Helpful Spelling Rules

Suffixes

Pluralising

For most words, we just add **s** to make the plural.

For example:

dog**s**, cat**s**, cup**s**

Suffixes

Pluralising

When a word ends in **f** or **fe** we change the **f-fe** to v, then add **es** to make the plural.

For example:

li**fe**-li**ves**, kni**fe**-kni**ves**, wol**f**-wol**ves**, thi**ef**-thie**ves**

Suffixes

Pluralising

When a word ends in **ch**, **sh**, **z**, **x**, **s**, or **o** we add **es** to make the plural.

For example:

church**es**, watch**es**, fox**es**, echo**es**

Exceptions include:

radios, solos, pianos, kangaroos, photos

Suffixes

Doubled Consonants

In words where a short vowel goes before a consonant, we double the consonant before adding -**ing**, -**ed**, -**er**, -**est** or -**y**.

For example:

plan-planner,

begin-beginning,

stop-stopped.

Suffixes

Words ending with -fer

If we are adding a suffix that starts with a vowel to a word that ends in -**fer**, the **r** is doubled but only if the -**fer** is still stressed when the ending is added. If the -**fer** is not stressed when pronounced with the suffix, we do not double the r.

r is doubled:

re**fer**-re**fer**red-re**fer**ral

pre**fer**-pre**fer**ring-pre**fer**red

trans**fer**-trans**fer**ring-trans**fer**red

r is not doubled:

refer-reference-referee

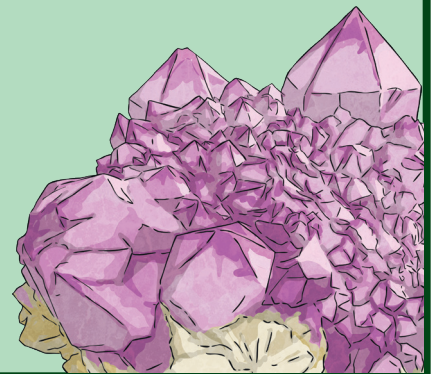prefer-preference

transfer-transference

Suffixes

-cious vs **-tious**

If the root word ends with **ce**, you'll usually find the sound spelt -**cious**.

Examples:

vi**cious**, pre**cious**, cons**cious**, deli**cious**, mali**cious**, suspi**cious**

ambi**tious**, cau**tious**, ficti**tious**, infec**tious**, nutri**tious**
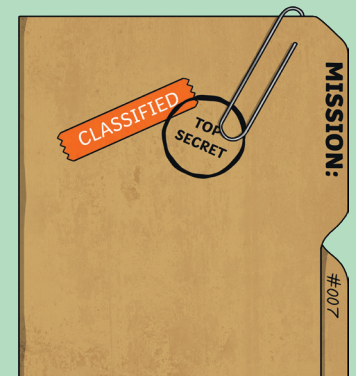

Suffixes

-cial vs **-tial**

-**cial** is usually used after a vowel. -**tial** is usually used after a consonant.

For example:

offi**cial**, spe**cial**, artifi**cial** par**tial**, confiden**tial**, essen**tial**

Exceptions: ini**tial**, finan**cial**, commer**cial**, provin**cial**.

Suffixes

-ant, -ance/-ancy, -ation

These usually work together.

For example:

observ**ant** - observ**ance** - observ**ation**.

Exceptions:

You can have assist**ance** from an assist**ant**, but not asisst**ation**.

Suffixes	Examples:

-ent, -ence/-ency

-ent and -ency are usually used if there is a soft /c/, soft /g/ or /qu/ sound before it in the word.

innoc**ent**, dec**ent**, frequ**ent**, confid**ent**, independ**ent**

innoc**ence**, dec**ency**, frequ**ency**, confid**ence**, independ**ence**

Suffixes

-able, -ible, -ably and **-ibly**

-able and **-ably** are usually used if there is a related word ending with **-ation**.

-ible and **-ibly** are usually used if there is no complete root word before it.

r is doubled:

ador**able**, applic**able**, ador**ably**, applic**ably**, poss**ible**, horr**ible**, terr**ible**, poss**ibly**, horr**ibly**, terr**ibly**

Exceptions: Change**able** and notice**able** don't have related words that end in **-ation**. In sensible, the whole root word can be found before the **-ible** ending.

Patterns

The **-ck** pattern

The letters **c** and **k** go together in single syllable words when they follow a short vowel.

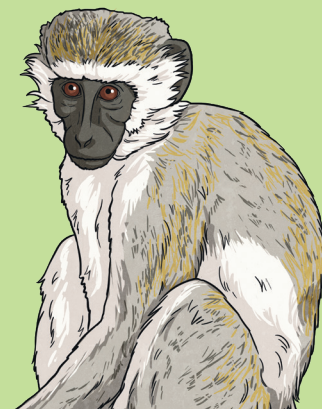For example:

du**ck**, clo**ck**, sti**ck**, ba**ck**, ne**ck**, ki**ck**

Patterns

The **-k** pattern

The letter **k** goes on its own if the short vowel sound is followed by a consonant.

For example:

thin**k**, san**k**, mil**k**, monke**y**

Patterns

For example:

The tch pattern

After a short vowel sound, we put **t** before **ch**.

ma**tch**, i**tch**, ki**tch**en, ske**tch**

Exceptions include:

whi**ch**, ri**ch**, su**ch**, mu**ch**

Patterns

The dge pattern

After a short vowel sound, we put **d** before **ge**.

For example:

fu**dge**, e**dge**, bri**dge**, smu**dge**
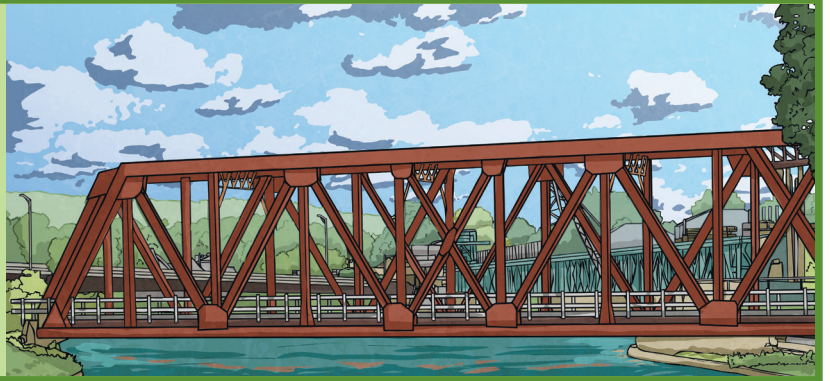
Patterns

i before e, except after c

This applies to words where the **e** sound **/e/** is spelt **ei**.

For example:

dec**ei**ve, conc**ei**ve, rec**ei**ve, perc**ei**ve, c**ei**ling

Exceptions include:

prot**ei**n, caff**ei**ne, s**ei**ze