

COMMON SPELLING RULES

Rule #1: “i” before “e” except after “c” if followed by a “v” or an “n”

Examples: believed achieved friend fiend received deceived receipt

Rule #2: If there is a “g” or an “r” in the middle of a word, it is “ei” instead of “ie” that precedes it.

Examples: neighbor weighed weird feign foreign

Rule #3: If a word has a consonant before the final “ly,” there is only one “l.” If the word has a vowel before the final “ly,” the “l” is doubled.

Examples: supposedly probably usually

Rule #4: If a word ends in a consonant/vowel/consonant and you add a suffix like “ed” or “ing,” the second consonant must be doubled.

Examples: beginning stopped planning slamming

Rule #5: Do not use contractions in your writing. This forces you to choose the correct spelling or homophone (words with the same pronunciation but different meanings and/or spellings).

CONTRACTION	NON-CONTRACTED WORD	HOMOPHONE(S)
I’m	I am	
you’re	you are	<i>your</i>
he’s	he is	
she’s	she is	
it’s	it is	<i>its</i>
we’re	we are	
they’re	they are	<i>their, there</i>

Note to teachers: Contractions are perfectly acceptable in the English language, but requiring students to use only non-contracted words will give them a lot more spelling and homophone practice.

Teaching Tip

You will want to give each student a copy of these rules to put into the spelling section of their notebooks so that they can refer to them as they learn the weekly words. Review the rules together as a class throughout the year to make them stick in your students’ brains.