

**LITERACY BASICS:
SPELLING
WORKSHEETS 2**

STUART SILLARS

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INTRODUCTION

- The pack** *Literacy Basics: Spelling Worksheets 2* provides comprehensive coverage of the more common spelling errors. The sheets provide work on problem word forms, confusing words, forming word endings and the use of apostrophes. Each worksheet covers the basic points, highlights common errors and provides examples and exercises.
- Student suitability** The pack is aimed at KS3 and KS4 students. Because the pack is photocopiable, you can use it flexibly – with individual students, small or large groups, or across a whole year set.
- Many teachers have used this pack for Adult Literacy. For this reason, we have included a cross-reference to the Adult literacy core curriculum at the end of this pack.
- Using the pack** We suggest you use the sheets as appropriate to make a teaching point, provide practice or to consolidate skills. If you have a query about how best to use the pack, we are happy to help; please write to us at the address below.
- Other linked Chalkface packs** *Literacy Basics: Spelling Worksheets 1* is an alternative version of this pack suitable for a lower ability level. *Literacy Basics: Spelling Worksheets 3* provides consolidation exercises and can be used after this pack for practice. You may also find the following packs useful: *Literacy Basics: Grammar Worksheets*, *Literacy Basics: Punctuation Worksheets*, *Literacy Basics: Sentence Worksheets*, *Literacy Basics: Word Worksheets*.
- The people involved** Stuart Sillars, the author of the pack, is a writer and freelance lecturer. The pack was illustrated by Michael Lopategui and Elaine Mitchell, Susan Quilliam was the series editor, Carole Hewett the sub-editor, and June Bulley the layout artist.
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The author wishes to dedicate this pack to Laurence, Stephie, Alex and Tim.

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LBS2

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—THE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING ENGLISH—

Spelling comes under the word level objectives in the Framework for Teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9.

Word level	Sentence level	Text level: Reading	Text level: Writing	Text level: Speaking & Listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Spelling · Spelling strategies · Vocabularies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sentence construction & punctuation · Paragraphing & cohesion · Stylistic conventions · Standard English & language variation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Research & study skills · Reading for meaning · Study of literary texts · Understanding the author's craft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Imagine, explore, entertain · Inform, explain, describe · Persuade, argue, advise · Analyse, review, comment · Plan, draft & present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Speaking · Listening · Group discussion & interaction · Drama

The overall aim of the Framework is to enable all pupils to develop sophisticated literacy skills. By the end of Year 9, each pupil is expected to be:

A shrewd and fluent independent reader:

- orchestrating a range of strategies to get at meaning in text, including inferential and evaluative skills;
- sensitive to the way meanings are made;
- reading in different ways for different purposes, including skimming to quickly pick up the gist of a text, scanning to locate specific information, close reading to follow complex passages and re-reading to uncover layers of meaning;
- reflective, critical and discriminating in response to a wide range of printed and visual texts.

A confident writer:

- able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, knowing the conventions and beginning to adapt and develop them;
- able to write imaginatively, effectively and correctly;
- able to shape, express, experiment with and manipulate sentences;
- able to organise, develop, spell and punctuate writing accurately.

An effective speaker and listener:

- with the clarity and confidence to convey a point of view or information;
- using talk to explore, create, question and revise ideas, recognising language as a tool for learning;
- able to work effectively with others in a range of roles;
- having a varied repertoire of styles, which are used appropriately.

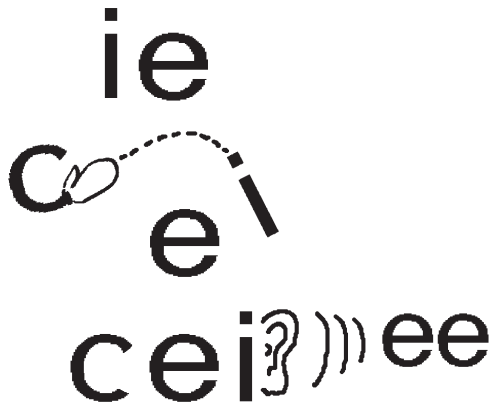
The following lesson structure is highly recommended to teachers using the Framework:

- 1 Short lesson starter activity (e.g. spelling, vocabulary) lasting 10–15 minutes.
- 2 Introduce the main teaching points (e.g. teacher exposition or questioning).
- 3 Develop the main teaching points (e.g. through group activity).
- 4 Plenary to draw out the learning (e.g. through feedback and presentation), lasting 5–10 minutes.

'Is AND Es 1'

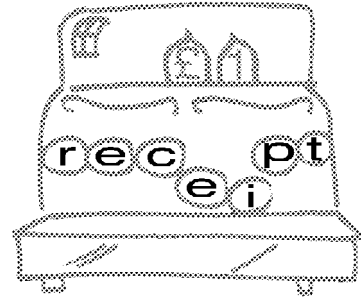
'I before e except after c – but only when the sound is ee'.

