



## SUFFIX SPELLING CHANGES – RULE CHARTS

An increased awareness of phonetic and structural patterns in words develops spelling consciousness, thereby leading to improved encoding accuracy. Visual learners tend to be better spellers since they remember how words look. Therefore, visual learners are more apt to spell words with suffixes correctly. Patterns become imbedded in visual memory as a reader sees them repeatedly over a period of time. Auditory or kinesthetic learners are more dependent on rules and instruction. They can become good spellers, but it takes more effort.

In an attempt to determine the value of phonological and structural algorithms for spelling, Stanford University conducted a computerized study of more than 17,000 words. The findings stated that nearly 50 percent of the words were spelled correctly according to the defined algorithms. Another 37 percent had an error in only one syllable. Less than 3 percent of the words had 3 or more errors. These figures support that structural and phonetic generalizations can be of value in spelling programs.

Rules are worth teaching if the generalization applies to many words and there are few exceptions. At the top of the list of rules meeting these criteria are the suffix spelling change rules. Data supports that these are among the most consistent English spelling patterns.

### TEACH RULES & PROVIDE PLENTIFUL DRILL FOR APPLYING THEM

These rules should be taught one at a time in the order listed. Rule charts are provided. Post them as the rules are introduced. Then provide students with ample drill applying the concepts. Drill cards or assignments may be tedious, but they are effective. Like multiplication tables, these rules must be memorized, and it is application practice that leads to mastery.

- 1. Words ending with s, x, z, ch, or sh, add -es**  
dress dresses    box boxes    buzz buzzes    church churches    wish wishes
- 2. Words ending in y preceded by a consonant, change the y to i if suffix begins with e**  
baby babies    try tries tried trying    key keys    play plays played playing
- 3. Words ending with a silent e, drop the e if suffix begins with a vowel**  
nice nicer nicest nicely    scare scares scared scaring scary
- 4. Words ending in one vowel followed by one consonant, double the final consonant if suffix begins with a vowel**  
chat chats chatted chatting chatter chatty

By teaching these rules to your students, you set expectations for spelling accuracy. Since young students are tuned in to phonetic elements of words, these rules can be taught as early as second grade. With older students, some phonics review may be needed. One of the best ways to ensure that students remember and apply the rules is to add suffixes to spelling words. Do this on practice exercises and on spelling tests.

This free product contains the 4 rule charts. The full product (350 Suffix Spelling Changes – Rule Charts & Drill Cards) contains the rule charts and 30 student cards (6 for rule 1, 12 for rule 2, 12 for rules 3/4) with answer keys.

## RULE 1

Words ending with  
***s, x, z, ch, or sh,***  
add ***-es***

dress  dresses      miss  misses

box  boxes      buzz  buzzes

church  churches      wish  wishes

## RULE 2

Words ending in *y*  
preceded by a **consonant**,  
change the *y* to *i* if suffix  
**begins with e**

baby   babies     try   tries   tried   triing  
keyu   keys     play   plas   plaed   plaiing

## RULE 3

Words ending with a **silent e**,  
drop the **e** if suffix  
**begins with a vowel**

nicee nicere niceste nicelye

livee livese livede livinge livelye

scaree scarese scarede scaringe scary

## RULE 4

Words ending in **one vowel**  
followed by **one consonant**,  
double the final consonant  
if suffix **begins with a vowel**

wet    wets    wetting    wetter    wettest

chat    chats    chatted    chatter    chatty