Spelling Guidance Document – Years 1-6

The Get Reading Right Programme has been implemented from Year 1-3. This incorporates the targeted phonemes and graphemes that need to be taught explicitly in each year level.

This guidance document also identifies other spelling patterns that need to be reviewed within each year level.

Included are word-lists for Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. These are a mixture of words pupils frequently use in their writing and those which they often misspell. Some of the listed words may be thought of as quite challenging, but the 100 words in each list can easily be taught within the four years of key stage 2 alongside other words that teachers consider appropriate.

The rules and guidance are intended to support the teaching of spelling. Phonic knowledge should continue to underpin spelling after Key stage 1. Teachers should still draw attention to the various graphemes and phonemes that do and do not fit in with what has been taught so far. Increasingly, however students also need to understand the role of morphology and etymology. Although the particular phonemes and graphemes in root words have to be learnt, teachers can help students to understand the relationship between the meaning and spelling where these are relevant. For example, understanding the relationship between medical and medicine may help students to spell the /s/ sound in the medicine with the letter ‘c’. Students can also be helped to spell words with prefixes and suffixes correctly if they understand the general principles for adding them, Teachers should be familiar with what students have ben taught about spelling in the early years, such as which rules students have been taught for adding prefixes and suffixes.

 The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is used to represent sounds (phonemes). A table showing the IPA is provided in this document.

Spelling - Year 1

**Targeted Phonemes and Graphemes**

These will be taught through the Programme Get Reading Right for Year 1 Toolkit 1 (RED) & Get Reading Right for Year 2 Toolkit 2 (BLUE)

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| **Targeted phonemes and graphemes** | **Rules and guidance**  | **Example words**  |
| s, m, c, t, g, p, a, o |  |  |
| r, l, d, b, f, h, i, u |  |  |
| v, w, y, z, j, n, k, e |  |  |
| The sounds /f/, /l/, /s/, /z/ and /k/ spelt **ff**, **ll**, **ss**, **zz** | The /f/, /l/, /s/, /z/ and /k/ sounds are usually spelt as **ff**, **ll**, **ss**, **zz** and **ck** if they come straight after a single vowel letter in short words. **Exceptions**: if, pal, us, bus, yes.  | off, well, miss, buzz |
| sh, ch, th, wh |  |  |
| ck, ng, qu, x |  | back, check, hang, bang, quack, quick, quiz, wax, flex, fox, box  |

**Year 2 - Toolkit 2 (BLUE)**

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| **Targeted Phonemes and Graphemes** | **Rules and guidance**  | **Example words**  |
| Targeted representations-**ee, ea, y, e** | The digraphs ai and oi are virtually never used at the end of English words.  | seed, lead, happy, she |
| Targeted representations-**i, igh, y, ie, i-e**  | **ay** and **oy** are used for those sounds at the end of words and at the end of syllables.  | wild, light, sky, pie, time  |
| Targeted representations-**o, oa, ow, o-e** |  | boat, grow, post, throne, stone, home |
|  Targeted representations-**a, ai, ay, a-e** |  | date, paid, stray, bake |
| Targeted representations-**oo, ew, ue, u-e** |  | drew, blew, rescue, clue true, Tuesday, zoo, soon |

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| **Spelling Patterns** | **Rules and guidance** **(non-statutory)** | **Example words** **(non-statutory)** |
| Adding **s** and **es** to words (plural of nouns and the third person singular of verbs)  | If the ending sounds like /s/ or /z/, it is spelt as **–s**. If the ending sounds like /ɪz/ and forms an extra syllable or ‘beat’ in the word, it is spelt as **–es**.  | cats, dogs, spends, rocks, thanks, catches  |
| Adding the endings –**ing**, –**ed** and –**er** to verbs where no change is needed to the root word  | **–ing** and **–er** always add an extra syllable to the word and **–ed** sometimes does. The past tense of some verbs may sound as if it ends in /ɪd/ (extra syllable), /d/ or /t/ (no extra syllable), but all these endings are spelt **–ed**. If the verb ends in two consonant letters (the same or different), the ending is simply added on.  | hunting, hunted, hunter, buzzing, buzzed, buzzer, jumping, jumped, jumper  |
| Adding –**er** and –**est** to adjectives where no change is needed to the root word  | As with verbs (see above), if the adjective ends in two consonant letters (the same or different), the ending is simply added on.  | grander, grandest, fresher, freshest, quicker, quickest  |
| Adding the prefix –**un**  | The prefix **un\_– \_**is added to the beginning of a word without any change to the spelling of the root word.  | unhappy, undo, unload, unfair, unlock  |
| Compound words  | Compound words are two words joined together. Each part of the longer word is spelt as it would be if it were on its own.  | football, playground, farmyard, bedroom, blackberry  |

