

## Spelling Strategies

You want to write a word you are not sure how to spell ... **what do you do ?**

1. I leave a space and fix it up later. yes / no
2. I write the first letter and then leave a space. yes / no
3. I try to write the word, underline it and check it later. yes / no
4. I try to sound the word out. yes / no
5. I write the word a few different ways on a piece of paper  
and choose the one which looks correct. yes / no
6. I ask someone. yes / no
7. I look to see if the word is written anywhere. yes / no
8. I look in the dictionary. yes / no
9. I use another word instead. yes / no
10. I try to think of other words that rhyme with it. yes / no
11. I remember a rule or a clue. yes / no
12. *What else do you do?*

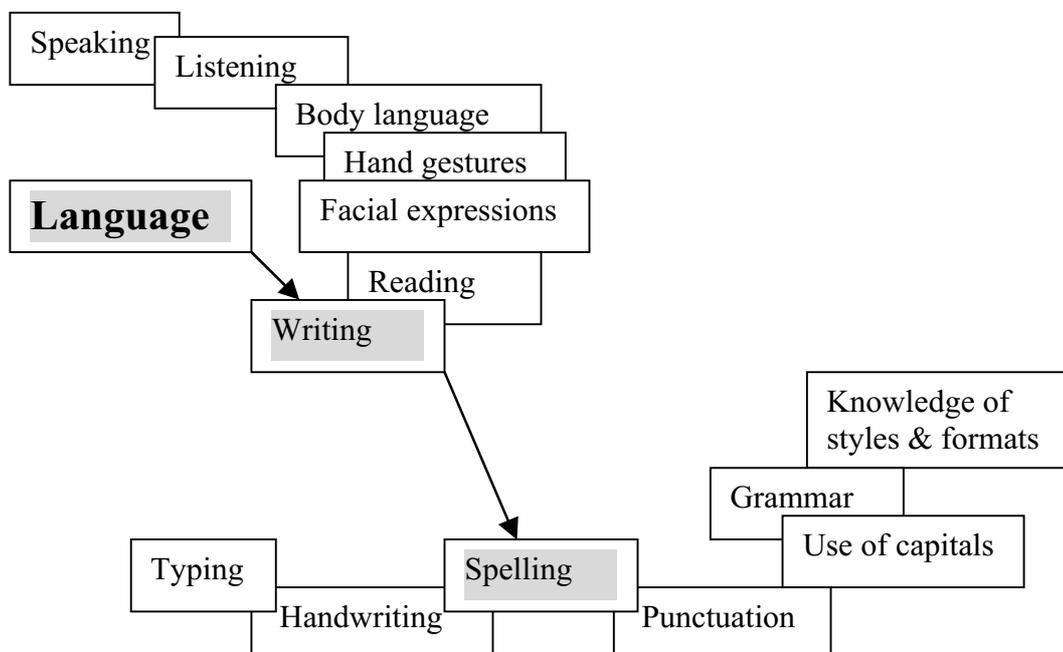
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## How important is spelling ?

Last Saturday when I was shopping I noticed a group of people talking about a sign in a window. The sign had a number of spelling mistakes...and the people were shaking their heads in disgust.

### Questions

- What do you think about the piece of writing above ?
- Did you find it easy to read ?
- How intelligent or educated do you think the writer is ?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how important do you consider perfect spelling ?
- How do you feel when someone spots a spelling mistake in your writing ?



Spelling is only one part of the writing process,  
which in turn is only one part of language communication.

## Words more recently English

Cut up :

<i>French</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Australian Aboriginal Languages</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Russian</i>
chef	sushi	siesta	boomerang	blitz	vodka
boutique	judo	patio	bunyip	waltz	sputnik
champagne	kimono	guitar	kangaroo	kindergarten	
restaurant	kamikaze	matador	didgeridoo	hamburger	

Adapted from : 'Spelling Works' by M.Hague & C.Harris, Heinemann1996

## Words with **ch**

**Ch** is found in the English language, but it is also found in the Greek and French languages. When English borrows words with **ch** from Greek or French, the words have the Greek and French pronunciation.

