooks in a word family with feature 'ai'.

The words we can generate using our consonant cards are mainly one syllable words. Let's take a few and add some prefixes and suffixes.

Let's do an example word that doesn't come up with the consonant cards. How about 'contain'?

We could add some suffixes to that word. What suffixes? (-ER, -ED, -ING, -S, -MENT)

Time for the next digraph:

a-o, yes or no? (NO)

Put a line through the 'ao' square.

Continue to fill in the grid.

SYLLABLES

Lesson plan

Skill level

Counting syllables.

Materials

Strong and weak syllables worksheet.

Pattern

Strong syllables usually fall on the base element. Prefixes and suffixes tend to be de-emphasised.

Error pattern

Omission of a vowel in a weak syllable because it cannot be heard.

Duration

30–60 minutes.

Step 1

Distribute the strong syllables worksheet and use strong emotion and incorrect emphasis to determine the strong syllables in each target word.

Step 2

Underline the strong syllable in each target word and write the rule:

In words with more than one syllable, there is always a strong syllable.

Step 3

Look through your various classroom dictionaries and observe how syllable emphasis is indicated.

Example lesson

Distribute the strong syllables worksheet.

Can you tell me how many syllables are in the word 'button'? (TWO)

Now I want you to say the word and tell me which syllable sounds stronger. A good way to test for this is to shout the word as if you're angry. Let's try saying, 'Sew up that button!'

In 'button', which syllable was louder, longer and clearer? (THE FIRST)

Give students the freedom to shout the word. This makes the lesson fun, but also teaches an important method of determining strong and weak syllables.

Handle any errors by exaggerating the syllable they chose as the strong one. For instance, 'button' would sound strange if we were to pronounce it 'butTON'.

To show that the first syllable is stronger, underline it. You have now shown which syllable is strong and which syllable is weak in the word 'button'.

All words of more than one syllable have strong and weak syllables in them. If this weren't true, our speech would sound boring and robotic.

Say this sentence without varying the tone of your voice so that you sound like a robot. This demonstrates the importance of strong and weak syllables.

This is the next rule. Let's write it down.

RULE: In a word with more than one syllable, there is always a strong syllable.

Let's see how our dictionaries show the strong syllable in words.

SCHWA

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Counting syllables
- Strong and weak syllables

Materials

Schwa worksheet

Pattern

Schwa vowels are most often written as single vowels.

Error pattern

- Omitting vowels from syllables
- Habitually writing two letters for schwa sounds

Duration

30–60 minutes.

Step 1

Take the words from the strong/weak syllables lesson ('button', 'adapt', 'respect'). Focus on the vowels in the weak syllables.

Step 2

Rewrite the words using the schwa symbol /ə/.

Step 3

Write the rule:

The vowel in the weak syllable is often /ə/.

Step 4

Use the schwa worksheet to fill in and tally the vowels in the example words. Use this information to complete the sentence:

When you hear schwa, try the single vowels first, in this order:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Example lesson

Now let's look at the word 'button' again. How many syllables are in this word?
(TWO)

And which one is the strong syllable? (THE FIRST, BUT-)

In the first, strong syllable, what sound does the vowel make? (/U/ AS IN CUT)

In the second, weak syllable, what sound does the vowel make?

Acknowledge any answers from students except if they say /o/ as in 'got'. Possible correct answers range from /er/ to /u/ and may even be /i/. This is okay, as long as students realise that even though there is a letter 'o' here, it does not make either of the common sounds of this letter.

Because it is in a weak syllable, the vowel is less clear and strong.

Some dictionaries write this weak vowel like an upside down 'e', which is the symbol we are going to use. It is called schwa.

In your worksheet, rewrite the word 'button', underlining the strong syllable and using the schwa symbol, for the letter 'o' in the word.

Now we're going to find schwa in some other words. Say this word: 'adapt'. How many syllables are in this word? (TWO)

And which one is the strong syllable? (THE SECOND, -DAPT)

In the second, strong syllable, what sound does the vowel make? (THE SOUND /A/ AS IN CAT)

In the first, weak syllable, what sound does the vowel make? (/ə/)

Because it is in a weak syllable, the vowel is less clear and strong. When you hear an unclear, weak vowel like that, you know that you have a weak syllable. The vowel in this syllable in this word is called schwa.

Write the word 'adapt', underline the strong syllable and write a schwa for the vowel in the weak syllable.

Now write the word 'respect' and put schwa in the right place.

Here is the rule, let's write it down:

RULE: The vowel in the weak syllable is often /ə/, schwa.