Spelling - Year 2

**Revision of work from Years 1 as necessary**

As words with new targeted phonemes and graphemes are introduced, many previously taught sounds can be revised at the same time as these words will usually contain them.

**Targeted Phonemes and Graphemes**

These will be taught through the Programme Get Reading Right for Year 2 Toolkit 2 (BLUE)

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| **Targeted Phonemes and Graphemes** | **Rules and guidance** **(non-statutory)** | **Example words** **(non-statutory)** |
| Targeted representations-**ee, ea, y, e, ey** | The digraphs ai and oi are virtually never used at the end of English words.  | seed, lead, happy, she, monkey, key |
| Targeted representations-**i, igh, y, ie, i-e**  | **ay** and **oy** are used for those sounds at the end of words and at the end of syllables.  | wild, light, sky, pie, time  |
| Targeted representations-**o, oa, ow, o-e** |  | boat, grow, post, throne, stone, home |
|  Targeted representations-**a, ai, ay, a-e** |  | date, paid, stray, bake |
| Targeted representations-**oo, ew, ue, u-e** |  | drew, blew, rescue, clue true, Tuesday, zoo, soon |

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| **Spelling Patterns** | **Rules and guidance** **(non-statutory)** | **Example words** **(non-statutory)** |
| The /l/ or /l/ sound spelt **–le** at the end of words  | The **–le** spelling is the most common spelling for this sound at the end of words.  | table, apple, bottle, little, middle  |
| The /l/ or /l/ sound spelt –el at the end of words  | The **–el** spelling is much less common than **–le**. The **–el** spelling is used after **m**, **n**, **r**, **s**, **v**, **w** and more often than not after **s**.  | camel, tunnel, squirrel, travel, towel, tinsel  |
| Adding –ed, –ing, –er and –est to a root word ending in –y with a consonant before it  | The **y** is changed to **i** before **–ed**, **–er** and **–est** are added, but not before **–ing** as this would result in **ii**. The only ordinary words with **ii** are *skiing* and *taxiing*.  | copied, copier, happier, happiest, cried, replied …**but** copying, crying, replying  |
| Adding the endings –ing, –ed, –er, –est and –y to words ending in –e with a consonant before it  | The **–e** at the end of the root word is dropped before **–ing**, **–ed**, **–er**, **–est**, **–y** or any other suffix beginning with a vowel letter is added. **Exception**: *being.*  | hiking, hiked, hiker, nicer, nicest, shiny |
| The suffixes **–ment, -ness, -ful, -less and** **-ly**  | If a suffix starts with a consonant letter, it is added straight on to most root words without any change to the last letter of those words. Exceptions: (1) *argument* (2) root words ending in **–y** with a consonant before it but only if the root word has more than one syllable.  | enjoyment, sadness, careful, playful, hopeless, plainness (plain + ness), badly merriment, happiness, plentiful, penniless, happily  |
| Contractions | In contractions, the apostrophe shows where a letter or letters would be if the words were written in full (e.g. can’t – can not.)*It’s means it is (e.g. it’s raining)* or sometimes it has (e.g. *It’s* been raining), but *it’s* is never used for the possessive.  | can’t, didn’t, hasn’t, couldn’t, it’s, I’ll |
| The possessive apostrophe (singular nouns) |  | Megan’s, Ravi’s, the girl’s, the child’s, the man’s |
| Homophones and near homophones | It is important to know the differences in meaning between homophones | There/their/ they’reHear/here, quite/quiet, see/sea, bare/bear, one/won, sun/son, to/too/two, be/bee, blue/blew, night/knight  |

Spelling - Year 3

**Revision of work from Years 1 & 2 as necessary**

Pay special attention to the rules for adding suffixes.