Sounds silly, really, doesn't it? But it's a good way to remember some of those awkward spellings which nobody's too sure of.



When the sound of a word is **ee** – as in **grief**, for example – the **i** comes before the **e**. But if there's a **c** in front, the **e** comes first – as in **ceiling**.

So, it's **believe** but **deceive**, **reprieve** but **receive**.



Some words like this are very important. If you're thinking of working in a shop or office, **receipt** is sure to crop up a lot. If you want to be a farmer, you'll need to be able to spell **field**.



Make a list of ten words which follow the rule given in the rhyme, and then check them in a dictionary.

Now try these!

- 1 'How can I bel__ve he's not dec__ving me?' she wondered.
- 2 It was a great rel__f to rec__ve your letter.
- 3 From the window I perc__ved the view across the f__lds to the sea.
- 4 The th__f was given a repr__ve, which put an end to his gr__f.

He woke to find the c__ling spinning. Then he remembered. He'd rec__ved a message asking him to meet a repr__ved killer in a f__ld outside the city. He'd bel__ved it! It wasn't anything to get conc__ted over, and there was no point in gr__ving. He moved, and it felt as if a bomb went off in his head. Trying to retr__ve the p__ces, he perc__ved a figure knocking on the glass door. That was all he needed!

Is AND Es 2

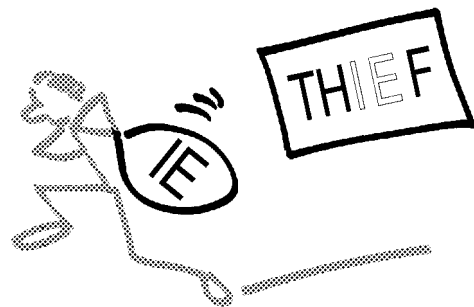
Some words don't follow the 'i before e except after c' rule. There are **weir**, **seize** and **science**, for example. Remember them by remembering the pictures. Can you think of another five words which break the rule?



The other part of the rhyme is quite helpful too – 'but only when the sound is **ee**'.

If the sound **isn't ee**, then the rule doesn't apply, and the spelling is usually **ei**. So it's **weight**, **height** and **their**. See if you can find some more examples of this part of the rule – use a dictionary to check your ideas.

HEIGHT



Now try these!

- 1 Suddenly he s__zed the r__ns and drove off.
 - 2 His counterf__t coins were the h__ght of perfection.
 - 3 The anc__nt building made the sc__ntist feel w__rd.
 - 4 The w__ght of the evidence was against the th__f.
- Sh__la was worr__d. It was w__rd. She bel__ved that K__th was dec__ving her, and she v__wed th__r br__f romance with gr__f. Was his love counterf__t? __ther it was, or the n__ghbours were lying. Suddenly she felt quite anc__nt. How could she retr__ve his love, s__ze his affection, and really ach__ve something?

PLURALS WITH S

It's usually quite easy to make plurals – words for more than one of something. You just add an **s** to the word for one of whatever it is. So it's **cats**, **bulldozers**, **cassettes**, **tracks**.

Almost all words can be turned into plurals by adding **s**, but not quite all – and that's where the problems start.

Words ending in **ch** are made plural by adding **es**. This is quite a sensible rule when you think about it: words like this would be very hard to say without the extra sound! Ditch becomes **ditches**, witch – **witches**, bench – **benches**, pitch – **pitches**, sandwich – **sandwiches**.

benches

Words ending in **o** aren't so easy. Some have plurals ending in **es**, but others just add an **s** for the plural. It's **potatoes**, **tomatoes** and **dominoes**, but just plain **discos** and **videos**. There isn't a rule about which add **s** and which add **es**, so you need to be extra careful about words like these.

VIDEOS

Try thinking of some more words ending in **ch** or **o** and working out their plurals. Then check them in a dictionary.

Words ending in **y** form their plurals in one of two ways. If there's a vowel before the **y** – **a**, **e**, **o** or **u** – you just add **s**. This gives **monkeys**, **donkeys**, **keys**, **surveys**, **guys**, **plays**, **trays** and **boys**.

MONKEYS

If there isn't a vowel before the **y**, the plural is formed by taking off the **y** and adding **ies** in its place. Fly becomes **flies**, cry changes to **cries**, gantry to **gantries**, factory to **factories**. Can you think of any more?

factories

Now try these!

Change the words in brackets into plurals.

In the late nineteen-(eighty), most (family) spent many (hour) a day watching (video). (Domino) lay abandoned, (disco) were empty, (potato) stayed unpeeled. (Meal) were quick (sandwich) snatched between

(cassette). (Cry) of grief came from the (writer) of (play) and (proprietor) of (theatre) and (gallery). (Factory) crumbled, and (wrench) rusted on garage (workbench). Space (invader) had conquered: (video) rule the (wave)!

