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# SPELLING WORKS!

by Jim Halverson



S C H O L A S T I C  
**PROFESSIONAL BOOKS**

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With heartfelt thanks to my many mentors,  
to my colleagues and students at Saint Ann's School,  
to my muse and editor Wendy Murray,  
and, especially, to Anita and Leif.

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# INTRODUCTION



book to help students learn English orthography—what a difficult thing to create! Or so I felt as I set out to write this book. I wanted to provide fellow teachers with the techniques that I've used successfully in the classroom to teach spelling—the same ones, essentially, that I quite confidently used in my book *Grammar*

*Works*. But then came the flood of questions. Where do I begin? How can my approach, built on the premise that learning should be intriguing and fun if it is to be lasting, be adapted to the teaching of spelling? And how can I make my book appeal both to educators who believe that spelling should be taught by word recognition alone as well as to those who maintain that only by learning the sounds of vowels and consonants can children become competent spellers?

Finally, I had to admit to myself what every veteran teacher of any of the language arts has had to admit: There is no one *right* way to teach spelling. I resolved, then, to write a book that shares what has worked for me. Looking back on more than three decades of my own teaching, I recognized that there are some methods that have been effective for most students. And these are the very approaches that were especially helpful to the anxious spellers—those who are not able to retain the spelling of words, who work and work to get a perfect score on the spelling quiz and then misspell the same words a day or two later in their own writing. We know well, because many of us were there ourselves once, that that group comprises a larger number of our students than we would wish. We can't magically make spelling an easy skill to learn, but perhaps we can find ways to provide structure to the learning of orthography, ways to simplify the process of learning by breaking up words into their component parts and by pointing out the patterns that do exist.

The technique of breaking longer words up into their component roots and affixes is actually a key theme in many of the units of this book. It is much easier for students to remember how to spell a hard word like *definitely*, for example, if they think of it as the word *finite* plus the prefix *de-* and the suffix *-ly*.



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The lessons in this book are designed to instruct and, wherever possible, to amuse and entice. English spelling, except for those gifted with photographic memories, is never easy for students; since it is a mechanical skill, those students for whom it is difficult should be encouraged rather than penalized.

After all, the bad spellers are in good company—George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Thomas Edison, to name but a few very successful individuals. Clearly, we should put verbal and expository skills ahead of the mechanical ones, and yet we want to help our students write a polished story or essay and not just an expressive one. Thus the exercises here are, as often as I could make them, both spelling exercises and stories that are fun to read, and the review exercises are “secret codes” and mazes. If the process of spelling is taught in the context of something enjoyable, then it has a better chance of becoming a welcome challenge for students and something they readily attend to when writing.



## KEY FEATURES OF THIS BOOK

### **Interactive Instruction**

The presentation of spelling concepts is done with amusing teasers, engaging questions, step-by-step explanations, and continual review. To show that spelling is a part of a larger language picture, there are interesting sidelights about word origins and the history of the language.

### **Spelling as a Part of Literature**

Wherever possible, the exercises in a unit comprise an ongoing story. This not only adds interest to the exercises but puts the study of spelling into its proper context as a part of the literary process.

### **Reviews in Game Form**

Every unit concludes with at least one and usually two reviews that seem like games—secret codes to break, puzzles, and mazes. For students who need a challenge, I have included “Stingers” beginning on pages 113. These are lists of difficult-to-spell words that relate to the respective units.

### **Individual or Group Use**

Model words are always provided, and the step-by-step instruction often lets students discover spelling principles on their own. This approach makes it possible for most of the units to be used for individual self-instruction as well as for the entire group.

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## TEACHER-TO-TEACHER

### **Get a feel for the book as a whole.**

The units cover a broad range of spelling concepts that vary considerably in difficulty.

Acquaint yourself with the topics, noting which will be appropriate for your group, and notice also that some of the topics extend over

more than one unit. The first four units, for example, all develop the idea of adding affixes to root words; the four units on possessives, contractions, and homophones all work together developmentally.



### **Supplement the units with enrichment exercises.**

As the material to the teacher that begins each unit often notes, many students need constant encouragement and review to become competent spellers. Lead into these units with some of the suggested oral work, then give your students a chance to apply their knowledge by working the spelling concepts into their own writing.

### **Keep in mind that good spelling is not an end in itself.**

As a writer and teacher of writing, I would love to think that the subject of this book—good spelling—is *not* high on your list of priorities as an English teacher. Yes, use the lessons you find here to help your students learn to become better spellers, but when they continue to have problems with spelling—as most of us do!—let them know that the joy of telling a good story or writing a good report, even if that piece of writing has spelling errors, is the first priority. Help them to learn that writing is fun, and they will want to learn to spell.



# ROOT WORDS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES



## This Unit Teaches Students

- to break words down into root words, prefixes, and suffixes
- to spell longer words formed with root words and affixes

## Overview

This unit helps students spell words that are comprised of root words and affixes. After they are introduced to the concepts of root words, prefixes, and suffixes, students do exercises in which, first, they build longer words by adding affixes to root words, and second, they separate longer words into their component parts.

The general rule for adding affixes is then presented: Do not change the root word when adding a prefix or suffix—*mis-* + *spell* = *misspell*. (The exceptions to this rule—the doubling rule, the final *y* and final *e* rules—are covered in later units.) Exercises, including one that tells a story of a girl whose garden is overrun with pests, then ask the students to apply this rule.

The unit ends with a playful word building game and a spelling maze that acts as a final review.

## Teaching Notes

When students set out to learn the spelling of longer words, they often simply memorize the order of the letters, never realizing that in many cases the task could be made easier by breaking the words down into their composite parts. Use this unit to introduce the idea of adding affixes to root words. This will give your students a good foundation for the harder rules that follow—the doubling rule, the final *y* rule, and the final *e* rule.

A good way to begin is by writing a word like *self* on the board and then asking the students to think of other words that can be built from it—e.g., *selfish*, *unselfish*, *unselfishly*. Then you can go the other way and put a long composite word on the board and have the students take it apart: *undoubtedly* = *un+doubt+ed+ly*.

At the end of the unit, you can combine spelling and vocabulary work in a fun way by having the students coin their own funny words by adding affixes to root words. For instance: *Nonsleepover*—What really happens when you have your best friend stay for the night.

# ROOT WORDS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES



Can you add two letters to the word *kind* and turn it into a word that means *not kind*?

Of course you can! Simply place the letters *un-* at the beginning of the word *kind*, and you have *unkind*.



## What's It All About?

In English we often add letters to a **root word** like *kind* to make a new word or to make a different form of the word—like *kindness*. These added letters are called **affixes**. The most common affix in English is the letter *s*, because we add it to nouns to make them plural: one pencil becomes more than one pencil when we make it *pencils*.

The words *friend*, *trust*, and *feed* in the list below are **root words**, and the letters that we add to them are **affixes**. If an affix is added to the *beginning* of a root word, it is known as a **prefix**—*un-*, *mis-*, and *under-*. If an affix is added to the *end* of a word, it is called a **suffix**—*-ly*, *-ful*, and *-ing*.

This unit is going to help you recognize root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Once you can break a word down into its basic parts, you will have an easier time spelling longer words that are made up of root words and affixes.

### Model Words

friend	friendly	unfriendly
trust	trusting	mistrustful
feed	feeder	underfeeding



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## Let's Try It

Add the affixes to the root words. Be careful to notice if the letters that you add are a prefix or a suffix. Write the new words that you have formed in the spaces provided.

**Example:**    **Root word:** *think*  
                  **Prefix:**        *un-*  
                  **Suffix:**        *-able*    *unthinkable*  
                  **New Word:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Root word:**    *grace*  
   **Suffix:**        *-ful*  
   **New word:**    \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Root word:**    *fit*  
   **Prefix:**        *mis-*  
   **New word:**    \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Root word:**    *end*  
   **Prefix:**        *un-*  
   **Suffix:**        *-ing*  
   **New word:**    \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Root word:**    *open*  
   **Prefix:**        *re-*  
   **Suffix:**        *-ed*  
   **New word:**    \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Root word:**    *manage*  
   **Prefix:**        *mis-*  
   **Suffix:**        *-ment*  
   **New word:**    \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Root word:**    *look*  
   **Prefix:**        *over-*  
   **Suffix:**        *-ing*  
   **New word:**    \_\_\_\_\_

7. **Root word:**    *formal*  
   **Prefix:**        *in-*  
   **Suffix:**        *-ly*  
   **New word:**    \_\_\_\_\_



### DID YOU KNOW?

The root word of *affix*, *prefix*, and *suffix* is the word *fix*. This word has come to mean *repair* in recent times, but it originally came from Old English and Latin words that meant *to fasten*. We still use this meaning when we “fix a sticker to the car window” or when we use a word like *prefix*, literally to “fasten before.”

## Let's Try More

In this exercise, you will find longer words made up of root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Identify each part of the word in the spaces provided. Be careful with the last few words: They're hard ones!

1. **useless:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **poorly:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **preview:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **trying:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

5. **unfairness:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **disagreeable:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

7. **replaying:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

**Example: Unsingable:**

Root word: **sing**

Prefix: **un-**

Suffix: **-able**

8. **understatement:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

9. **uncertainty:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

10. **misspelling:**

Root word: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

Suffix: \_\_\_\_\_

There are four prefixes, eight root words, and seven suffixes in the boldface words in this sentence. Can you find them all?

(see answer key to check)

The **unfriendly**, **impish** actor **mistrusted** **demanding** directors and **overgrown**, **hyperactive** plants.



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## Applying Your Knowledge

The last exercise ended with a very frequently misspelled word—the word *misspell* itself. Many people leave out one *s* in this word, because they don't realize that they are adding the common prefix *mis-* (not *mi-*) to the root word *spell*. Similarly, they often omit one of the *l*'s in a word like *totally*—root word *total* plus the suffix *-ly*.

Now that you have practiced breaking down words into root words, prefixes, and suffixes, you can apply your knowledge to the spelling of difficult words like *misspell*.

By now you probably have discovered the general rule for adding prefixes and suffixes:

When adding prefixes and suffixes to a root word, do not change the spelling of the root word.

As you will see in the next few units of this book, this rule has quite a few exceptions. (You were expecting to hear that, weren't you? Yes, the landscape of English spelling is unfortunately littered with exceptions.) But in this case, the exceptions are quite logical and form their own rules—the final *y* rule, the doubling rule, and the final *e* rule. The exercises that follow do not include any of these exceptions.

## Let's Practice

Combine the root words, prefixes, and suffixes to form correctly spelled words.

**Example:** total + -ly

totally

1. mild + -ness
2. mis- + lead
3. un- + reach + -able
4. real + -ly
5. open + -ness
6. usual + -ly
7. im- + mature
8. dis- + satisfaction
9. pre- + school + -er
10. un + natural + -ly

---

## Challenge

Each of the sentences below has two underlined words. One of these words is spelled correctly, and the other is misspelled. (These are words that often cause spelling problems, even for good spellers.) Use your knowledge of adding prefixes and suffixes to root words to find the misspelled words. Write the correct spelling above the misspelled words.

**Helpful hints:** the spelling errors are always the result of adding a prefix or suffix incorrectly. The prefixes and suffixes used in the exercise include these: *dis-*, *-er*, *-less*, *-ly*, *-ness*, *over-*, *un-*, *under-*.

totally

**Example:** Janet was breathless and ~~totaly~~ exhausted.

1. Janet was a gardener, but her garden was overun with pests.
2. The lovely greeness of her plants had turned to a sickly brownness.
3. The problem had gone unnoticed for days, but with a scary suddeness, it had appeared.
4. Janet had to discover what was causing the thinness of her celery stalks and the unnatural spots on her beans.
5. Finaly, she spotted the cause: there were bright red caterpillars crawling blissfully across the leaves of her lettuce.
6. She cried out, "You have practicaly ruined my garden, you naughty and unnatural bugs!"
7. "You have underrated my meaness if you think I am going to let you keep dining," she continued, as if the caterpillars could understand her.

- 
8. But the caterpillars were so beautifully marked—glistening red with blue spots down their backs—that Janet's dissatisfaction soon turned to appreciation.
  9. Maybe it was unnecessary to kill the caterpillars. Ideally, she thought, she could save her vegetables and the beautiful bugs too.
  10. Thus with admirable stubbornness, she carefully picked off every caterpillar by hand and put it into a box full of lettuce leaves.
  11. A month later as Janet skillfully tended her garden, she could barely withhold her pride: her gorgeous, thriving garden was now even more beautiful with so many red and blue butterflies fluttering amongst the summer squash and the basil.



## Fun With Affixes



### Coining Words

When scientists, inventors, advertisers, and poets find that they want a word that doesn't exist in English, they make one up, a process that is known as "coining words." Often a coined word is made up of a known root word plus new affixes.

You can have fun coining your own words. Here are some examples of words that might be added to our language.



- miscursive** Writing that is purposely illegible so that spelling errors can be concealed.
- nonsleepover** What really happens when you have your best friend stay for the night.
- bescreech** Act of making people scream "Stop!" as when fingernails are dragged down a chalkboard.
- plotborers** People who bore you into a stupor by telling you every detail of the movie they saw last night.

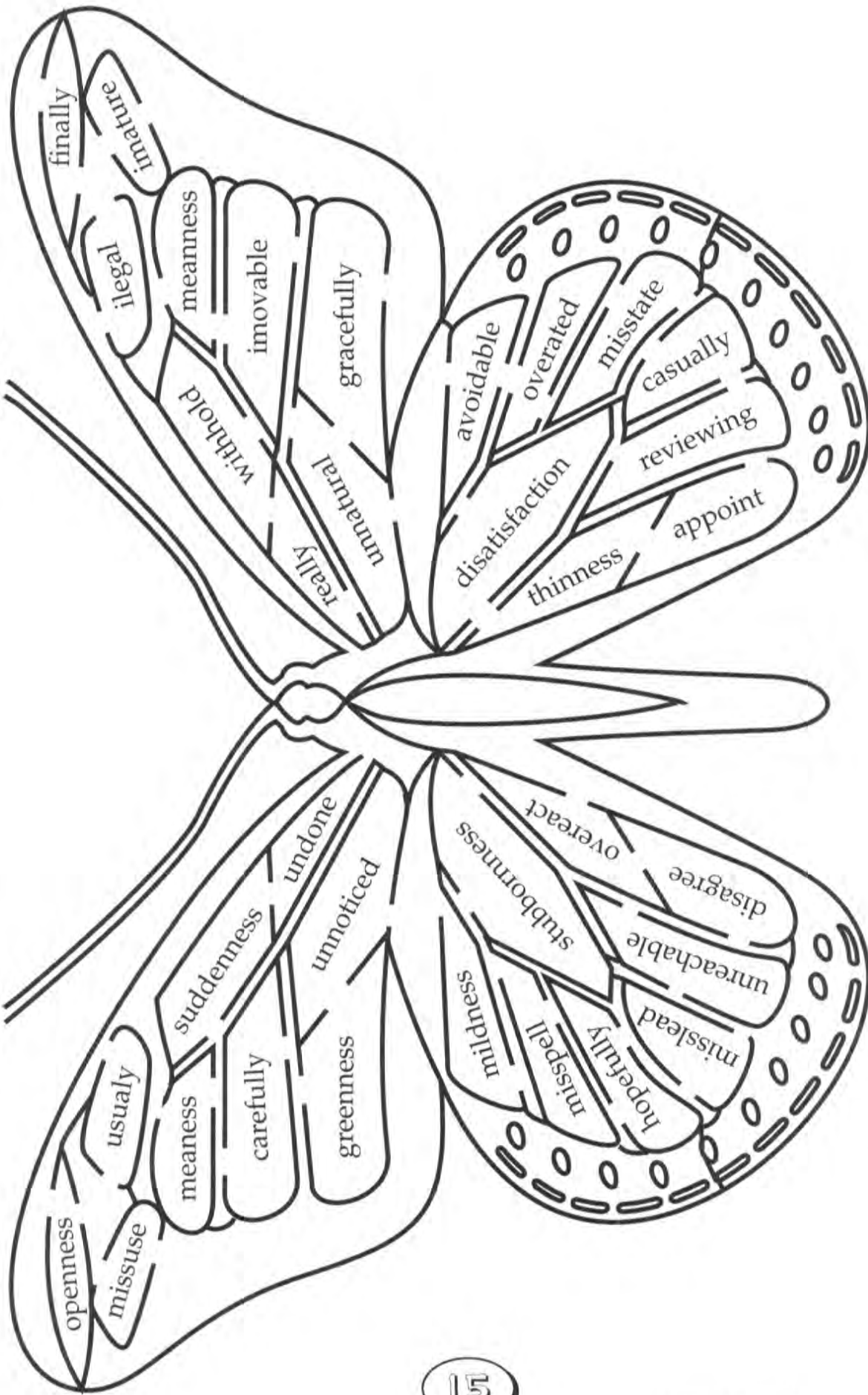


Now try to make up some of your own. Think about root words that are fun—*kiss*, *eat*, *school*, *friend*—and add your own imaginative prefixes and suffixes—and even more imaginative definitions!



FINISH

START



**Root Words, Prefixes, and Suffixes:** Find the path to the finish by passing only through correctly spelled words. The shortest path goes through nineteen correct spellings, but as a bonus, see if you can find five others!

## THE DOUBLING RULE FOR ONE-SYLLABLE WORDS

### This Unit Teaches Students

- when and when not to double the final consonant of one-syllable words when adding suffixes

### Overview

After an introduction that demonstrates how double letters affect the pronunciation of preceding vowels, the unit reviews the concepts of root words and affixes. The doubling rule is then presented, and students apply their understanding in a series of exercises.

The unit concludes with two reviews, an amusing story where students find and correct misspellings and a spelling maze.

### Teaching Notes

This unit and the two that follow extend the concept introduced in the first unit—adding affixes to root words. Like the final *e* and final *y* rules, the doubling rule presents an exception to the general rule of adding affixes. Instead of keeping the root word the same, now students must spot cases when they double its final consonant before adding a suffix.

The unit stresses the reason why we must double the final consonant—to maintain the root word's short-vowel pronunciation. Introduce this concept to students by writing a few pairs of words on the board—*later* and *latter* or *filing* and *filling*—that illustrate the need for the double letter. When students *hear* the need for the double consonants, they are much more likely to remember and apply the rule.





# THE DOUBLING RULE FOR ONE-SYLLABLE WORDS



Lucinda wrote: "I'm so hungry I could eat a huge diner!"

## What's It All About?

Do you think that Lucinda meant what she wrote? She probably meant that she planned to eat a huge *dinner*. That extra *n* in *dinner* changes both the sound of the word and its meaning.

Many words look the same except that one has a **double letter**—that is, a letter that is repeated. For instance, if you say aloud each of the pairs of words below, you will notice that the

first word has a long vowel sound. But what happens when the consonant is doubled? That's right—that first long vowel becomes a short vowel.

### Model Words

diner	dinner	hater	hatter
robed	robbed	fury	furry

When you see a double consonant—*dinner*, *summer*, *summer*—that's a sign to pronounce the vowel before the double letters with a short vowel sound.

Usually, any set of two consonants after a single vowel indicates a short vowel sound:

back      melt      turn      last

This unit will help you decide when to double letters when adding **suffixes** to **root words**. First, then, let's review the idea of building words with **root words** and **affixes**.

DID  
YOU  
KNOW?

No Canadian provinces contain double consonants in their names, but seven states in the United States do. In fact, two of these states have two sets of double consonants, and one state has three! How many of these states can you think of? (Answers below.)

Answers: Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts (2), Mississippi (3), Missouri, Pennsylvania, Tennessee (2)

## Root Words and Affixes

Look at these words:

**sing**ing  
unc**lear**

walk**ed**  
un**think**able

The **root word** is the part of the word printed in **boldface** type. In English we build on a root word by adding letters before or after it. These affixes are called **prefixes** when they come before the root word and **suffixes** when they follow the root word.

For instance, here is a breakdown of the word *unreadable*:

**prefix** : *un-*  
**root word**: *read*  
**suffix**: *-able*

Sometimes the root word changes its spelling when we add a suffix in order to help us pronounce the new word correctly.

### The Doubling Rule for One-Syllable Words

You double the final consonant of a root word when you add a suffix if:

- A. the root word ends in a *single vowel* followed by a *single consonant*—a word like *put* or *thin* and
- B. the suffix begins with a vowel, like *-ing*, *-ed*, or *-y*.



## WORD WATCH

There is a single English word that means *correct spelling*—the word *orthography*. Its first part—*ortho*—comes from the Greek

word *orthos*, which means *straight* or *right*. The last

part—*graphy*—comes from the

Greek *graphos*, *something written*.

*Cacography*, the opposite of *orthography*, is an infrequently used word

meaning *incorrect spelling*.

This was the case with the model words at the beginning of this unit. The root word *rob* adds another *b* when we add the suffix *-ed*, and the root word *fur* adds another *r* when we add the suffix *-y*. If we didn't add this extra consonant, we would end up with not just another pronunciation but with an entirely different word—*fury*, not *furry*.

The words *robber* and *furry* follow **the doubling rule**. Note that the root word must end with just **one vowel** and **one consonant**. A word like *walk* that ends with two consonants does not double the final *k* when you add *-ed*: *walked*. And a word like *keep* does not double the final *p* when you add *-ing*: *keeping*.

Also, the suffix must start with a vowel, not a consonant. For example, *red* doubles the final *d* before *-er* (*redder*) but not before *-ness* (*redness*).

**Hint:** the letter *y* is a vowel when it is pronounced like long *i* or long *e* as in the words *lucky* (*luck—ee*) or *python* (*pie—thon*).

---

## Let's Try It

I. Circle the root words that would need a double letter if you added the suffix *-ing*.

Example: a) feed    b) fit    c) find    d) pat

- 1) hit                      2) run                      3) sing  
4) plan                    5) fail                      6) turn  
7) bet                      8) beat                      9) spin  
10) rot

---

### EXCEPTIONS

- ➔ A single final *x* is not doubled: *mix* becomes *mixed* or *mixing*.
- ➔ The single final *-s* in *bus* is not doubled: *bus* becomes *busing*.
- ➔ Other final consonants that are not doubled: *-c, -h, -k, -j, -q, -v, -w*.
- ➔ The *u* of the *qu* combination does not act like a vowel: *quit* becomes *quitting*.

