

# A Cheat Sheet to the Spelling Rules

## The Big Ideas

- 1) We spell with letters and letter combinations – graphemes!
  - a) Consonant Grapheme Types
    - 1) **Single letter** (including blends) as in *trap*, *spend*
    - 2) **Digraphs** (one sound/two letters) as in *chain*, *phone*
    - 3) **Trigraphs** (one sound/three letters) as in *edge*, *switch*
    - 4) **Silent Letter Combinations** as in *autumn*, *walk*
  - b) Vowel Grapheme Types (See chart on Mod. 3 pg 15 for Vowel Grapheme Chart)
    - 1) Single Letter Spelling (long and short) as in *ro-bot*, *cat*
    - 2) Vowel Teams as in *east*, *south*, *night*, *blue*
    - 3) Vowel –r Combinations as in *her*, *bird*, *fur*, *car*
    - 4) Vowel-Consonant-e as in *cape*, *kite*
- 2) The position of a phoneme or grapheme influences what letters are used to spell sounds.
  - a) **Spellings for ng**
    - 1) Spell *ng* for the /ng/ sound at the end of a word/syllable
    - 2) Spell *n* for the /ng/ sound when it falls before a /k/ or /g/
  - b) **Spellings for long a**
    - 1) Spell long a *ai* in the middle of a word as in *rain*
    - 2) Spell long a *ay* at the end of a word as in *may*
  - c) **Phoneme-Grapheme Consonant Generalizations**

**/n/ kn, gn** – Silent letter spellings only at the beginning of Anglo-Saxon origin

**/g/ gh, gue** – a limited set of English words spelled with *gh* are *ghost*, *ghastly*, and *ghoul*. The *-gue* closes off French words such as *league*, *fatigue*.

**/k/ k, c, ck, ch-** The spellings for /k/ depend on the sound's position and the language of origin. After an accented short vowel, a *-ck* is used. In Greek words, the *ch* is used.

**/kw/ qu-** This is the only two letter spelling that stands for 2 speech sounds (/kw/). Letter *q* is always followed by *u* in English.

**/f/ ff, ph, gh-** A double *f* is used after short, accented vowels (*stuff*), *ph* is used in words of Greek origin (*philosophy*), *gh* is used at the ends of a handful of Anglo Saxon words (*tough*, *rough*, *cough*, *laugh*)

**/ch/ tch, ch-** A *-tch* occurs after an accented short vowel(*thatch*) and *-ch* occurs after long vowels, diphthongs, or consonants (*ouch*)

**/j/ dge, ge-** No word in English ends in *j*! At the ends of syllables after an accented short vowel, the *dge* is used (*fugde*, *dodge*, *sledge*)

3) We spell by letter patterns.

- a) **Never Double** - h, k, y, j, v, w, x, nor any consonant digraphs (ng, sh, th, ph, ch, gh, wh)
- b) **Double Consonant** or it's substitute is found between a stressed short vowel syllable and an inflection beginning with a vowel (*grabbing, drugged*)
- c) **Spellings ck, dge, tch, and x** replace/act as a double consonant after a short vowel in words and signal the vowel is short as in *picnicking, boxing, pitching*
- d) **Letters j and v Never End Words!** Thus spellings for the j sound maybe -dge or -ge at ends of words. In words ending with the /v/ sound, the marker e is placed at the end of the word so as to not violate the v rule. (Letter e is holding the v up so he doesn't fall over!)
- e) **Letter e Has Many Jobs.** It can act as a phoneme directly (*wet, be*). It can act as a marker in a larger orthographic pattern (*spade, make*). The letter e can indicate when a vowel is long (*drape, probe*). It indicates when a c or a g should be 'soft' as in *stooge, receive, nice*. It also is placed at the end of words with s to keep them from looking like plurals. (*house, please, cheese*)
- f) **Letter u as a Marker** – Letter u in words like *guest* and *guide* intervenes between the g and the e/l to keep g from having the soft sound.
- g) **Families that Violate 'Long Vowel' Spelling Conventions** – *find, kind, most, post, wild, mild, old, cold, pint*

4) We Spell by Meaning

- We spell **morphemes**, meaningful parts of words, consistently even though their pronunciation may change. (*heal, health; anxious, anxiety*)

5) The language of origin explains a word's spelling.

- a) **Anglo Saxon** – one syllable, very common things and ideas, oldest words in English, have digraphs, diphthongs, and silent letters
- b) **French/Romance** – Have spellings such as *ou* for *coupon* or *que* for *bouquet*, have words for food, concepts of enlightenment as in *magnificent*
- c) **Latin** – Include prefixes, roots, and suffixes. They are built around roots. They have endings. No *th* or vowel teams.
- d) **Greek** - Use *ph* for /f/, *ch* for /k/, and *y* for /i/(short i). Combines morphemes more freely and in different sequences than Latin counterparts. Are often used as scientific or mathematical terms.

### Spelling Rules for Adding Endings

- 1) **Consonant Doubling Rule** – When a one syllable word with one vowel ends in one consonant, double the final consonant before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel as in *wettest, bigger, crabbing*
- 2) **Drop the silent e Rule** – When a root word ends in a silent e, drop the e when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel. Keep the e before a suffix beginning with a consonant as in *blaming, confinement, pasted*.
- 3) **Change the Y to I Rule** – When a root ends in a y preceded by a consonant, change the y to an i before a suffix, except *ing*. If the root word ends in a y preceded by a vowel(ey, ay, oy), just add the suffix. Note: y changes to i even if the suffix starts with a consonant as in *monkeying, happiness*

Remember to refer back to your LETRS Module 3 manual for many more examples and activities to go along with these spelling rules 😊