

HOW TO BE A GOOD SPELLER...

English spelling may be a nightmare for many. But, with some hard work and some easy tips, spelling words correctly will grow into a habit for students.

1. Use mnemonics[pronounce as ni-mon-iks]: Like a formula or a rhyme

Remembering information can be difficult. But when you give that information more meaning, it becomes easier to memorize. **Mnemonic devices** turn information into a picture, a sentence, a rhyme or anything else that's easier to remember.

Here are three types of mnemonic devices you can use to remember difficult spelling:

- **Rhymes and songs** make words and information easier to remember. One of the best-known spelling rhymes is “i before e except after c or when sounding like a as in **neighbor** and **weigh**.” This rhyme tells you when to write “ie” and when to write “ei.” You can also make up your own!
- An **acronym** takes the first letter of a few words and puts them together. You might already use acronyms online or in texts. **LOL**, for example, stands for “**L**aughing **O**ut **L**oud.” **BRB** is “**B**e **R**ight **B**ack.” One way to remember some tricky spellings is by turning each letter into a word. For example, to remember “**rhythm**” just remember, “**R**hythm **H**elps **Y**our **T**wo **H**ips **M**ove.” Turn difficult words into silly sentences and you will remember them in no time.
- Some mnemonics use **sentences** to explain the difficult part of spelling a word. Having trouble spelling the word “**island**”? Just remember that “An island **is land** surrounded by water.” Is “**separate**” spelled with an **e** or an **a** in the middle? “There’s a **a** rat in separate!”

2. Learn a few rules

Sometimes the best way to learn is to know the rules. Start by learning a few. Then, as you learn new words, you can add more and more rules. Before you know it, you’ll be able to spell most words!

Don’t try to learn them all at once! Instead, learn and practice one or two at a time until you understand them.

The next time you find a word that you can’t spell, try finding out if it follows a rule.

For example, why does the **y** in “**friendly**” turn into an **i** in “**friendliness**”?

Well, when you add a suffix (a word ending like “**-ness**”) to a word that ends in the letter **y**, that **y** is changed to an **i**. *But* that’s not the case if the suffix starts with an **i** (like “**-ing**”).

So someone can be “**trying**” but that same person “**tries**.” You can be “**partying**” or go to many “**parties**.” Thanks to knowing one word, you can learn how to spell many others that follow the same rule.

3. Learn commonly misspelled words

Some words are so tough to spell that even native speakers get them wrong a lot. You can also find some videos of misspelled words. Many commonly misspelled words are not words you need to use too often. But here are ten commonly misspelled words you might actually need to know how to spell:

Of course, this doesn't mean you should memorize all these words at once! Learn them one at a time, starting with the ones you use the most often.

4. Make a list of the words you have trouble spelling

Maybe you already know how to spell most commonly misspelled words. Instead of studying a list of words made by someone else, why not make your own? Write down words that you have trouble spelling, even if they seem simple. Then learn their spelling rules or memorize them with mnemonics.

You might find that you have trouble with certain groups of words. For example: “**percent**,” “**preview**,” “**presentation**”... when do you write “**pre**” and when is it “**per**”? Knowing what you need to learn is an important part of learning!

5. Check word origins in the dictionary

Many English words have Greek and Roman **roots**. This means they have Greek or Latin words in them. Knowing common roots can help you spell (and understand) more words.

When you look up a word in the dictionary, you might check the meaning and part of speech. But it can also be useful to check the **origin** (where something comes from). Many dictionaries include the origin of the words.

For example, have you ever wondered why “**bicycle**” is spelled the way it is? It comes from the Greek word **cycl**, which means “**circle**.” This is easy to remember because a wheel has the shape of a circle. The **bi** in “bicycle” is from Latin, and means “**two**.” So a bicycle is something that has two wheels.

Now, the next time you see **cycl** in a word, you can use it to guess the meaning. It will also help you remember how to spell the word. If a unicycle is like a bicycle but with just one wheel, what do you think **uni** means?