**Targeted Phonemes and Graphemes**

These will be taught through the Programme Get Reading Right for Year 3 Toolkit 3 (ORANGE BOOK). Students will also revise targeted phonemes and graphemes from toolkit 2 (BLUE BOOK)

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| **Targeted Phonemes and Graphemes** | **Rules and guidance**  | **Example words**  |
| Targeted representations-**r, rr, wr** | The digraphs ai and oi are virtually never used at the end of English words.  | run, ribbon, carrot, ferry, wrote, written, wrap |
| Targeted representations-**oi, oy**  |  | oil, spoil, enjoy, decoy |
| Targeted representations-**ph, f, ff** |  | phone, dolphin, fool, frost, fluff, offend |
|  Targeted representations-**ow, ou** |  | crown, town, ours, south |
| Targeted representations-**c, ce, s, se, ss** |  | cent, twice, balance, fence, skill, seem, rinse, mouse, horse, dress, chess, bliss |
| Targeted representations-**u, oo, oul** |  | Pull, helpful, book, stood, could, would |
| Targeted representations-**ar, a** |  | car, start, park, arm, garden  |
| Targeted representations-**ir, er, ear, ur, or** |  | first, girl, her, fern, pearl, heard, burn, return, word, worst |
| Targeted representations-**or, au, aw, al, ore** |  | for, torn, forty, haul, pause, saw, straw, ball, walk, small, always, more, wore, explore |
| Targeted representations-**air, ear, are, ere** |  | air, chair, wear, pear, care, spare, where,  |
| Targeted representations-**j, dge, ge, g** | The letter j is never used for the /dz/ sound at the end of English words.At the end of a word, the /dz/ sound is spelt -dge straight after the short vowels sounds.After all other sounds, whether vowel or consanents, the /dz/ sound is spelt as –ge at the end of the word.In other positions in words, the /dz/ sound is oftern (but not always) spelts as g before e, i and y. The /dz/ sound is always spelt as j before a, o and u. | Badge, edge, bridge, dodge, fudgeAge, huge, change, charge, bulge, villageGem, giant, magic, giraffe, energy, gymJacket, jar, job, join, adjust |
| Targeted representations-**ch, tch, tu** |  | chop, chest, switch, fetch, future, adventure, structure, creature  |
| Targeted representations-**sh, ci, ti** |  | shout, shrink, relation, addition, motion, caption, subtraction |
| Targeted representations- **s, si** |  | measure, treasure, division, television, vision  |

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| **Spelling Patterns** | **Rules and guidance** **(non-statutory)** | **Example words** **(non-statutory)** |
| The / **I** / sound spelt y elsewhere than at the end of words | These words should be learnt as needed. | myth, gym, Egypt, pyramid, mystery |
| The /l/ or /el/ sound spelt –**al** at the end of words | Not many nouns end in –al, but many adjectives do | metal, pedal, capital, hospital, animal |
| Words ending -il | Not many of these words | pencil, fossil, nostril |
| Adding –**ing, -ed, -er, -est and –y,** to words of one syllable ending in a single consonant letter after a single vowel letter | The last consonant letter of the root word is doubled to keep the /ae/, /ɛ//ɪ/, /ɒ/, and /^/ sound (i.e. to keep the vowel ‘short’). **Exception**: The letter ‘x’ is never doubled: *mixing*, *mixed*, *boxer*, *sixes*. /æ/, / /, / /, / / /ʌ/  | patting, patted, humming, hummed, dropping, dropped, sadder, saddest, fatter, fattest, runner, runny  |
| More Prefixes**Un-****In-****Re-****Dis-****Mis-** | Most prefixes are added to the beginning of the root words without any changes in the spelling, but see in- belowLike un-, the prefix dis- and mis- have negative meanings.The prefix in- can mean both ‘not’ and ‘in’/ ‘into’. In the words given here it means not. | dis-disappoint, disagree, disobeymis-: misbehave, mislead, misspell (mis+spell)in-: inactive, incorrect |
| The suffix **- ly** | The suffix **–ly** is added to an adjective to form an adverb. The rules already learnt still apply. The suffix **–ly** starts with a consonant letter, so it is added straight on to most root words. **Exceptions:**