Note: These exceptions do not appear on this page.

---

II. In each of the sentences below there is a blank space for you to write a correctly spelled word. The root word and the suffix are given to you in parentheses. You must decide if you should double the final consonant.

Example: Carlos didn't really care if he was always a (win/-er) winner.

1. Carlos was not a fast (run/-er) \_\_\_\_\_, but he was an honest (think/-er) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When asked to race, he said, "No, I (stop/-ed) \_\_\_\_\_ racing when I began (feel/-ing) \_\_\_\_\_ silly about always losing."
3. His friends replied, "We enjoy (beat/-ing) \_\_\_\_\_ you, but we would never try to make you feel (fun/-y) \_\_\_\_\_ about losing."
4. "Carlos," they said, "you don't run (bad/-ly) \_\_\_\_\_, and wouldn't you feel (sad/-er) \_\_\_\_\_ about just watching us race than about losing?"
5. "Okay, just (sit/-ing) \_\_\_\_\_ here and watching you race isn't fun," said Carlos. Then laughing, he started running and yelled, "Whoever doesn't beat me is a (rot/-en) \_\_\_\_\_ egg!"

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## MEMORY TRICK

To help you to remember when a consonant should be doubled, just think about the pronunciation of the word: for example, *riding* (long i) and *ridding* (short i).

**III.** Circle the word which is spelled in a way that makes the sentence sensible.

1. I am going to eat my (diner, dinner) at six o'clock.
2. A person who loves money and won't spend it is a (misser, miser).
3. At first Willy was (scared, scarred) on the roller coaster ride, but then he thought it was fun.
4. The naughty girl liked to bash old cans together because she knew her mother hated their (tiny, tinny) sound.
5. Someone who makes sun bonnets could be called a (hatter, hater).



Is the actress starring or staring in the movie?

---

## Fun With Doubling

In the paragraph below, there are spelling errors that make many of the sentences read strangely. These errors are all from misuse of the doubling rule. Underline the words that are misspelled.

The sun was shinning and it was cool and breezy for the big baseball game. But some of the fans were hotter than a bowl of red peppers because of the way their team was playing.

"Holly cow," whinned one fan in a tatered old sweatshirt, "they can't do anything right today."

"I know!" cried his wife who was starring angrily at the manager. "When they're bating, they swing at everything, and when they're running the basses, they seem to be just lopping along as if they didn't want to score."

A moment latter, another fan raged in a biter, furious tone, "Look at that guy on second! He's not even trying to steal."

"Let's go home," said a fourth fan, wading up his program in disgust.

But just as these grippers who were planing to leave were speaking, a huge roar went up from the rest of the crowd. The next thing they knew, their team's worst hitter was sliding into home to tie the score. And then the lead-off man cracked a hommer into the center field seats.

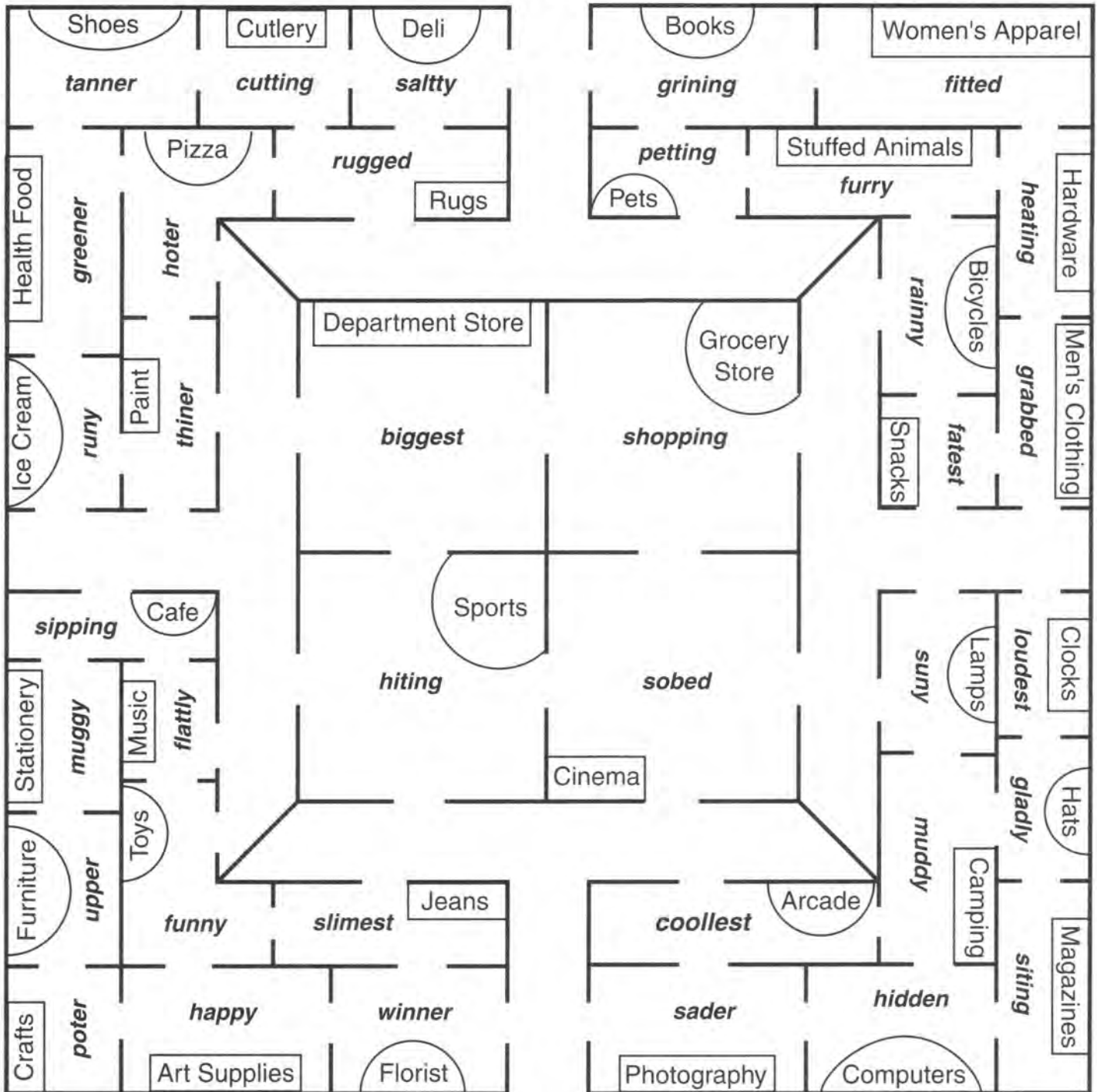
"I knew we'd win," said the man in the old sweatshirt happily. "There's no finner team in the big leagues."

"Yes," agreed his wife. "I was never scarred that we would lose. My hopes never fadded."

The third fan shouted happily, "With these players I'm hopping that we'll go all the way to the World Series."



# ENTER



# EXIT

**The Doubling Rule for One-Syllable Words:** "Shop" your way through the mall to the finish by passing only through the words in **boldface** type that are spelled correctly. The shortest path goes through twelve correct **boldface** spellings, but as a bonus, see if you can find others. Happy shopping!

## THE FINAL SILENT E RULE

### This Unit Teaches Students

- when to drop the final silent *e* when adding a suffix to the root word

### Overview

This unit helps students understand why we need to keep the final silent *e* of a root word when adding a suffix beginning with a consonant (as in *careful*), and why we drop it before a suffix beginning with a vowel (as in *carving*). After learning the rule, students apply it in two exercises. The second of these tells a story of a brother who is jealous of the attention his sister is getting for her Halloween costume.



The unit ends with a spelling maze that acts as a final review.

### Teaching Notes

The first four units of *Spelling Works* deal with adding affixes to root words. Like the doubling and final *y* rules, the final *e* rule presents an exception to the general rule of adding suffixes. Instead of keeping the root word the same, now students must spot cases in which they drop the final *e* before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel.

The unit stresses the main reason why we must keep the final *e* before consonants—to keep the pronunciation of the vowel of the root word long. To introduce the unit, write a few pairs of words on the board—*hoping* and *hopeless*, for example. Ask students how we would pronounce *hopeless* if we didn't retain the *e*—*hopless*.

For enrichment, point out that sometimes the final silent *e* is retained not to keep a preceding vowel long but to keep a *c* or *g* soft, as in *resourceful*, *noticeable*, and *discouragement*.

# THE FINAL SILENT E RULE

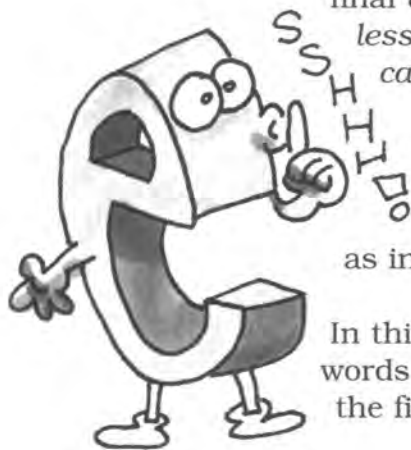
- FACT 1:** Dr. Soto parked his car near the beach.  
**FACT 2:** There were hurricane warnings that day.  
**FACT 3:** His car was washed out to sea in a hurricane.  
**QUESTION:** Should we think of Dr. Soto as *carless* or *careless*—or both?



## What's It All About?

You probably would agree that Dr. Soto was *carless* after the hurricane, and perhaps even Dr. Soto himself would agree that he was *careless* in leaving his car near the beach with a hurricane coming.

Even if Dr. Soto disagreed about being *careless*, he would surely agree that the addition of an *e*—*car(e)less*—makes a big difference in what that word means. Keeping or dropping that *e* is what this unit is about. Learn the final *e* rule well and don't be *carless*! (Or should that have been *careless*?)



See what happens when we add different suffixes to the words *care* and *use*? Sometimes we keep the final silent *e* of the root words, as in *careful* and *useless*; sometimes, we drop it, as in *caring* and *usable*.

In this unit you are going to learn the rule for adding suffixes to words that end in a final silent *e*. But before learning *when* to drop the final silent *e*, it is important to see *why* we sometimes do this.

### Model Words

<u>care</u>	caring	careful	careless
<u>use</u>	usable	useful	useless



---

Say these words aloud: “bit” and “bite”. Do you hear what happens to the *i* sound when you add the final *e*? It changes from /*i*/ (short *i*) to /*i*/ (long *i*).

Now say these words: “biter” and “bitter”. The extra *t* in *bitter* gives us a signal to pronounce the *i* as /*i*/ (short *i*). Generally, two consonants following a vowel tell us to pronounce the vowel in its short form: for example, *miser* versus *mister* or *hating* versus *halting*.

Now you probably see why we must keep the final *e* on a word like *useless*. Otherwise, we would want to pronounce it *uss-less*.

### The Final Silent *E* Rule

If a root word ends in a final silent *e*:

1. Drop the *e* when adding suffixes that begin with a vowel—as in *caring*;
2. Keep the *e* when adding suffixes that begin with a consonant—as in *careful*.

**Note:** The vowels are, of course, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, and sometimes *y*. To help you determine when *y* is a vowel and when it's a consonant, say the word or suffix aloud. If the *y* makes the long *i* or long *e* sound, then it is a vowel, as in the words *dye* and *sadly* and *pretty*. If it makes the sound you hear in the words *you* and *yell*, it is a consonant.



### DID YOU KNOW?

In the past, before English spelling was made uniform, writers put a final *e* on many words that no longer have them. Here is part of a sentence from a book published by Sir Thomas Elyot in 1531: “...to teache any persone, I my selfe havinge moste nede of teachinge....”



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## Let's Try It

Add the suffixes to the root words below. Write the correctly spelled words in the spaces provided. Remember: The suffix *-y* is a vowel if it says the long e sound.

	ROOT WORD	SUFFIX	NEW WORD
<b>Example:</b>	<i>care</i>	<i>-ful</i>	<u>careful</u>
<b>1.</b>	<b>smile</b>	<b>-ing</b>	_____
<b>2.</b>	<b>hate</b>	<b>-ful</b>	_____
<b>3.</b>	<b>move</b>	<b>-ment</b>	_____
<b>4.</b>	<b>move</b>	<b>-able</b>	_____
<b>5.</b>	<b>love</b>	<b>-ly</b>	_____
<b>6.</b>	<b>come</b>	<b>-ing</b>	_____
<b>7.</b>	<b>hope</b>	<b>-less</b>	_____
<b>8.</b>	<b>taste</b>	<b>-y</b>	_____
<b>9.</b>	<b>please</b>	<b>-ure</b>	_____
<b>10.</b>	<b>desire</b>	<b>-able</b>	_____

---

### EXCEPTIONS TO THE FINAL SILENT *E* RULE

There are luckily very few exceptions to this rule, but here are a few:

- ➔ Words that end in *-ce* or *-ge* often keep the final *e* before the vowels *a*, *o*, and *u* to keep the *c* and *g* sounds soft: *noticeable*, *manageable*.
- ➔ Words that end in a vowel, then silent *e*: *tie* becomes *tying*; *canoe* becomes *canoeing*; also, *truly*, *argument*.
- ➔ The words *awful*, *ninth*, and *wholly*.

Note: These exceptions do not appear in the following exercises.

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## Let's Practice

In each of the sentences below, there are two underlined words. One of them is spelled incorrectly. Correct the misspellings by crossing out the incorrectly spelled words and writing them in correctly as in the example below.

excitement

**Example:** Mark thought that he was hiding his ~~excitment~~ well.

1. Mark's mind was racing and his hands were almost shakeing as he went over his plan one last time.
2. This was an idea that would make him fameous in the fifth grade, he thought; yes, soon his classmates would be praising his name.
3. Mark listened intently and heard that he had precisly two minutes before he could put his exciting plan into effect.
4. In two minutes Celia, his pest of a little sister, would be finished brushing her teeth and begin moving toward the safty of her bedroom.
5. That is when he would get even with her for makeing his Halloween entirely too humiliating.
6. Hadn't she received more compliments for her homemade frog costume than he had for his scarey rubber Dracula mask?
7. Hadn't she turned on the cuteness and flashed her lovly smile and received twice as many treats as he had?
8. Now he was going to give her a scare that would put an end to her ceasless gloating and turn her Halloween pleasures into frights.
9. Carefully Mark tiptoed down the hall to her room and slipped sidways through the doorway.

- 
10. Not only was he wearing his horribly frightening Dracula mask now, he had also coated his bare chest with priceless fake blood.
  11. Good, Celia had left the lights off, and as Mark crouched menacingly behind her bed, he could not help laughing out loud at the perfection of his arrangments.
  12. She was coming! The lights went on and Mark leaped up from behind her bed, yowling weirdly and making bizarre movments with his hands and arms.
  13. Celia walked serenely to the bed, climbed in, and said, "Hi, Mark, glad you came in. I thought you'd taken off that boreing costume."
  14. As Mark fought back a feeling of hoplessness, Celia began giggling and added, "Did you hear that a photographer took my picture tonight?"
  15. "My picture is going to be in the newspapers tomorrow as an example of creativeness," she crowed as Mark uslessly tried to cover his ears and ran for his room.



START



**The Final Silent E Rule:** Find the path to the finish of the maze by passing only through correctly spelled words. The shortest path goes through ten correct spellings, but as a bonus, see if you can find one other correctly spelled word.

# THE FINAL Y RULE

## This Unit Teaches Students

- how to add suffixes to root words that end in a final *y*

## Overview

Students learn the final *y* rule in three steps. The basic rule, with no exceptions, is presented and practiced—e.g., *joyful* (vowel before *y*, thus no change); *happiness* (consonant before *y*, thus the change to *i*). The second part explores the exception of adding suffixes beginning with the letter *i*—*trying* and *buying* (never a change to *i*). The last part reviews the process of adding *-s* to final *y* words—*toy* becomes *toys* but *try* becomes *tries*, with that extra *e* thrown into the ending. The final regular exercise tells a short tale of children who try to make a surprise breakfast for their parents.



The unit concludes with a spelling maze that serves as a comprehensive review.

## Teaching Notes

Happily, the final *y* rule is very consistent. Unlike some other spelling patterns, this one does not have scores of variations and exceptions. Still, students frequently make mistakes using the rule—e.g., *hurried* or *lonelyness*.

Introduce the rule by reviewing the general procedure for adding suffixes (covered in Unit 1). Explain to students that usually we just keep the root word the same and add the suffix—build + *-ing* = building. The final *y* rule is one of the exceptions to this general rule: if a root word ends in a *y*, they must be careful. In fact, they must check the letter before that final *y* to see if it is a consonant or a vowel—*play* becomes *played* but *try* becomes *tried*. Of course, the hard part is to help students work backwards—to see that a hard word like *marriage* is really just a word they know how to spell, *marry*, plus the suffix *-age*. You may wish to “undress” some harder final *y* words—*carriage*, *emptiness*, *pitiful*—to show your students how these words are much easier to spell if recognized as words built on final *y* roots.

# THE FINAL Y RULE

If *try* becomes *tries*,  
Shouldn't *buy* become *buies*?  
And then there is *trying*—  
Why isn't that *triing*?  
That darn final *y*  
Sometimes becomes *i*,  
Sometimes remains *y*....  
Can you tell me why?



## What's It All About?

That little verse asks a good question. Why do final *y* words sometimes stay the same when we add a suffix and sometimes change? Must you learn each final *y* word individually, or is there a pattern to when the *y* changes? The model words below may give you a clue about how to solve this problem.

### Model Words

Root Word	New Word	Root Word	New Word
happy	happier	toy	toys
joy	joyous	try	tries
<b>marry</b>	married	<b>pray</b>	prayed

As you can see from the list above, when we add a suffix to a root word ending in a final *y*, we sometimes change the *y* to *i*—but then again, we sometimes leave the *y* unchanged. But, yes, there is a pattern to the changes.

*Clue:* In the list above, look carefully at the letter before the final *y* of the root word. (In the last row this letter has been set in boldface type.) Sometimes this next-to-last letter is a consonant, and sometimes it is a vowel.

---

Do you see the pattern? If so, you have learned the basic final *y* rule:

- If the letter before the final *y* of the root word is a consonant, change the *y* to *i*.
- If the letter before the final *y* is a vowel, do not change it.

### Let's Try It

Add suffixes to the root words below to make new words.

	ROOT WORD	SUFFIX	NEW WORD
Example:	pretty	-er	prettier
1.	silly	-est	_____
2.	play	-s	_____
3.	hurry	-ed	_____
4.	pity	-ful	_____
5.	merry	-ment	_____
6.	dizzy	-ness	_____
7.	pay	-ment	_____
8.	marry	-age	_____
9.	empty	-ness	_____

### Exception to the Final Y Rule

Look at the last word that you wrote in the exercise above: *emptiness*. You changed the final *y* of the root word *empty* to an *i* before adding the suffix *-ness*. But what if you followed the rule and added the suffix *-ing*? You would have a new word spelled *emptiing*. Since that looks so strange to us, we never change a final *y* to *i* when adding a suffix like *-ing* that already starts with *i*. The suffix *-ing* is so common in English that we will include it in our final version of the final *y* rule.

### The Final Y Rule

1. If a root word ends in a consonant and then *y*, change the *y* to *i* before all suffixes except those already beginning with *i*—e.g., tried, trying.
2. If a root word ends in a vowel and then *y*, do not change the *y*—e.g., payed, payment.



---

## Let's Practice

In this exercise your challenge is to separate each word into its root word and suffix.

	New Word	Root Word	Suffix
Example:	tiniest	tiny	-est
1.	joyful	_____	_____
2.	trying	_____	_____
3.	destroyer	_____	_____
4.	fried	_____	_____
5.	staying	_____	_____
6.	plentiful	_____	_____
7.	merrily	_____	_____
8.	displaying	_____	_____
9.	friendliest	_____	_____
10.	carriage	_____	_____

### Adding S to Final Y Words

When a root word ends in a consonant and then final *y*, and you wish to add the suffix *-s*, you face one additional challenge. You must change the final *y* to *i*, but you must also add an *e* before the *s* to retain the long *y* sound.

**Example:** *try* becomes *tries*, not *tris*. Of course this does not apply to root words that end in a vowel and *y*—*toy* becomes *toys*.



### DID YOU KNOW?

There is a common English word that has a double *i*, but it is made from a root word that ends in *i* not *y*. That word is *skiing*. The word *ski* comes to us from Old Norse, the parent language of modern Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish.

