

Test yourself on commonly misspelled words

See if you can choose the correct words to fill the gaps in the following sentences.

- Katie bumped into her friend Sue.
a. accidentally b. accidently
- Mick a grade A in his chemistry exam.
a. achieved b. acheived
- He needs to some driving experience.
a. aquire b. acquire
- Sue often dresses in the most fashions.
a. bizarre b. bizare
- Try not to your teacher when she's talking.
a. interrupt b. interupt
- She entered for an award in the under-tens age
a. catagory b. category
- The weather has been very today.
a. changeable b. changable
- The criminal had three offences on the same day.
a. comitted b. committed
- I shall be going to Sally's party.
a. definitely b. definately
- The boy didn't have a very good record.
a. discipline b. disipline
- Children had a very miserable working in the mines.
a. existance b. existence
- Sammy has lots of of working in a shop.
a. experience b. experiance
- I've made a decision about the decor.
a. finaly b. finally
- We're going on a holiday this year.
a. foreign b. forein
- It took Flora seconds to spot the answer.
a. fourty b. forty
- The criminal complained that the officer had him.
a. harrassed b. harassed
- Sue is of medium but looks taller.
a. height b. hight
- My of foreign languages became obvious during the trip.
a. ignorence b. ignorance
- Masie has moved out of her parents' home and is now quite
a. independent b. independant
- Grandma finds her sewing machine quite
a. indispensable b. indespensable
- Hugo showed a lot of when tackling the problem.
a. intelligence b. intelligance
- Dave was a boy who was always playing pranks.
a. mischievous b. mischievious
- She was early for school that day which was a very rare
a. occurence b. occurrence
- Swimming is Shaun's favourite
a. pastime b. passtime
- She keeps her most valuable in a locked drawer.
a. possessions b. posessions
- Mrs Atkins the matter to her boss.
a. refered b. referred
- Tick the box for the right answer.
a. revalent b. relevant
- We ate at an expensive last night.
a. restaurant b. restaraunt
- The latest version all previous models.
a. supercedes b. supersedes
- My of chemistry is very limited.
a. knowledge b. knowlege

ANSWER KEY ON BACK PAGE

Basic Rules For Better Spelling

1. **Short-Vowel Rule:** When one-syllable words have a vowel in the middle, the vowel usually has a short sound: Examples: cat, dog, man, hat, mom, dad, got. If the letter after the vowel is *f, l, or s*, this letter is often doubled. Examples: staff, ball, pass.
2. **Two-Vowels Together:** When two vowels are next to each other, the first vowel is usually long (the sound is the same as the sound of the letter) and the second vowel is silent. Examples: meat, seat, plain, rain, goat, road, lie, pie.
3. **"Vowel-Consonant- e" Pattern:** When a short word, or the last syllable of a longer word, ends in this pattern: **vowel--consonant--e**, the first vowel is usually long and the **"e"** is silent. Examples: place, cake, mice, vote, mute.
4. **Y as a long i:** The letter **"y"** makes the long sound of **"i"** when it comes at the end of a short word that has no other vowel. Examples: cry, try, my, fly, by, hi.
5. **Y as a long e:** When **"y"** or **"ey"** ends a word in an unaccented syllable, the **"y"** has the long sound of **"e"**. Examples: money, honey, many, key, funny.
6. **I before E:** Write **"i"** before **"e"** when the sound is long **"e"** except after the letter **"c."** Examples: relieve, relief, reprieve. Notice the change when there is a **"c"** preceding the **"ie"**: receipt, receive, ceiling, deceive, conceive.
7. **E before I:** Write **"e"** before **"i"** when the sound is long **"a"**. Examples: weight, freight, reign.
8. **Oi or Oy:** Use **"oi"** in the middle of a word and use **"oy"** at the end of a word. Examples: boil, soil, toil, boy, toy.
9. **Ou or Ow:** Use **"ou"** in the middle of a word and use **"ow"** at the end of words other than those that end in **"n"** or **"d."** Examples: mouse, house, found, mount, borrow, row, throw, crow.
10. **Double Consonants:** When b, d, g, m, n, or p appear after a short vowel in a word with two syllables, double the consonant: b, d, g, m, n, or p. Examples: rabbit, manner, dagger, banner, drummer.
11. **The "ch" sound:** At the beginning of a word, use **"ch."** At the end of a word, use **"tch."** When the **"ch"** sound is followed by **"ure"** or **"ion,"** use **"t."** Examples: choose, champ, watch, catch, picture, rapture.
12. **Take Your Words Apart:** Break down your words into their component parts. For example, look at the synonym for "rivalry," which is "competition." Why is it spelled **"competition"** rather than **"compitition?"**