The words below all have **ch** in them. Read the words aloud and decide if the **ch** has an English, Greek or French pronunciation. Write the words in the correct column.

branch	chain	scholarship	mechanic
chassis	chemical	Chinese	ache
chauvinistic	reach	chandelier	character
technical	chatterbox	itchy	charming
chamois	archives	chocoholic	charismatic
chalet	chewy	architect	chaperone
champion	chaotic	retrenched	machine
chronic	cholera	chisel	chemotherapy
choice	chief	cheeky	achieve
crochet	child	mechanic	cheap

The **English** pronunciation is **hard**. It's found in words like **chips** and **church**.

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The **Greek** pronunciation is a **k** sound. It's found in words like **chemist** and **Christmas**.

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The **French** pronunciation is a soft **sh** sound. It's found in words like **chef** and **champagne**.

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Words to be cut up  
and sorted according  
to the sound of **ch**

## **English**

branch

chain

Chinese

reach

chatterbox

itchy

charming

chocoholic

chewy

champion

retrenched

chisel

choice

chief

cheeky

achieve

child

cheap

## **Greek**

mechanic

chemical

character

technical

archives

charismatic

architect

chaotic

chronic

cholera

chemotherapy

mechanic

ache

scholarship

## **French**

chassis

machine

crochet

chandelier

chauvinistic

chamois

chaperone

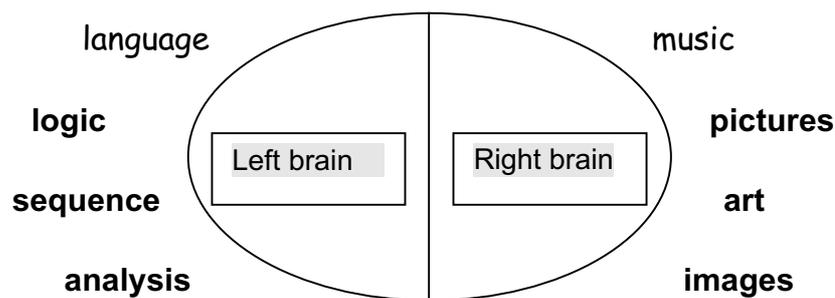
chalet

## Memory and Learning

Memory and learning are part of the same process. If we understand a little more about them both, our learning can improve.

### How our brain works

The brain is divided into two halves. In Western society, each half processes information in different ways. The right brain responds to emotion, art, music and patterns and grasps the whole picture quite quickly. The left brain tends to take in information in stages and in a logical sequence. To maximise memory and learning, we need to try and involve both sides of the brain fully...so learning to spell to music might be a good idea !



Most of us are under using our brain's learning potential. To develop it we need to use it. So the more facts and experiences we store up, the more associations and connections we can make. This will make the learning and remembering of new material easier because we have more 'pegs' to hang the information on. Because of this, adults are able to relate new information to existing knowledge more effectively than children and so can learn a wider range of things through understanding.

Contrary to popular belief, the brain does not start to decline after age 25. Research suggests that the complexities of the brain start to improve as you get older if you use them.

## Two kinds of Memory

### 1. Working memory

Working memory is often referred to as your 'short term' memory. It holds information only for the brief time you need it to do something, such as to make a decision to cross a road. It has been described as electrical and erasable.

On average, the short term memory can handle between 5 and 9 units of information at once. If all the short term memory space is used up, then any additional information will simply push the first piece out. Items stored in short term memory space can vary in length from single letters to single words to whole pieces of information.

The short term memory has severe limitations on its capacity to store things, so it helps if people 'chunk' their information. If the spelling of a twelve letter word is being learned, then it may be best learned in 'chunks' rather than separate letters.

eg: **d - i - s - t - r - i - b - u - t - i - o - n**

becomes **dis - tri - bu - tion**

### 2. Long term memory

Long term memory has been described as chemical and permanent. It holds everything that you know and which makes you the person you are. You are unlikely to forget anything that is in it, although recalling information may prove difficult sometimes.

If you want to hold onto something for future use, you have to transfer it from your short term memory into your long term memory. This will only come about if you make it happen and this is particularly so with spelling. Just because you have seen a word and copied it down once does not mean it is yours. You won't own that word to use it when you want, unless you learn it.

[Adapted from *The Spelling Pack* –ALBSU London '91]

Quiz - *Memory and Learning*

**True**

**False**

1. The brain is divided into two halves.
2. The right brain responds to music and art.
3. The left brain responds to emotions.
4. To learn better, we need to involve both sides of the brain.
5. The more we learn, the less room we have in our memories.
6. Adults can learn a wider range of information than children.
7. The brain begins to go downhill after age 25.
8. Your short term memory can hold 12 units of information at once.
9. You are unlikely to forget anything in your long term memory.
10. Information usually goes automatically from your short term to your long term memory.