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## Putting It All Together

I. The root words below all end in final *y*. Add the suffixes to make correctly spelled new words.

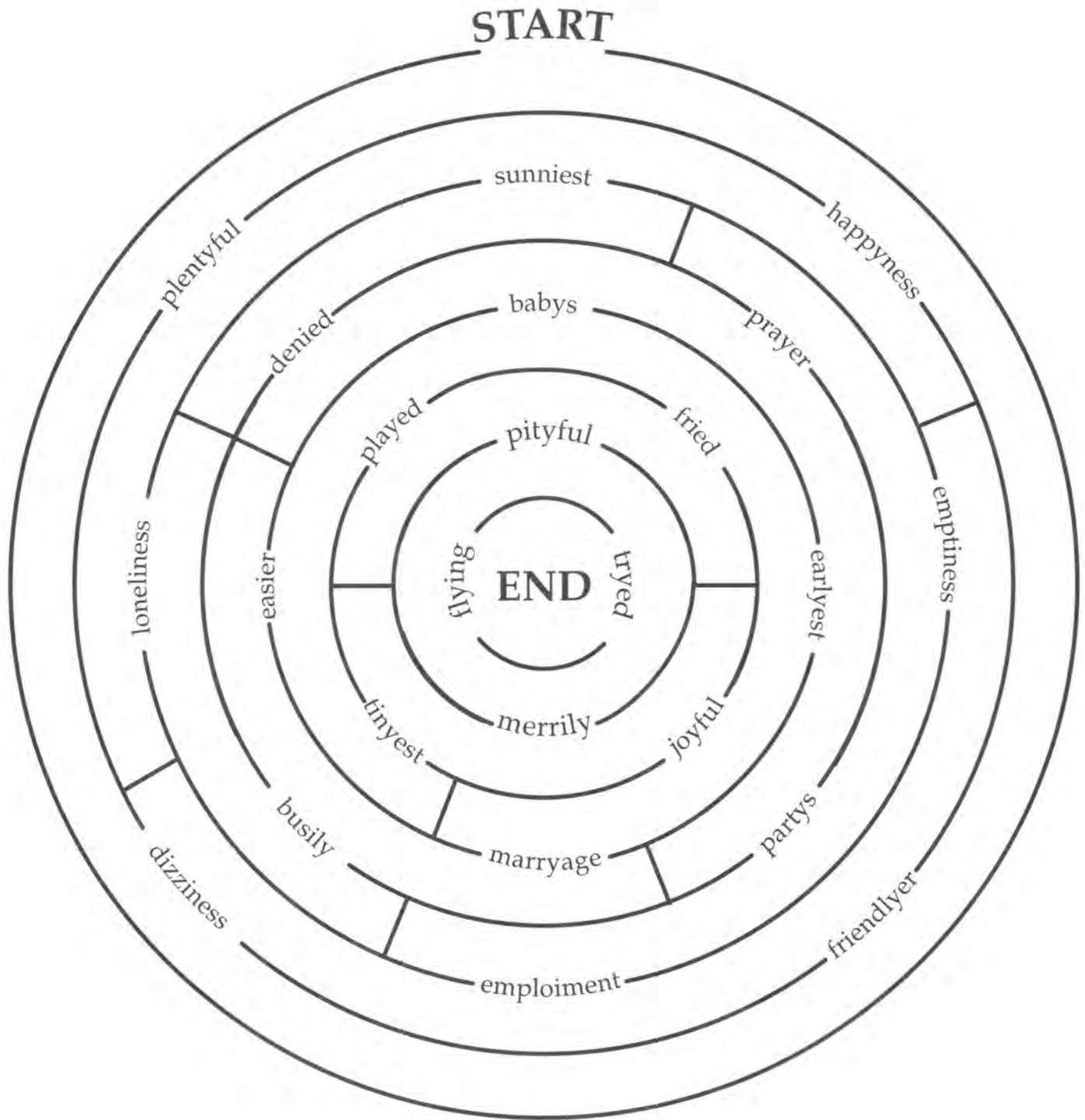
	Root Word	Suffix	New Word
Example:	fly	-s	<u>flies</u>
1.	tray	-s	_____
2.	country	-s	_____
3.	buy	-ing	_____
4.	sunny	-er	_____
5.	pay	-ment	_____
6.	party	-s	_____
7.	deny	-ing	_____
8.	joy	-ful	_____
9.	lonely	-ness	_____
10.	library	-an	_____

II. In each of the sentences below, two words are underlined. One of these words is spelled correctly and one of them is misspelled. Draw a line through the misspelled words and then write in the correct words above the words you have crossed out.

Example: The twins, Noel and Maria, were ~~happily~~ <sup>happily</sup> trying to give their parents a surprise for their wedding anniversary.

1. "This is the earlyest we've ever been up," said Maria joyously.
2. "Mom and Dad will love their surprise anniversary breakfast," replied Noel merryly.

- 
3. "They've been married ten years, but this will be their best breakfast ever," said Maria as she busily took things from the refrigerator.
  4. "We're not babies," said Noel proudly. We're seven years old, and we know how to make the tastiest breakfast in the world!"
  5. "I'm making scrambled eggs," said Maria as she pryed open an egg carton, "and I'm going to mix in some cherries to make them special."
  6. "I'll start friing up some bacon," Noel cried out eagerly.
  7. Soon Noel added, "This bacon is so pityfully plain. I think it needs to be sprayed with a little whipped cream."
  8. "Making breakfast is even easier than I thought," Maria bragged as she readyed two trays to take to their parents' bedroom.
  9. "Oops, these eggs have dried up," she added with annoyance. "But some chocolate sauce should take care of that."
  10. A few minutes later the twins hurried up to their parents' room with their surprise breakfast, and later their parents agreed that the girls' meal made this one of their most memorable anniversaries.



**The Final Y Rule:** Find the path to the finish of the maze by passing only through correctly spelled words. The shortest path to the end goes through eleven correct spellings, but as a bonus, see if you can find two others.

# THE i BEFORE e RULE

## This Unit Teaches Students

- the *i* before *e* rule with its two major exceptions—when the vowel combination comes after *c* and when it sounds like /ā/ (long a)
- other common exceptions to the rule

## Overview

To help students remember which words are *ie* and which are *ei*, the unit breaks the rule up into four sections, with the general rule first—“use *i* before *e*”—and then separate presentations of each set of exceptions—“after *c*,” “sounded like /ā/,” and miscellaneous words like *either* and *seize*. Each part is followed by exercises that review the prior sections as well as the new exceptions. The exercises in the unit comprise an ongoing story about a boy who must solve clues to find his birthday presents.

The unit ends with a spelling maze that acts as a final review.

## Teaching Notes

Although the *i* before *e* rule is probably the best known spelling rule—many of your students can probably quote it verbatim before you begin the lesson—it is also one of the most frequently violated. How many times do we correct the spelling of the word *friend* or *niece*? The rule causes such frequent difficulty because there are so many exceptions to the *i* before *e* pattern.

You may wish to give your class a quick overview of the rule before beginning the unit by writing a few words on the board with the *ie* and *ei* vowel combination omitted: e.g., *fr\_\_nd*, *rec\_\_ve*, *ch\_\_f*, *w\_\_gh*. See how much your students already know, and notice which parts of the rule seem to be giving them trouble. A frequent misunderstanding of the “after *c*” exception arises from the fact that the *c* must immediately precede the *ei* combination: when a letter intervenes, as in *chief*, the “after *c*” exception is not applicable.

The fourth section, which adds a final group of miscellaneous exceptions, is for strong students and is optional. These words are not used in the final maze, although the story that develops in the earlier exercises is concluded in this part of the unit.



# THE i BEFORE E RULE

Lori's neighbor let out a shriek when she saw a huge spider dangling from her ceiling.



## What's It All About?

Some people might want to shriek when they see that the words *neighbor*, *shriek*, and *ceiling* do not use the vowel combinations *ie* and *ei* in a consistent way. Perhaps *neighbor*, where the combination sounds like /ā/ not /ē/, should be spelled *ei* and not *ie*. But why should *ceiling*, with the same /ē/ vowel sound as in *shriek*, also be spelled *ei* and not *ie*? This unit won't help you deal with dangling spiders, but it will provide some patterns to follow when spelling words like *shriek*, *ceiling*, and *neighbor*.

### Model Words

thief    believe    field    friend

The model words above follow the *i* before *e* rule, one of the best known spelling rules. You may, in fact, already be able to say it from memory. But as you know by now, every rule has tricky spots. In this unit you will learn several common exceptions to it. First, let's review the basic rule.

### The Basic I Before E Rule

When the vowels *i* and *e* are used together, use *i* before *e*.

**Note:** In words that fit this rule, the sound of the *ie* vowel combination is usually /ē/ (the long e sound). But as the word *friend* in the box above shows, this is not always the case.

---

## Let's Try It

In each of the following sentences you must decide if the underlined word is spelled correctly. If it is misspelled, cross it out and write in the correct spelling above the crossed out word. If the underlined word is correctly spelled, simply leave it as it is. The sentences begin a short story that will be continued in later exercises.

Example: "A <sup>thief</sup>~~thief~~ must have stolen your birthday presents," said Pedro's mother with a wink.

1. Pedro knew his mother was joking and didn't beleive her fib.
2. One year his parents had given him all his presents early, and in a brief five minutes his birthday was as good as over.
3. Ever since that day, Pedro had had to do something long and fun to acheive his birthday prizes and surprises.
4. "Maybe a feirce tiger came and ate them all up," said his father with a smile.
5. "We left them on the kitchen table last night," added his mother, "and, look, there's nothing there now except a piece of blue paper."

First Exception			
believe	receive	chief	ceiling

As the words in the box above illustrate, the *ie* vowel combination is reversed to *ei* if it directly follows the letter *c*. Notice that the *c* must be the letter right before the vowel combination—a word like *chief* follows the basic *i* before *e* rule because the letter *h* intervenes between the *c* and the *ie*.

Now we can add this exception to the general rule:

**Use *i* before *e* except after *c*.**

---

## Let's Practice

Again you must decide if the underlined words in each of the following sentences are spelled correctly. Cross out each misspelling and write in the correct spelling above the crossed out word. If the underlined word is correctly spelled, simply leave it as it is.

The sentences continue the story from the first exercise.

Example: "The ~~theif~~<sup>thief</sup> who stole your birthday presents has left you a note," said Pedro's mother with another wink.

1. Pedro's father glanced at the note and said, "It's breif and puzzling."

2. Pedro eagerly read it:

"To recieve your presents look around;

First look up and and then look down."

3. Pedro looked up at the ceiling, but it provided no more clues.

4. Then he looked down below the table, and to his releif he saw another slip of blue paper.

5. It said:

"The word scar is without an end.

Can you concieve of this, my friend?"

### Second Exception

weigh    rein    eight

These three words illustrate the second exception to the usual *i* before *e* combination. Can you figure out what they have in common? **Hint:** Say them aloud.

Did you hear that the vowel sound that the letters make in each of these words is /ā/, the long *a* sound? Now we can add this idea to the rule too, giving us the whole rule in its final form.

### The I Before E Rule

Use *i* before *e*, except after *c* or when sounded like /ā/ as in *neighbor* and *weigh*.



---

## Putting It All Together

Wherever you find letters missing in a word, you must decide if you should write in *ie* or *ei*. This exercise continues the story from the exercise that you did before.



**Example:** The note said:

"The word *scar* is without an end.

Can you conceive of this, my friend?"

1. "I think that the th \_\_\_\_ f is trying to dec \_\_\_\_ ve you," laughed Pedro's mother.
2. "No, he is not," laughed Pedro. "I think he's being a good n \_\_\_\_ gbor and helping me find where he's hidden my presents."
3. "But that last clue is causing me some gr \_\_\_\_ f," Pedro continued. "Wait! I think I've got it!"
4. "I bel \_\_\_\_ ve that the clue means to take off one end of the word *scar*," Pedro said happily. "*Scar* without the first letter is *car*!"
5. His parents could not run as fast as Pedro, and when they arrived at the garage, they perc \_\_\_\_ ved that he was already reading another note that he'd found on the front seat of the family car.
6. Pedro read the latest clue:  
"The final clue will be revealed,  
Only if you cross a f \_\_\_\_ ld."
7. Pedro did not need to w \_\_\_\_ gh that clue very long in his mind. In seconds he was running across the grassy meadow behind his house.
8. "You've almost ach \_\_\_\_ ved your goal," his father panted when he finally caught up to Pedro. "But I don't see any presents yet."
9. Pedro looked worried as he scanned the bushes and searched under rocks, but then he was rel \_\_\_\_ ved to see another blue p \_\_\_\_ ce of paper tacked to a small oak tree.
10. It read:  
"One last clue to tax your brains—  
To guide a horse you use the r \_\_\_\_ ns."

---

## Final Exceptions (Optional)

Unfortunately, the final e rule has more exceptions than most other spelling rules. In fact, it seems to have exceptions to the exceptions! Your teacher may not ask you to learn these, but as a bonus here are some of the most common “exception words.”

Several words that don't fit the rule can be made into a silly sentence to help you remember them:

**Neither leisurely foreigner seized their weird height.**



*Neither* will help you remember its cousin *either*, which is also an exception. There are also exceptions to the “except after c” part of the rule:

Words like *efficient* and *species* where the /sh/ sound is spelled *ci*.

Words like *science* and *society* where there is a syllable break between the *i* and *e*.

---

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the United States we usually pronounce the word *sheik* to rhyme with the word *week*, making it an exception to the “...or when sounded like /ā/...” part of the *i* before *e* rule—an exception to the exception, it would seem. The word derives, however, from an Arabic word that in our alphabet might be written *shaykh* with the vowel sound /ā/. The usual pronunciation of *sheik* in Great Britain is like the word *shake*.



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## Let's Practice (Optional)

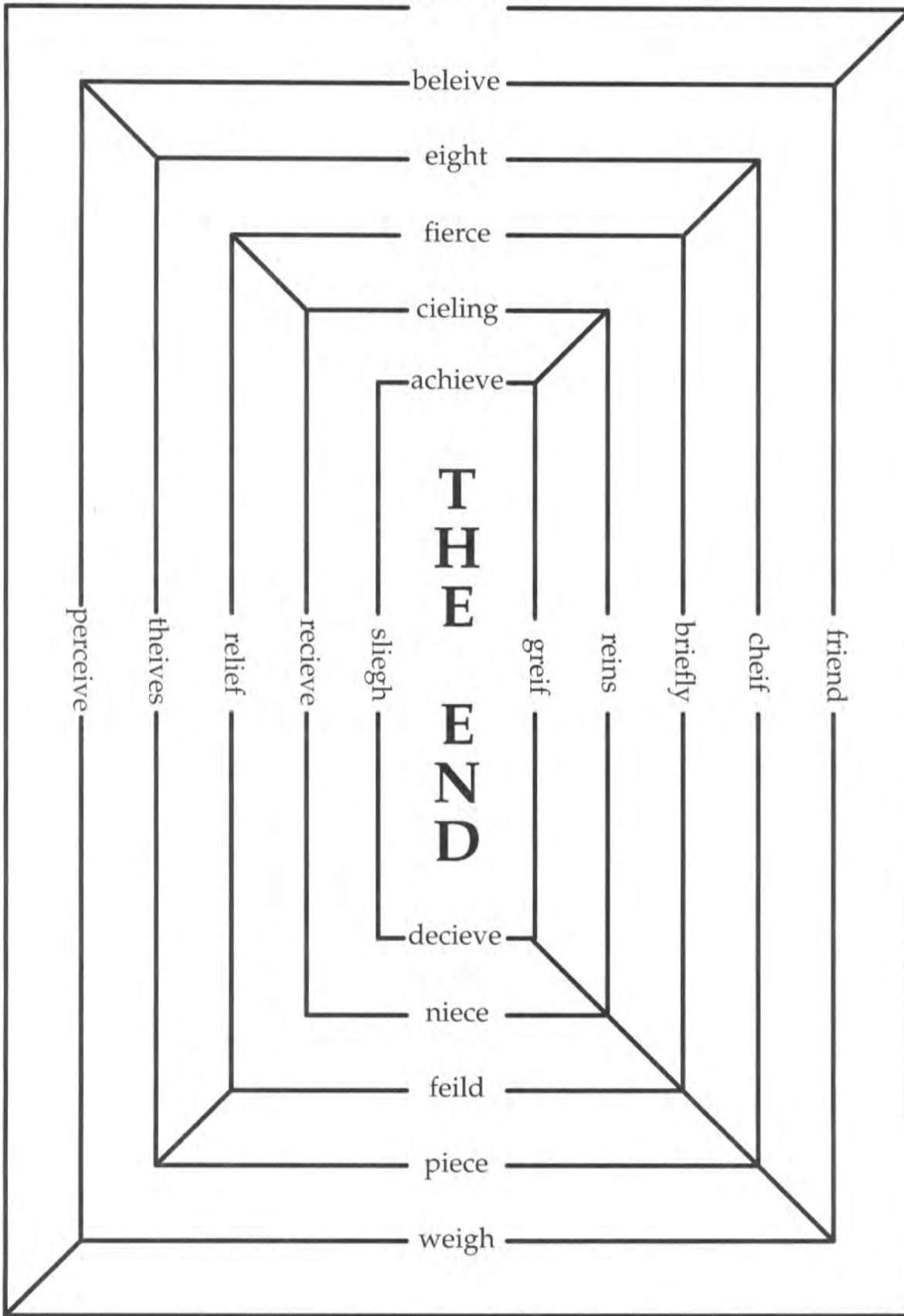
In each of the numbered sentences below, you must cross out any incorrect spellings and write the correctly spelled word above. **But this time there is no more underlining to help you.** Be careful: Some sentences have more than one error. All misspellings involve the complete *i* before *e* rule or the final exceptions above. This exercise concludes Pedro's story.

**Example: The last clue said:**

"One last clue to tax your brains—  
To guide a horse you use the <sup>reins</sup>~~riens~~."

1. Pedro thought briefly about that clue and then began running across the field again towards his nieghbor's farm.
2. Neither of his parents tried to keep up with him, though they wished they could be there to see him finally retrieve his presents.
3. They knew, though, that thier birthday surprise had been a complete success when they heard shrieks of joy from the barn next door.
4. They heard, "Surprise! Surprise!" as they walked leisurely around the corner of the barn, which belonged to Pedro's best freind Billy.
5. In the barn were eight of Pedro's classmates, two cousins, and three neices, all laughing as Pedro stared in disbeleif at a huge mound of birthday presents.

START



**The I Before E Rule:** Find the path to the finish of the maze by passing only through correctly spelled words. The shortest path will take you through seven correct spellings, but as a bonus, see if you can find four others.

# APOSTROPHES IN CONTRACTIONS

## This Unit Teaches Students

- how to use apostrophes in contractions

## Overview

The first part of this unit reviews the function of apostrophes in contractions: to indicate that a letter or letters have been omitted. The most frequently misspelled—and misused—contractions are then listed along with homophones that contribute to their misspelling, e.g., *they're* and *their*. There are a series of exercises, all of them parts of an ongoing story about a girl who only likes to eat “colorful” foods.



The unit concludes with a spelling maze that acts as a final review.

## Teaching Notes

While most students find it easier to use apostrophes correctly in contractions than in possessives, they still omit them frequently or place them where the original words were joined rather than where letters have been omitted—*do'nt* instead of *don't*. A greater problem, and one that gets detailed coverage in the second half of this unit, is the confusion of contractions and possessive pronouns that are homophones—*you're* and *your*, *they're* and *their*, and especially *it's* and *its*.

Because these last three pairs account for so many student errors, you may wish to do some review with your class before you tackle that part of the unit. Point out that while apostrophes are used to show possession for nouns—Myra's hat—they are only used to make contractions with the personal pronouns. Words like *his*, *your* and *its* are already possessive and should not be confused with *you're* and *it's*. In fact, a good way to drive this point home is to write this sentence on the board: *The dog lost his bone*. Now replace *his* with *its* and say, “Just as you don't use an apostrophe in the word *his*—*hi's*—neither do you spell the possessive *its* with an apostrophe.” This will then be reinforced in the unit when students are given a procedure to use to see if they need a contraction: substitute the original words of the contraction and see if they fit into the sentence—*The dog lost **it is** bone?* No, then the spelling must be *its*.

# APOSTROPHES IN CONTRACTIONS

## What's It All About?

Apostrophes can be a nuisance. Not only do you have to remember to use them, but you also have to remember just where to put them. Imagine, though, what would happen if we didn't have apostrophes. We might end up writing sentences like those in the illustration that could have more than one meaning.

Probably the writer of those sentences meant **She'll** be good and **We'll** try to be good too. But without apostrophes, those contractions became the words *shell* and *well*.



Shell be good.

Well try to be good too.

## Let's Find Out

In the model words below you'll find a list of word pairs that are commonly contracted. Be a detective and see if you can discover the rule for placing apostrophes in contractions.

*Clue:* Are apostrophes always placed:

1. where two words have been joined together?

or

2. where letters from one of the words have been omitted?

Be careful. If you don't read the whole list, you may not discover the right answer.

### Model Words

#### Two Words

I have  
can not  
have not

#### Contractions

I've  
can't  
haven't

If you said that apostrophes are placed in contractions *where letters from one of the words have been omitted*, then you were a good detective. The most frequent error when spelling contractions is to forget to use the apostrophes at all—as the writer who wrote *shell* for *she'll* in the illustration above. But another common error is to place the apostrophe where the original words are joined—*does'nt* instead of *doesn't*.

---

## Let's Try It

The underlined words in the sentences below have been written with extra spaces between the letters. Decide if an apostrophe is needed in one of these spaces, and if so, write it in. This exercise begins a story that will continue in later exercises in this unit.

**Example:** Maria d i d n t always enjoy the food that was good for her.

1. Maria's mother knew that Maria c o u l d n t stand lima beans or turnips and that she usually w a s n t able to resist hamburgers or potato chips.
2. "I c a n t help it!" sighed Maria. "I m an artist, and the breads and fruits and vegetables that are healthful just d o n t make beautiful colors in my mouth."
3. Her mother laughed and asked, "A r e n t you being a bit dramatic about this, Maria? Yes, y o u r e a fine artist, but your mouth i s n t where you detect colors."
4. "I think I v e got a special mouth that i s n t like yours," Maria said somewhat proudly.
5. Frowning as if she c o u l d n t bear to imagine certain healthful food-stuffs, Maria continued, "Some things—like whole wheat bread or beans—t h e y r e only gray or brown, boring colors to my sensitive taste buds."
6. "But d o n t even mention grapefruit or carrots!" she almost cried. "Their slashing yellows and cutting crimsons s h o u l d n t ever be allowed in any artist's mouth!"

### Contraction Demons

Here is a list of contractions that frequently cause spelling problems:

<u>Two Words</u>	<u>Contraction</u>	<u>Frequent Error</u>
I would, I had	I'd	I'd
will not	won't	wont
let us	let's	lets
should have	should've	should of
it is	it's	its
you are	you're	your
they are	they're	their, there

---

Except for the first two, most of the contractions in this list are misspelled because our ears do not help us distinguish among different spellings. There is so little difference, for instance, in the pronunciation of *they're*, *there*, and *their* that often we write one spelling when we mean to use another. Words that are pronounced the same but spelled differently are called **homophones**.

There is a test that you can use to decide which homophone spelling is needed in a sentence. Substitute the two original words for the contraction form of the word. If the two words fit the sentence, then use the spelling that has the apostrophe.

**Example 1**

Is the word *it's* spelled correctly in this sentence?

*It's* cold and rainy today.

**Test:** Substitute *it is* for *it's*: "*It is* cold and rainy today." Yes, it should be the contraction form—spelled with an apostrophe.

**Solution:** *It's* cold and rainy today."

**Example 2**

Is the word *let's* spelled correctly in this sentence?

Martin *let's* me read his books.