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| (1) If the root word ends in –y with a consonant letter before it, the **y\_ \_**is changed to **i\_**, but only if the root word has more than one syllable.  |  |
| (2) If the root word ends with **–le**, the **–le** is changed to **–ly**.  | gentl  |
| (3) If the root word ends with **–ic,** **–ally** is added rather than just **–ly**, except in the word *publicly*.  |  |
| (4) The words *truly*, *duly*, *wholly.*  |
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 | sadly, completely, usually (usual + ly), finally (final + ly), comically (comical + ly) happily, angrilygently, simply, humbly, noblybasically, frantically, dramatically |

Spelling-Year 4

**Revision of work from Years 3**

Pay special attention to the rules for adding suffixes.

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| **Requirements** | **Rules and guidance** **(non-statutory)** | **Example words** **(non-statutory)** |
| Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words of more than one syllable  | If the last syllable of a word is stressed and ends with one consonant letter which has just one vowel letter before it, the final consonant letter is doubled before any ending beginning with a vowel letter is added. The consonant letter is not doubled if the syllable is unstressed.  | forgetting, forgotten, beginning, beginner, prefer, preferred gardening, gardener, limiting, limited, limitation  |
| The /ʌ/ sound spelt **ou**  | These words should be learnt as needed.  | young, touch, double, trouble, country  |
| More prefixes | Before a root word starting with **I**, **in**- becomes **il**-.Before a root word starting with **m** or **p**, **in**- becomes **im**-.Before a root word starting with **r**, in- becomes **ir**-.**re**- means ‘again’ or ‘back’.**sub**- means ‘under’.**inter** **–** means ‘between’ or ‘among’.**super** **–** means ‘above’.**anti** **–** means ‘against’. **auto –** means ‘self’ or ‘own’. | Illegal, illegibleImmature, immortal, impossible, impatient, imperfectIrregular, irrelevant, irresponsible**re**-: redo, refresh, return, reappear, redecorate**sub**-: subdivide, subheading, submarine, submerge**inter**-: interact, intercity, international, interrelated (inter + related)**super**-: supermarket, superman, superstar**anti**-: antiseptic, anticlockwise, antisocial**auto**-: autobiography, autograph |
| The suffix **-ation** | The suffix **–ation** is added to verbs to form nouns. The rules already learnt still apply. | Information, adoration, sensation, preparation, admiration |
| Words with endings sounding like /ʒə/ or /t ʃ ə/ | The ending sounding like/ ʒə / is always spelt **–sure**.The ending sounding like or /tʃə/ is often spelt **– ture,** but check that the word is not a root word ending in the (t)ch with an we ending e.g. teacher, catcher, richer, stretcher | measure, treasure, pleasure, enclosure creature, furniture, picture, nature, adventure  |
| Endings which sound like **/**ʒən**/** | If the ending sounds like **/**ʒən**/**, it is spelt as **–sion**.  | division, invasion, confusion, decision, collision, television  |
| The suffix -**ous** | Sometimes the root word is obvious and the unusual rules apply for adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters.Sometimes there is no obvious root word.**-our** is changed to **–or** before **–ous** is added.A final ‘e’ of the root word must be kept if the /dʒ/ sound of ‘g’ is to be kept.If there is an ‘i:’ sound before the **–ous** ending, it is usually spelt **i**, but a few words have **e**. | poisonous, dangerous, mountainous, famous, varioustremendous, enormous, jealoushumorous, glamorous, vigorouscourageous, outrageousserious, obvious, curious, hideous, spontaneous, courteous |
| Endings which sound like /ʃən/ spelt **–tion**, **–sion**, **–ssion**, **–cian**  | Strictly speaking, the suffixes are **–ion** and **–ian**. Clues about whether to put **t, s, ss,** or **c** before these suffixes often come from the last letter or letters if the root word.**-tion** is the most common spelling. It is used if the root word ends in **t** or **te**.**-ssion** is used if the root word ends in **ss** or **-mit**.**-sion** is used if the root word ends in **d** or **se**.Exceptions: attend – attention, intend – intention**-cian** is used if the root word ends in **c** or **cs**. | invention, injection, action, hesitation, completion expression, discussion, confession, permission, admission expansion, extension, comprehension, tension musician, electrician, magician, politician, mathematician  |
| Words with the /k/ sound spelt ch (Greek in origin)  |  | scheme, chorus, chemist, echo, character  |
| Words with the /ʃ/ sound spelt ch (mostly French in origin)  |  | chef, chalet, machine, brochure  |
| Words ending with the /g/ sound spelt – gue and the /k/ sounds spelt –que (French in origin) |  | league, tongue, antique, unique  |
| Words with the /s/ sound spelt sc (Latin in origin)  | In the Latin words from which these words come, the Romans probably pronounced the **c** and the **k** as two sounds rather than one – /s/ /k/.  | science, scene, discipline, fascinate, crescent  |
| Words with the /eɪ/sound spelt ei, eigh, or ey /eɪ/  |  | vein, weigh, eight, neighbour, they, obey  |
| Possessive apostrophe with plural words | The apostrophe is placed after the plural form of the word; **-s** is not added if the plural already end **–s**, but is added if the plural does not end in **–s** (i.e. is an irregular plural – e.g. children’s). | Girls’, boys’, babies’, children’s, men’s, mice’s(**Note**: singular proper nouns ending in an s use the ‘s suffix e.g. Cyprus’s population |
| Homophones and the near-homophones |  | accept/except, affect/effect, ball/bawl, berry/bury, brake/break, fair/fare, grate/great, groan/grown, here/hear, heel/heal/he’ll, knot/not, mail/male, main/mane, meat/meet, medal/meddle, missed/mist, peace/piece, plain/plane, rain/rein/reign, scene/seen, weather/whether, whose/who’s |

