

English Appendix 1: Spelling

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spelling – work for years 3 and 4

Revision of work from years 1 and 2

Pay special attention to the rules for adding suffixes.

New work for years 3 and 4

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

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

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

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

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

Word list – years 3 and 4

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

Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

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

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

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

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

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

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