## How do you remember?

Try answering the following questions and then think what your answers tell you about how you remember things. Do people remember in different ways? Compare your responses with others in the group.

### How do you :

1. Remember a phone number after you look it up, until you dial it?
  2. Recall the colour of your lounge room carpet?
  3. Remember someone's name after you have been introduced to them?
  4. Remember where you left your car in a very large car park.
  5. Remember what a rose in bloom is like?
  6. Remember a new piece of information you have just read?
  7. Remember a journey that you make quite regularly?
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## Systematic Revision

To be able to recall whatever you have learnt, it has to get into your long term memory. Information gets there through practise. We hardly ever learn something by paying attention to it once or twice. If you want to get a word into your long term memory you need to:

1. Look carefully at the word and work out what might help you remember it.
  - Break it into syllables. eg: **con cen trate**
  - Focus on the difficult part and write this part larger  
eg: spe**C**ial fr**i**end
  - Write the difficult part in colour.
  - Mispronounce the word. eg: Wed / nes /day
  - Sound the silent letters. eg: **comb**
  - Make links with similar words. eg: a **piece** of **pie**
2. Using the **Look Say Cover Write Check** method, practise the word three times
3. Practise again **1 hour** later, **six hours** later, **one day** later, **two days** later, **one week** later.
4. The word will now be in your long term memory.

**Every time you use the word in your writing, it strengthens in your long term memory and improves recall for the next time you need it.**

Adapted from: 'The Spelling Pack' ALBSU

## The importance of handwriting in learning to spell

The motor aspect of spelling is handwriting. The motor memory or muscle memory is one of our strongest memories. Once a motor skill is learned, for example, bike riding, it is very difficult to forget. This is one reason why consistently misspelled words are difficult to unlearn.

When a writer prints, the letters are isolated and the hand has no memory for how it feels to produce certain patterns of letters. With joined writing however, each word has its own distinctive rhythm and the chance of remembering a word is increased because both the visual and motor memory are being used.

Many people continue to print because they have done it for so long and feel it is too difficult to change. Others believe that their joined writing is too messy. Adult students have the advantage of having better fine motor control than they had when they were younger, and they are usually more highly motivated. Such students, can learn to write fluently in a matter of months.

Adapted from: 'The Spelling Pack' ALBSU London

# Speed Copying

## Introduction

Speed copying is just what it says it is – copying as fast as you can. However, it is not mindless copying, but copying with a purpose. If you do speed copying for ten minutes regularly, you will physically be able to write faster, your spelling and memory will improve and the way you express yourself in writing will also improve.

## How to do it

1. Choose a paragraph of text to copy. It can be from a book, a newspaper, a magazine...or anywhere. There should be roughly five words you are not confident spelling, and the paragraph should be a little longer than the one above.
2. Set your timer or watch for **ten** minutes.
3. Copy the paragraph as fast as you can. If you finish the paragraph before ten minutes is up, start copying it again.
4. As you copy, try to remember as big a 'chunk' of words as you can.
5. Don't worry about neatness; you will get neater after practise.
6. Continue copying the same paragraph at least four times in the one week. Start from the beginning of the paragraph each time.
7. Change to a new paragraph each week.

## Speed copying is helpful for:

- **Spelling** –you are practising the same words over and over for a week.
- **Handwriting** – your hand will get stronger and in time you will be able to write as quickly as you think.
- **Memory** – by 'chunking' words together when you copy, you are working your memory.
- **Written expression** – you will slowly start to use some of the words, sentences and styles of writing you have been copying.

Adapted from : 'Learning to learn' – R.McCormick & G.Pancini

## Spelling and Writing

Many people complain that they can't or don't write because they can't spell. Since we only spell for writing, the only way to improve your spelling is to write. Trying to learn about spelling without writing is like trying to learn to swim by watching someone swimming. Impossible!

Learning to do anything well involves taking risks and being prepared to make mistakes. Even children learning to ride a bike know there is a chance they will fall off. It is the same for learning about spelling. You will make mistakes, but so what! They can always be fixed. And as with any learning, the mistakes will become fewer and less important.