— PLURALS WITHOUT S —

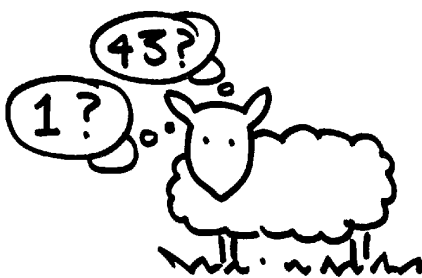
Although most words can be made into plurals by adding **s**, or a group of letters ending in **s**, there are lots which aren't quite so straightforward.

Some foreign words, for example, form their plurals by adding an **x** at the end. The most common are **bureau** which becomes **bureaux** and **gateau** which becomes **gateaux**.



Some words don't change at all in the plural. The plural of **deer** is **deer**, and the plural of **sheep** is **sheep**. Must be confusing for a sheep, stuck on a hillside in Wales all day wondering how many of you there are!

Some words for kinds of fruit don't change either: **grapefruit** is the most common of them. Another word which doesn't change in the plural is **craft**; it can mean either one ship or any number of them. The same is true when it's part of a longer word: **aircraft** and **hovercraft** can be either singular or plural.



Now try these!

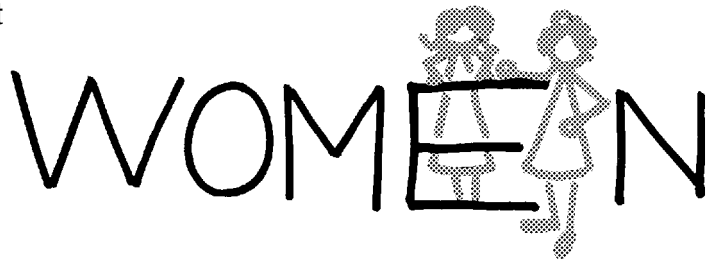
Change the words in brackets into plurals.

- 1 A fleet of (hovercraft) delivered (gateau) to the lighthouse.
- 2 During the winter, food was dropped to the (sheep) by (aircraft).
- 3 The (man) and (woman) had brought their (spouse) with them.
- 4 The (goose) were disturbed by the (man) on bicycles.

There are some words which change completely in the plural. Goose becomes **geese**, and mouse becomes **mice**. Spouse – wife or husband – is **spouses**, not spice, though.



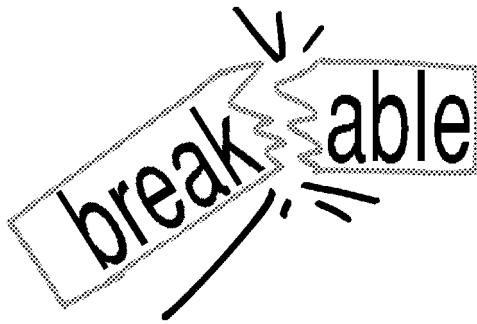
There are some words which don't do what you'd expect. Woman, for example: one is woman, with an **a**, but two or more are **women**, with an **e**. Men are just the same: one man, several **men**.



Noah II: The epic story of two (spacecraft) full of creatures from a doomed planet. They took only (deer), and (horse), and (sheep), and (goose). They chose brilliant (man) and (woman) to crew the (craft). They fed them a special diet of (grapefruit) and low-calorie (gateau). Blasting off from the highest (plateau), the (craft) rocketed into hyperspace.

—ADDING ABLE, IBLE, UBLE—

Forms of words ending in **able** are a useful way of communicating a particular feature of something or someone. If you know about something, for example, you're **knowledgeable**. If something breaks easily, it's **breakable**. If something is worth laughing about, it's **laughable**.



ha
ha
laughable
ha
ha

If the word doesn't end in **a, e, i, o, u** or **y**, then you can simply add **able** to the end to make a new word.

If the word ends in an **e**, ask yourself if the letter before the **e** is a **c** or a **g**. If it is, does it sound like the **c** in service or the **g** in change?

If so, the word keeps its last **e**, and you just add **able** as usual. So service becomes **serviceable**, and change becomes **changeable**.

If the letter before the **e** isn't a **c** or **g**, or if it doesn't sound like the **c** in service or the **g** in change, take off the last **e** before adding **able**. Love turns into **lovable**, survive becomes **survivable**, and argue becomes **arguable**.

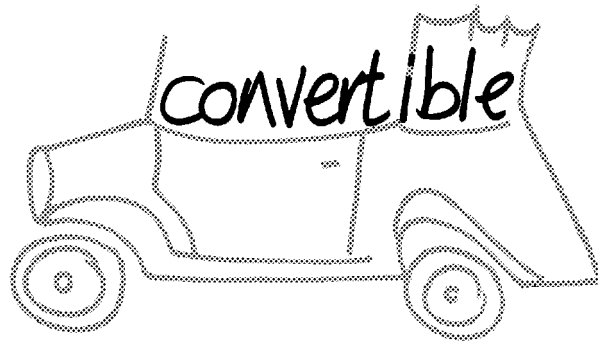
However, it isn't always quite so simple. Some words, for example **likeable**, keep the **e** even though they don't have a **c** or a **g**.