Schwa can replace any vowel in a word. Let's look at some words to see how this is true.

To show how schwa can replace the letter 'a', we are going to use the example word 'alive'. How many syllables are in this word? (TWO)

Which syllable is the strong syllable? (THE SECOND, -LIVE)

When you say this word naturally, what sound does the vowel in the first syllable make? (SCHWA)

Accept schwa sounds, do not accept /a/ as in 'cat'. We do not make this sound in the word 'alive'. Compare it to the first syllable in the word 'actor'. Same letter, very different sound.

Write the word 'alive', but put schwa in the first syllable. Underline the strong syllable, -live.

Schwa usually replaces a single vowel in a word. So when you hear the schwa sound, you will know that most of the time you have to choose between 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o' or 'u' to spell the vowel. This is the next rule. Write it down:

RULE: Schwa can replace any single vowel in a word.

To help you choose between 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o' or 'u' we are going to look at how common each vowel is. What do you think is the most common?

Tally the vowels which correspond to schwa in the example words and write the totals. The letters 'a' and 'e' are about equal, let your students discover that.

Finish the sentence 'When you hear ...'

TO DOUBLE OR NOT TO DOUBLE?

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Counting syllables
- Affixes
- The difference between vowels and consonants

Materials

Last 3 CVC blank worksheet.

Duration

60–120 minutes.

Step 1

Distribute the Last 3 CVC worksheet and dictate 'hop' for the first word.

Step 2

Use the Last 3 CVC column to count and tick the last three letters (sometimes they are the only letters, but as the words get bigger, keep orienting students to the last three letters).

Step 3

If there are three ticks in the CVC boxes, call this a 'Last 3 CVC' word. Dictate the suffix -ing and check if it begins with a vowel. Tick the vowel suffix box. Tell students that when you add a vowel suffix to a Last 3 CVC word, you double the final consonant in the base.

Step 4

Write the rule:

When you add a vowel suffix to a Last 3 CVC word, you must double the final consonant in the base.

Step 5

Dictate the remaining bases ...

big, stop, fit, flat, flat (again), neat, red, tight, blast, mud

... and the remaining suffixes ...

-er, -ed, -est, -en, -ly, -er, -ish, -en, -ing, y

... and apply to form new words.

Step 6

Review all words, making sure students can say why some consonants are doubled and others aren't.

Notes

The important thing is that students understand the two crucial elements in this rule:

- 1 Last three letters fit the Last 3 CVC pattern
- 2 Addition of a vowel suffix

This rule will not work if the suffix begins with a consonant.

It is important that the students also go through this process in the correct sequence, as you are about to set them own work which relies on that sequence.

When you come to 'flat/flatly', there is no double consonant in the new word, as *-ly* is not a vowel suffix. This is where it is vitally important to know the *whole* rule, not just the Last 3 CVC part. Make sure your students understand this.

Here is a list of common *consonant* suffixes:

-ful, -less, -ly, -ment, -ness

The final consonant in any base element does not double when these suffixes are added ('sinful', 'hatless', 'sadly', 'shipment', 'madness').

When you get to 'neat/neatest', you also do not double the final consonant. This is because there are two vowels in the base, so the pattern is VVC.

In 'tight/tighten', the pattern is CCV.

In 'blast/blasting', there are two consonants at the end of the base, giving it a VCC pattern, so no doubling occurs.

'Mud/muddy' is straightforward if students remember that the letter 'y' is a vowel in most cases, therefore *-y* is a vowel suffix.

Example lesson

Now we are going to do some counting. In the word 'hop', I want you to look at the letter pattern. There are only three letters in that word, but when we come to other words, there might be more. The ones we're really interested in here are the last three. We are going to see if those three letters match the pattern consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC for short.

What kind of letter is 'h'? (A CONSONANT)

So far so good. Put a tick in the first box.

What kind of letter is 'o'? (A VOWEL)

This matches the pattern in the second box, so put a tick under the V.

What kind of letter is 'p'? (A CONSONANT)

Good. So make sure you put a tick under the C. Now we have the pattern Last 3 CVC. We have done the first part. Now to the second part.

Now we're going to add a suffix to this Last 3 CVC word. The suffix is -ing. Write this suffix next to 'hop'.

What is the new word? (HOPPING)

What does this suffix start with, a vowel or a consonant? (A VOWEL)

So we will call it a vowel suffix.

When you add a vowel suffix to a Last 3 CVC word, you have to double the final consonant in the base. What is the final consonant in the base? ('P')

So our new word will have a double 'p'.

