

Year 6 Spelling – Rules, Guidance and Examples

	spelling	Statutory requirements	Rules and guidance (non-statutory)	examples [www.morewords.com is a really useful site]
1	-cious	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	conscious precious unconscious suspicious delicious vicious spacious gracious subconscious ferocious malicious judicious vivacious luscious atrocious precocious tenacious auspicious audacious
2	-tious			ambitious cautious contentious infectious conscientious nutritious pretentious fictitious superstitious propitious vexatious fractious ostentatious facetious surreptitious unpretentious
3	-cial	Endings which sound like /ʃəl/	–cial is common after a vowel letter –tial after a consonant letter. Exceptions: initial, financial, commercial, provincial (the spelling of the last three is clearly related to finance, commerce and province).	social special official financial commercial crucial judicial artificial provincial racial beneficial superficial unofficial facial glacial especial psychosocial sacrificial prejudicial antisocial multiracial
4	-tial			potential essential initial substantial residential presidential partial influential differential spatial confidential martial sequential impartial preferential consequential celestial existential circumstantial prudential torrential referential exponential palatial inertial inconsequential insubstantial interstitial experiential quintessential evidential deferential
5	-ant	Words ending in –ant, –ance/–ancy, –ent, –ence/–ency	Use –ant and –ance/–ancy if there is a related word with a /æ/ or /e?/ sound in the right position; –ation endings are often a clue.	important significant defendant servant assistant constant sergeant relevant tenant pleasant peasant consultant merchant giant infant applicant brilliant participant accountant dominant warrant instant distant covenant unpleasant elephant pregnant protestant reluctant elegant inhabitant variant ant irrelevant attendant descendant claimant migrant occupant informant ignorant dependant extravagant pollutant triumphant
6	-ance			performance importance finance distance insurance balance advance appearance circumstance dance glance significance assistance resistance alliance entrance substance allowance acceptance instance enhance assurance appliance attendance stance ambulance relevance guidance compliance inheritance disturbance ignorance renaissance romance nuisance utterance clearance surveillance tolerance resemblance abundance reassurance annoyance avoidance elegance grievance reliance maintenance
7	-ancy			pregnancy fancy redundancy consultancy tenancy expectancy discrepancy vacancy accountancy occupancy infancy truancy malignancy conservancy ascendancy constancy militancy hesitancy poignancy vibrancy buoyancy
8	-ent		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 /ʃ/ sound in the right position. There are many words, however, where	government development different went moment management present department president patient movement event student agreement environment treatment parent statement investment employment argument extent represent parliament equipment element comment prevent client current document recent

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			the above guidelines don't help. These words just have to be learnt.	payment accident assessment content involvement commitment requirement agent arrangement independent spent improvement appointment settlement experiment incident establishment component rent sent
9	-ence			experience evidence difference influence defence science conference reference presence sentence confidence existence silence audience absence consequence violence sequence offence licence intelligence preference hence independence essence fence residence incidence competence correspondence conscience interference pence dependence negligence occurrence emergence obedience coincidence convenience commence insistence excellence inference prominence patience prevalence
10	-ency			agency emergency currency efficiency tendency frequency constituency presidency consistency deficiency urgency dependency contingency insolvency potency decency inconsistency sufficiency transparency regency proficiency complacency delinquency latency solvency insurgency expediency insufficiency indecency residency fluency immunodeficiency competency excellency leniency patency clemency inefficiency
11	-able	Words ending in -able and -ible Words 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.	adorable advisable agreeable avoidable capable breakable changeable comfortable disposable employable enjoyable fashionable identifiable inexcusable manageable miserable noticeable portable probable reliable remarkable replaceable respectable sociable valuable vegetable
12	-ible		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.	accessible audible credible destructible edible flexible horrible impossible indestructible invincible legible possible responsible reversible sensible susceptible terrible visible
13	-ably		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.	probably presumably reasonably inevitably considerably notably invariably remarkably comfortably preferably suitably arguably understandably uncomfortably unreasonably noticeably conceivably reliably irritably miserably predictably unmistakably undeniably unquestionably inextricably regrettably justifiably unbelievably profitably admirably inexplicably improbably unavoidably uncontrollably impeccably inescapably agreeably amiably ably appreciably
14	-ibly		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).	possibly terribly audibly forcibly sensibly visibly ostensibly horribly imperceptibly impossibly plausibly irresistibly indelibly invisibly responsibly flexibly perceptibly incredibly