Then there are words ending in **y**, like pity and vary. In these, the **y** changes to an **i**, to give **pitiable** and **variable**.

Then there's **soluble** – that ends in **uble**, and doesn't follow any of the usual rules.

soluble

Not all words end in **able**. Some end in **ible**; for example, there are **terrible**, **horrible**, **credible**, **convertible**, **deductible** and **reducible**.



Now try these!

Complete these words by adding **able**, **ible** or **uble**. Change or leave out the last letter if you need to.

You know how change_____ he is, like _____ one minute, unmanage_____ the next. Quite pity_____ really – almost laugh_____.

There he was being knowledge_____, and then suddenly he was angry and horr_____. It was a terr_____ sight. It's an insol_____ problem now. He's very love_____ really, but so vary_____; his temper's ungovern_____. It's just unbear_____: like living with the Incred_____ Hulk!

—ADDING ING—

When you add **ing** to a word to show that what you're doing is going on for a while, you often need to change the spelling of the word you're using.

If the word has an **e** at the end, then it usually loses the **e** before you add **ing**. Examples are make which turns to **making**, argue which becomes **arguing** and drive which becomes **driving**.



A few words keep the **e**, though. **Ageing** – getting older – is one of the most frequent, and another is **queueing**.

Another group contains those which end in a double **e**, like see, foresee and flee. They keep the double **e** (**ee**), and become **seeing**, **foreseeing** and **fleeing**.

seeing

There are special rules for words like die and tie, which end in **ie**. You can't write dieing, or tiing: so in these words **ie** changes to **y** to give **dying** and **tying**. **Dyeing** (changing the colour of cloth) is spelt with an **e**.

DYING

Words ending in **y** are straightforward. They stay the same, and you just add **ing** after the **y**. Be careful not to leave out the **y** – it's **studying**, not studing, which sounds rather nasty. And it's **flying**, **relaying**, **frying**.

STUDYING

Now try these!

Complete the sentences by adding **ing**, to the words in brackets.

- 1 He was busy (make) sure that somebody was (care) for his aged aunt.
- 2 I felt sure he was (drive) me mad by constantly (phone) me during the night.
- 3 (Tie) an apron round his waist he began (fry) the meat.
- 4 (See) that they were (queue) up, he realised he was in for a (try) time.
- 5 Although she was (age) rapidly, she kept (study) for her exams.

(See) the buffalo (graze), he realised something was wrong. They were (raise) their heads, (breathe) quickly. Now they were (move) – no, (stampede), (flee) from the fire that was (pursue) them. Next moment he was (phone) headquarters, (relay) news of the fire to the city, (try) to get them to evacuate. No use (argue): it was (spread) fast. The bush was (blaze) – and it didn't smell at all like (fry) steak!

—ADDING LY—

It's often useful to be able to say how something was done. Words that do this are called **adverbs**, and many of them can be formed by adding **ly** to the end of other words.

DARK **LY**

There's a simple rule for words which end in **y**. Take off the **y** and add **ily**. So busy becomes **busily**, happy changes to **happily**, angry to **angrily**, bleary to **blearily** and airy to **airily**.

blear**ily**

air**ily**

Words ending in **l** also follow a simple rule. Just add another **l** and a **y**. Occasional becomes **occasionally**, usual becomes **usually**, thoughtful and careful change to **thoughtfully** and **carefully**.

thought**fully**

Then there are those words which end in **ic**. These usually take **ally** when they change into adverbs. Scientific changes to **scientifically**, and automatic to **automatically**.

Be careful, though; public changes to **publicly**, and doesn't follow the rule at all.

SCIENTIFIC**ALLY**

The last group are those words which end in **e**. If the letter before the **e** is **a** or **u**, simply knock off the **e** and add **ly**. True changes to **truly** and due to **duly**, for example.

All others ending in **e** just take **ly** as usual – brave becomes **bravely**, free – **freely**, large – **largely**.

Now try these!

Add **ly** to the words in bracket to complete the sentences.

- 1 'I speak French, Spanish and Italian (fluent),' she snapped (angry).
- 2 (Happy), the house was not damaged too (bad) by the fire.
- 3 (Usual) he wrote most (careful), but now he scribbled (erratic).
- 4 She was (true) angry that he had announced it (public).
- 5 (Scientific) speaking, evidence of ghosts is (large) unreliable.

The castle was (glorious) sited on a cliff which looked (menacing) down on a (tortuous) rocky shore. It was (cunning) located: anyone trying to break in would have to do it very (wary). He tried to climb (scientific) but (real) felt rather scared. Inching (brave) along, he (careful) rested his foot on a ledge. It fell away (immediate), and he was left hanging (sickening) above a (fearful) deep drop.