So if you don't write often, or you avoid it, you will find that improving your spelling will take much longer. Remember, we didn't learn to talk by listening alone! Try to write as often as you can until it becomes a natural part of your everyday life. Before long you will be wondering why spelling and writing ever bothered you.

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### Ideas for writing - Leading lines

Leading lines are the opening lines for whatever piece of writing you would like them to become – a story, a poem, a reflection, a memory, an idea. Use these leading lines as a starting point:

- My earliest memory is...
- The happiest time of my life was...
- Five years ago I was...
- In five years' time I will...
- My favourite time is...
- This is how I got my name...
- If I could change one thing about myself...
- An embarrassing moment for me was...
- Sometimes I wonder...
- The best thing about my mother [sister/ husband etc] is...
- Do you remember when...
- The best thing that ever happened to me was...
- It is my one dream to...
- If I won a fortune...
- My most treasured possession is...
- My favourite film / book is...
- The most important thing in life is...
- Looking through my window...
- Someone I admire...
- Childhood memories...
- I had a terrible accident ...
- The best party ...
- One country I would really like to visit...
- The best holiday I ever had...
- My favourite part of Australia is...
- If I had a day to do whatever I pleased, I would...
- My favourite pastime is...

[Adapted from: *Improve your Spelling* – S. McConnell, Penguin 1990]

## Daily Journal

Choose one [or more] of the following words that best describe your day, or use other words that best suit. Do this for a week choosing appropriate words for each day.

exciting  
ordinary  
tiring  
busy  
fun  
terrifying  
relaxing

frustrating  
disastrous  
emotional  
dull  
stressful  
wonderful  
extraordinary

romantic  
exhausting  
interesting  
boring  
normal  
sociable  
pleasant

Beside each word or words you choose, write a brief note to explain your choice.

*Friday*

*Busy and tiring - I had to finish writing the report by 6 o'clock, I got it done, but I didn't even have time for lunch. I was too tired to go to the cinema as planned. Went straight home.*

*Saturday*

*Relaxing - Slept in this morning – too cold to get out of bed. Spent most of the day reading and listening to music. Went round to visit friends in the evening.*

Adapted from: *Writing Matters* – K. Brown & S. Hood, Cambridge University Press Aust. 1989

## The Alphabet Race # 2

*In pairs, see how quickly you can work out the following.*

A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y  
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1. What's the twelfth letter of the alphabet? .....
2. What's the sixth letter from the end of the alphabet? .....
3. Make two words starting with the seventh letter. ....
4. Make a five letter using the third, fourth, eighth, ninth and twelfth letters.  
.....
5. How many different letters are there in the word **manager** ? .....
6. What are the two middle letters of the alphabet? .....
7. Which letters in the word **similar** come between sixteenth and twenty first letters ? .....
8. Which letter in the word **solicitor** is closest to the fifth letter? .....
9. Which letter comes twice in **refrigerator** and once in **butcher**? .....
10. How many different vowels [V] and consonants [C] are there  
in the word **particular**? [V]..... [C].....
11. How many different vowels are there in **confidence**? .....
12. Arrange and write the following words in alphabetical order :

**dollar director driver dealer donor**

.....

13. Which letter in the word **calendar** is closest to **J** in the alphabet ? .....
14. Make a word that includes the eleventh and thirteenth letters. ....
15. Make two words that end with the twentieth letter. ....

[Adapted from: 'Vocabulary Games & Activities 1 by P.Watcyn-Jones, Penguin Books 2001]

## Proofreading

Draft 1

*Can you find 9 mistakes?*

Lots of people dont like cats because they are alergic to them. They also can be an enviromental hazard, deligthing in eating small birds and other native animals. Although they are classified as pets, they cant be trained as easily as dogs. But the most anoying thing about them is that you have to kill them nine times bifore you get rid of them.

Draft 2

Lots of people don't like cats because they are allergic to them. They also can be an environmental hazard, delighting in eating small birds and other native animals. Although they are classified as pets, they can't be trained as easily as dogs. But the most annoying thing about them is that you have to kill them nine times before you get rid of them.

## Initial sounds - Finding words in the dictionary

To find a word in the dictionary, you need to know at least the first few letters. This is not always easy. Below is a guide to different ways of spelling some initial sounds.

