



Spelling Study Strategies

Spelling words correctly is an important part of your writing skills. When you write, you are trying to communicate your thoughts and ideas. To communicate them clearly, you need to be able to spell correctly.

You may wonder why it's important to learn to spell when there are programs that check your spelling for you. Although your word processor's spelling checker is helpful, you can't count on it to catch everything. And, you can't use it on tests!

Need some help improving your spelling skills? Here are some study strategies you can use to help you remember how to spell words correctly.

- **Say it.** Look at the word, say the word aloud, and then spell the word out loud. Next, write the word from memory. Then, check to see if you spelled it correctly. If not, repeat these steps again.
- **Chunk it.** Say the word aloud slowly. Break the word into chunks that are easy to remember. Think about the parts of the word, like the syllables, prefixes, suffixes, and roots.
- **Box it in.** Write the word and trace the shape of the word using all straight lines. This creates a "box" for the word to sit in.
- **Air write it.** Use your finger to write the word in large letters in the air in front of you face. Say each letter aloud. Air write the word while speaking the letters twice.
- **Rainbow write it.** Write the word using five different colored crayons, markers, or pencils. Each time, write on top of the last color.

Experiment with the different strategies to find the ones that are most helpful to you.

Another way to remember how to spell words is to memorize some of the most common rules, like the ones below:

- **I before e:** Use i before e except after c, or except when there's an a sound, as in neighbor and weigh. There are some exceptions to this rule, such as either, height, science, and weird.
- **Silent e:** When adding a suffix that begins with a vowel, drop the silent e before adding the suffix. Exceptions to this rule include changeable and knowledgeable. You do not drop the e when the suffix begins with a consonant. Some exceptions to this rule include argument and truly.
- **Words ending in y:** If y is the last letter of a word, and a consonant comes before it, then change the y to i before adding a suffix (except a suffix beginning with i). When forming the plural of a word that ends with a vowel followed by y, add s.
- **Consonant endings:** When a one syllable word ends in a consonant, and one vowel comes before that consonant, then double the final consonant before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel. When a multisyllabic word ends in a consonant, and one



vowel comes before that consonant, then the consonant should also be doubled when adding a suffix that begins with a vowel.

By memorizing spelling rules and practicing your spelling memorization strategies, you'll improve your spelling.