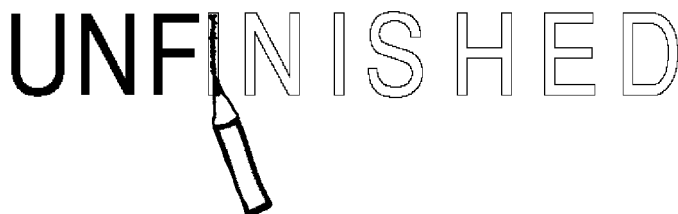
—MAKING OPPOSITES 1—

Negatives are opposites – that is, versions of words which mean the opposite of what the word first meant.

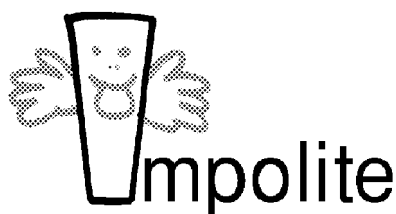
Some words can't be turned into negatives: nobody says that something is 'ungood', for example.

Many words, though, can be turned into negatives just by adding a few letters at the front.

The most usual letters to add are **un**. Helpful becomes **unhelpful**, kind becomes **unkind**. Others include **unbearable**, **unable**, **unfamiliar** and **unfinished**. Find some more yourself in a dictionary.



Another group of negatives starts with **im**: **impatient**, **improbably**, **impolite** and **immoral**.



Then there are those which start with **in**: **indestructible**, **inadequate**, **inedible** and **informal**.



You can find lots more **ins** and **ims** in the dictionary, but be careful: not all of them are negatives of other words. **Intense** and **impact**, for example, are complete words on their own.

Another group begins with **ir**. There aren't as many of these words, and they're mainly formed from words which begin with **r**. **Irresponsible** and **irrational** are good examples – and so is **irreplaceable**.



Now try these!

- 1 It was highly __likely that such an __formal man was not __tidy in his habits.
- 2 Their attitude to the __firm was very __kind and __helpful.
- 3 He was very __patient with the __responsible and __practical young man.
- 4 It was __probable that the __replaceable paintings had survived the fire.

Well, darling, I knew it was __responsible, but I didn't think it was __moral. Poor __sophisticated me! I was quite __prepared for it, and thought it awfully __proper. He said it would be very __formal, but I felt so __adequate and __prepared. He said it was __likely we'd be seen and he was so __patient. It was all so __familiar. But, do you know it wasn't all __pleasant. I quite enjoyed eating jellied eels with chopsticks!

—MAKING OPPOSITES 2—

Many words can be turned into negatives, with the opposite of their first meaning, by adding **dis** at the beginning.

Dislike is one of the most common, and others include **disagree** and **disloyal**.

Others form their negative by adding **il** at the front. Usually these are words which begin with **l**. There are **illogical** and **illegible** – and, of course, **illegal**.



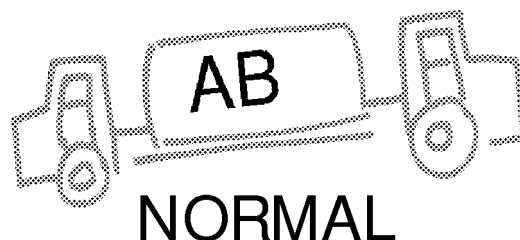
There are some negatives which aren't quite so straightforward. Some words, for example, are turned into negatives by adding **ill-**, with a hyphen, at the beginning. **Ill-natured**, **ill-mannered** and **ill-tempered** are useful ones to know.

ILL-NATURED

Some words have to make do with having **non-** stuck on at the front. **Non-hazardous** is a good one, and so is **non-flammable**, meaning something which will not burn.



Then there's **abnormal**, the only useful negative form which starts with **ab**. Check in the dictionary if you don't believe me. And, while you're looking at a dictionary, try finding some more negatives starting with **dis** and **il**.



Now try these!

- 1 He was very ___agreeable, and argued in an ___logical way.
- 2 The writing was quite ___legible, and the whole thing looked ___honest and ___legal.
- 3 The ___normal load contained ___hazardous chemicals.
- 4 She was ___natured and ___tempered.

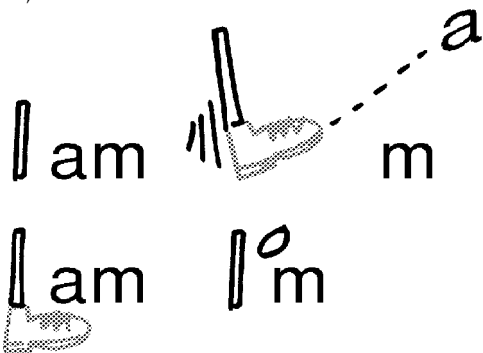
And another thing, Roger – you're the most ___courteous, ___mannered and ___agreeable man I've met. I'm sure you're up to all sorts of ___legal activities even though you say they're ___hazardous. If you're not openly ___honest then everything you do is ___normal and ___logical. I don't want to seem ___loyal, Roger, but you're just an ___bred lout.