A **"competition"** is a petition of two or more people for the same thing; they seek the same objective. You get the correct spelling by dividing the word into its two parts: **com-petition**.
13. **Identify Prefixes:** A prefix is a letter or group of letters at the beginning of a word. When a word has a prefix, imagine that there is a hyphen between the word and the prefix, and you will generally see the correct spelling. **"Dissolve"** consists of **dis-solve**. **"Disappear"** consists of **dis-appear**. So, a word that is combined with the prefix **dis** is spelled with **ss** if the root word originally begins with **s**, but with a single **s** if it begins with any other letter. Examples: dis-satisfy, dis-similar, dis-appoint, dis-believe, dis-locate, dis-regard, mis-step,

mis-understand, over-rated, over-extend, un-natural, un-necessary, un-interesting, under-rate, under-estimate.

14. **Identify Suffixes:** When a word has a suffix (a letter or group of letters at the end), you can generally apply a test similar to the prefix test. Imagine a hyphen between the word and the suffix; double the letter if the word ends and the suffix begins with the same sound; but do not double when the two letters are different. Examples: actual-ly, drunken-ness, soul-less, sincere-ly, clever-ness, heart-less.
15. **Double Consonants Before Suffixes—Part 1:** When a monosyllable (a word of one syllable) ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, you double the consonant before adding “ing”, “ed”, “er”, “est.” Examples: star, star-ring; tap, tap-ped; wrap, wrap-per; big, big-gest.
16. **Double Consonants Before Suffixes—Part 2:** When a word of more than one syllable ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, and when the accent is on the last syllable, you double the consonant before adding **ing, ed, er, est**. Examples: concur, concur-ring; commit, commit-ted; forbid, forbid-den; compel, compel-ling.

If you remember Rules and , you will see why the following words are spelled with a single instead of a double consonant: beat, beat-ing; heat, heat-er; conquer, conquer-ing, soft, soft-est. “Beat” and “hear” end in a single consonant, but the consonant follows two vowels instead of a single vowel; “conquer” does not have the accent on the last syllable; “soft” ends in two consonants.

17. **Drop the “E”:** When a word ends in a consonant followed by a silent “e”, drop the “e” before you add “ing.” Examples: bribe, brib-ing; drive, driv-ing; save, sav-ing; urge, urg-ing.
18. **Keep the “Y” Before Adding ING:** When a word ends in “y” preceded by a consonant, keep the “y” before adding ing, but change the “y” to “i” before adding “es” or “ed”. Examples: cry, cry-ing, cr-ies, cri-ed; reply, reply-ing, repl-ies, repl-ied.
19. **Know the “Sedes” and the “Ceeds”:** Only *one* words ends in **sedes**: supersede. Only *three* words end in **ceed**: exceed, proceed, succeed. *All other* words ending with this pronunciation use **cede**; concede, precede, recede, etc.
20. **“ible” vs “able”**
This rule can help you decide the correct spelling. It works most (but not all!) of the time. If you remove **-able** from a word, you are left with a **complete** word. If you remove **-ible** from a word, you are **not left with a complete** word (note that *accessible, contemptible, digestible, flexible* and *suggestible* above are among the exceptions to this rule).

21. **Learn Homophones:** Common homophones (words sounding the same) are listed below that are commonly misused. Learn their meanings.

accept—except
ail—ale
aisle—isle
alter—altar
bail—bale
be—bee
bear—bare
beaux—bow
been—bin
blue—blew
born—borne
bough—bow

brewed—brood
buy—bye
capital—capitol
cash—cache
ceiling—sealing
cent—sent
cereal—serial
choose—chews
coarse—course
colonel—kernel
compliment—complement
council—counsel

dew—due
eight—ate
elicit—illicit
eye—I
flour—flower
fore—four—for
forth—fourth
herd—heard
horse—hoarse
hour—our
in—inn
lain—lane

lean—lien
led—lead
lint—lent
loan—lone
mail—male
might—mite
mint—meant
naval—navel
night—knight
not—knot
one—won
ought—aught

principal—principle
recede—reseed
red—read
right—rite
sail—sale
sight—site—cite

so—sew
stationary—stationery
steak—stake
straight—strait
there—their—they're
threw—through

tied—tide
to—too—two
vary—very
ware—where—wear
wave—waive
weather—whether

weigh—way
weight—wait
win—when
write—right
wry—rye

Answer Key

1. a	2. a	3. b	4. a	5. a	6. b	7. a	8. b	9. a	10. a
11. b	12. a	13. b	14. a	15. b	16. b	17. a	18. b	19. a	20. a
21. a	22. a	23. b	24. a	25. a	26. b	27. b	28. a	29. b	30. a