**Test:** Substitute *let us* for *let's*: "Martin *let us* me read his books." No, it should not be the contraction form—no apostrophe.

**Solution:** Martin *lets* me read his books.

**Example 3**

Is the word *they're* used properly in this sentence?

The students were eating *they're* lunches.

**Test:** Substitute *they are* for *they're*: "The students were eating *they are* lunches." No, it should be the possessive *their*—no apostrophe.

**Solution:** The students were eating *their* lunches.

**Note:** Although we often say them when we chat, we don't usually write the contractions *could've*, *should've*, *would've*, and

*must've* that create the spelling problems *could of*, *should of*, *would of*, and *must of*. It is best to write out *could have*, *should have*, *would have*, and *must have*.



The kids were playing with *they're* toys . . . . They are toys? No, with *their* toys.





---

## Let's Practice

Only one of the words in each set of parentheses is correctly spelled. Underline the correct spelling. This exercise continues the story about Maria.

**Example:** Maria (did'nt, didn't, didnt) always enjoy the food that was good for her.

1. Although Maria's mother (wasn't, wasnt, was'nt) upset by Maria's tastes in food, her brother Marcus (could'nt, couldnt, couldn't) accept her comments.
2. "Maria, (lets, let's) get serious!" (hed, he'd) moan, "and stop talking about all those colors on your tongue. Vanilla ice cream (doesnt, does'nt, doesn't) taste turquoise—it tastes sweet!"
3. "I (could of, could have) guessed (your, you're) crass reaction to my sensitive taste buds," sniffed Maria. "(Its, It's) my mouth, and you, Marcus, (cant, can't, ca'nt) know (what's, whats) happening inside it!"
4. "(Id, I'd, I'd) hate to know what (you've, youve, youv'e) got going on inside your mouth," replied Marcus, "since I can barely stand what I hear coming out of it."
5. "(Lets, Let's) stop this bickering," laughed their mother. "Marcus, (your, you're) just making Maria even more stubborn about disliking healthful food."
6. (Its, It's) fine if Maria's tongue sees colors," their mother added, "but I (wont, wo'nt, won't) like it unless she mixes in some of those "dull" colors too—like the color of whole wheat bread or the color of apples."



---

## Putting It All Together

In this exercise, which continues the story of Maria and her tastes, you must decide if the underlined words are misspelled. If they are spelled correctly as they are written, just leave them alone. If they are misspelled, cross them out and write the correct spelling above.

**Note:** In this unit you only are asked to distinguish between the contraction *they're* and the possessive *their*. The other homophone *there* is added in a later unit.

should have

**Example:** Marcus didn't think that Maria ~~should of~~ blamed her dislike of wholesome food on her sensitive tongue.

1. "I dont want to discuss my artistic taste buds further," said Maria to her brother Marcus and they're mother. "I'm going out to ride my bicycle, and I wont be back for awhile."
2. Her mother smiled and said, "Its a good afternoon for a ride. But let's think for a minute—I think you should be home by five. Were going to have an early dinner."
3. Maria hadnt finished shutting the door before Marcus complained to his mother, "I'll bet your going to give that "artist" special food for dinner. She's going to eat pizza while the rest of us eat corn bread."
4. "You're a genius, Marcus!" exclaimed his mother. "Thats exactly what shes going to eat—a very special pizza, and were going to eat corn bread and a chicken salad with yogurt dressing."
5. "I should of kept my big mouth shut!" said Marcus angrily. "Corn bread and chicken salad—their things I like. Still, Maria shouldn't get special foods because her taste buds despise they're colors. Its just not fair."

- 
6. His mother winked and said, "Marcus, I'd just be patient with Maria—and with me—if I we're you. Youve given me an idea for a special pizza that may make Maria change her mind about the kind of colors she'd prefer her tongue to see."

### Challenge

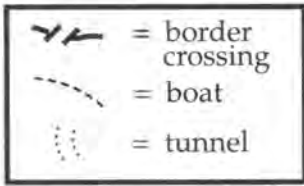
In this final exercise, which completes the story about Maria, you no longer have underlining to help you find contraction and homophone misspellings. As before, cross out the misspelled words and write them correctly above the misspellings.

**Hint:** There are two mistakes in each of the numbered sentences.

**Example:** At first Marcus ~~didn't~~ <sup>didn't</sup> think that Maria ~~should~~ <sup>should have</sup> of been given a special meal.

1. "Im so hungry!" exclaimed Maria when she came in. "I would of eaten more for lunch, but it was so plain. What's for dinner?"
2. "Come to the table and see, Maria," said her mother. "Your late. We've already got the food on the table. Were about to start eating."
3. "I hope its something I like," said Maria as she sat down. "Oh, no, thats corn bread! I don't want that. It looks yellow and it tastes yellow, and chicken salad in that bland yogurt sauce—boring gray!"
4. "Oh, I've got something special for Maria, have'nt I Marcus?" said their mother. "And it's full of brilliant colors, Maria, for your eyes and for you're tongue."

- 
5. "Its in the oven—a special pizza I've made for you. You'll see that it's truly colorful—just the way youve always wanted it."
  6. "Wow!" Maria soon said as she looked at the topping on the slice of pizza on her plate. "Look at all those colors! Reds, greens, blues—their beautiful! I ca'nt wait to taste them!"
  7. "I wouldnt wait a second," said Marcus, who didn't seem angry any more. "I would of had some too, but I like plain food."
  8. Maria should of known something was up, but she didn't hesitate and bit right into the pizza, not seeing that it's topping was made of fiery red peppers, salty anchovies, green tomatoes, and blue cheese.
  9. "Oh me, I mean, oh my!" she cried after swallowing her first bite. "I ca'nt stand the heat—I mean the colors! Their flaming crimsons and bitter blues and screaming golds! My tongue is on fire!"
  10. "Yogurt is'nt very colorful," said Maria's mother calmly, "but it's good for you, and its especially good for putting out tongue fires."
  11. Maria must of decided suddenly that she liked chicken salad in yogurt sauce, because she gobbled two helpings that night, and for many nights afterwards she wouldnt eat anything but plain food.



**Apostrophes in Contractions:** Find the shortest route from the START in Finland to the END in Sicily by passing through countries where the **boldfaced** words are spelled correctly. Note that you may use boats and a tunnel.

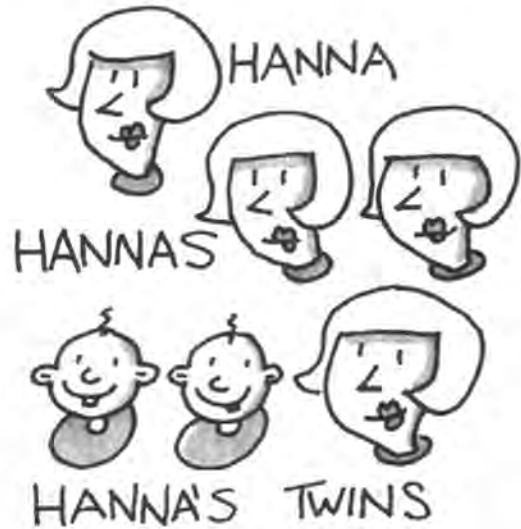
# PLURALS AND SINGULAR POSSESSIVES

## This Unit Teaches Students

- to distinguish between the plural and the singular possessive forms of nouns

## Overview

The opening section of this unit helps students understand when a noun is a plural and when it is a singular possessive. The next part reviews how to make the plurals of nouns that end in *-y*. For these words, students will see that they have a three-way problem—should they spell the word *storys*, *stories*, or *story's*? Most of the exercises comprise a story that runs through the whole unit and continues in the next unit, where plural possessives are added to the mix.



The unit concludes with a spelling maze that acts as a final review.

## Teaching Notes

When we pick up a set of papers to mark, we can almost be certain of finding one kind of spelling error—the misuse of apostrophes. Plural nouns are often spelled with apostrophes (...the city street's...) and possessives are even more often spelled without them (...the books cover...). Since the plural and possessive forms of most nouns sound alike, there is no aural clue to help students distinguish between the forms.

Since many students have difficulty understanding when nouns should be possessive, you may wish to do some oral work before handing out the exercises. First help your students understand what the *-s* ending means: "When I say, 'Willa's book,' why did I say Willa's? What did that *s* sound after *Willa* tell you? Yes, the book belongs to Willa." Then discuss plurals in a similar way: "When I say, 'Willa's books,' what did the *s* sound after the word *book* tell you? Yes, she has more than one book." Let this lead up to an oral drill where you ask the class to decide if the words with the *s* sounds in your sentences are plurals or possessives: "The cats were fighting;" "The cat's collar had a bell."

# PLURALS AND SINGULAR POSSESSIVES

**Coach:** Someone left these strange shoes in the gym.

**Student:** They're Tara's.

**Coach:** Taras? I've never heard of shoes called Taras.

**Student:** No, I mean they belong to Tara.



## What's It All About?

Why did the coach misunderstand the student about Tara's shoes? Because there was no way for him to hear the apostrophe that signaled that the shoes belonged to Tara. For most nouns, the plural form (Taras) and the singular possessive form (Tara's) sound alike. As a result, we sometimes make spelling errors when we use plurals and singular possessives. This unit will help you remember when you should use that important apostrophe.

Because the words *cars* and *car's* and *books* and *book's* sound exactly alike, we are very likely to make spelling errors when we write **plurals** (more than one) and **possessives** (ownership).

Since our ears can't help us, we have to think each time, "Should this be a possessive or a plural?"

Model Words		
<u>Singular Noun</u>	<u>Plural Noun</u>	<u>Singular Possessive</u>
car	cars	a car's bumper
book	books	the book's cover

For example, look at the spelling of *brothers* in these sentences:

His brothers were late.

The girl was wearing her brothers hat.

---

One of those underlined words should be spelled *brother's* because it refers to ownership. Which one?

You're right if you said the second one. How could you tell? Probably you said something like this to yourself: In the first sentence, the word means **two or more brothers**—it's plural. In the second, it means **belonging to a brother**—it's possessive and needs an apostrophe.

In addition, you must remember that we also often show ownership by using a phrase starting with *of*. Instead of writing *the book's cover* we might wish to write *the cover of the book*. In this case there is no need for an apostrophe.

## Let's Try It

In the sentences below, some of the nouns should be plural and others should be possessive. For those words, a space has been provided before the final *-s*. If the word is a possessive, write an apostrophe in that space. If the word is a plural, leave the space empty. The sentences begin a story that is continued in later exercises.

**Example:** Sean s favorite book s were about haunted houses.

1. Sean s book s about haunted house s never scared him—until the night of the huge wind storm.
2. He had just started a new book that night when the wind s howl s became almost ghostly and the full moon s pale light made the yard outside seem spooky.
3. The leave s on the big tree outside Sean s bedroom window were rattling and swishing eerily with every new gust.
4. At one point, two dark shape s flew out of the tree and crashed to the ground with a plop just below his father s study.
5. Bravely Sean opened the window s latch and raised the sash to see just what sort of thing s had blown towards the house.



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6. They seemed to be weird, shapeless blob<sup>□</sup>s, and through the wind<sup>□</sup>s howl Sean thought he could hear faint crying sound<sup>□</sup>s.

7. Sean slammed down his window, turned the new book<sup>□</sup>s scary cover down so that he couldn't see it, and pulled the blanket<sup>□</sup>s all the way over his head, hoping that he could sleep.

### Singular Nouns that End in -y

Singular Noun	Plural Noun	Singular Possessive
city	cities	the city's streets
pony	ponies	a pony's saddle
boy	boys	the boy's hat

The words *ponies* and *pony's* don't look much alike, but they do sound alike and thus are often misspelled. This is a good time, then, to review the final *y* rule, since it presents another problem when spelling plurals and possessives. Not only do you have to decide whether to use an apostrophe, you also have to remember when to change the *y* to *i* and add *-es* instead of just *-s*.

### The Final Y Rule for Making Plural Nouns

- If the letter before the final *y* of the singular noun is a consonant, change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*: *fly* becomes *flies*.
- If the letter before the final *y* is a vowel, just add *-s*: *boy* becomes *boys*.

---

## Let's Practice

On the lines provided, write the plural of these nouns that end in *-y*. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun
1. city	<u>cities</u>
2. kitty	_____
3. pastry	_____
4. toy	_____
5. tray	_____
6. fly	_____
7. country	_____
8. treaty	_____
9. delay	_____
10. library	_____



### DID YOU KNOW?

If a singular word already ends in *-s* like *princess*, *Phyllis*, *Dallas*, and *Moses*, some writers omit the *s* after the apostrophe when making a possessive. For example: **Dallas'** streets are usually wide.

It is usually clearer and never wrong, however, to double the final *s* sound: **Dallas's** streets are usually wide.

---

## Putting It All Together

In the following sentences there are plurals, including those that follow the final *y* rule, and there are singular possessives that end in *'s*. Underline the correctly spelled words in the parentheses. The sentences continue the story begun in the first exercise.

**Example:** (Seans, Sean's) ghost (storys, stories, story's) were no longer so enjoyable after the night of the wind storm.

1. After the night of the wind storm, (Seans, Sean's) (nerves, nerve's) were on edge, especially on dark (nights, night's).
2. The ghost (storys, stories, story's) in his books seemed all too real, and even some (toys, toies, toy's) now seemed threatening.
3. One of his stuffed (bears, bear's) ears had been missing for (years, year's), but the (bears, bear's) odd expression had never bothered Sean until now.
4. And he noticed that his toy (ponys, ponies, pony's) tail was now broken, giving Sean (fantasys, fantasies, fantasy's) that something bad had come into his room.
5. What were those big (blobs, blob's) that the (winds, wind's) fury had blown at the house that night—something trying to get inside?

---

## More Practice

In this exercise there are more mistakes in the spelling of plurals and singular possessives. This time you must decide if the underlined words are spelled correctly. If they are misspelled, cross them out and write them in correctly above, as in the examples.

Be careful. Some of the underlined words are correct and should not be changed. The last sentences pose a real challenge: the underlining is no longer there to help you find the misspellings.

nerve's

**Example:** Sean's mother noticed that his nerve's were on edge.

1. "You look as if you have a bad case of the worrys," said Sean's mother as they sat one night in the families dining room.
2. "Yes," said his father, "your worrys are our worry's too. Are you having problem's you haven't told us about?"
3. "Well, yes," said Sean with relief. "I think I've been reading too many ghost storys, and ever since I heard strange noise's in the wind storm, I've been scared."
4. "In the storm that big oaks branches were whipping back and forth, and it seemed as if the tree almost threw two weird blob's at our house. They landed just outside Dads study," Sean added.
5. "I don't believe in ghost's," said Sean's mother confidently, "and I think we should go see if we can find something very ordinary on the ground outside your fathers study."

---

(In the last four sentences there is no more underlining to help you find the mistakes. *Helpful hint:* There are two mistakes in each of these sentences.)

6. **Seans eyes rolled nervously, but he agreed to go along with his parents to see if the mysterious flying blob's could be made to seem less ghostly.**
7. **"This ghost stories ending is going to be a happy one," laughed his mother when they rounded the corner of the house. "Look there on the ground—a squirrels nest!"**
8. **"Here is another one," said Sean's father. "I saw them in the trees top branches last week—like leafy blobs—but they were blown down by the strong gust's of wind."**
9. **Sean once again read ghost story's that night, and he slept soundly, so soundly, in fact, that he didn't hear the strange noise's coming from the walls of his room....**

**Plurals and Singular Possessives:** Help the worker bee find the shortest path to the queen by passing only through cells where the **boldfaced** type words are correctly spelled. The shortest path goes through thirteen cells, but as a bonus, see if you can find four more with correct spellings.

**START**



The wind blew the dry **leave's**. The worker **bees** are all very active.

This **cake's** icing tastes delicious. My **books** cover isn't like yours. Have you seen my new **shoes**?

She told **stories** of the past. The **song's** lyrics are very silly.

He washed the **car's** windshield. Pass the **tacos** to your sister. The wild **pony's** ran in the rain.

The **cats** fur is soft and silky. Are your **teacher's** very strict?

The bed has clean new **sheets**. I like to make my own **toy's**. Cal swept the **stairs** every day.

She cut **Taras** hair too short. My **pencil's** eraser makes a smudge.

I've lived in three **countries**. The flower **beds** were under water. The **rake's** handle was broken.

I borrowed **Sandra's** new paint set. The **libraries** roof is leaking very badly.

The **storm's** center is two miles away. The **knights** armor needed polishing. The **city's** three parks were closed.

The little **girls** dress was muddy. The queen **bee's** food is royal jelly.

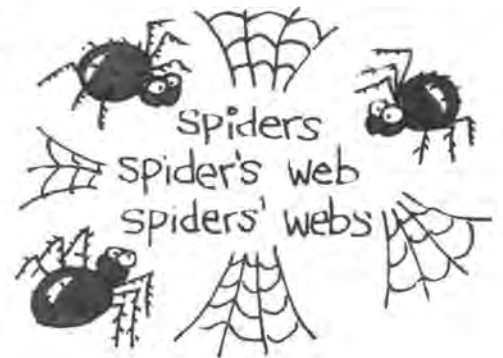


**FINISH**

# SINGULAR AND PLURAL POSSESSIVES

## This Unit Teaches Students

- how to spell plurals, singular possessives, and plural possessives of regular nouns
- how to spell plural possessives of nouns with irregular plurals



## Overview

The unit begins with models of regular nouns in their plural, singular possessive, and plural possessive forms. After a short discussion of these forms, the rule for making plural possessives is presented: add an apostrophe after the final *-s*. Nouns with irregular plurals are the focus of the second part of the unit, and models are provided that illustrate how to make plural possessives for these words—*men's* not *mens'*.

Each part has its own exercise, and there is also an optional final exercise that asks students to find and correct unmarked spelling errors in longer sentences.

The unit ends with a maze that serves as a comprehensive review.

## Teaching Notes

This unit concludes the study of plurals and possessives that began in Unit 7. Students who are still struggling with the spelling of plurals and singular possessives may need more practice before tackling this material, for it assumes a basic understanding of the use of apostrophes to make singular possessives.

Before handing out the material, it would probably be a good idea to give your students some understanding of why we need a spelling for plural possessives that is different from that of singular possessives. Say to the class: "We found the math teachers' rulers." Ask them what they visualized. Most students will have imagined one teacher's rulers; some may have imagined several teachers' rulers. Then write the sentence on the board showing how it would have been clearer if they could have seen the spelling—*teacher's* if one teacher was meant, *teachers'* if more than one.

Since apostrophes cause so many spelling problems, your students will benefit if you follow up this work with other kinds of exercises. Challenge them to write their own sentences in which they use one plural, one singular possessive, and one plural possessive all in the same sentence. Or have them proofread their next writing assignment looking exclusively for apostrophe errors.

# SINGULAR AND PLURAL POSSESSIVES

Miku wrote: The search party found the dogs bones and leashes.

The search party found the dogs bones and leashes.



## What's It All About?

When Miku wrote that sentence in the box, she used no punctuation or apostrophes. As a result, we can't be sure just what she meant. For instance, how many dogs were there?

## Let's Find Out

If you think about it, Miku's sentence could mean three different things:

1. The search party found three groups of things—dogs, bones, and leashes.
2. The search party found two things belonging to one dog—his bones and leashes.
3. The search party found the bones and leashes of two or more dogs.

To make the sentence clear, Miku needs to understand the spelling of plurals and of singular and plural possessives. Here is a group of correctly spelled models:

### Model Words

#### Plural Noun

two **dogs**  
two **cities**

#### Singular Possessive

one **dog's** bones  
one **city's** streets

#### Plural Possessive

two **dogs'** bones  
two **cities'** streets



---

These models illustrate the rule for spelling regular plural possessives:

### **Plural Possessives**

To spell the plural possessive of a regular noun, write the plural and add an apostrophe after the final s.

With the rule in mind, maybe we can help Miku make her sentence about the search party clear. Let's assume, since we are working with plural possessives in this unit, that Miku meant that the search party found several dogs and the bones and leashes that belonged to them. In other words, Miku needed to use the plural possessive form of d-o-g-s.

As the models indicate, her sentence should then be written like this:

The search party found the dogs' bones and leashes.



---

## Let's Try It

Underline the words in parentheses that are correctly spelled. You must decide if the word should be a plural, a singular possessive, or a plural possessive. This exercise and the ones that follow are a continuation of Sean's story from the unit on plurals and singular possessives.

**Example:** In a howling wind storm, two (squirrels, squirrel's, squirrels') ( nests, nest's, nests') had blown down by (Seans, Sean's, Seans') house.

1. Sean was so jumpy from reading ghost (stories, story's, stories') that when the two (squirrels, squirrel's, squirrels') nests blew by his window, he thought that he had seen two (ghosts, ghost's, ghosts').
2. His (mothers, mother's, mothers') refusal to believe in (ghosts, ghost's, ghosts') led to the (families, family's, families') discovery that Sean had only seen a very normal accident, not a ghost.
3. Sean slept well again and even read new ghost (stories, story's, stories') until one night he heard strange scraping (noises, noise's, noises') in the (walls, wall's, walls') of his room.
4. The next morning the (curtains, curtain's, curtains') in his (fathers, father's, fathers') study billowed out even though the (windows, window's, windows') were closed.
5. (Seans, Sean's) father tried to laugh but admitted, "These (ghosts, ghost's, ghosts') habits are becoming bothersome because I just heard weird (sounds, sound's, sounds') in my (studies, study's, studies') walls too!"
- 6 His (mothers, mother's, mothers') explanation was simple: "Now you're both imagining (things, thing's, things'). (Ghosts, Ghost's, Ghosts') don't exist."
7. At dinner she said, "Fairy (tales, tale's, tales') usually have happy (endings, ending's, endings'), and I'm sure that these ghost (stories, story's, stories') endings are going to turn out to be happy too.
8. Just then strange raspy (noises, noise's, noises') arose, like the sound of many (ghosts, ghost's, ghosts') laughter, in the dining room wall next to her.

---

## Irregular Plural Possessives

Words like *man*, *deer*, and *ox* have **irregular plurals**, because they don't add a final *-s* to make their plurals. In the box below you will see how to form the possessives of such irregular nouns as well a review of the process for regular nouns.