APOSTROPHES 1

Apostrophes are those strange things looking like commas, which float about near the ends of some words and in the middle of others.

They show that a letter, or small group of letters, has been left out of a word.

Think of a simple one – **I am**. Say it a few times quickly, and you'll see that the **a** gets lost, and the word turns into **I'm**.



He is changes to **he's**, **we are** to **we're**, **they are** to **they're**, **it is** to **it's**. To make the meaning clear, the apostrophe goes above the space where the letters have been left out.

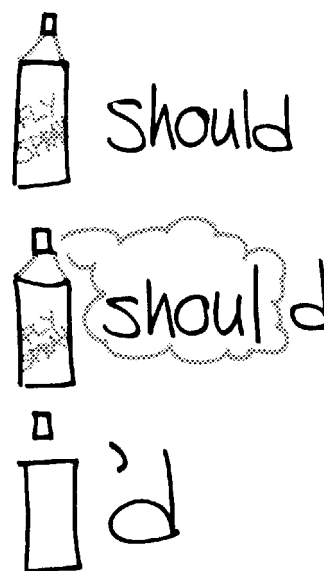
He is
He is
He's
He's

it is
it's

As well as these simple expressions, you can use an apostrophe for more complicated ones. **I've** is the shorter form of **I have**, **he's** of **he has**, and **we've**, **you've** and **they've** are easier versions of **we have**, **you have** and **they have**.

The same is true of lots of other words. **I will**, **you will** and **they will** change to **I'll**, **you'll** and **they'll**.

Had, **should** and **would** often shorten to **'d**, as in **I'd**, **you'd**, **he'd**, **we'd**. **Could have** changes to **could've**, **should have** to **should've**, and **would have** to **would've**.



Now try these!


Shorten the words in brackets by using apostrophes.

- 1 (They are) sure that (they have) everything (we are) going to need.
- 2 He says (he has) studied electronics, but (I am) not sure I believe him.
- 3 I (would have) done it myself if I (could have) been there in time.
- 4 (You will) see: (they will) be here in the morning.
- 5 (He had) forgotten everything he (should have) remembered.

Look squire, if (I had) taken the jewels I (should have) sold them by now. So will he: he (would have) taken them to a fence – or he (should have) done – to get rid of 'em, see! (It is) no use grilling me. (He would) never have told me where (he is) thinking of going. (I would) get on to Amsterdam, if I were you – (that is) where I (would have) gone, (I am) sure. He (could have) gone to Paris, but (they are) bad payers there. Bet you a fiver (he has) sold them in Amsterdam: (it is) what I (would have) done, straight up, guv!

APOSTROPHES 2

Apostrophes in words like **I'm** and **could've** show that a letter or two have been left out to make the word easier to say. The same is true when you use an apostrophe in words which describe things which do not happen.

is not o
is n t

isn't

Think about **is not**, for example. Most people would say **isn't** instead. Again, the apostrophe goes where the letter has been left out. Notice that the two words have joined into one – **isn't** – and that there's no break, and no apostrophe, between them.

So, **do not** becomes **don't**; **does not** becomes **doesn't**; **did not** becomes **didn't**. The same is true of **haven't**, **couldn't**, **shouldn't**, **wouldn't**, **wasn't** and **weren't**.

There's also another group of words which are a little more complicated. The two words have been combined again, and the apostrophe goes over the space where the letters have been left out: but the words have changed slightly too. For example, **will not** becomes **won't**, and **shall not** becomes **shan't**. The leaving-out has gone a step further, making the words a lot easier to say.

One more completes the set – **can't**. This is a shortened form of **cannot**.

shall not
shall not
shall not
sha n't
shan't

Now try these!

Shorten the words in brackets by using apostrophes.

- 1 I (would not) be too happy if I were you;
we (have not) finished yet.
- 2 You (should not) talk like that, even if
you (do not) mean it.
- 3 He (cannot) understand that they (will
not) be visiting him.
- 4 (Cannot) they come tomorrow? I (shall
not) be in on Tuesday.

Right, you miserable crew. I (would not) give you houseroom if I (was not) getting paid for it. (Do not) come the sob stories – I (would not) like to break your little hearts, not that I (could not). It (is not) fair, is it sonny? You (should not) have joined, should you? I (have not) got time to waste, so I (will not) keep telling you: you (cannot) get away with it and you (will not) get away with it. The Brigadier (does not) like sloppy soldiers, so we (do not) give him sloppy soldiers, do we, sonny? Is that clear or (is not) it?