The word begins with the sound:	This sound could be spelt:	For example:		
f	ph	photo		
g	gh	ghost		
g	gu	guard		
h	wh	whole		
j	g	gem		
k	ch	chemist		
k	qu	queue	quay	quiche
kw	qu	quick		
n	kn	knee		
n	gn	gnaw	gnarled	gnome
n	pn	pneumonia	pneumatic	_____
r	wr	write		
r	rh	rhythm		
s	c	city		
s	sc	scent	science	scenic
s	ps	psychology		
sh	ch	chef		

sk	sch	school		
w	wh	when		

Adapted from: 'Dictionary Power' by E.Hamilton, Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1987

## Nice

The overused word **nice** has been left out of the spaces below. Choose a word for each space, from the words below the letter or check your thesaurus for some alternative words.

Dear Aunty Joan,

We had a very \_\_\_\_\_ holiday in Spain. The weather was \_\_\_\_\_ all the time and it was \_\_\_\_\_ to be able to swim every day.

We had some \_\_\_\_\_ meals in a \_\_\_\_\_ restaurant where all the waiters were very \_\_\_\_\_ to us.

On one of the days, we went for an \_\_\_\_\_ coach trip up into the mountains. We were very high up and the scenery was \_\_\_\_\_. We took some \_\_\_\_\_ photos and enjoyed a \_\_\_\_\_ picnic in the open-air.

We will be coming over to see you in two weeks. It will be \_\_\_\_\_ to see you again and to show you the photos from our \_\_\_\_\_ holiday.

Love  
Jess

<i>wonderful</i>	<i>excellent</i>	<i>marvellous</i>	<i>lovely</i>	<i>good</i>
<i>delicious</i>	<i>pleasant</i>	<i>beautiful</i>	<i>kind</i>	<i>great</i>
<i>relaxing</i>	<i>first class</i>	<i>fantastic</i>	<i>interesting</i>	<i>spectacular</i>

## Long a

### a\_e

- |          |                     |          |                       |
|----------|---------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 1. _a_e  | a friend [in Aust.] | 6. _a_e  | not early             |
| 2. _a_e  | part of a fence     | 7. _a_e  | a brown fruit         |
| 3. _a_e  | opposite of love    | 8. _a_e  | the front of the head |
| 4. __a_e | a large wooden box  | 9. __a_e | not fresh             |
| 5. __a_e | the largest animal  | 10. _a_e | a tie for your shoe   |
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### ai

- |          |                           |          |                           |
|----------|---------------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| 1. _ai_  | an strong ache            | 5. __ai_ | to do <u>another time</u> |
| 2. __ai_ | it runs on rails          | 6. _ai_  | the most important        |
| 3. __ai_ | made with links           | 7. __ai_ | frightened                |
| 4. _ai_  | on the end of your finger | 8. _ai_  | not succeed               |
- 

### ay

- |         |                  |         |                               |
|---------|------------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| 1. __ay | to say prayers   | 5. _ay  | present tense of said         |
| 2. __ay | children do this | 6. __ay | carry food and drinks on this |
| 3. _ay  | 24 hours         | 7. _ay  | Port Phillip _____?           |
| 4. _ay  | homosexual       | 8. _ay  | after April                   |
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The unstressed sound at the end of words

**er, ar, or** and **our** can say the **schwa** sound at the end of a word

**er** is the most common ending eg: farmer, mother .

**ar** often after **l** eg: *regular, collar*

**or** often after **at, ct, it** and **ess** eg: *orator, actor, editor, confessor*

but use **er** after **tt** eg: bitter

**our** after *colour, labour*

*There are exceptions, but most of the words below follow the rules.  
Add the correct ending :*

broth.....

direct.....

wond....

coll.....

doll.....

muscul.....

train.....

particul.....

calculat....

profess.....

refridgerat.....

babysitt.....

gutt.....

regul.....

glam....

visit.....

solicit.....

flav.....

lab.....

dream.....

weath....

schol.....

manag.....

instruct....

fath.....

singul.....

feath....

sist.....

doct.....

dictat...

popul.....

hum.....

sug.....

butt.....

aggress.....

calend.....

operat.....

circul.....

driv.....

simil.....

cell.....

alt....

hon.....

butch.....

mann....

sing.....

leath.....

