Spell it right
Activity 1: Rules to remember

There are many rules to help you with English spelling, but remember that there are always exceptions to the rule! One of the reasons for this is that the English language has ‘borrowed’ and integrated so many words from so many languages – each with their own rules of spelling!

Here are some useful rules that may help you remember your spelling.

**Plurals are formed in many different ways.**

Add ‘s’ to singular nouns.

- girl-girls
- book-books
- month-months

Add ‘es’ to words ending with x, sh, s, ss and ch.

- box-boxes
- class-classes
- dish-dishes

Add ‘s’ to words ending with a vowel + y

- toy-toys
- key-keys
- boy-boys

Add ‘ies’ to words ending with a consonant + y

- baby-babies
- pony-ponies

Write the plural forms of these words.

1. sister _____________ 2. story _____________ 5. fox _____________
3. room _____________ 4. spy _____________ 6. family _____________
7. beach ____________ 8. glass ____________ 9. witch ____________

Remove f and add ‘ves’ to words that end with f or fe.

- knife-knives
- shelf-shelves
- thief-thieves

Write the plural form of these words.

1. wife _____________ 2. calf _____________ 3. wolf _____________
4. hoof _____________ 5. leaf _____________ 6. elf _____________
Add ‘s’ to words ending with a vowel + o (ao, eo, io, oo, uo).
radio-radios  video-videos

Add ‘es’ to words ending in o.
potato–potatoes  tomato-tomatoes

Circle the correct spelling.
1. heros  heroes  2. echos  echoes  3. autos  autoes  4. zoos  zooes

Write the plural forms of these words.
1. mango  ____________  2. buffalo  ____________  3. piano  ____________
4. volcano  ____________  5. hero  ____________  6. kilo  ____________
7. echo  ____________

Interesting fact:
Add only ‘s’ to musical terms ending in –o.
cello-cellos  solo-solos  piano-pianos

Activity 2: Doubling letters

Double ‘l’, ‘f’ and ‘s’ after a single short vowel at the end of a word.
call, tall, toss, miss, stiff, stuff

Exceptions: us, bus, gas, if, of, this, yes, plus, nil, pal

Double the final consonant before adding ‘ed’, ‘er’, ‘est’, ‘ing’, ‘able’ and y to show that the vowel has a short sound.
bed + ing = bedding  dip + ed = dipped  stop + er = stopper
stop + able = stoppable  fun + y = funny

Read these sentences and circle the correct spelling.
1. My friend grinned/grined at me.
2. Rama batted/bated all day.
3. The man looks happy/hapy.
4. What are the kids planning/planing?
5. Where is the wrapping/wraping paper?
6. This is the funniest/funiest joke I have ever heard!
Activity 3: Using the prefix

Double the letter when the prefix ends with the same letter as the first letter of the base word.

un + necessary = unnecessary  mis + spell = misspell  ir + responsible = irresponsible

Combine the prefix and root word.

1. im + mature = 2. un + natural =
3. un + needed = 4. ir + reversible =
5. dis + satisfy = 6. im + moral =

When you want to form opposites:
add ‘il’ with words starting with I = illegal
add ‘ir’ with words starting with r = irrelevant
add ‘im’ with words starting with m or p = impossible/immobile

Form the opposites of these words by adding a prefix. Choose from il, ir or im.

1. logical ________ 2. rational ________ 3. probable ________
4. mature ________ 5. possible ________ 6. polite ________
7. personal ________ 8. literate ________ 9. practical ________

‘Con’ and ‘ex’ are two prefixes that are spelled in the same way they are said.

congratulate extend exclaim exterminate contaminate

Fill in the blanks with con or ex.

1. That dress is very ________pensive, isn’t it?
2. Did you ________nect the two wires?
3. Shreya is a very ________fident speaker.
4. How much do I have to ________tribute towards the present?
5. We are going to the ________ference tomorrow.
Activity 4: ...and the suffix

Suffixes come at the end of words.

In the word interesting, ‘ing’ is the suffix.

In the word statement, ‘ment’ is the suffix.

‘ing’ is called a vowel suffix because it begins with a vowel (the letter i).

‘ment’ is called a consonant suffix because it begins with a consonant (the letter m).