Next to 'hop', in the last column, write 'hopping'.

Write 'hopping' after students have attempted to write the word for themselves. Some may spell it with a double 'p', some may not. Whatever the response:

Hopping is spelt with a double 'p'. The reason for this is that when you have a Last 3 CVC word and you add a vowel suffix, you must double the final consonant in the base. This is the next rule. Write it down:

RULE: When you add a vowel suffix to a Last 3 CVC word, you must double the final consonant in the base.

If you didn't double that final consonant and you added the vowel suffix -ing, this is the word you would get: 'hoping' (write the word).

How many syllables are in that word? (TWO)

Where would you break the word into those syllables? (AFTER THE O BECAUSE WE SHOULD ALWAYS TRY TO START A SYLLABLE WITH A CONSONANT)

The letter 'o' would come at the end of the syllable and so what would it say? (ITS NAME)

Therefore, that word would say ...? (HOPING)

And we need the word 'hopping'. So to stop the 'o' from saying its name, we have to use another 'p' to close the syllable. This is one of the major reasons why some words have a single consonant and some words have a double consonant.

Underneath 'hop', write the word 'big'.

Now we are going to do this process again with some more words.

The students should be getting the idea now, so begin to ask them for the rule rather than telling them.

When the Final Syllable is Like a Last 3 CVC Word

In words where the final syllable is the strong syllable, it can be treated like a Last 3 CVC word. Therefore when adding a vowel suffix, the final consonant is doubled in the base, just as before.

Example: 'begin' has emphasis on the final syllable. The final syllable can be treated like a Last 3 CVC word in this case. When adding the vowel suffix -ing, the final consonant is doubled.

Students fill out a table and discuss the rules as in the preceding lesson.

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Counting syllables
- The difference between vowels and consonants
- Affixes

Materials

Last 3 CVC worksheet.

Duration

60–120 minutes.

Step 1

Dictate example words:

begin, control, excel, forgot, enter, occur, admit, profit, acquit, budget

Step 2

Dictate suffixes:

-ing, -able, -ent, -en, -ing, -ence, -ance, -able, -al, -ed

Step 3

Return to the word 'begin' and check which syllable is the strong syllable. If it is the final syllable, underline it and continue by counting the last three letters as before.

If it goes Last 3 CVC, as in the words in the preceding lesson, then double the final consonant in the base when adding a vowel suffix. Write the new word in the last column.

Step 4

Write the rule:

RULE: When the final syllable

- is strong and
- acts like a Last 3 CVC word
- double the final consonant in the base
- when adding a vowel suffix.

Step 5

Repeat the process for the remaining bases and suffixes and review.

Notes

- 'Enter/entering' does not use the rule because the strong syllable is not the final syllable. Students need go no further in identifying the different parts of this word once they have established that the strong syllable is not the final syllable.
- 'Profit/profitable' does not use the rule because the strong syllable is not the final syllable.
- 'Budget/budgeted' does not use the rule because the strong syllable is not the final syllable.

Example lesson

In the word 'begin', which is the strong syllable? (-GIN)

Mark the strong syllable by underlining it. If that final syllable is strong, then we can go on. If it isn't, then just add the suffix without changing anything.

We are going to add a suffix, like we did last time, but first we have to find some things out.

What is the letter pattern in the final syllable? (LAST 3 CVC)

Make sure you tick the boxes just like last time.

This strong syllable acts just like a Last 3 CVC word. So when we add a vowel suffix, like -ing, what do you think we do with the final consonant? (WE DOUBLE IT)

Now write the suffix -ing in the next column and the new word 'beginning' in the last column.

So now that you have this example, can you work out what the next rule is? It comes in three parts. Here it is:

RULE: When the final syllable is:

1. Strong and
2. Acts like a Last 3 CVC word

double the final consonant when adding a vowel suffix.

FINAL SILENT E AND SUFFIXES

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Affixes
- Final Silent E
- Handwriting
- Phonemic awareness
- Middle-primary minimum vocabulary

Materials

Final Silent E and suffixes worksheet

Duration

60–120 minutes

Step 1

Distribute the Final Silent E and suffixes worksheet and dictate the base words, providing definitions and checking for understanding where necessary:

hope, dance, rehearse, humble, active, large, white, like, double, courage

... and the suffixes:

-ing, -er, -al, -est, -ly, -er, -ish, -en, -y, -ous

Step 2

Return to the word 'hope' and check if you are adding a vowel suffix.

Step 3

Figure out how to write the new word.