APOSTROPHES 3

All apostrophes are there to show that a letter or group of letters have been left out – even those you use to show something belongs to someone.

A long time ago, instead of saying the **book's** cover, the **tadpole's** tail, or the **boy's** shirt, you'd have said the bookes cover, the sheepes tail and the boyes shirt.

tadpole's tail

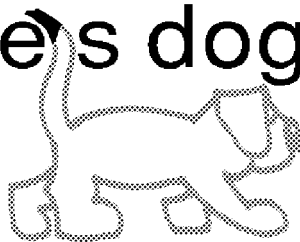


diver's board

There didn't seem a lot of point in having that extra **e**, so a lot of go-ahead, trendy people in the sixteenth century started leaving it out – and an apostrophe took its place.

So today, when you need to show that something belongs to someone, or that it's part of something else, all you need do is add an **apostrophe** and an **s** at the end – **diver's** board, **tadpole's** tail, **George's** dog.

George's dog



Words for more than one of something – plurals – don't have apostrophes, and neither do any other words which just end in **s**, like **glass**, **success**, **possess**, for example. Unless you're writing about something belonging to, or being part of, something else, don't use an apostrophe.

dogs' collars

When you're talking about something belonging to a plural word ending in **s**, there's a simple rule to follow.

Put an apostrophe at the end of the word, but don't add another **s**. So it's the **dogs'** collars, not the dogs's collars – the ziz sound on the end would be very clumsy, so the **s** isn't added.

children's party

If the plural word doesn't end in an **s**, though, add an apostrophe and an **s** as usual. Examples of this are the **children's** party, **fishermen's** nets, **servicemen's** pay, and **women's** movement.

women's movement

Now try these!

Add apostrophes where they're needed in this passage.

The doctors patients sat looking at papers in the waiting-rooms gloom. The old ladys daughter read her womens magazine, and

the parsons wife looked at a friends knitting patterns. The receptionists in-tray was piled with letters and files and patients records. Along the corridor, cries came from the childrens clinic. 'Next!' shouted the receptionists assistant.

-HEAR, HERE; WEAR, WHERE-



Two words which sound the same but have quite different meanings are **hear** and **here**.

Hear is what you do with your ears. A good way of remembering how to spell it is by thinking of **ear** with an **h** in front.



The second one – **here** – is more to do with eyes than ears. It's a place near enough to see. Think of it as it's shown in the drawing.

Here is also the one you use in expressions like 'look here' or 'here it is'.

Now try these!

- 1 Stand h____ and see if you can ____ anything unusual.
- 2 'Look h____,' he said, 'you must be h____ing things: there's no one h____.'
- 3 'I h____ you've had some trouble down h____,' he said.
- 4 She said 'H____ we are again then,' but nobody could h____ her.



Another pair which sometimes causes problems is **wear** and **where**.

Wear has two meanings. First, it's what you do with clothes. Secondly, it's what happens to things with age – they 'wear away'.

The other **where** is to do with finding your way, as in 'where are you?'. You could think of it as **here** with a **w** in front of it, or you could remember it as it's shown in the drawing.

Now try these!

- 5 It was the kind of place w____ you could w____ whatever you liked.
 - 6 He looked down to w____ the river had begun to w____ away the supports of the bridge.
 - 7 The coat had started to w____ badly w____ the sleeves joined the yoke.
- H____, on this tropical paradise, w____ the only sound is the waves w____ing away the sandy beaches, people w____ what they like and go w____ they please.
- You can h____ little except the waves, for, on an island w____ everyone has everything, w____'s the sense in talking? The silence is w____ing only for those who miss the world of business, w____ life is governed by profits which are h____ today and now____ tomorrow. But you won't h____ many complaints h____, w____ even buying h____ing-aid batteries is too much like hard work!

ITS, IT'S



A book belonging to Peter is **Peter's** book, right? Right.

A cassette belonging to Sharon is **Sharon's** cassette, right? Right.

A bowl belonging to a stray dog is **it's** bowl, right? Wrong.

That's the problem with **it** in a nutshell.



Usually, when something belongs to somebody or something else, you add an apostrophe and an s. There are exceptions, though, and the most important are these:

His = something belonging to him

Hers = something belonging to her

Its = something belong to it

None of them has an apostrophe. They are very often mis-spelt, mainly because people put in apostrophes which shouldn't be there.

Now try these!

- 1 She was sure that the things were h____, but he kept saying they were h____.
- 2 The dog sat on her lap, i____ face close to h____.

- 3 Suddenly h____ self-control broke, and his outburst was frightening in i____ violence.
- 4 H____ arguments were put forcefully, but h____ were more sensible.

There are times, though, when you need to write **it's** with an apostrophe. Then, the word has a completely different meaning:

It's = **It is**

Over the years, people have combined the two words **it** and **is**. **It's** is much easier to say than **it is**.