Spelling-Year 5

**Revise previous work done in previous years as necessary**

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| **Requirements** | **Rules and guidance** **(non-statutory)** | **Example words** **(non-statutory)** |
| Endings which sound like /ʃəs/ spelt **–cious** or **–tious**. | Not many common words end like this. If the root word ends in **–ce**, the sound is usually spelt as **c** – e.g. *vice – vicious*, *grace – gracious*, *space – spacious*, *malice – malicious.* **Exception**: *anxious*. /ʃ/  | vicious, precious, conscious, delicious, malicious, suspicious ambitious, 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 the clue.Use **–ent** and **–ence/–ency** after soft **c** (/s/ sound), soft **g** 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. (/dʒ/ / /  | 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  |
| 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**. 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, legible dependable, comfortable, understandable, reasonable, enjoyable, possible/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, transferred reference, referee, preference, transference  |
| 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 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  |
| 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*).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.

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 | advice/advise device/devise licence/license practice/practise prophecy/prophesy farther: further 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?*) |

Spelling-Year 6

**Revise previous work done in previous years as necessary**

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| **Requirements** | **Rules and guidance** **(non-statutory)** | **Example words** **(non-statutory)** |
| Endings which sound like /ʃəs/ spelt **–cious** or **–tious**. | Not many common words end like this. If the root word ends in **–ce**, the sound is usually spelt as **c** – e.g. *vice – vicious*, *grace – gracious*, *space – spacious*, *malice – malicious.* **Exception**: *anxious*. /ʃ/  | vicious, precious, conscious, delicious, malicious, suspicious ambitious, 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 the clue.Use **–ent** and **–ence/–ency** after soft **c** (/s/ sound), soft **g** 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. (/dʒ/ / /  | 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  |
| 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**. 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, legible dependable, comfortable, understandable, reasonable, enjoyable, possible/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, transferred reference, 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  |
| 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 rough, tough, enough cough though, although, dough through thorough, borough plough, 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  |
| 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*).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.

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 | advice/advise device/devise licence/license practice/practise prophecy/prophesy farther: further 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?*) |