Step 4

Write the rule: When adding a vowel suffix to a Final Silent E word, take away the Final Silent E.

Step 5

Repeat for the remaining words.

Notes

- In 'active/actively', the Final Silent E is stopping the base from ending with an Illegal Letter. However, the suffix begins with a consonant, therefore the Final Silent E remains. Reward students for spotting this.
- In 'courage/courageous', the Final Silent E is making the 'g' say /j/. However, it must remain when adding the vowel ending -ous, as it needs something to keep the 'g' saying /j/. Other words which do this are 'outrageous', 'advantageous', 'noticeable'. Contrast them with deleted 'e': 'outragous', 'advantagous', 'noticable'.

Example lesson

Now we're going to write some base words and suffixes to see how we make the new words. Here they are ...

hope, dance, rehearse, humble, active, large, white, like, double, courage

... and the suffixes:

-ing, -er, -al, -est, -ly, -er, -ish, -en, -y, -ous

What do you see at the end of the word hope? (FINAL SILENT E)

What is it doing in this word? (MAKING THE O SAY ITS NAME)

Now we are going to add the suffix -ing. Is this a vowel or a consonant suffix? (A VOWEL SUFFIX)

Write the new word in the second column and tell me what it is. (HOPING)

Write 'hoping' on the board. Some may take away the Final Silent E, some may not. Whatever the response:

'Hoping' is written without an E. There is a reason for this. When you add a vowel suffix to a Final Silent E word, you take away the Final Silent E. It is no longer needed, and in spelling, we always try to keep it simple.

This is the next rule.

RULE: When adding a vowel suffix to a Final Silent E word, take away the Final Silent E.

What do you see at the end of the word 'dance'? (FINAL SILENT E)

What is it doing in this word? (MAKING THE C SAY /S/)

Now we are going to add a suffix. The suffix is -er. Is this a vowel or a consonant suffix? (A VOWEL SUFFIX).

Write down the new word and tell me what it is. (DANCER)

Just as you would with any other Final Silent E word, you take away the Final Silent E when adding a vowel suffix. It just so happens that this vowel suffix begins with the letter 'e', so it looks like you haven't taken away the Final Silent E at all.

Now let's figure out the spelling of the remaining words.

THE RETURN OF ILLEGAL I

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Affixes
- Illegal Letters
- The Vowel Generator

Materials

Return of Illegal 'i' worksheet.

Duration

60–120 minutes.

Step 1

Distribute return of Illegal 'i' worksheet and dictate the bases:

angry, fifty, party, happy, twenty, cry, funny, lady, library, many, naughty

... and the suffixes:

-ly, -(e)th, (e)s, -ness, (e)th, (e)s, -er, (e)s, -an, -fold, -ness

The bracketed 'e's are not to be dictated, but are there as a reminder that these suffixes require the insertion of 'e' when returning 'y' to 'i'.

Step 2

Go to the word 'angry'. Figure out what happens to word-final letter 'y' when adding the suffix -ly. Write the new word, 'angrily' in the new column. Write the rule:

RULE: When adding a suffix to a word-final 'y' word, return 'y' to 'i'.

Step 3

Go to the next word, 'fifty'. Figure out what happens to word-final 'y' when adding the suffix -th. This time it is not enough to simply replace the 'y' with 'i'. See if your students can explain what happens and why, by writing and saying the word without the 'e'.

Step 4

When that is done, go to the next word 'party' and figure out what happens to 'y' when the suffix -s is added.

Step 5

Write the new words, 'fiftieth' and 'parties' in the next column. Write the rule:

RULE: When returning y to i and adding the suffixes -th or -s, you must add 'e'.

Continue with the rest of the words, noting the new words that require insertion of 'e'.

Example lesson

We are going to add the suffix -ly to the word 'angry'. If we did this without changing anything, this is what the new word would look like: 'angryly'. How does that look to you? (IT LOOKS WRONG)

The reason for this is that unless we're spelling Greek-derived words, the letter 'y' is only there to stand in for 'i' or 'e'. Let's take that apart.

Why does 'y' go at the end of 'angry'? (BECAUSE ANY OTHER LETTER WOULD BE ILLEGAL)

In 'angrily', we need an /i/ sound in the second syllable but because there's a syllable right after it, we don't need to use the letter 'y' any more. So Illegal 'i' can return. That's why this lesson is called 'The return of Illegal i'.

This works for the addition of vowel *and* consonant suffixes.

There are times when returning Illegal 'i' is not enough. When converting 'twenty' to 'twentieth', for instance, just returning Illegal 'i' would result in this word: 'twentith'.

