ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Common spelling patterns

Difficulty level: Intermediate

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you spell new words by spotting the pattern in them. Patterns like i before e give you a rule to follow instead of guessing letter by letter and getting stuck. Once you know the common patterns, most new words are just a familiar pattern with a new beginning or ending.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Spell using i before e: b __ f (a belief).

SOLUTION

The pattern i before e applies here, since the sound is ee and there is no c before it.

Put i, then e: b i e f.

So the spelling is: belief.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Spell using the pattern for a word ending in a consonant plus y: happ _ness.

SOLUTION

The base word is 'happy', ending in consonant plus y.

Change y to i before adding the ending: happi.

So the spelling is: happiness.

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Practice questions

1 The parcel finally arrived at the post office. The word in the strip means to get something that was sent to you, and it is the exception to i before e after c. Spell the word.



A recieve

B receive

C receve

D recive

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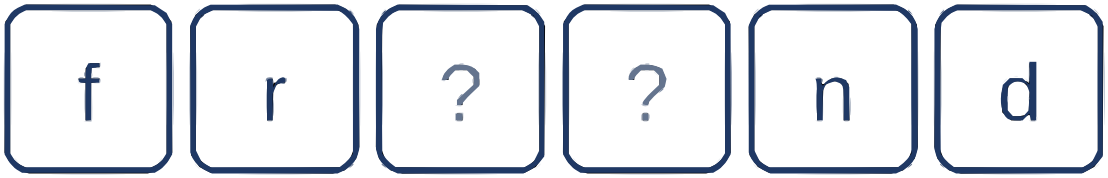
2 Lena and her best ___ have played together since kindergarten. The strip shows the word for a close companion, spelled with ie. What is the word?



A freind

B frend

C friend

D fiend

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3 **The puppy wagged its tail ___ when its owner came home. Add ly to the word happy, changing y to i first. What is the word in the strip?**



A happilly

B happyly

C happely

D happily

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4

For her test, Ana ___ her notes every night last week. The strip shows the past tense of study: change y to i, then add ed. Spell it.



A studyed

B studied

C studed

D studyd

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5

The farmer counted the ___ in the field at sunset. The word for the woolly animals is spelled with a double e. What is it?



A sheap

B sheep

C shep

D shepe

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6 **Every morning the ___ pulls into the station at eight. The word for the railway cars is spelled with ai. Fill in the strip.**



A trane

B traine

C train

D tran

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7

The garden was full of ___ flowers after the rain. Start with beauty, change y to i, then add ful. What is the word?

b	e	a	u	t	?	f	u	l

A beautifull

B beautyful

C beautiful

D beautful

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8

The puppy is ___ than the cat. Start with happy, change y to i, then add er. What is the word?



A happyer

B happiier

C happier

D happyier

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9

You have to ___ in yourself before a big race. The word follows i before e and means to trust that something is true. What is the word?

b	?	?	l	i	e	v	e

A beleive

B believe

C belive

D beleave

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10 **The cook poured ___ over the strawberries for dessert. The word for the thick part of milk is spelled with ea. What is it?**



A creem

B creme

C cream

D craem

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ANSWER KEY

1. receive

2. friend

3. happily

4. studied

5. sheep

6. train

7. beautiful

8. happier

9. believe

10. cream

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