**Spelling Rules - Years 5 and 6**

Year 5 and 6 Children should know:

| **Statutory requirements** |  | **Rules and guidance (non‑statutory)** | **Example words (non‑statutory)** |
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| Endings which sound like /ʃəs/ spelt –cious or –tious |  | Not many common words end like this.If the root word ends in **–ce**, the /ʃ/ sound is usually spelt as **c** – e.g. *vice – vicious*, *grace – gracious*, *space – spacious*, *malice – malicious.***Exception**: *anxious*. | vicious, precious, conscious, delicious, malicious, suspiciousambitious, cautious, fictitious, infectious, nutritious |
| Endings which sound like /ʃəl/ |  | **–cial** is common after a vowel letter and **–tial** after a consonant letter, but there are some exceptions.**Exceptions**: initial, financial, commercial, provincial (the spelling of the last three is clearly related to *finance*, *commerce* and *province*). | official, special, artificial, partial, confidential, essential |
| Words ending in –ant, –ance/–ancy, –ent, –ence/–ency |  | Use **–ant** and **–ance/–ancy** if there is a related word with a /æ/ or /eɪ/ sound in the right position; –**ation** endings are often a clue.Use **–ent** and **–ence/–ency** after soft **c** (/s/ sound), soft **g** (/dʒ/ sound) and **qu**, or if there is a related word with a clear /ɛ/ sound in the right position.There are many words, however, where the above guidance does not help. These words just have to be learnt. | observant, observance, (observation), expectant (expectation), hesitant, hesitancy (hesitation), tolerant, tolerance (toleration), substance (substantial)innocent, innocence, decent, decency, frequent, frequency, confident, confidence (confidential)assistant, assistance, obedient, obedience, independent, independence |

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| Words ending in –able and –ibleWords ending in –ably and –ibly |  | The **–able/–ably** endings are far more common than the **–ible/–ibly** endings.As with **–ant** and **–ance/–ancy**, the **–able** ending is used if there is a related word ending in **–ation**.If the **–able** ending is added to a word ending in **–ce** or **–ge**, the **e** after the **c** or **g** must be kept as those letters would otherwise have their ‘hard’ sounds (as in *cap* and *gap*)before the **a** of the **–able** ending.The **–able** ending is usually but not always used if a complete root word can be heard before it, even if there is no related word ending in **–ation**. The first five examples opposite are obvious; in *reliable*, the complete word *rely* is heard, but the **y** changes to **i** in accordance with the rule.The **–ible** ending is common if a complete root word can’t be heard before it but it also sometimes occurs when a complete word *can* be heard (e.g. *sensible*). | adorable/adorably (adoration),applicable/applicably (application), considerable/considerably (consideration), tolerable/tolerably (toleration)changeable, noticeable, forcible, legibledependable, comfortable, understandable, reasonable, enjoyable, reliablepossible/possibly, horrible/horribly, terrible/terribly, visible/visibly, incredible/incredibly, sensible/sensibly |
| Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words ending in –fer |  | The **r** is doubled if the **–fer** is still stressed when the ending is added.The **r** is not doubled if the **–fer** is no longer stressed. | referring, referred, referral, preferring, preferred, transferring, transferredreference, referee, preference, transference |
| Use of the hyphen |  | Hyphens can be used to join a prefix to a root word, especially if the prefix ends in a vowel letter and the root word also begins with one. | co-ordinate, re-enter, co-operate, co-own |

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| Words with the /i:/ sound spelt ei after c |  | The ‘**i** before **e** except after **c**’ rule applies to words where the sound spelt by **ei** is /i:/.**Exceptions**: *protein*, *caffeine*, *seize* (and *either* and *neither* if pronounced with an initial /i:/ sound)*.* | deceive, conceive, receive, perceive, ceiling |
| Words containing the letter-string ough |  | **ough** is one of the trickiest spellings in English – it can be used to spell a number of different sounds. | ought, bought, thought, nought, brought, foughtrough, tough, enoughcoughthough, although, doughthroughthorough, boroughplough, bough |
| Words with ‘silent’ letters (i.e. letters whose presence cannot be predicted from the pronunciation of the word) |  | Some letters which are no longer sounded used to be sounded hundreds of years ago: e.g. in *knight*,there was a /k/ sound before the /n/, and the **gh** used to represent the sound that ‘ch’ now represents in the Scottish word *loch.* | doubt, island, lamb, solemn, thistle, knight |

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| Homophones and other words that are often confused |  | In the pairs of words opposite, nouns end **–ce** and verbs end **–se**. *Advice* and *advise* provide a useful clue as the word *advise* (verb) is pronounced with a /z/ sound – which could not be spelt **c**.More examples:aisle: a gangway between seats (in a church, train, plane).isle: an island.aloud: out loud.allowed: permitted.affect: usually a verb (e.g. *The weather may affect our plans*).effect: usually a noun (e.g. *It may have an effect on our plans*). If a verb, it means ‘bring about’ (e.g. *He will effect changes in the running of the business*).altar: a table-like piece of furniture in a church.alter: to change.ascent: the act of ascending (going up).assent: to agree/agreement (verb and noun).bridal: to do with a bride at a wedding.bridle: reins etc. for controlling a horse.cereal: made from grain (e.g. breakfast cereal).serial: adjective from the noun *series* – a succession of things one after the other.compliment: to make nice remarks about someone (verb) or the remark that is made (noun).complement: related to the word *complete* – to make something complete or more complete (e.g. *her scarf complemented her outfit*). | advice/advisedevice/deviselicence/licensepractice/practiseprophecy/prophesyfarther: furtherfather: a male parentguessed: past tense of the verb *guess*guest: visitorheard: past tense of the verb *hear*herd: a group of animalsled: past tense of the verb *lead*lead: present tense of that verb, or else the metal which is very heavy (*as heavy as lead*)morning: before noonmourning: grieving for someone who has diedpast: noun or adjective referring to a previous time (e.g. *In the past*) or preposition or adverb showing place (e.g. *he walked past me*)passed: past tense of the verb ‘pass’ (e.g. *I passed him in the road*)precede: go in front of or beforeproceed: go on |

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| Homophones and other words that are often confused (continued) |  | descent: the act of descending (going down).dissent: to disagree/disagreement (verb and noun).desert: as a noun – a barren place (stress on first syllable); as a verb – to abandon (stress on second syllable)dessert: (stress on second syllable) a sweet course after the main course of a meal.draft: noun – a first attempt at writing something; verb – to make the first attempt; also, to draw in someone (e.g. *to draft in extra help*)draught: a current of air. | principal: adjective – most important (e.g. *principal ballerina*) noun – important person (e.g. *principal of a college*)principle: basic truth or beliefprofit: money that is made in selling thingsprophet: someone who foretells the futurestationary: not movingstationery: paper, envelopes etc.steal: take something that does not belong to yousteel: metalwary: cautiousweary: tiredwho’s: contraction of *who is* or *who has*whose: belonging to someone (e.g. *Whose jacket is that?*) |