6. Chunk it

Sometimes words are difficult to spell just because they are long. In these cases, you can use the **chunking** method. Chunking is when you separate the word into “chunks,” or shorter parts. This way, you're not memorizing the spelling for one long word, but just a few short ones!

The word “**embarrassed**,” for example, can be chunked like this:

em
bar
ras
sed

Just remember the spelling for these four short “words,” and you'll spell “embarrassed” correctly every time.

You can do this with any word you have trouble spelling—it makes them much easier to remember!

7. Sound it out

This is a spelling trick that is often taught to little kids, because it's so simple. If you're not sure how to spell a word, say it out loud, very slowly. Then write down what you hear. Of course, this won't work with every word. The word **"friend,"** for example, doesn't sound the way it's written. For words that don't sound the way they're spelled, you will need to use a different method.

In many simpler words, you should be able to get the correct spelling (or very close to it) by sounding the word out. So if you're getting similar words like **"blink"** and **"blank"** confused, sound them out, letter by letter. This will help you spell *and* improve your pronunciation.

8. Draw a picture

You can use drawing as another mnemonic device. Have you ever noticed that the word **"bed"** actually looks like a bed? Using pictures is a great way to remember spellings.

Turn words that are difficult to spell into pictures. For example, **"balloon"** looks like it has two balloons in the middle. Maybe they're being held up by the double **I** next to them, which is really two kids.

Draw any word you're having trouble with, making the letters into a picture. The words will stop being just letters, and turn into an image.

9. Play word games

Playing word games is a fun way to test your new spelling skills. It's also a good way to learn new words. Classic board games like Scrabble and Scattergories are great for spelling practice.

Now that you know how to improve your English spelling, you just need to work on it.

Before you know it, spelling will become much easier for you!

WAYS TO REMEMBER THOSE TRICKY WORDS

In the English language there are several words which are so similar it can be difficult to remember which one you use or even how to spell them. Each person will, of course, experience problems with different words. Here are a few mnemonics, shortcuts and phrases to help you:

FRIEND-Five **R**ed **I**ndians **E**ating **N**uts **D**ownstairs

ANSWER-A Negative **S**core **W**ill **E**qual **R**elegation

RHYTHM -**R**hythm **H**elps **Y**our **T**wo **H**ips **M**ove

SIGNIFICANT-SIGN IF I CAN'T

GEOGRAPHY-George **E**liot's **o**ld **g**randmother **r**ode **a** **p**ig **h**ome **y**esterday.

CEMETERY-People frequently spell "cemeter**y**" with an 'a', in order to spell it correctly, simply remember that late at night all the ghosts come and and go "eeeeeeeeee"!

DESSERT-Can't remember how many s's there are in the word "de**ss**ert"? Well just think, when you eat dessert you always want "one more".

PRINCIPAL-To remind you that the ending of this word is 'p-a-l' and not 'p-l-e' remember he/she is your 'pal'.

*The word **principle** means a personal code of conduct or fundamental truth.*

BECAUSE- **B**ig **E**lephants **C**an't **A**lways **U**se **S**mall **E**xits!

PRACTICE / PRACTISE

To distinguish between **PRACTISE** (verb) and **PRACTICE** (noun) think of **ADVISE** and **ADVICE**. To **ADVISE** is the verb so **PRACTISE** is the verb.

To distinguish **PRACTICE** (noun) from **PRACTISE** (verb) and **ADVICE** (noun) from **ADVISE** (verb), just remember that **ICE** is a noun and **IS** is a verb.

STATIONERY / STATIONARY

STATIONERY meaning paper and **E**nvelopes

STATIONARY meaning "not moving"

This can be remembered if you think of "**E**" stands for **E**nvelopes, therefore, Stationery with an "e" is paper etc. and a **CAR** not moving, therefore, the word meaning "still" ends in **ARY**.

NECESSARY -**N**ever **E**at **C**hips **E**at **S**alad **S**andwiches **A**nd **R**aspberry **Y**oghurt.