<b>Regular Plural Nouns</b>		<b>Regular Possessives</b>	
		<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
two <b>dogs</b>		one <b>dog's</b> bones	two <b>dogs'</b> bones
two <b>cities</b>		one <b>city's</b> streets	two <b>cities'</b> streets
<b>Irregular Plural Nouns</b>		<b>Irregular Possessives</b>	
		<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
two <b>men</b>		one <b>man's</b> books	two <b>men's</b> books
two <b>deer</b>		one <b>deer's</b> antlers	two <b>deer's</b> antlers

As you can see, the rule for forming the possessive plural of a noun with an irregular plural is the same as the rule for a singular noun:

To make the possessive form of a noun with an irregular plural, simply write the plural noun and add *-s*

.....

## DID YOU KNOW?

There is one exception to the usual use of apostrophes. They are used to make plurals rather than contractions or possessives in one rare case—when you need to write the plural of a letter, a word, or a numeral. Then, and only then, it is correct to add *-s* to make a plural. Here is an example:



There are two *l*'s in *silly*, two *2*'s in *twenty-two*, and two *that*'s in the sentence, "I said that that song begins to sound silly after hearing it twenty-two times."

---

## Let's Practice

This exercise reviews all that you have learned so far: the formation of plurals, singular possessives, and plural possessives of both regular and irregular nouns. This time, however, you must decide if the underlined words are spelled correctly. If they are misspelled, cross them out and write them in correctly above, as in the examples. If they are correct, don't change them.

**Example:** Now Sean's mother had heard the strange <sup>noises</sup>~~noise's~~ too.

1. When Seans mother heard the strange noise's in the wall of the dining room, her eyes' widened, but she refused to be alarmed.
2. "Those," whispered Sean, "were the sounds of at least three ghost's laughter, and they're laughing because of Moms disbelief."
3. "Let them laugh," smiled Sean's mother, "because even though I enjoy childrens' stories, I still don't believe in ghost's."
4. But just then they heard crashes' in the kitchen, and when they ran to look, they saw that a plates contents had been scattered all over the kitchen floor—but no one was there.
5. "This problems' solution is near at hand," said Seans' mother, her lip's corners still raised in a confident smile.

---

## More Practice (Optional)

In this last challenging exercise, there is no underlining to help you determine which words have been misspelled. Find them for yourself and, as in the last exercise, cross them out and write the correct spellings above the mistakes.

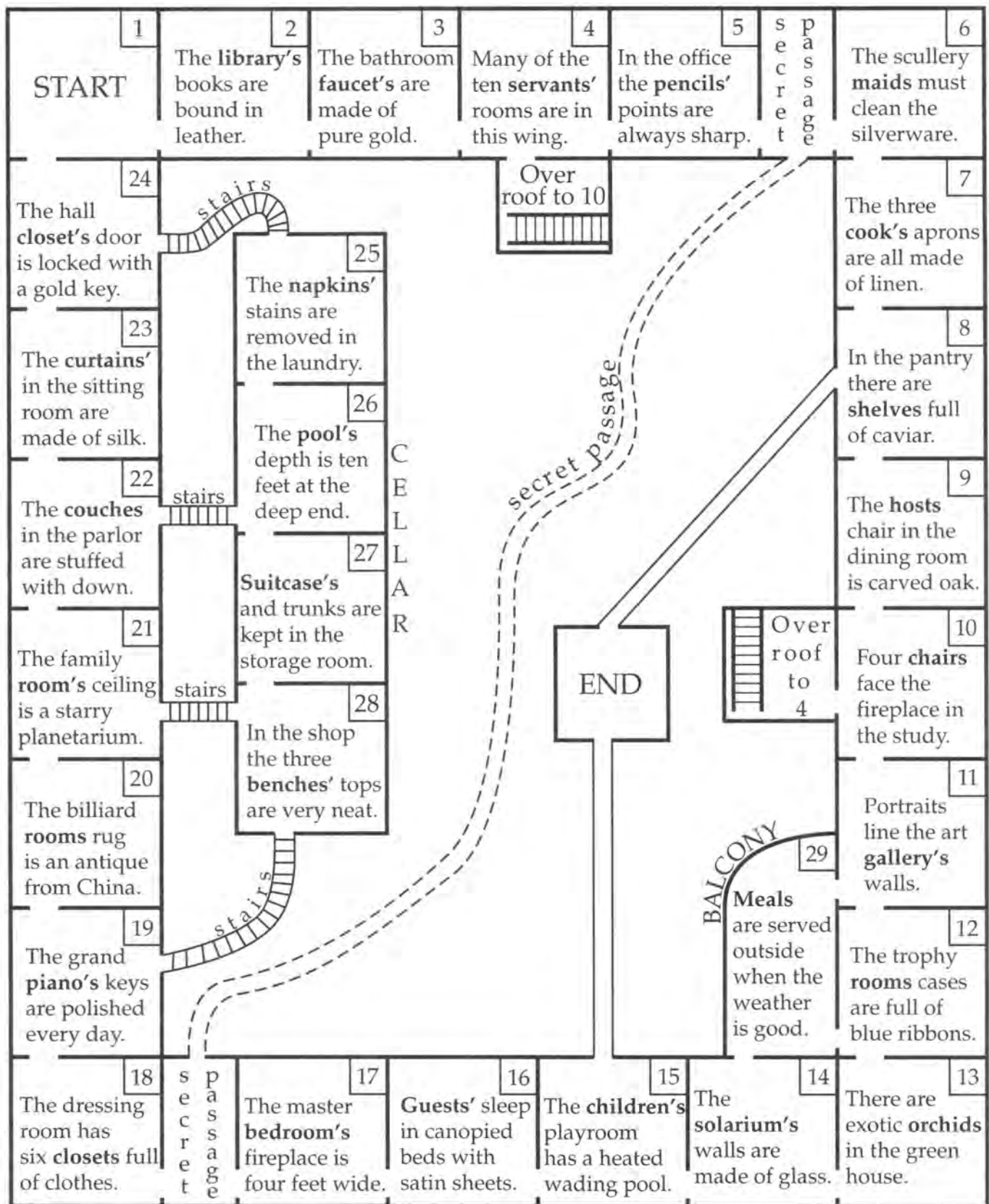
This exercise concludes the story about Sean and his family.

*Hint:* There are two misspellings in each of the ten sentences.

**Example:** The ghosts' ~~antic's~~<sup>antics</sup> were occurring more often, but ~~Seans~~<sup>Sean's</sup> mother still was not worried.

1. Sean said nervously, "These ghost's visits are getting much too frequent for me to have a good nights sleep."
2. His fathers eyes seemed worried too as they studied the leftover's scattered across the kitchen floor.
3. "The three of us are going to become detective's and find these mysteries' solutions," announced Seans mother.
4. "Look at the fruit on the floor," she said. "These apple's have been pierced by a small animals teeth, and these rolls have been gnawed."
5. "And here on the table," said Sean excitedly, "the milk carton's top has been chewed and the cookies edge's have been nibbled."
6. "And," said Sean's father laughing, "these ghosts entrances and exits' have been right through this hole in the wall below the window."

- 
7. His parent's words were identical as they shouted happily, "The squirrel's!"
  8. "Of course, that is the problems solution!" said Sean. "Those two squirrels nests were blown out of the tree that windy night, and the squirrels have gone into the walls of our house."
  9. With a neighbors help, they put nut's in traps by the holes in the walls, soon caught the hungry animals, drove them to a nearby forest, and released them.
  10. That night Sean picked up the book by his bed—*Childrens' Favorite Ghost Stories*—and read it for the first time in several day's.



**Singular and Plural Possessives:** Find the path to the end by passing only through the rooms with correctly spelled **boldfaced** words. The shortest path leads through fifteen rooms with correct spellings, but as a bonus, see if you can find five others!

# HOMOPHONE DEMONS

## This Unit Teaches Students

- how to distinguish between homophones that cause frequent spelling errors

## Overview

This unit includes two lists of homophone “demons” that are some of the most frequently misspelled words in English—words like *to*, *too*, and *two*; *there*, *their*, and *they’re*; and *piece* and *peace*. Some words that are similar but are not true homophones—such as *then* and *than*, *quiet* and *quite*—are also included. Wherever possible, suggestions and mnemonic devices are provided to help students distinguish between the confusing homophones.

The exercises in the unit are all parts of an ongoing story about a girl who receives an anonymous poetic note at school and hopes that it came from a boy that she likes.

The unit ends with two amusing review exercises, including a spelling maze.

## Teaching Notes

This unit is a final extension of the concepts covered in the last units—words that are difficult to spell because they sound alike but are spelled differently. You can give this material to your class without having done the prior units first, but they will have a much easier time with it if they have already done the work on possessives and contractions.

Since not just our students but all of us occasionally write the wrong form of *to* or *too* or of *they’re* or *there*, these demons demand constant correction, continual instruction, and frequent review. Before starting the unit, take some time to discuss mnemonic devices with the class so that your students can share their own methods for remembering how to spell the words in a difficult pair. (Often the sillier a memory aid is, the better it works. To this day I still remember my seventh grade teacher telling me “There’s a rat in *separate*.”)

As you move through the unit, emphasize the differences in the words in the groups—for example, have them overpronounce the vowel sounds in *then* and *than* so that they really hear a difference. Also, encourage them to come up with and share mnemonic devices. Finally, follow up this unit by reminding your students to proofread their work with homophones in mind since they are responsible for such a large number of spelling errors.





# HOMOPHONE DEMONS



## What's It All About?

Yes, that's a strange little poem, made stranger by 2 and B in place of *to* and *be*. Or should that be *too*—or maybe *two*—and *bee*? Those words all sound alike but are spelled differently!

After you've worked your (or should that be *you're*?) way through this unit, you will get a chance to fill in the right spellings for 2 and B in that poem. But first, let's (*lets*?) learn about homophone demons.

## Let's Find Out

A homophone (sometimes called a *homonym*) is a word that sounds the same as another word but is spelled differently—words like *grown* and *groan*, *horse* and *hoarse*, and *lets* and *let's*.

A spelling "demon" is a word that is frequently misspelled. A list of homophone demons follows, and among them you're sure to recognize some of the words that you've misspelled before. (You aren't alone! There is probably not a single writer of English who hasn't at some time been "demonized" by one of these pesky words.)

I'm not 2 sure but probably  
The quote "2B or not 2B...."  
Comes from a soliloquy  
(A word that is 2 hard for me  
2 spell or say quite easily)  
By Hamlet, who was not a B—  
An insect buzzing busily—  
But someone who just wished 2B  
Not 2 things, rather just 2B  
Alone—which does appeal 2 me  
Especially, *especially...*  
*When homophone demons are  
pursuing me!*



<b><u>Contraction</u></b>	<b><u>Homophone Demons</u></b>	
	<b><u>Possessive</u></b>	<b><u>Other Homophone</u></b>
they're (they are)	their (their dog)	there (There he is.)
it's (it is)	its (its tail)	_____
you're (you are)	your (your cat)	_____
there's (there is)	theirs (It is theirs.)	_____
who's (who is)	whose (Whose dog?)	_____
let's (let us)	_____	lets (He lets me play.)
we're (we are)	_____	were (They were here.)
we'll (we shall or will)	_____	well (Well, I guess so. I'm feeling well.)

You may recognize some of these words from the earlier unit on contractions; even so, you may want a quick review of the way to test to see if a word is a contraction or a possessive.

The trick is to substitute the two words that the contraction represents and see if they work. If they do, you need the spelling with the apostrophe.

**Example 1:** Is the underlined word spelled correctly in this sentence:

I don't know whose book this is.

**Trial:** Substitute *Who is*, the words that form the contraction *who's*, for *whose*.

I don't know who is book this is.

**Result:** No, that does not make sense. The contraction is wrong. The spelling with no apostrophe was correct: *whose*.

**Reminder:** Remember that the apostrophes in contractions are placed where letters of the original words have been omitted, not where the words have been joined: *Don't* write *do'nt!*

**Example 2:** Is the underlined word spelled correctly in this sentence:

I think that your taller than I am.

**Trial:** Substitute *you are*, the words that form the contraction *you're*, for *your*.

I think that you are taller than I am.

**Result:** Yes, that does make sense. The contraction form should be used: *you're*.

---

## Let's Try It

Underline the correctly spelled words in the parentheses below. Use the list of demons on page 74 to help you, and be sure to test for contractions as in the trials above. The sentences begin a story that will be continued in later exercises.

**Example:** "Unless you think that (I'm, Im) a fool,  
(I'll, Ill) meet you somewhere after school."

1. (Who's, Whose) that note from?" said Jacqueline to Allegra, her best friend at school.
2. "I (don't, dont) know," blushed Allegra. "(It's, Its) something I found stuck into my locker and (theirs, there's) no signature."
3. "Look," whispered Jacqueline. "(There's, theirs) another one pushed under (you're, your) math book!"
4. "(You're, Your) right," said Allegra, "(Lets, Let's) see what it says. It looks like another little poem."
5. "If you (can't, ca'nt, cant) judge a book by reading (it's, its) cover, Then how can just looking help you discover (Who's, whose) your friend and (who's, whose) your lover?"
6. "(There's, Theirs) no name on this one either," sighed Allegra. "And (I'm, Im) not sure (who's, whose) handwriting it is either."
7. Jacqueline said, "(We'll, Well), I think we have to be observant. (Let's, Lets) not tell anyone we found the notes. Then (we'll, well) watch people carefully in our classes and see (who's, whose) watching you."

---

## More Homophone Demons

So far we have studied homophones that involve contractions. Here is another list of words, none of which have apostrophes, that also cause spelling problems because they sound alike.

<u>Common Word</u>		<u>Homophone or Similar Word</u>	
to	(to him, to the store)	too	(too much; also)
		two	(2)
plain	(not fancy; level land)	plane	(airplane; smoothing tool)
piece	(part)	peace	(not war)
break	(snap; recess)	brake	(stop a vehicle)
course	(noun form; "of course")	coarse	(adjective: rough)
past	(history)	passed	(went by; passed a note or a test)
		than	(comparison word)
then	(at that time; therefore)	quiet	(silent)
quite	(very)		

If there were some easy devices to help you remember how to distinguish these words, we would all be happier. Unfortunately, all of us have to come up with our own individual methods for remembering these words. Maybe you have a way that works for one of these pairs that you can share with your classmates.

One thing that will help you spell the last two pairs in the list is to over-pronounce them: *thehn* as opposed to *thaa*; *qui-eh* (two syllables) as opposed to *quite* (one syllable). Here are some samples of memory aids (also known as *mnemonic devices*) that might be helpful to you.

### Mnemonic Devices

There are **too** many o's in the word **too**.

You might **-ake** (ache) if you stamp too hard on the **brake**.

A piece of pie; a **pie** in **piece**.

---

## DID YOU KNOW?

A *mnemonic device* is something that assists our memory, and that word *mnemonic* is a real spelling demon itself. The *m* is silent so it is pronounced nee•mah•nic.

The word *mnemonic* comes from Ancient Greek and is related to the Greek goddess of memory Mnemosyne (pronounced Nee•mah•suh•nee). She was the mother of all the Muses, those nine goddesses who inspire poetry, music, dance, and the other arts and sciences.



---

## Let's Practice

Underline the correctly spelled words in the parentheses below. Use the list of homophone demons on page 76 to help you. (There are no contractions or words from the list on page 74 in this exercise.) The sentences continue the story of the first exercise.

**Example:** Allegra was (quite, quiet) anxious to discover which boy was secretly passing her notes.

1. Jacqueline smiled at Allegra and said, "Of (course, coarse) I know who you are hoping is the one who (past, passed) you those notes."
2. "Do you know (to, too, two)?" asked Allegra. "Is it (plain, plane) (to, too, two) everyone that I like Luis better (then, than) some of the other boys?"
3. "You've been (quite, quiet) about it," said Jacqueline, "but (then, than) you've been staring at him a lot (to, too, two)."
4. "I just (past, passed) him in the hall at the (to, too, two) o'clock class (break, brake) and hardly even looked at him," Allegra said defensively.
5. "(Then, Than) why did you blush when he said hello (to, too, two) you?" demanded Jacqueline.
6. "Oh, please," begged Allegra, "don't make fun of me. You've got (to, too, two) help me find out if he sent the notes. I won't have a minute's (piece, peace) until I find out."
7. "Of (course, coarse) I'm going to help you," Jacqueline said reassuringly. "Our next class is history, and he sits across from you. We'll find out (then, than) if he seems to be watching you."
8. "I'm more nervous (then, than) when I first flew in a small (plain, plane)," laughed Allegra. "I just want to have this whole thing over."

---

## Putting It All Together

In the first part of the following exercise, the words that are underlined are sometimes spelled correctly and sometimes misspelled. Cross out the misspellings and write the correct spelling above the word. In the last challenging sentences, there is no more underlining to help you spot the misspellings; you must find them completely on your own. The story of the last two exercises is concluded here.

course

**Example:** "Of ~~course~~, I really hope it's Luis who has been sending me those notes," admitted Allegra.

1. "Look, Allegra!" whispered Jacqueline as they walked into they're history class, "theirs another note on the chair where you always sit."
2. They were among the last to get too the class, and Allegra was quite self-conscious as she picked up the note and took her seat.
3. Feeling as if everyone we're staring at her, she opened the note under her desk and then quickly read it.
4. It read:

"Lets meet today—please don't say no!

Behind the gym is where two go.

It's very plane how much I care:

At 4:15 please meet me there!"

- 
5. Jacqueline, who's desk was next to Allegra's, must have been able to read the note to, for she immediately past Allegra a note of her own that read: "Your going to go, of course!"
  6. "Stop passing me notes!" whispered Allegra angrily. "The other kids seem to know something is up. There all looking at us! Well decide what to do after class. Until than just be quite."
  7. Poor Allegra had no peace in that class, for Luis seemed to interested in the present—meaning her!—to pay attention to the history teacher's lecture about the past.

## Challenge

Now there is no more underlining to help you. Find the words that are misspelled, cross them out, and write the correct spellings above them. **Hint:** There are two incorrectly spelled words in each sentence.

1. "It's almost 4:15 and you still can't make up you're mind," said Jacqueline too Allegra after school.
2. "I'm more nervous then I've ever been before," moaned Allegra, "because I just don't know who's going to be waiting for me their."
3. "If its not Luis, I'll just die," she continued. "And if it's Luis, then...well, I'll just die to!"
4. "Lets think," said Jacqueline. "I know! Well both go together. I'm sure that together we'll be able to deal with whoever is there."

- 
5. Allegra pondered that piece of advice and then said, "Of course, that's the safest and best way. Thanks for all your support, Jacqueline."
  6. In less than a minute the two of them were rounding the far corner of the gym, although Allegra was walking much more slowly than Jacqueline.
  7. "Were almost they're," said Jacqueline impatiently. "Take off the brakes and get a move on! It's already almost 4:20."
  8. "Whose afraid of a silly boy who past me a note?" said Allegra bravely, and she walked right by Jacqueline and around the corner of the gym.
  9. Allegra thought her heart would brake—not from love but from surprise—when the plain truth was revealed: All her friends were there, and all of them, including Jacqueline, cried out, "Surprise!"
  10. "Your all very nice," Allegra stammered, "but it's not my birthday. Who's idea was this anyway?"
  11. For a moment it was very quite, and then Luis said, "Someone appreciates you a lot as a friend and thought you deserved a party. Isn't it plain who it was? It was my idea, of course."



---

## Fun With Homophones

### Helping the Poet

At the beginning of this unit you found a poem that used 2 for *to*, *too*, and *two* and B for *and* *be* and *bee*. After all your hard work with homophones, maybe you can help that lazy poet and write in the correct spellings for him.

I'm not (2) \_\_\_\_\_ sure but probably

The quote "(2B) \_\_\_\_\_ or not (2B) \_\_\_\_\_"

Comes from a soliloquy

(A word that is (2) \_\_\_\_\_ hard for me

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ spell or say quite easily)

By Hamlet, who was not a (B) \_\_\_\_\_

An insect buzzing busily—

But someone who just wished (2B) \_\_\_\_\_

Not (2) \_\_\_\_\_ things, rather just (2B) \_\_\_\_\_

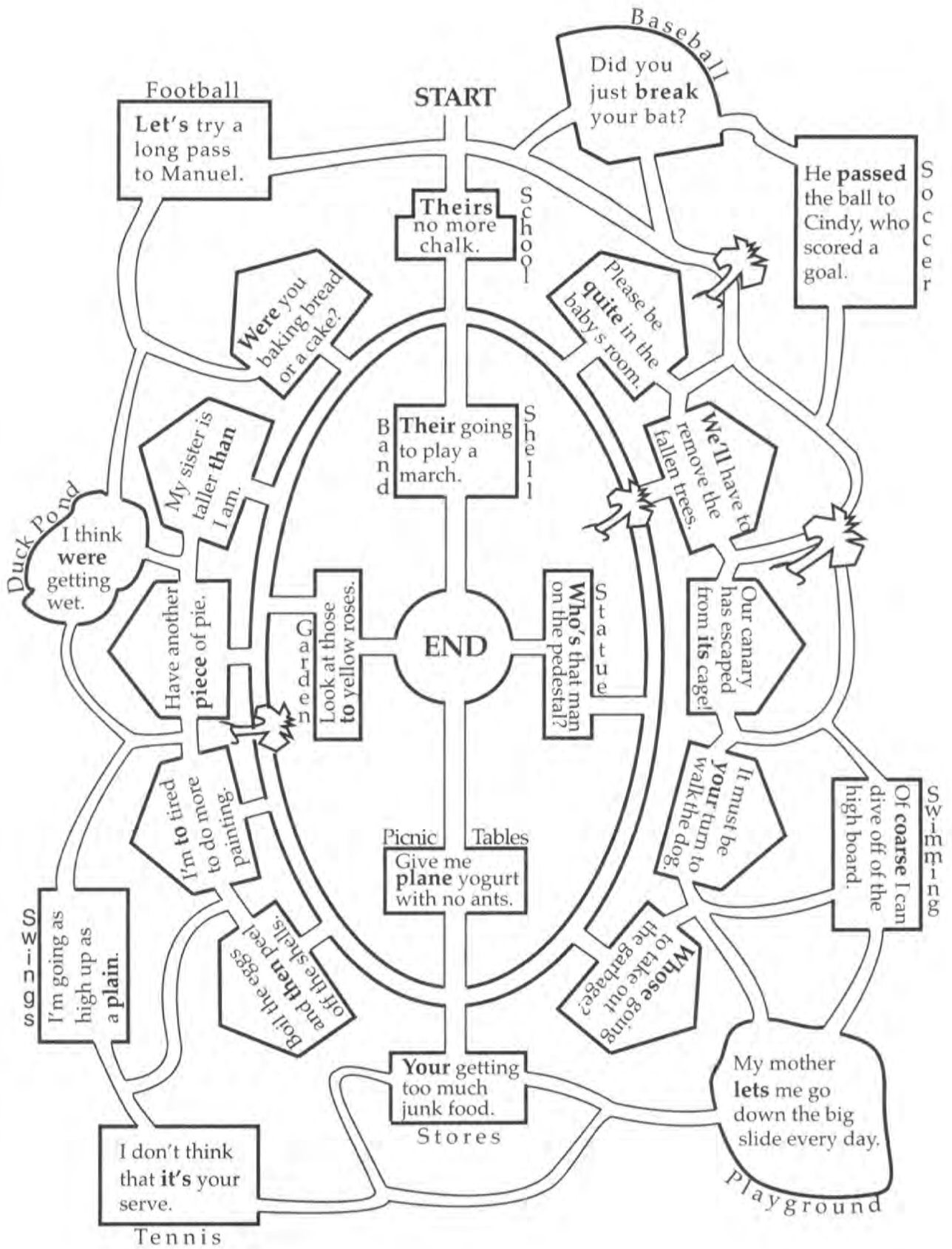
Alone—which does appeal (2) \_\_\_\_\_ me

Especially, *especially*...

