

# Spelling

- **Use a dictionary.** As you write, circle words you are unsure of. Check them in the dictionary after you are done.
- **Don't rely on your computer's spell checker.** It identifies many typos but may not catch them all.  
Example: I left my briefcase over **their**.
- **Learn the basic spelling rules.** These rules can be applied to many words.  
Example: *I* before *e* except after *c* or when sounded like *ay* as in *neighbor* and *weigh*.
  - achieve, believe, ceiling, conceive, eight, freight
  - exceptions to the rule: ancient, caffeine, conscience, either, foreign, height, leisure, neither, science, seize, species, weird
- **Do not change the spelling of a word when adding a prefix.**  
Example: spell – misspell  
purpose – multipurpose
- **In some cases, it may be necessary to change the spelling of a word when adding a suffix.**  
Example: If a word ends in *-y*, change the *y* to *i* before adding a suffix.
  - beauty –beautiful
  - strawberry – strawberries
  - fury – furious

If a word ends in *-e*, drop the *e* before adding the suffix.

  - scare – scaring, scared
  - bore – boring, bored

If a word is one syllable and does not end in a vowel, or if a word is more than one syllable but the last syllable is accented and does not end in a vowel, double the final consonant before adding a suffix.

  - stop –stopping
  - infer – inferring, inferred

- **Use memory clues with trouble words.**

Example: "The school principal is your pal," helps you to remember that a **principal** of a school is spelled with *pal* not *ple*.

- **Memorize some of the most commonly misspelled words.**

Examples: judgment, probably, woman, women, Wednesday, exercise, professor, receive, recognize, embarrass

### **Online Resources**

[Spelling Rules | EnglishClub](#)

[Spelling Problems - Help with Spelling Problems for ESL Classes](#)

[Some Rules and Suggestions about Spelling](#)

[The Four Most Helpful Spelling Rules in English](#)

**Exercise:** Choose the correct spelling in the parentheses.

1. Let's not have an (arguement, argument) about this.
2. Mary thinks that the (cemetery, cemetary) is a sad place.
3. Her sloppy clothing is an (embarrassment, embarassment) to her parents.
4. Dad is not (stoping, stopping) at the supermarket before he comes home.
5. The (thief, theif) stole all of Grandma's (antique, anteak) (jewlry, jewelry).