When a consonant suffix is added to the base word, the spelling does not change:

- blame + less = blameless
- waste + ful = wasteful
- punish + ment = punishment
- bad + ly = badly

When a vowel suffix is added, the silent e in the base word is dropped.

- note + able = notable
- care + ful = careful

How would you spell these words?

1. create + ion =
2. examine + ation =
3. active + ly =
4. sad + ly =
5. late + est =
6. calculate + tion =
7. excite + ment =
8. invite + ation =
9. replace + ment =
10. replace + ing =

There are exceptions to the above rule!

In base words ending in ‘ce’ or ‘ge’, the silent e is not dropped before suffixes such as ‘able’ and ‘ous’.

- notice + able = noticeable
- courage + ous = courageous

How would you spell these words?

1. service + able =
2. outrage + ous =
3. enforce + able =

Correct the spellings wherever necessary.

1. senseible
2. managable
3. changeable
4. continuous
5. exciteable
6. marriageable
Activity 5: Syllables

Add ‘ick’ to words with only one syllable. Add ‘ic’ to words with more than one syllable.

trick                 lick                 mystic                 skeptic

Circle the words spelled correctly.

1. pick                2. picnick               3. platstick            4. traffic
5. sick                6. panic                 7. lyrick               8. clinic

When a suffix is added to words ending in ‘ic’, the ‘ic’ changes to ick.

panic + ed = panicked          frolic + ed = frolicked

How would you spell these words?

mimic + ed =        panic + ing =         picnic + ing =
traffic + ing =     frolick + ing =

Activity 6: Follow the pattern

Many words in English end with the ‘er’ sound. This sound is spelled with er, or or ar.

farmer               dancer               regular               contractor

There is no distinct rule, but there are some useful patterns that can be kept in mind.

Most words end with er.
1. er is most often used when a verb with a silent e ending is changed to a noun.
   write-writer        dive-diver

2. er is also used to indicate the person who is carrying out the action:
   reporting-reporter  farming-farmer

3. or is used when the base word ends in ate, ct or it.
   calculate-calculator edit-editor       conduct-conductor

4. ar is used for many words ending in l.
   regular             similar

Tick the correct spelling.

1. operator          operatar            operater
2. rectangular       rectangular         rectangular
3. alligator         alligater           alligator
4. acter             actor               actar
5. popular           populer             populor
6. investigator      investigator        investigatar
7. pillor            pillar              piller
8. exhibiter         exhibitor           exhibitar
Activity 7: -able and -ible

Say these words aloud. Listen to their endings.
understandable   edible

The endings almost sound the same. Is there a spelling pattern?

able is added when the base word is not changed in any way. Most words follow this pattern.
understand – understandable   comfort – comfortable   manage – manageable

ible is added to other words.
legible   audible   possible   flexible

Fill in the blanks with able or ible.
1. defend ___________   2. terr ___________   3. digest _________
4. adjust ___________   5. allow ___________   6. horr _________

Activity 8: Sound it out!

Add ‘le’ to words where the vowel sound is short and there are two consonants between the vowel and the final le.
bubble   bottle   little

When the vowel sound is long, this is not necessary. Hence:
poodle but puddle;   people but pebble

Circle the correct spelling.
1. brittle   britle
2. pickle   picle
3. puzzle   puze
4. cudle   cuddle
5. kettle   kete
6. letter   leter
7. staple   stapple
Activity 9: Word endings

Double the ‘I’ when a word ends in a single l and has a vowel before it.

travel – traveller          cancel – cancelled

Add ‘ing’ endings to these words.
1. control
2. fulfil
3. label
4. excel
5. patrol
6. boil
7. cool

Add ‘ed’ to these words:
1. cancel
2. signal
3. mail
4. sail
5. control
6. panel
7. fail

Activity 10: Spelling champion

Proofread these sentences. Circle the wrong spelling. Write the right spelling in the blank.

1. The match was canceled because of heavy rain. _____________________________
2. He didn’t beleive me. _____________________________
3. That was a terrbale move, wasn’t it? _____________________________
4. Tic the correct answer. _____________________________
5. The tree was feled by the woodcutter. _____________________________
6. Swiming is a good exercise. _____________________________
7. I had forgoten to take the camera. _____________________________
8. That wasn’t a believeable story. _____________________________
9. We have had so many visitars today! _____________________________
10. My sister has 10 clockes. She collects them! _____________________________