When **homophone demons** are pursuing me!



**Homophone Demons:** Find the way to the end by following the path that leads only through correctly spelled **boldface** words and across no fallen trees. The shortest path passes through nine correct **boldface** spellings, but as a bonus, see if you can find four more.



# TROUBLESOME ENDINGS

## This Unit Teaches Students

- how to spell words that end in *-us* and *-ous*
- how to spell words that end in *-cle* and *-cal*
- how to spell words that end in *-ful*

## Overview

This unit is divided into three sections. The first part explains that *-ous* is an adjective ending and *-us* is a noun ending. A brief review of these two parts of speech is provided so that students can work out which ending a word should have. The second part distinguishes between *-cal*, usually an adjective ending, and *-cle*, a noun ending. The third section takes up the troublesome *-ful* ending, noting that the word *full* itself ends *-ull*, but one *l* is dropped when *full* is used as a suffix. Each section includes an exercise, and the final regular exercise tells a short tale about two children who find that watching the sky can be an exciting game.

The unit concludes with two review exercises in the form of games, a search for a “secret message” and a spelling maze.

## Teaching Notes

English spelling is made even more difficult by endings that sound alike but are spelled differently. When students realize that some of these endings fall into consistent patterns, they can simplify the task of orthography.

You may wish to introduce the three patterns presented in this unit before handing out the printed materials. You could put groups of words on the board—*octopus*, *radius*, and *nucleus* in one box and *dangerous*, *humorous*, and *nervous* in another—and see if the students can spot the pattern for themselves: one is a group of nouns, and the other is a group of adjectives. The same could be done for words that end in *-cle* and *-cal*.

Like most spelling patterns, the three in this unit are easily forgotten, and often students who do well with spelling exercises misspell the same words in their own writing. You may wish to follow up the work here with more exercises or by having them write a story where they use words ending in the five ways covered in this unit.



# TROUBLESOME ENDINGS

Beautiful Jessica was full of delight when she saw a wondrous smiling purple octopus.



## What's It All About?

A smiling purple octopus could, indeed, delight Jessica, but the endings of *full* and *beautiful* as well as *wondrous* and *octopus* may make Jessica wonder in a different way. She may wonder why endings that sound the same are not spelled in the same way. This unit will help you find some patterns to make spelling seem a little more consistent.

### Model Words

radius	wondrous
particle	practical
full	wonderful

Sometimes English spelling does seem difficult and confusing. Why should the endings of the first two pairs of words in the box be spelled differently when they are pronounced the same? Both *radius* and *wondrous* end with the /ūs/ sound. And there is no difference in that /kə1/ sound at the end of *particle* and *practical*. Furthermore, *full* has two l's but one of them is dropped when it becomes an ending on a word like *wonderful*.

Although these spellings may seem to be very inconsistent, there are patterns that can help you with these endings, not just for these six words but for all English words that end like these.

First, let's look at the problem of *-us* and *-ous*. If you know your parts of speech, you will see that *radius* is a **noun** and *wondrous* is an **adjective**. That is the key to the pattern:

- I. **Words that end in -us are nouns.**  
**Words that end in -ous are adjectives.**

Before you try to use this pattern, perhaps you might wish to have a quick review of **adjectives** and **nouns**.

---

**Nouns** are words that name things like *dog*, *house*, *happiness*, and *spelling*. You can usually tell if a word is a noun if you can put *the* or *a* before it: Is *center* a noun? *The center*? Yes. Is *happy* a noun? *The happy*? *A happy*? No.

**Adjectives** are words that describe nouns—*big*, *yellow*, *happy*, *strange*. All those words could be used to describe the noun *dog*. (The most common adjectives of all are *the* and *a*, and that is why you can use them to test if a following word is a noun.)

### Let's Try It

Write in the correct endings for the following words, then write a sentence using each word. Remember, if you can put *a*, *an*, or *the* in front of a word, it's a noun.

*Hint:* The word for number 6 may be new to you, but you can still spell it correctly because it is a noun. Also, you can't go wrong with number 10, but can you explain why?

**Example:** wondr ous

The wizard shared his wondrous tales with the king.

1. octop \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. danger \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. humor \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. nerv \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. geni \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. termin \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

7. gener \_\_\_\_\_

---

8. mischiev \_\_\_\_\_

---

9. religi \_\_\_\_\_

---

10. call \_\_\_\_\_

---



A **callus** is a rough patch on your skin. You can get a **callus** if you work with your hands a lot. But a **callous** person is someone who doesn't really care about anything.



---

## DID YOU KNOW?

The adjective *nauseous* is often used informally to mean *feeling sick*, but its true meaning is *causing nausea, disgusting*. Thus if you say, "I'm nauseous," you actually mean, "I make you sick." If you're the one who's sick, say, "I feel nauseated."



---

**II. Words that end in *-cle* are nouns.  
Words that end in *-cal* are adjectives.**

You can use the same kind of test for words that end in the /kəl/ sound as you did for the /ūs/ ending.

**Test 1:** Is *-al* the correct ending for the word *partical*? Is the word a noun or an adjective? If it's a noun, you could say "A partical" or "The partical." It is a noun so, no, the ending should be *-cle*; thus, *particle* is the correct spelling.

**Test 2:** Is *-al* the correct ending for the word *practical*? Is the word a noun or an adjective? If it's a noun, you could say "A practical" or "The practical." No, it isn't a noun so the ending should be *-cal*; thus, *practical* is the correct spelling.

### Let's Practice

Write in the correct endings for the following words. Bonus question: Why could number 10 be seen as an exception to the rule?

**Example:** parti cle

1. arti \_\_\_\_\_

6. mysti \_\_\_\_\_

2. criti \_\_\_\_\_

7. identi \_\_\_\_\_

3. histori \_\_\_\_\_

8. typi \_\_\_\_\_

4. mira \_\_\_\_\_

9. ici \_\_\_\_\_

5. bicy \_\_\_\_\_

10. musi \_\_\_\_\_

Some words that end *-cal* can be nouns—such as **rascal**—or adjectives and nouns—like the word **musical** (from your list above) or **radical** (when used as a noun as in the sentence, "The politician used to be a radical, but now he's a conservative.")

---

III. The only common word that ends in *full* is the word *full* itself.  
All others end in *-ful*.

### Let's Try It

Many of the words below are spelled incorrectly. Write them correctly on the lines provided. You do not have to rewrite correctly spelled words.

**Example:** skillfull skillful

1. pitifull \_\_\_\_\_
2. handful \_\_\_\_\_
3. masterfull \_\_\_\_\_
4. full \_\_\_\_\_
5. playfull \_\_\_\_\_
6. plentiful \_\_\_\_\_
7. respectfull \_\_\_\_\_
8. delightfull \_\_\_\_\_
9. distressfull \_\_\_\_\_
10. beautifull \_\_\_\_\_



### Try This!

Write a limerick using words with *-us*, *-ous*, *-cle*, *-cal*, and *-ful* endings. Use as many words as you can from the lists in the preceding three exercises. A limerick has a rhyme scheme of *a-a-b-b-a*.

Diane said, "I find it quite comical  
When a gentleman's wearing a monocle.  
It's so humorous,  
That lone oculus,  
That I laugh myself sick-then I'm sorrowful!"



---

## Putting It All Together

In each of the following sentences, there are two underlined words. One of them is spelled correctly, but the other is misspelled. Cross out each misspelling and write a correctly spelled word over it. All of the words follow the three rules above and no exceptions have been included. Notice that the sentences tell a short story.

Wondrous

**Example:** Isabel noticed how ~~wondrus~~ the sky above her had suddenly become.

1. Isabel and her younger brother Michael were riding their identical bicycals in the park.
2. When they arrived at the park, the sky was a beautifull blue, but now Isabel noticed that it had become truly magical.
3. From seemingly nowhere had come two glorius clouds, one of them pink and shaped like a horse and another like a purple octopus.
4. Although Isabel and Michael were skillfull riders, they almost fell as they tried both to ride and to observe the mystical clouds.
5. "Stop," cried Isabel. "That octopous cloud looks dangerous!"
6. "I know," Michael gasped. "It is an evil and skillful cloud! It's going to wrap up that lovely pink horse in its awful tentacals."
7. Here was the horse's distressful problem: He had his back turned to the evil fish and was rearing in a playfull way.
8. Only a miracal could save the pink horse from the purple cloud's disastrous embrace.



9. But then it happened: a strong wind twisted the horse's head to the side, and with a skillful and vigorous leap he avoided his doom.
10. The victorious pink horse raced over the horizon, but as Isabel later said, "It was almost pitiful to see that purple villain collapse into just a regular gray rain cloud after it failed to catch its prey."



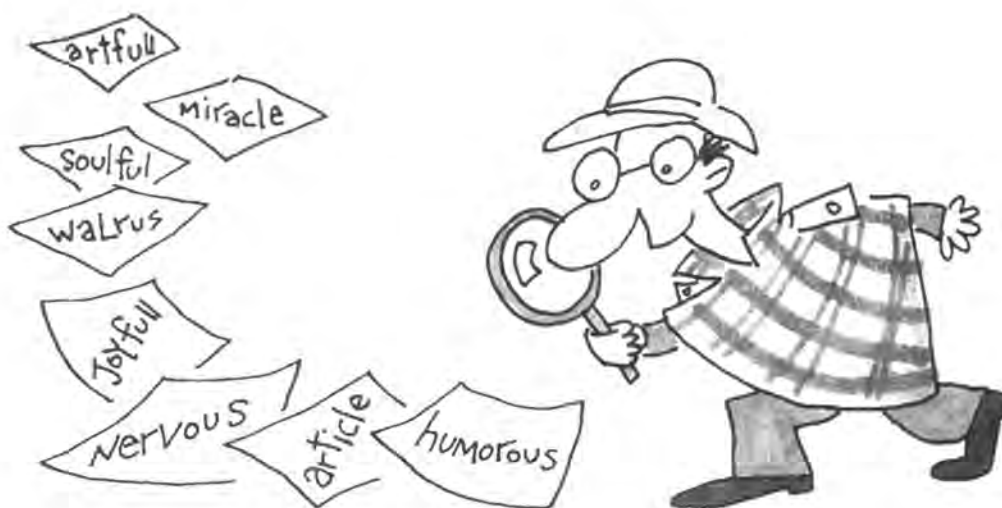
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## Fun With Endings

### Find the Hidden Message

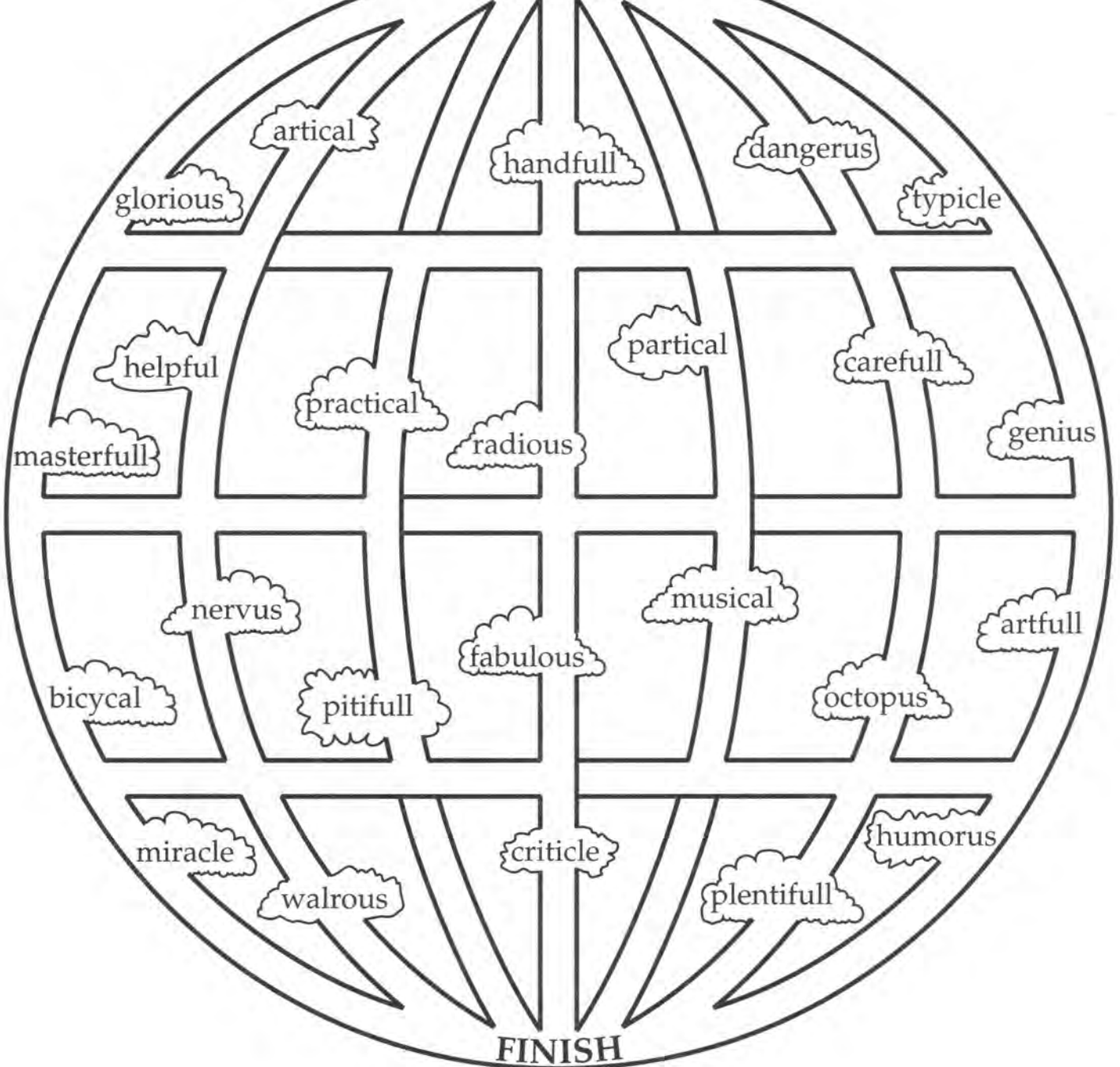
Here is a list of words, some of which are spelled correctly and some of which are misspelled. (All misspellings are in the endings you studied in this unit.) Circle the first letter of every word that is misspelled. Then put the circled letters together in the order they appear and see if you can read the hidden message.

wonderful magical gratefull tricycle mysterious rebellius obstacle  
envius critical humorous plentiful artfull tremendous miracle soulful  
walrus joyfull nervous obvius playful article bicycal humorous





START



FINISH



**Troublesome Endings:** Find the path to the finish by passing only through correctly spelled words. The shortest path will go through eight correct spellings.

# DIVIDING WORDS INTO SYLLABLES

## This Unit Teaches Students

- how to separate words into their component syllables in order to facilitate the spelling of longer words



## Overview

This section begins by emphasizing that syllables are units of sound with one vowel sound in each of a word's syllables—e.g., **un·hap·py**. The first exercise asks students to count the number of syllables they hear in a variety of words. Next, two methods are presented for finding where words divide into syllables—between double letters (hap·py) and between root words and affixes (re·play·ing). The students decide in the following exercise whether given words have been divided correctly, and then they divide words themselves.

## Teaching Notes

Although this unit asks the students to spell very few words, syllable separation belongs in any thorough spelling program. Many students do not hear or see syllable breaks and are thus condemned to learning every long word as a lengthy chain of letters rather than a series of short, discrete syllables. Think of the task of remembering how to spell that word *remembering* if you couldn't break it up into the simple parts *re-mem-ber-ing*.

This is a unit where oral drill is invaluable since many people, not just children, have great difficulty hearing syllables. Say a one-syllable word like *in* to the class and then add a syllable to it to make a two-syllable word—*inside*. Ask them if they can hear that the second word has two parts and the first only one part. Discuss the general idea that a syllable is a unit of sound and that each syllable in a word has one vowel sound. Then do more drill with words whose syllables are easily heard, asking how many syllables each word comprises.

Of course it is often very difficult to know where syllables separate, and we all must sometimes go to the dictionary for help. This unit deals only with words that break in clear or systematic ways. In your drills it is probably advisable to avoid words where the divisions are not easily determined.

# DIVIDING WORDS INTO SYLLABLES



When we read, we can't read **just** the letters of the words.  
We must often **adjust** and **readjust** the way we group the letters.

## What's It All About?

Look what happens when we push the letters of the two words *read* and *just* into one word. We don't have a word that means "read only" but the word *re·ad·just*. In order to read this word correctly, we must see that it has three **syllables** instead of two.

re·do	bat·ter	treat·ment
im·me·di·ate·ly	weight·y	screech

The model words above have been divided into **syllables**. If you say the words slowly, you will hear that each syllable contains one vowel sound. We break words down into syllables by listening to these units of sound.

As you can see in the word *weight·y*, syllables can be many letters long (*weight·*) or as short as one letter (*·y*). Some words like *im·me·di·ate·ly* are composed of many syllables, while many words have only one syllable, even longer words like *screech*.

If you tune your ear to hear syllables, it can make spelling a much easier process. For instance, instead of having to remember the order of all the letters of a long word like *interesting*, you can spell it one short syllable at a time: *in·ter·est·ing*.

## Let's Get Started

By pronouncing the words below—or listening to the way you would pronounce them in your mind—decide how many syllables each has. Some words have only one syllable; one has as many as seven.

Word	Number of Syllables
Example: similar	3
1. radar	_____
2. break	_____
3. breakfast	_____
4. about	_____
5. freight	_____
6. happy	_____
7. happily	_____
8. unhappiness	_____
9. American	_____
10. quietly	_____
11. independently	_____
12. squeeze	_____
13. individualistic	_____
14. skeletons	_____
15. accumulation	_____



DID YOU  
KNOW?

### Antidisestablishmentarianism.

Now there's a word for you! It probably was made up just to be the longest word in English since it is never really used much—except as an example of a long word. It would be extremely hard to spell if we couldn't break it up into syllables. Can you count them? (Answer below)

Answer:  
an-ti-dis-es-tab-lish-men-tar-i-an-ism  
has eleven syllables.

---

## Separating Words Into Syllables

---

### More Model Words

run·ner      bit·ter·ness      im·pres·sing      un·hap·pi·ly

---

Even after hearing the different syllables in a word, we sometimes find it hard to tell just exactly where the syllables separate. There are, however, some general guidelines that can give you help with this process. The model words above demonstrate some of these guidelines.

#### 1. A syllable break often occurs between double letters.

As you can see in the list of models, there is usually a syllable break between double letters in words like *runner*.

#### 2. A syllable break often occurs where a prefix or suffix has been added to a root word.

Look at the model words *impressing*, *bitterness*, and *unhappily*. You see that prefixes like *im-* and *un-* usually make up separate syllables as do suffixes like *-ness* and *-ly*.

*Note:* You must be careful with suffixes. In the words *runner* and *impressing*, the syllable break occurs between the double letters, not before the suffixes *-er* and *-ing*. Also, in words like *tossed*, which we pronounce /tôst/, there is no syllable break.

---

### DID YOU KNOW

The ability to separate words into syllables not only helps you spell words more easily, it also helps you use hyphens when you don't have enough space at the end of a line to finish writing a word. The correct place to put a hyphen when you divide words between lines is between syllables. Thus you should never divide a one-syllable word. Squeeze it in, or leave some blank space and put the whole word on the next line.





---

## Let's Try It

There are two parts to this exercise. In Part I, you must decide if the given words have been correctly divided into syllables. In Part II, you must make the divisions yourself.

I. If the syllables of a word below are separated incorrectly, rewrite the word on the lines provided and place the dots where they should go. Leave the lines blank if a word is correctly separated.

Examples: swi·m·ming swim·ming un·want·ed \_\_\_\_\_

1. ha·ppy \_\_\_\_\_

2. sil·ly \_\_\_\_\_

3. un·fit \_\_\_\_\_

4. imm·ense \_\_\_\_\_

5. thi·nking \_\_\_\_\_

6. un·man·ly \_\_\_\_\_

7. up·brin·ging \_\_\_\_\_

8. mass·ive·ness \_\_\_\_\_

9. dis·app·oint·ment \_\_\_\_\_

10. un·flat·te·ring \_\_\_\_\_

---

II. Now it's your turn to put in the dots that indicate syllable breaks. On the line next to the given word, write the word showing where the syllables separate.