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15	Suffixes	-fer stressed	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.	conferring deferring inferring misinferring misreferring preferring referring retransferring transferring conferred deferred inferred misinferred misreferred preferred referred retransferred transferred conferral deferral referral transferral
		-fer unstressed		The r is not doubled if the -fer is no longer stressed.	referencing refereeing preferencing buffering chaffering coffering differing goffering offering proffering reoffering suffering chamfering interfering pilfering buffered chaffered chamfered coffered differed goffered interfered offered pilfered proffered reoffered suffered unbuffered conferencing feral transferral circumference conference countertransference deference difference indifference inference interference misreference nonconference non-interference preference reference teleconference transference videoconference
16					
17		- hyphen	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. Compounds with these prefixes are sometimes (but not always) hyphenated to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant, and sometimes even to prevent initial misreading or mispronunciation. 1. To avoid doubling a vowel: anti-art anti-administration co-opt (but cooperation) de-emphasize 2. To avoid tripling a consonant: shell-like 3. To prevent initial reading or mispronunciation: re-cover vs. recover (I will re-cover the sofa when I recover from the flu.)	co-ordinate re-enter co-operate co-own
18	ee:ei	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).	ceiling conceit deceive perceive receive receipt conceited conceive deceit	

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	-ough	or	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 fought
		u f			rough tough enough chough
		o			cough
		o-e			though although dough
		oo			through breakthrough
		u			thorough borough
		ow			plough bough
	silent		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.	<p>a - artistically logically musically romantically,</p> <p>b -bomb dumb lamb numb thumb doubt debt climb comb crumbs numb subtle tomb</p> <p>c - abscess ascend ascent conscience conscious crescent descend descent disciple fascinate fluorescent incandescent isosceles luminescent miscellaneous muscle obscene resuscitate scenario scene scent scissors</p> <p>d - Wednesday sandwich handsome edge bridge handkerchief</p> <p>e – breathe</p> <p>g – sign champagne gnaw reign align assign benign campaign cologne consign design feign foreign gnarl gnash gnat gnaw gnome gnu resign</p> <p>h - honest ghost heir hour what whether rhubarb rhyme ache anchor archaeology architect archives chaos character characteristic charisma chemical chemist chemotherapy chlorine choir cholera chord choreograph chorus Christian Christmas chrome echo leprechaun loch mechanical melancholy monarch monochrome orchestra orchid psychic scheme school stomach technical technique technology</p> <p>i - business</p> <p>k - knead knife knight knock knot know knack knapsack knave knead knee kneel knell knew knickers knife knit knob knoll knot knowledge knuckle</p> <p>l – would should calf half salmon talk yolk folk calm calf half</p> <p>m – mnemonic</p> <p>n - autumn column condemn damn hymn solemn</p> <p>o – colonel</p> <p>p - corps coup pneumonia psychology receipt pseudo psychiatrist psychiatry psychotherapy psychotic receipt</p> <p>r –</p> <p>s- aisle island debris apropos bourgeois</p>

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			<p>t - asthma ballet castle gourmet listen rapport ricochet soften apostle bristle bustle fasten glisten hustle jostle listen moisten mortgage often * nestle rustle soften * thistle trestle whistle wrestle</p> <p>u - guess guard guide guilt guitar baguette biscuit build built circuit disguise guest guide guild guile guillotine guilty guise rogue silhouette</p> <p>w - answer sword two whole wrist write who awry playwright sword wrack wrangle wrap wrapper wrath wreak wreath wreck wreckage wren wrench wrest wrestle wretch wretched wriggle wring wrinkle wrist writ write writhe wrong wrote wrought wrung wry</p> <p>x – faux pas</p> <p>z - rendezvous</p>
		<p>Homophones and other words that are often confused</p>	<p>In these pairs of words, 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.</p> <p>advice/advise device/devise licence/license practice/practise prophecy/prophesy</p> <p>Alphabetically 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) 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 airfarther: further</p>

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				<p>father: a male parent guessed: past tense of the verb guess guest: visitor heard: past tense of the verb hear herd: a group of animals led: 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 noon mourning: grieving for someone who has died past: 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 before proceed: go on principal: adjective – most important (e.g. principal ballerina) noun – important person (e.g. principal of a college) principle: basic truth or belief profit: money that is made in selling things prophet: someone who foretells the future stationary: not moving stationery: paper, envelopes etc. steal: take something that does not belong to you steel: metal wary: cautious weary: tired who's: contraction of who is or who has whose: belonging to someone (e.g. Whose jacket is that?)</p>
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