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?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Handout 1 – Spelling strategies
2004
Sue Paull DVLC
How important is spelling?

Larst sataday when I was shoping I notised a group of people torking about a sine in a window. The sine had a number of spelling misstakes...and the people were shakeing there 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Australian Aboriginal Languages</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Russian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chef</td>
<td>sushi</td>
<td>siesta</td>
<td>boomerang</td>
<td>blitz</td>
<td>vodka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boutique</td>
<td>judo</td>
<td>patio</td>
<td>bunyip</td>
<td>waltz</td>
<td>sputnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>champagne</td>
<td>kimono</td>
<td>guitar</td>
<td>kangaroo</td>
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<td>kamikaze</td>
<td>matador</td>
<td>didgeridoo</td>
<td>hamburger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: ‘Spelling Works’ by M. Hague & C. Harris, Heinemann 1996
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>branch</th>
<th>chain</th>
<th>scholarship</th>
<th>mechanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chasis</td>
<td>chemical</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>ache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical</td>
<td>chatterbox</td>
<td>chandelier</td>
<td>character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chauvinistic</td>
<td>archives</td>
<td>chocked</td>
<td>charming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chamois</td>
<td>chewy</td>
<td>architect</td>
<td>charismatic</td>
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<tr>
<td>chalet</td>
<td>chemic</td>
<td>retrenched</td>
<td>chaperone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>champion</td>
<td>chaotic</td>
<td>chisel</td>
<td>machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chronic</td>
<td>cholera</td>
<td>cheeky</td>
<td>achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choice</td>
<td>chief</td>
<td>mechanic</td>
<td>cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crochet</td>
<td>child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

The French pronunciation is a soft sh sound. It’s found in words like chef and champagne.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words to be cut up and sorted according to the sound of ch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheeky</td>
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<td>chain</td>
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<td><strong>Chinese</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>chatterbox</td>
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<tr>
<td>itchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>charming</td>
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<td>chocoholic</td>
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<tr>
<td>chewy</td>
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<tr>
<td>champion</td>
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<tr>
<td>retrenched</td>
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<td>choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>chief</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>French</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>child</td>
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<td>chain</td>
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<td>charming</td>
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<td>chocoholic</td>
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<tr>
<td>choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 \[d i s ‐ t r i ‐ b u ‐ t i o n\]

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?

---

**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: speCial frlend
   - 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 a 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 practice.

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
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 spelling: you will make mistakes, but so what! They can always be fixed. So if you don't write often, 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.

Ideas for writing - Leading lines

- My favourite possession is...
- The best thing that ever happened to me was...
- The best thing about my mother [sister/husband etc.] is...
- Sometimes I wonder...
- If I won a fortune...
- If I had a terrible accident...
- My most treasured possession is...
- Looking through my window...
- The most important thing in life is...
- Someone I admire...
- My favourite film/book is...
- This is how I got my name...
- An embarrassing moment for me was...
- If I could change one thing about myself...
- My favourite part of Australia is...
- My earliest memory is...
- The happiest time of my life was...
- The best holiday I ever had...
- One country I would really like to visit...
- The best party...
- The happiest time of my life was...
- The best time I've ever had...

[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   frustrating   romantic
ordinary  disastrous   exhausting
tiring     emotional    interesting
busy       dull         boring
fun        stressful    normal
terrifying wonderful sociable
relaxing   extraordinary 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.

The Alphabet Race # 2

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

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. …………………

Proofreading

Draft 1

Can you find 9 mistakes?

Lots of people don’t like cats because they are allergic to them. They also can be an enviromental 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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The word begins with the sound:</th>
<th>This sound could be spelt:</th>
<th>For example:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>ph</td>
<td>photo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>wh</td>
<td>when</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wonderful</th>
<th>excellent</th>
<th>marvellous</th>
<th>lovely</th>
<th>good</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>beautiful</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td>great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relaxing</td>
<td>first class</td>
<td>fantastic</td>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>spectacular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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  

#### ai

1. _ai_  an strong ache  &  5. _ai_  to do another time  
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
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 \( \text{c} \) and \( \text{g} \)**

*Read aloud the sentences below.*

1. Cathy sat on a *cushion* under the apricot tree.
2. They rode their *bicycles* into the *city* twice a week.

*Can you hear the difference in the sound of the \( \text{c} \) in each sentence?*

3. Gary is *going* to clean the leaves out of the *gutters*.
4. After a *gentle* work out in the *gym*, she relaxed with a *gin* and tonic.

*Can you hear the difference in the sound of the \( \text{g} \) in each sentence?*

\( \text{c} \) & \( \text{g} \) are usually **hard** when they come before the vowels \( \text{a, o \& u} \):

- cab
- coat
- cushion
- gas
- go
- gum

They are usually **soft** when they come before \( \text{e, i \& y} \):

- cent
- city
- cycle
- gentle
- gin
- gypsy

* except for some words beginning with \( \text{gi} \). girl, give gift
* & \( \text{ge} \) get, gear, geese

**Exercise 1**

Supply the missing letters in the following words and listen to the sound of the \( \text{c} \) or \( \text{g} \). Write **hard** or **soft** after the word.

1. disgrac_ 6. g_ant 11. surg_on 16. servic_able
2. c_cling 7. spac_ous 12. c_pable 17. g_mnastics
3. grac_ous 8. picnic_ed 13. courag_ous 18. serg_ant
4. vag_e 9. chang_able 14. g_tless 19. rec_ive
5. c_nscious 10. pig_on 15. plag_e 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] ______________
2. manage [ing]__________
3. announce [ing] ____________
4. manage [able]__________
5. disgrace [ful]_____________
6. change [able]___________
7. trace [able] ______________
8. courage [ous] ___________
9. ice [y] ________________
10. peace [ful]______________
11. dodge [y]______________
12. manage [ment] __________
13. infringe [ment]_________
14. grace [ful]______________
15. urge [ed]______________
16. disgrace [ing]___________
17. judge [ment ]___________
18. pronounce [ing]________
19. hedge [ing] ____________
20. notice [able]____________
21. commence [ment]_________
22. advantage [ous]_________
23. salvage [able]___________
24. race [y]__________
Words to be cut up for sorting

- gamble
- cushion
- gypsum
- ceremony
- galvanised
- occasion
- giraffe
- citrus
- gesture
- capital
- ginger
- cyclone
- going

- cylinder
- goggles
- convenient
- guarantee
- disgrace
- German
- canteen

**Hard c** Sounds like **k**

**Soft c** Sounds like **s**

**Hard g** Sounds like **g**

**Soft g** Sounds like **j**
i before e

Read the following words and follow the instructions given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>brief</th>
<th>relief</th>
<th>perceive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>priest</td>
<td>deceive</td>
<td>ceiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thief</td>
<td>believe</td>
<td>weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leisure</td>
<td>piece</td>
<td>shield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>height</td>
<td>rein</td>
<td>receipt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freight</td>
<td>veil</td>
<td>conceited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grief</td>
<td>chief</td>
<td>vein</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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]