Example: swimming swim·ming

1. platter \_\_\_\_\_

2. undone \_\_\_\_\_

3. brightness \_\_\_\_\_

4. hopeful \_\_\_\_\_

5. sputtering \_\_\_\_\_

6. misfitted \_\_\_\_\_

7. disappear \_\_\_\_\_

8. peppery \_\_\_\_\_

9. different \_\_\_\_\_

10. unlawfully \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Fun With Syllable Separation

### Secret Message

Here is a list of words separated into syllables—sometimes correctly and sometimes incorrectly. Put a circle around each word whose syllables are correctly separated. When you are finished, read the circled words in order. You will find that they will send you a message.

sin•ging

hurr•y•ing

thought•ful

hap•pil•y

shipm•ent

un•hurr•ied

work•ers

ref•er•ring

be•come

doubt•full•y

mi•stake

redd•en

awes•ome

ex•cel•lent

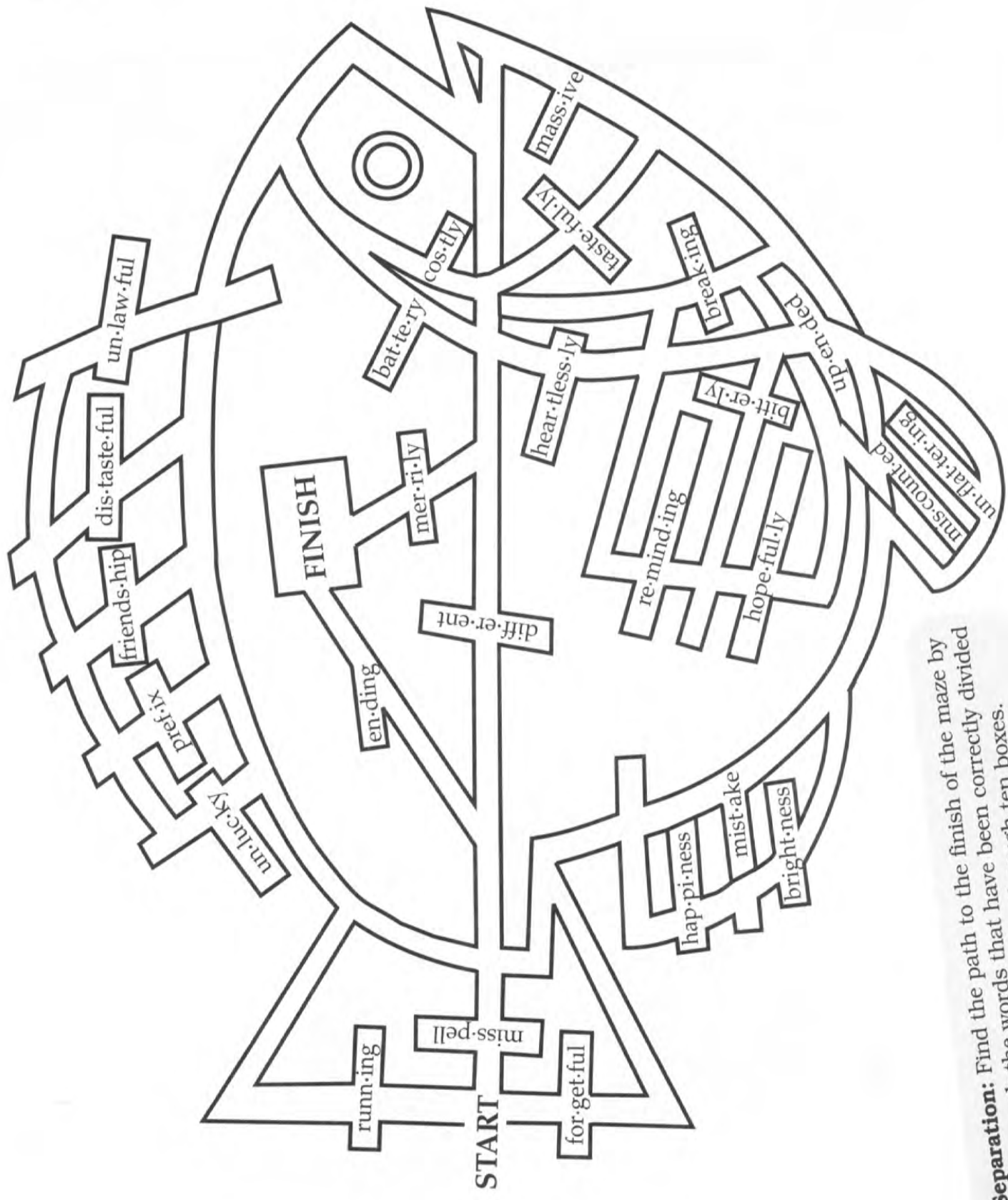
un•be•co•ming

sill•i•ness

spel•lers

en•ding





**Syllable Separation:** Find the path to the finish of the maze by passing only through the words that have been correctly divided into syllables. The shortest path goes through ten boxes.

# STRESS AND THE SCHWA SOUND

## This Unit Teaches Students

- that multisyllabic words have syllables with primary and sometimes secondary stress—*e.g.*, *in·de·pend·ent*.
- that vowels in unaccented syllables often change their sound and become the schwa (ə) sound, the *uh* sound of the *o* in the word *purpose*.



## Overview

After a short introduction, the unit is divided into three sections. The first part explains the concept of stress and gives the students practice in locating a word's primary stress. The second part, which is optional, takes up the concept of secondary stress. The third section presents the schwa sound—that "nothing" sound that we so often make when a vowel is not in a stressed syllable.

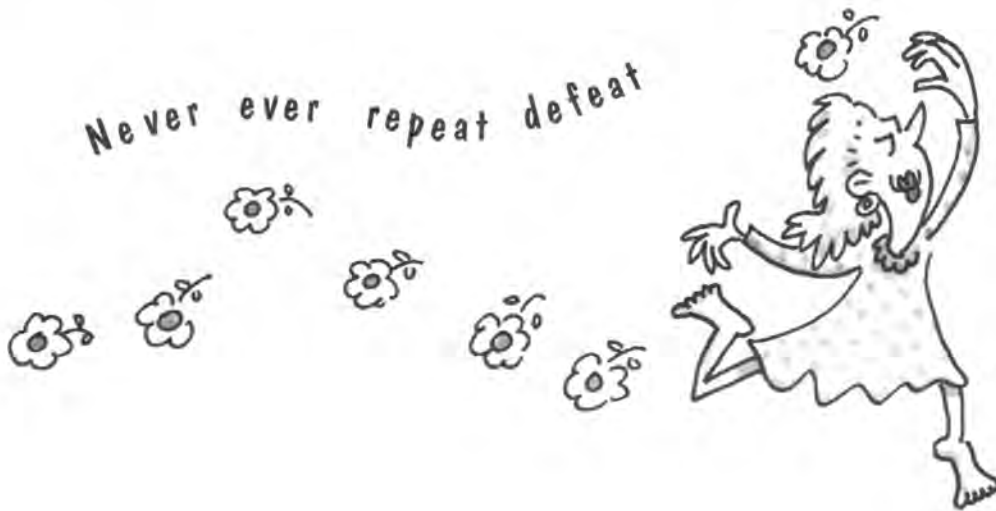
## Teaching Notes

This unit is an extension of the work begun in the last unit on syllabification. Students who do not understand how to divide words into syllables will have a hard time with this material. In fact, it is often difficult for some students to hear where the stress falls in words with just two syllables.

Every attempt has been made here to give students techniques to hear where the stress falls in a word. You may find, however, that you should skip over the optional section on secondary stress if your class is having trouble locating primary stress. To give them a boost and to prompt interest, you may wish to introduce the idea of overpronouncing syllables to locate the stress before you hand out the materials. A good method is to have them play with their own names: Is your name pronounced **Rob-ert** or **Rob-ert**?

The payoff for spelling improvement comes in the third section, where students will come to understand why they have a hard time remembering, for example, if it should be an *a* or an *e* in the last syllable of *independent*. Since the *e* in the suffix *-ent* makes the schwa sound (ənt) rather than the sound of a soft *e* (ĕ), there is no way that their ears can help them. This will help them locate trouble spots in multisyllabic words where they will have to pay close attention to the vowel used. If they overpronounce the unstressed syllable, moving the sound from schwa to soft *e*—*independĕnt*—they will have an easier time remembering the correct spelling.

# STRESS AND THE SCHWA SOUND



## What's It All About?

*Never ever repeat defeat.* That sentence makes a kind of music when you say it. The first two words make one rhyme, and the last two words make another. But there is more music in our spoken language than repeating sounds. Our speech, like music, also has rhythm.

Can you hear that the "beat" of the first two words is different from that of the last two? *Never ever* has a rhythm that goes **ONE**-two, **ONE**-two, while *repeat defeat* goes one-**TWO**, one-**TWO**.

When one syllable in a word gets the "beat," it is said to have the **stress** or the **accent**. In this unit you will practice finding that stress and see how stress, or lack of stress, can change vowel sounds.

---

## Part I: Stress

---

### Model Words

turning return

forest forbid forgotten

---

Say the words *turning* and *return* slowly, and listen to how the rhythms of the words differ. We say **turn**-ing, with more stress on the first syllable *turn*- than on the second syllable -ing. In the word *return*, the **stress**—or as it is sometimes called, the **accent**—has moved to the second syllable, and we pronounce the word *re*-**turn**.

Now you try to determine where the stress falls in the other three words in the box.

Is the word pronounced **for**-est or *for*-est? (You are right if you chose the first way.)

For instance, where is the stress in the word *mistake*? Is it **mis**-take or *mis*-**take**? Yes, it's *mis*-**take**.

Is the first syllable *for*- stressed in the other two words in this group? Do you say **for**-bid and **for**-got-ten?

You are right if you said no, that the stress falls on the second syllable: *for*-**bid** and *for*-**got**-ten.

**Helpful Hint:** If you are having a hard time hearing where the stress falls, try over-stressing one syllable and practically whispering the other syllable or syllables.



---

## Let's Try It

I. In the word pairs below, one word has its stress on the first syllable and one word has its stress on the second syllable. Underline the syllable in each word that receives the stress. In the first three pairs, the syllables have been separated for you with dots. After that you must decide where the syllables separate as well.

Example: a) mis-take      b) taking tak-ing

1. a) un-wind    b) wind-ing

2. a) long-er    b) be-long

3. a) re-form    b) for-mal

4. a) fender \_\_\_\_\_      b) defend \_\_\_\_\_

5. a) missing \_\_\_\_\_      b) dismiss \_\_\_\_\_

II. Now the words in each group have three syllables, and at the end there are three words in the group. As you did above, underline the syllable in each word that receives the stress. At first, the syllables have been separated for you with dots.

Example: a) mis-for-tune    b) forunate for-tu-nate

6. a) dis-a-gree      b) a-gree-ment

7. a) re-play-ing      b) play-ful-ly

8. a) enjoyment \_\_\_\_\_      b) joyfully \_\_\_\_\_

9. a) gracefully \_\_\_\_\_      b) disgraceful \_\_\_\_\_

10. a) unlocking \_\_\_\_\_      b) lockable \_\_\_\_\_

c) interlock \_\_\_\_\_



---

## Let's Practice

Underline the syllables that are stressed when you say the following words. In the first half of the exercise, the syllables have been separated for you. In part II, you must also determine the syllable separation. In the three-syllable words, only one of the three syllables gets heavy stress.

Examples: Part I: re·quire      syl·la·ble

Part II: respectful re·spect·ful

### Part I:

1. run·ner
2. a·bove
3. re·view
4. hap·pi·ly
5. in·volve·ment

### Part II:

6. boastful \_\_\_\_\_
7. unkind \_\_\_\_\_
8. possible \_\_\_\_\_
9. enduring \_\_\_\_\_
10. arrangement \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Part II: Primary and Secondary Stress (Optional)

Some words, especially longer ones, have more than one syllable that receives stress. Usually, however, one of the stressed syllables gets a heavier accent than the other. In these words, the syllable that gets the heavier accent is said to have **primary stress**, and the syllable that gets less accent is said to have **secondary stress**.

Pronounce, for example, the word *undertake*. Do you hear that the primary stress is on the last syllable *-take* but that the first syllable *un-* gets secondary stress?

Here is an example of a four-syllable word that includes both primary and second stress: *indicator*. There is stress on both the first syllable *in-* and the third, *-ca-*. Can you hear which gets the primary and which gets the secondary stress?

You are right if you said that the primary accent falls on the first syllable.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Dictionaries show primary and secondary stress in various ways. A common method is to put accent marks after the syllables that receive stress: a bold-face accent for primary stress and a lighter accent for secondary stress:  
in' spi·ra' tion.

Often this is done where the dictionary shows how the word is pronounced:  
in·spi·ra·tion  
(in' spə rā' shə n)

Some dictionaries have another method. They put vertical accent marks before the stressed syllable: <sup>ˈ</sup>in·spi <sup>ˈ</sup>ra·tion.

---

## Let's Try It (Optional)

Each of the words in this exercise has a syllable that has secondary stress as well as a syllable with primary stress. Put a circle around the syllable with primary stress. Underline the syllable with secondary stress. In the first half of the exercise, the syllables have been separated for you. In the second half, you must also determine the syllable separation.

**Examples: Part I:** un·der·take

**Part II:** generator gen·er·a·tor

**Part I:**

1. o·ver·come
2. Mas·sa·chu·setts
3. ac·a·dem·ic
4. re·u·ni·ting
5. con·sti·tu·tion

**Part II:**

6. underneath \_\_\_\_\_
7. immature \_\_\_\_\_
8. transportation \_\_\_\_\_
9. imperfection \_\_\_\_\_
10. locomotive \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DID YOU KNOW?

Some long words have more than one secondary accent, such as the word *hypersensitivity* which has one primary accent and two secondary accents: *hy·per·sen·si·ti·vi·ty*.



---

## Part III: Schwa: The Unstressed Sound

---

stain certain      ten bitten      sin raisin

---

Look at the first pair of words in the box. Say the word *stain* and listen to the vowel sound. It is /ā/, the long *a* sound. Now say the word *certain* and listen to what happens to that *ai* vowel sound. It has changed to a sound closer to /uh/.

Each of the other pairs illustrates the same change. No matter what vowel sound is in the first word of the pair, it moves towards that /uh/ sound the minute it becomes part of an unstressed syllable—as illustrated by the second word of the pair.

That /uh/ vowel sound, the sound of the vowel in an unstressed syllable, is called the **schwa** sound and is indicated in most dictionaries by the phonetic symbol /ə/.



---

## Let's Try It

Underline the syllable in the following words that contains the schwa sound. In the first part, the syllables have been separated for you. In the second part, you must also separate the word into syllables.

Example: Part 1: open      Part 2: informal in·for·mal

### Part I:

1. un·der
2. nick·el
3. pur·chase
4. un·der·neath
5. im·pres·sion

### Part II:

6. friction \_\_\_\_\_
7. father \_\_\_\_\_
8. fortunate \_\_\_\_\_
9. overhead \_\_\_\_\_
10. misery \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Fun With Accents

### Secret Message

In the following words some syllables have letters that are underlined. Sometimes the letters are in an accented syllable; sometimes they are in an unaccented syllable. If you carefully write down, in the same order as they appear, the underlined letters that are *only in accented syllables*, they will spell out a secret message.

**Example:** employ eeing happy pp business ss opera rr messy ssy

**Solution:** employ eeing ssy

**Secret word:** yes

### Secret Message

ivite trying breakfast shower basis pepper funnyy woodenn

Secret word: \_\_\_\_\_

wasteful costtly vappor trrible finally opperate refnnement

Secret word: \_\_\_\_\_

liquid hastlly battleffield shallownss notable

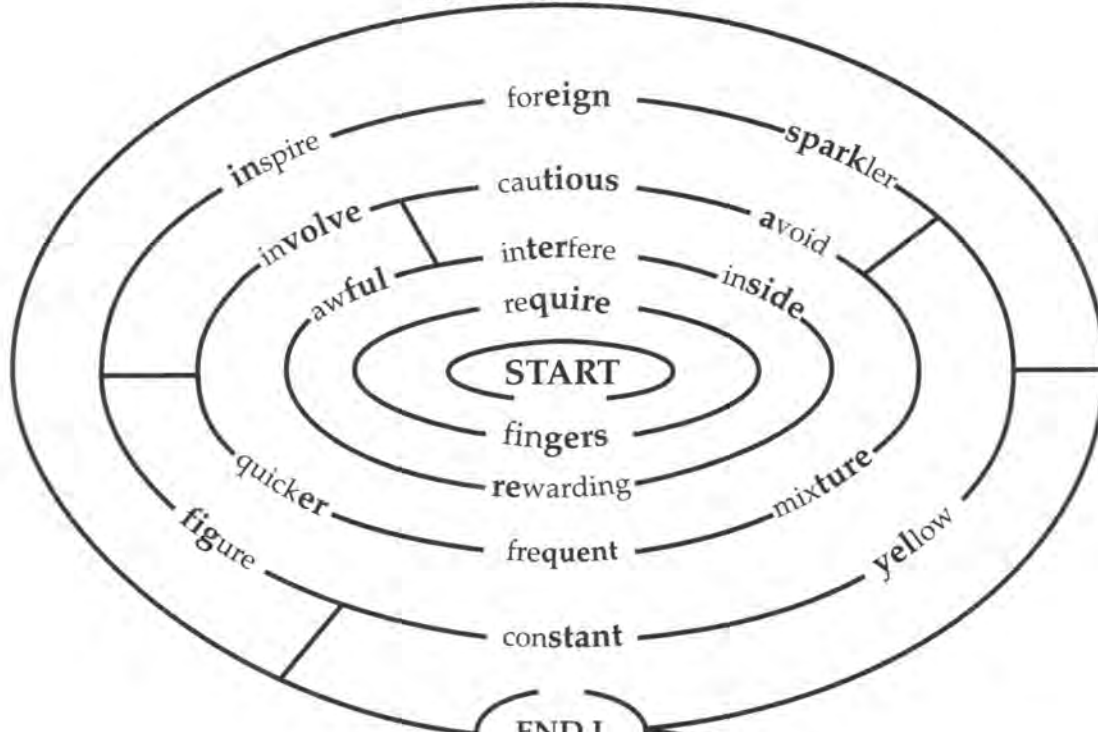
Secret word: \_\_\_\_\_

mastery remnder forcffully retturning basketbball rrational clossely

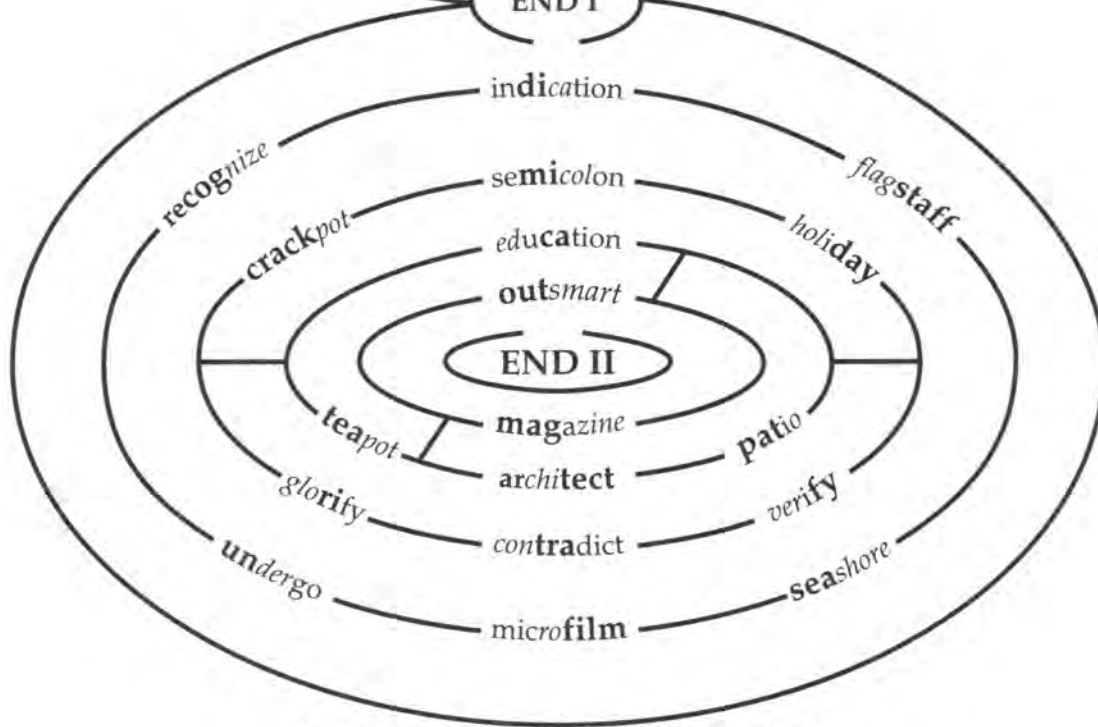
Secret word: \_\_\_\_\_

Secret  
Message \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY STRESS



END I



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STRESS

**Accent:** This maze has two parts. In both you must find the path to the end by following the words in which the stress has been correctly indicated. Syllables with primary stress are shown with **boldface** type like this: **syllable**. In the second part syllables with secondary stress are shown with *italic* type: *politician*. If the stress has been incorrectly indicated, stop and go another way. You cannot go through a solid line or a word with incorrect stress indicators.

The correct path to END I will take you through six correctly stressed words. You pass through six more correctly stressed words in the second part to get to END II.









# STINGERS





# STINGERS

## UNIT 1 **ROOT WORDS, PREFIXES, AND SUFFIXES**

Here is a list of words that are often misspelled, words that are, in fact, so hard to spell that they are often used in spelling bees. Look carefully and you will see that they are all made up of root words, prefixes, and suffixes.

You might want to start a special page in your notebook, where you write down words that you'd like to learn to spell.

<b>difference</b>	<b>acquaintance</b>	<b>recommendation</b>	<b>undoubtedly</b>
<b>occasionally</b>	<b>outrageous</b>	<b>independence</b>	<b>illegally</b>
<b>irresistible</b>	<b>accessible</b>	<b>dissimilar</b>	

.....

## UNIT 2 **THE DOUBLING RULE FOR ONE-SYLLABLE WORDS**

If you want to be a star speller, this list of frequently misspelled words is for you. They all have double letters, but these are surely not one-syllable words that fit the simple rule. To help you learn them, maybe you could make up your own spelling maze, like the one at the end of this unit, using these words and other hard words as possible blocks to the path to the finish. With these words it would be a very difficult maze!