Adapted from: 'Exercise your spelling' by E.Wood

dimmer  
runner  
helper  
golfer  
fresher  
singer  
shredder  
shutter  
blinker  
streamer  
sister  
traveller  
consider  
grandfather  
flower  
miner  
drummer  
feather  
trainer  
gutter  
butter  
dreamer  
manager  
butcher  
wonder  
leather  
weather  
driver  
manner  
alter

sugar  
collar  
regular  
scholar  
popular  
similar  
singular  
dollar  
particular  
circular  
cellar  
muscular  
calendar  
altar

sailor  
visitor  
tailor  
professor  
doctor  
dictator  
solicitor  
operator  
director  
aggressor  
actor  
instructor  
editor  
calculator  
refrigerator

**Words with  
the schwa  
sound at the  
end**

flavour  
colour  
humour  
labour  
honour  
glamour

**Hard and soft c and g**

Read aloud the sentences below.

1. **C**athy sat on a **c**ushion under the apricot tree.
2. They rode their bicycles into the **c**ity twice a week.

Can you hear the difference in the sound of the **c** in each sentence ?

3. **G**ary is **g**oing to clean the leaves out of the **g**utters.
4. After a **g**entle work out in the **g**ym, she relaxed with a **g**in and tonic.

Can you hear the difference in the sound of the **g** in each sentence ?

c & g are usually **hard** when they come before the vowels **a, o & u**

cab      coat      cushion  
gas      go      gum

They are usually **soft** when they come before **e, i & y**:

city      cycle      cent  
gentle      gin      gypsy

\* except for some words beginning with **gi.** *girl, give gift*  
& **ge** *get, gear, geese*

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**Exercise 1**

Supply the missing letters in the following words and listen to the sound of the **c** or **g**. Write hard or soft after the word.

1. disgrac\_
2. c\_cling
3. grac\_ous
4. vag\_e
5. c\_nscious
6. g\_ant
7. spac\_ous
8. picnic\_ed
9. chang\_able
10. pig\_on
11. surg\_on
12. c\_pable
13. courag\_ous
14. g\_tless
15. plag\_e
16. servic\_able
17. g\_mnastics
18. serg\_ant
19. rec\_ive
20. intrig\_e

## Exercise 2

It is especially important to be careful when adding **vowel suffixes** to words which end in **ce** or **ge**. The **e** is needed and must be kept when you add a suffix beginning with an **a**, **o** or **u**.

eg:            service + ing    = servicing  
                service + able = serviceable  
  
                manage + ing    = managing  
                manage + able = manageable

### Add suffixes to the following.

*Be careful to note if they are vowel or consonant suffixes :*

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. notice [ed] _____    | 13. infringe [ment]_____ |
| 2. manage [ing]_____    | 14. grace [ful]_____     |
| 3. announce [ing] _____ | 15. urge [ed]_____       |
| 4. manage [able]_____   | 16. disgrace [ing]_____  |
| 5. disgrace [ful]_____  | 17. judge [ment ]_____   |
| 6. change [able]_____   | 18. pronounce [ing]_____ |
| 7. trace [able] _____   | 19. hedge [ing] _____    |
| 8. courage [ous] _____  | 20. notice [able]_____   |
| 9. ice [y] _____        | 21. commence [ment]_____ |
| 10. peace [ful]_____    | 22. advantage [ous]_____ |
| 11. dodge [y]_____      | 23. salvage [able]_____  |
| 12. manage [ment] _____ | 24. race [y]_____        |

**Words to be cut up for sorting**

gamble

cylinder

cushion

goggles

gypsum

convenient

ceremony

guarantee

galvanised

disgrace

occasion

German

giraffe

canteen

citrus

**hard c**     *Sounds like k*

gesture

**soft c**     *Sounds like s*

capital

**hard g**     *Sounds like g*

ginger

**soft g**     *Sounds like j*

cyclone

going

## **i before e**

*Read the following words and follow the instructions given below:*

brief	relief	perceive
priest	deceive	ceiling
thief	believe	weight
leisure	piece	shield
height	rein	receipt
freight	veil	conceited
grief	chief	vein

1. Tick each word in which the ie or ei rhymes with bee.
2. Looking through the words you have ticked, underline any of them containing ei.
3. Say what you notice about all the words you have underlined.
4. Say what you notice about all the words you have not ticked.
5. Discuss the rule for 'i before e'

[Adapted from: A Basic Course in English by W. Wright , Nesbit & Co. 1976]