What's wrong with that? (IT DOESN'T LOOK OR SOUND RIGHT)

What's the solution? (INSERT 'E' AFTER RETURNING ILLEGAL 'i')

See if you can spot where we need to insert 'e'.

THE SUFFIX GENERATOR

Lesson plan

Skill level

- Counting syllables
- Schwa

Materials

Suffix Generator blank worksheet

Duration

60–120 minutes.

Step 1

Distribute the blank Suffix Generator and examine the operative rule in the first square of row 2:

Vowel = /ə/

Step 2

In the next square, write -a and pronounce the sound that it will make in the word-final position according to the operative rule (/ə/).

Step 3

Find three example words and write them in the grid or in notebooks, depending on how much space is needed. With older students, we play the '1,2,3 Game', where one point is awarded for a regular word, two points for a longer or irregular word and three points for a very difficult word. In the chart below, there are example words of increasing difficulty in each square.

Step 4

Generate the top row of suffixes, following the same pattern: asking for pronunciations and finding examples.

Use suffixes -an, -on, -al, -ous, -ent, -ence.

This is called the 'key row', from which all other suffixes and stable endings will be generated. The first two rows contain actual suffixes. The remaining rows contain those suffixes merged with consonants that come at the end of their bases. For

example, the base *magic* merges with the suffix *-ian* and the final consonant undergoes a change in pronunciation. moving from a /k/ to a /sh/ sound.

The class of word each suffix typically denotes can be added in the top row.

Step 5

After generating the key row, ask if anyone has noticed a pattern in the type of word each suffix denotes. When you have figured this out, write the categories in the top row as shown in the completed chart.

In the second and third columns, both suffixes denote nouns, but those ending in *-an* are far more likely to refer to beings rather than objects, which tends to be the domain of the *-on* suffix. There are exceptions, of course ('*tartan*', '*toucan*', '*Amazon*', '*person*', '*deacon*').

Step 6

Go to the next row and write the operative rule, 'i' says /ee/. Combine the letter 'i' with the suffixes generated in the key row, and a whole new batch of suffixes appears.

This is the only row that has a two-syllable suffix. When using the Spelling Formula, make sure the two syllables are represented properly with two separate lines.

Step 7

Repeat for rows 3 and 4.

Notes

Additional suffixes can be generated when adding *-si-* to *-a*, *-an* and *-on*. A list of possible words is included in the wordlist for this chapter.

In the same way, *-gi-* can be added to *-a*, *-an*, *-on* and *-ous*, also included in the wordlist.

Line 4: 'ci says /sh/'

Why not spell everything with 'ti-' and be done with it? It is useful here to look at the base of 'ci' words and figure out why (i.e. they commonly end with the letter 'c', hence the direct conversion).

magic/magician
music/musician
face/facial
office/official

Example lesson

We are going to generate some suffixes using this grid. The first rule says:

Vowel = /ə/

This means that all the vowels in the suffixes in this row say /ə/.

The first vowel that we are going to deal with is 'a'. At the end of a word, it says /ə/. Write it down with a hyphen to indicate the rest of the word.

Can you think of any words that follow this rule?

Acknowledge any suggestions. Students will often give words that start with this vowel. Correct this by directing them to the end of the word and saying, 'We are looking for that sound at the end of the word.'

Write 'banana' and any other example words students come up with. Let them work out the spelling as best they can before providing help.

Next to -a, write this suffix: -an. The rule says that the vowel will say /ə/ at the end of a word, so what will this suffix sound like? (/ən/)

Do you know any words with this ending? See if you can work out our example word. What type of being are you? (HUMAN)

Write this word in the box.

Next to -an, write this suffix: -on. The rule says that the vowel will say the schwa sound, so what will this suffix sound like?

Is that the same sound or a different sound to the ending that we had in the last box? (THE SAME)

Why is it the same? (BECAUSE THE RULE TELLS US THAT THE VOWEL SAYS /ə/)

Do you know any words with this ending? See if you can work out our example word. What is the salty breakfast food you eat with eggs? (BACON)

Write this word in the box.

Row 2: 'i says /ee/'

When you have completed the first row, say:

Now it is time for the next rule. Go to the next row. The rule is 'i = /ee/'.

We are now going to combine the letter 'i' with the suffixes on the top row, so what will your first suffix on this row look like? (-IA)

And what will it sound like? (/iθ/)

Write it down in the box. See if you can work out our example word. It is an irrational fear of something. (PHOBIA)

Continue with the second row etc.