<b>occurrence</b>	<b>moccasin</b>	<b>irrelevant</b>	<b>embarrass</b>
<b>annihilate</b>	<b>beggar</b>	<b>grammar</b>	<b>unnecessary</b>
<b>ballet</b>	<b>curriculum</b>	<b>villain</b>	<b>accelerator</b>



## STINGERS

### UNIT 3 THE FINAL SILENT E RULE

The words below either follow the final silent *e* rule or are exceptions to it. If you can spell these words, you're on your way to becoming a champion speller! In order to make learning them fun, you might want to see how many of them you can work into a story without making the story seem strange or artificial.

**definitely**

**immovable**

**sincerely**

**noticeable**

**marriageable**

**argument**

**cataloguing**

**pursuing**

**courageous**

**acknowledgment**

**outrageous**

**separately**

---

### UNIT 4 THE FINAL Y RULE

All of the words below end in a final *y*, although many of them do not take suffixes that require you to use the final *y* rule. Since these are difficult words to spell, you might try to make up memory aids, for instance: "U don't use a U in *forty*."

**already**

**forty**

**probably**

**library**

**imaginary**

**secretary**

**particularly**

**tyranny**

**formerly**

**opportunity**

**tragedy**

**responsibility**



# STINGERS

## UNIT 5 THE I BEFORE E RULE

Most of the words below follow the *i* before *e* rule or are exceptions to it. They are all hard words to spell, often chosen for championship spelling bees.

**conceit**

**heifer**

**inefficient**

**obedience**

**conscience**

**financier**

**inconceivable**

**surfeit**

**counterfeit**

**forfeit**

**efficiency**

**handkerchief**

---

## UNIT 6 APOSTROPHES IN CONTRACTIONS

Like several of the contractions and homophones in this unit, the words below cannot be “sounded out” easily. You simply have to remember their spellings. Maybe you can come up with memory aids to help you remember the tricky spots in some of the words. For instance, “O, is she a sophomore?” or “I had et ball (à ball) at the ballet.”

**gauge**

**pneumonia**

**recipe**

**ballet**

**maneuver**

**vacuum**

**sophomore**

**exhaust**

**naive**

**biscuit**

**mosquito**

**catalogue**



# STINGERS

## UNIT 7

### PLURALS AND SINGULAR POSSESSIVES

You may have fun learning how to spell these words that are so difficult that many professional writers must check their spelling in the dictionary. They are all in their plural form and a few follow the final *y* rule.

**rhinoceroses**

**dilemmas**

**tragedies**

**physicians**

**privileges**

**pageants**

**tendencies**

**playwrights**

**specimens**

**emperors**

**prophecies**

**cemeteries**

## UNIT 8

### SINGULAR AND PLURAL POSSESSIVES

The words below are all in their plural form, and a few have irregular plurals. If you wish to learn how to spell these “demons,” it might help to write them down. To make that more fun, you might see how many words you can use in a single sentence and how few sentences you can write using every one of the words correctly. Here's a sentence that includes four of them: As the **superintendents** strolled down the **boulevards**, they saw **yachts** on the sea and **tortoises** on the beach.

**boulevards**

**orchestras**

**tortoises**

**alumni**

**welcomes**

**superintendents**

**catastrophes**

**yachts**

**propaganda**

**data**

**phenomena**

**burials**



# STINGERS

## UNIT 9 HOMOPHONE DEMONS

This is a list of words that are similar in sound or spelling. The abbreviations in the explanations are parts of speech—*n.* for *noun*, *v.* for *verb*, *adj.* for *adjective*, and *prep.* for *preposition*. A brief explanation of each word's meaning is provided to help distinguish them. You might have fun making tongue twisters from some of these words. Sample: She threw her two shoes through three shoestore shelves.

**principle** (*n.* rule; )

**principal** (*adj.* main; *n.* head of school)

**through** (*prep.* "Go through the door.")

**threw** (*v.* past tense of throw)

**affect** (*v.* "Snow affects traffic.")

**effect** (*n.* "The effect of snow")

**lead** (*n.* the metal)

**lead** (*v.* "Lead the way.")

**led** (*v.* Past of *lead*)

**dessert** (*n.* meal part)

**desert** (*v.* "Don't desert your friends.")

**desert** (*n.* dry land)

**compliment** (*n.* nice words)

**complement** (*n.* thing that completes)

---

## UNIT 10 TROUBLESOME ENDINGS

All of the words below fit the rules you studied in Unit 10, and a few are repetitions of words from the unit that are often misspelled. As an extra challenge, you might want to write a story in which you use as many of these words as possible while still telling a good, well developed tale.

**virus**

**nucleus**

**anonymous**

**enormous**

**beautiful**

**mischievous**

**advantageous**

**conscious**

**icicle**

**apparatus**



# STINGERS

## UNIT 11 **DIVIDING WORDS INTO SYLLABLES**

Most of the words below have many syllables and are difficult enough that they are often chosen for spelling tests. From your work in this unit you should have an easier time learning to spell them since you can think of them as groups of syllables.

- |                   |                  |                       |                      |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>parallel</b>   | <b>until</b>     | <b>attendance</b>     | <b>disappearance</b> |
| <b>appearance</b> | <b>grammar</b>   | <b>disappoint</b>     | <b>accompaniment</b> |
| <b>embarrass</b>  | <b>necessary</b> | <b>correspondence</b> |                      |

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## UNIT 12 **STRESS AND THE SCHWA SOUND**

Most of the words below have unaccented syllables where vowels are hard to remember because they make the schwa sound. Many of these words would be hard to identify in the word game hangman, but if you use them, be sure to spell them correctly!

- |                     |                  |                 |                 |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>adequate</b>     | <b>peasant</b>   | <b>apparent</b> | <b>ecstasy</b>  |
| <b>interference</b> | <b>sponsor</b>   | <b>beggar</b>   | <b>liquor</b>   |
| <b>villain</b>      | <b>rehearsal</b> | <b>vinegar</b>  | <b>innocent</b> |







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## Unit 1:

### Root Words, Prefixes, and Suffixes

#### Let's Try It p. 9

1. graceful
2. misfit
3. unending
4. reopened
5. mismanagement
6. overlooking
7. informally

#### Let's Try More p. 10

1. Root word: use; suffix: -less
2. Root word: poor; suffix: -ly
3. Root word: view; prefix: pre-
4. Root word: try; suffix: -ing
5. Root word: fair; prefix: un-; suffix: -ness
6. Root word: agree; prefix: dis-; suffix: -able
7. Root word: play; prefix: re-; suffix: -ing
8. Root word: state; prefix: under-; suffix: -ment
9. Root word: certain; prefix: un-; suffix: -ty
10. Root word: spell; prefix: mis-; suffix: -ing

#### Sentence p. 10

Prefixes: un-, mis-, over-, hyper-

Root words: friend, imp, act, trust, demand, direct, grown, act

Suffixes: -ly, -ish, -or, -ed, -ing, -ors, -ive

#### Let's Practice p. 11

1. mildness
2. mislead
3. unreachable
4. really
5. openness
6. usually
7. immature
8. dissatisfaction
9. preschooler
10. unnaturally

#### Challenge p. 12

1. gardener, overrun
2. greenness, brownness
3. unnoticed, suddenness
4. thinness, unnatural

5. finally, blissfully
6. practically, unnatural
7. underrated, meanness
8. beautifully, dissatisfaction
9. unnecessary, ideally
10. stubbornness, carefully
11. skillfully, withhold

#### Maze p. 15

The shortest path to the finish goes through: undone, suddenness, carefully, greenness, unnoticed, mildness, stubbornness, unreachable, appoint, thinness, reviewing, casually, misstate, avoidable, unnatural, really, withhold, meanness, finally

**Bonus:** openness, misspell, hopefully, disagree, gracefully

## Unit 2:

### The Doubling Rule for One-Syllable Words

#### Let's Try It p. 19

I. Circle:

1. hit 2. run 4. plan 7. bet 9. spin 10. rot

II.

1. runner, thinker
2. stopped, feeling
3. beating, funny
4. badly, sadder
5. sitting, rotten

III.

1. dinner
2. miser
3. scared
4. tinny
5. hatter

#### Fun With Doubling p. 21

The words that should be corrected, in order of their appearance and in their correctly spelled form, are: shining, Holy, whined, tattered, staring, batting, bases, loping, later, bitter, wadding, gripers, planning, sliding, homer, finer, scared, faded, hoping.

#### Maze p. 22

The path to the finish goes through: petting, furry, heating, grabbed, shopping, biggest, sipping, muggy, upper, funny, happy, winner.

**Bonus:** fitted, loudest, gladly, muddy, hidden, rugged, cutting, tanner, greener

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**Unit 3:**  
**The Final Silent E Rule**

**Let's Try It** p. 26

1. smiling
2. hateful
3. movement
4. movable
5. lovely
6. coming
7. hopeless
8. tasty
9. pleasure
10. desirable

**Let's Practice** p. 27

1. racing; shaking
2. famous; praising
3. precisely; exciting
4. moving; safety
5. making; entirely
6. homemade; scary
7. cuteness; lovely
8. ceaseless; pleasures
9. Carefully; sideways
10. horribly; priceless
11. menacingly; arrangements
12. coming; movements
13. serenely; boring
14. hopelessness; giggling
15. creativeness; uselessly

**Maze** p. 29

The correct path to the finish will take you through:  
exciting, boredom, moving, useful, tuneless, drive-  
way, nicely, rarely, writing, safety

**Bonus:** pleasure

**Unit 4:**  
**The Final Y Rule**

**Let's Try It** p. 32

1. silliest
2. plays
3. hurried
4. pitiful

5. merriment
6. dizziness
7. payment
8. marriage
9. emptiness

**Let's Practice** p. 33

1. joy, -ful
2. try, -ing
3. destroy, -er
4. fry, -ed
5. stay, -ing
6. plenty, -ful
7. merry, -ly
8. display, -ing
9. friendly, -est
10. carry, -age

**Putting It All Together** p. 34

I.

1. trays
2. countries
3. buying
4. sunnier
5. payment
6. parties
7. denying
8. joyful
9. loneliness
10. librarian

II.

1. earliest, joyously
2. replied, merrily
3. married, busily
4. babies, tastiest
5. pried, cherries
6. frying, cried
7. pitifully, sprayed
8. easier, readied
9. dried, annoyance
10. hurried, anniversaries

---

**Maze P.36**

The correct path to the end will take you through:  
dizziness, emptiness, prayer, denied, sunniest, loneliness, busily, easier, joyful, merrily, flying

**Bonus** : fried, played

**Unit 5:**  
**The I Before E Rule**

**Let's Try It** p. 39

1. believe
2. brief
3. achieve
4. fierce
5. piece

**Let's Practice** p. 40

1. brief
2. receive
3. ceiling
4. relief
5. conceive, friend

**Putting It All Together** p. 41

1. thief, deceive
2. neighbor
3. grief
4. believe
5. perceived
6. field
7. weigh
8. achieved
9. relieved, piece
10. reins

**Let's Practice** p. 43

1. briefly, neighbor's
2. retrieve
3. their
4. friend
5. nieces, disbelief

**Maze** p. 44

The correct path to the end will take you through:  
perceive, weigh, friend, eight, relief, niece, achieve

**Bonus** : piece, briefly, reins, fierce

**Unit 6:**  
**Appostrophes in Contractions**

**Let's Try It** p. 47

1. couldn't, wasn't
2. can't, I'm, don't
3. Aren't, you're, isn't
4. I've, isn't
5. couldn't, they're
6. don't, shouldn't

**Let's Practice** p. 49

1. wasn't, couldn't
2. let's, he'd, doesn't
3. could have, your, it's, can't, what's
4. I'd, you've
5. Let's, you're
6. It's, won't

**Putting It All Together** p. 50

1. don't, their, I'm, won't
2. It's, let's, We're
3. hadn't, I'll, you're, She's
4. You're, That's, she's, we're
5. should have, they're, shouldn't, their, It's
6. I'd, were, You've, she'd

**Challenge** p. 51

1. I'm, would have
2. You're, We're
3. it's, that's
4. haven't, your (before *tongue*)
5. It's (before *in*), you've
6. they're, can't
7. wouldn't, would have
8. should have, its
9. can't, They're
10. isn't, it's (before *especially*)
11. must have, wouldn't

**Maze** p. 53

The shortest path to the end will take you through the following sentences:

1. Please **don't** be late.
2. **Who's** the man on the bicycle?
3. **It's** so green here.
4. **I've** never seen olive trees before, and I think **they're** beautiful.
5. **He's** a ship pilot.
6. **It's** a statue.
7. **That's** a colorful dress that **she's** wearing.
8. **Didn't** you like **your** pasta?

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## Unit 7:

### Plurals and Singular Possessives

#### Let's Try It p. 56

1. Sean's, books, houses
2. wind's, howls, moon's
3. leaves, Sean's
4. shapes, father's
5. window's, things
6. blobs, wind's, sounds
7. book's, blankets

#### Let's Practice p. 58

1. cities
2. kitties
3. pastries
4. toys
5. trays
6. flies
7. countries
8. treaties
9. delays
10. libraries

#### Putting It All Together p. 59

1. Sean's, nerves, nights
2. stories, toys
3. bear's, years, bear's
4. pony's, fantasies
5. blobs, wind's

#### More Practice p. 60

1. worries, Sean's, family's
2. worries, worries, problems
3. stories, noises
4. oak's, branches, blobs, Dad's
5. ghosts, Sean's, father's
6. Sean's, blobs
7. story's, squirrel's
8. tree's, gusts
9. stories, noises

#### Maze p. 62

The shortest path to the finish will take you through:

1. The worker **bees** are all very active.
2. The **song's** lyrics are very silly.
3. Pass the **tacos** to your sister.
4. She told **stories** of the past.
5. He washed the **car's** windshield.
6. The bed has clean new **sheets**.
7. I've lived in three **countries**.
8. I borrowed **Sandra's** new paint set.
9. The flower **beds** were under water.
10. My **pencil's** eraser makes a smudge.
11. The **rake's** handle was broken.
12. The **city's** three parks were closed.
13. The queen **bee's** food is royal jelly.

**Bonus** : 1. This **cake's** icing tastes delicious. 2. Have you seen my new **shoes**? 3. Cal swept the **stairs** every day. 4. The **storm's** center is two miles away.

## Unit 8:

### Singular and Plural Possessives

#### Let's Try It p. 66

1. stories, squirrels', ghosts
2. mother's, ghosts, family's
3. stories, noises, walls
4. curtains, father's, windows
5. Sean's, ghosts', sounds, study's
6. mother's, things, Ghosts
7. tales, endings, stories'
8. noises, ghosts'

#### Let's Practice p. 68

1. Sean's, noises, eyes
2. sounds, ghosts', Mom's
3. Sean's, children's, ghosts
4. crashes, plate's, contents
5. problem's, Sean's, lips', corners

#### More Practice p. 69

1. ghosts, night's
2. father's, leftovers
3. detectives, Sean's
4. apples, animal's
5. cookies', edges
6. ghosts', exits
7. parents', squirrels
8. problem's, squirrels' (before nests)
9. neighbor's, nuts
10. Children's, days

---

**Maze** p. 71

The path to the finish goes through these rooms:

24. The hall **closet's** door is locked with a gold key.
25. The **napkins'** stains are removed in the laundry.
26. The **pool's** depth is ten feet at the deep end.
22. The **couches** in the parlor are stuffed with down.
21. The family **room's** ceiling is a starry planetarium.
28. In the shop the three **benches'** tops are very neat.
19. The grand **piano's** keys are polished every day.
18. The dressing room has six **closets** full of clothes.
5. In the office the **pencils'** points are always sharp.
4. Many of the ten **servants'** rooms are in this wing.
10. Four **chairs** face the fireplace in the study.
11. Portraits line the art **gallery's** walls.
29. **Meals** are served outside when the weather is good.
14. The **solarium's** walls are made of glass.
15. The **children's** playroom has a heated wading pool.

**Bonus** : Rooms 2, 6, 8, 13, and 17.)

## Unit 9: Homophone Demons

### Let's Try It

 p. 75

1. Who's
2. don't, It's, there's
3. There's, your
4. You're, Let's
5. can't, its, Who's, who's
6. There's, I'm, whose
7. Well, Let's, we'll, who's

### Let's Practice

 p. 77

1. course, passed
2. too, plain, to, than
3. quiet, then, too
4. passed, two, break
5. Then, to
6. to, peace
7. course, then
8. than, plane

### Putting It All Together

 p. 78

1. their, there's
2. were, to, quite
3. were, then
4. Let's, to, It's, plain, there
5. whose, too, passed, You're, course
6. They're, We'll, then, quiet
7. peace, too, to, past

### Challenge

 p. 79

1. your, to
2. than, there
3. it's, (before *not*), too
4. Let's, We'll (before *both*)
5. piece, course
6. were, than
7. We're, there
8. Who's, passed
9. break, were
10. You're, Whose
11. quiet, plain

### Helping the Poet

 p. 81

I'm not 2 too sure but probably

The quote "2B to be or not 2B to be..."

Comes from a soliloquy

(A word that is 2 too hard for me

2 to spell or say quite easily)

By Hamlet, who was not a B bee—

An insect buzzing busily—

But someone who just wished 2B to be

Not 2 two things, rather just 2B to be

Alone—which does appeal 2 to me

Especially, *especially*...

When **homophone demons** are pursuing me!

### Maze

 p. 82

The correct path to the end goes through:

1. Did you just **break** your bat? 2. He **passed** the ball to Cindy, who scored a goal.
3. **We'll** have to remove the fallen trees.
4. Our canary has escaped from **its** cage.
5. It must be **your** turn to walk the dog.
6. My mother **lets** me go down the big slide every day.
7. I don't think that **it's** your serve.
8. Boil the eggs and **then** peel off the shells.
9. **Who's** that man on the pedestal?

**Bonus** : **Let's** try a long pass to Manuel. 2. **Were** you baking bread or a cake. 3. My sister is taller **than** I am. 4. Have another **piece** of pie.

## Unit 10: Troublesome Endings

### Let's Try It

 p. 85

1. octopus
2. dangerous
3. humorous

4. nervous
5. genius
6. terminus
7. generous
8. mischievous
9. religious
10. callus or callous

**Let's Practice** p. 87

1. article
2. critical
3. historical
4. miracle
5. bicycle
6. mystical
7. identical
8. typical
9. icicle
10. musical (It could be a noun as a short form of *musical comedy*.)

**Let's Try It** p. 88

Incorrect:

1. pitiful
3. masterful
5. playful
6. plentiful
8. delightful
10. beautiful

**Putting It All Together** p. 89

1. identical, bicycles
2. beautiful, magical
3. glorious, octopus
4. skillful, mystical
5. octopus, dangerous
6. skillful, tentacles
7. distressful, playful
8. miracle, disastrous
9. skillful, vigorous
10. victorious, pitiful

**Hidden Message** 91

Misspellings:

gratefull, rebellius, envious, artfull, tremendous  
joyfull, obvious, bicycal

**Message:** great job

**Maze**

The correct path to the finish goes through:  
glorious, helpful, practical, genius, octopus, musical,  
fabulous, miracle

**Unit 11:**  
**Dividing Words Into Syllables**

**Let's Get Started** p. 95

1. 2
2. 1
3. 2
4. 2
5. 1
6. 2
7. 3
8. 4
9. 4
10. 3
11. 5
12. 1
13. 7
14. 3
15. 5

**Let's Try It** p. 97

Incorrect:

1. hap·py
  4. im·mense
  5. think·ing
  7. up·bring·ing
  8. mas·sive·ness
  9. dis·ap·point·ment
  10. un·flat·ter·ing
- 
1. plat·ter
  2. un·done
  3. bright·ness
  4. hope·ful
  5. sput·ter·ing
  6. mis·fit·ted
  7. dis·ap·pear
  8. pep·per·y
  9. dif·fer·ent
  10. un·law·ful·ly

**Message** p. 99

Thoughtful workers become excellent spellers.

**Maze** p. 100

The correct path to the finish goes through:

for·get·ful, hap·pi·ness, bright·ness, un·flat·ter·ing,  
mis·count·ed, hope·ful·ly, re·mind·ing, break·ing,  
taste·ful·ly, mer·ri·ly

**Unit 12:**

**Stress and the Schwa Sound**

**Let's Try It** p. 104

1. un·wind, wind·ing
2. long·er, be·long
3. re·form, for·mal
4. fen·der, de·fend
5. miss·ing, dis·miss
  
6. dis·a·gree, a·gree·ment
7. re·play·ing, play·ful·ly
8. en·joy·ment, joy·ful·ly
9. grace·ful·ly, dis·grace·ful
10. un·lock·ing, lock·a·ble, in·ter·lock

**Let's Practice** p. 105

Part I

1. run·ner
2. a·bove
3. re·view
4. hap·pi·ly
5. in·volve·ment

Part II

6. boast·ful
7. un·kind
8. pos·si·ble
9. en·dur·ing
10. ar·range·ment

**Let's Try It** p. 107

Part I

1. o·ver·come
2. Mas·sa·chu·setts
3. ac·a·dem·ic
4. re·u·nι·ting
5. con·sti·tu·tion

Part II

6. un·der·neath
7. im·ma·ture
8. trans·por·ta·tion
9. im·per·fec·tion
10. lo·co·mo·tive

**Let's Try It** p. 109

Part I

1. un·der
2. nick·el
3. pur·chase
4. un·der·neath
5. im·pres·sion

Part II

6. fric·tion
7. fath·er
8. for·tu·nate
9. o·ver·head
10. mis·er·y

**Message** p. 110

try·ing, show·er, fun·ny= **you**

wasteful, fin·ally, refi·ne·ment= **win**

hastily= **a**

mas·tery, re·turn·ing, bas·ketball, ra·tion·al= **star**

**Maze** p. 111

The correct path to the finish goes through:

Primary Stress

re·quire, in·side, in·volve, sparkler, figure, yellow

Primary and Secondary Stress

sea·shore, crack·pot, edu·ca·tion, tea·pot, pa·tio,  
magazine