When you're not sure which one to use – **its** or **it's** – ask yourself if the meaning is something belonging to it or it is. The one that refers to the dog's bowl is **its**. The one to use in phrases like 'it's cold' or 'it's Tuesday' is **it's**.



it's raining

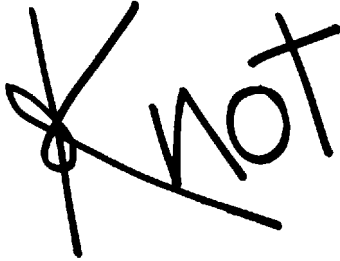
Now try these!

I____ just not right, chief. I____ not starting properly, and the slow running is on the blink. Perhaps i____ the big end that's gone – i____ noisy too, you see. I____ petrol consumption's up – and i____ a thirsty car anyway.

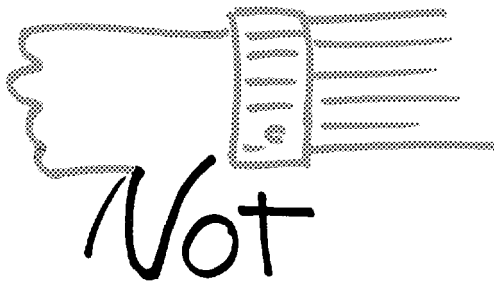
I____ strange: I hope i____ something small that's wrong. I____ choke needs careful handling – i____ easy to stall it. Still, i____ up to you now, chief – I'm sure you'll sort out i____ little problems.

KNOT, NOT; NO, KNOW, NOW

Knot and **not** are a troublesome pair, with the same sound but quite different meanings.



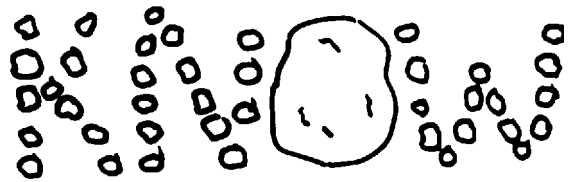
Knot is the one that you tie in string or rope. Try thinking of the drawing to remember that first **k**.



Not is the one about negative things: 'not open', 'not available', or 'not present'. Think of it as it's shown in the drawing – a thumbs down sign.



No is clear enough – it's the opposite of yes, and the word which stops or prohibits in notices or statements, such as 'no entry' or 'no parking'.



Know is rather different – it means to be certain or sure of something. Think of it as something rock hard, an absolute certainty.



These two are made a little more confusing by the word **now**. The meaning is clear enough, but it's easy to get muddled up between the three when you're writing. Think of **now** as a very important occasion – perhaps the vital start of a race.

Now try these!

- 1 He had been presented with a ____ty problem, by which he was ____ going to be beaten.
- 2 Although there was ____ a hope of escape, he twisted his body against the ____s that bound it until there was ____ an ounce of energy left in him.
- 3 I have ____ idea what things are like ____, but I ____ how they were.
- 4 '____, we can't decide _____. I ____ it sounds weak, but we must delay our decision a little longer.'

I ____ its ____ been easy for you, and you've had ____ty problems to solve, but I also ____ it's ____ hardship to you, and that ____ you ____ what it's all about, there'll be ____ more uncertainty. We've ____ much time ____, so there's ____ point in worrying. Tie yourselves in with slip ____, and there's to be ____ talking ____ that we've set off. And remember: there's ____ turning back _____. Once you've jumped out of the plane, you're on your own!

—THERE, THEIR, THEY'RE—

These three words all sound the same, but mean quite different things.

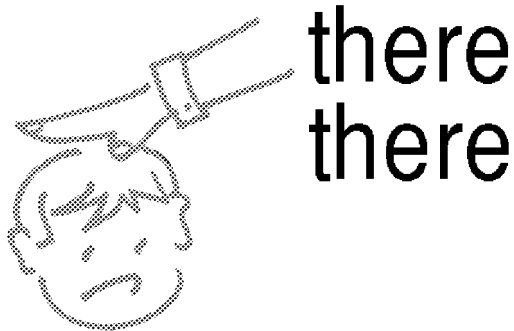
There is the most common; it has three separate meanings.

It means **there** as in 'over there' – a place somewhere in the distance which is the opposite of here.



There can also be used in the expression 'there is' or 'there are'. This meaning is rather like the first one, except that, instead of pointing to a place, it can point to an idea, or anything that's been noticed.

The word **there** is also used as an exclamation. When somebody falls over a carpet you've told him to nail down for the past six weeks, you might well say, 'There, I told you so!' You can also use this word to comfort someone, as in 'there, there'.



Their has quite a different meaning – something belonging to them; 'their' books and 'their' time. Whenever you're describing something belonging to them, **their** is the one you want.



They're is something else again. It's a shortened version of **they are**, with an apostrophe standing for the **a** that's been left out. Think of it as part of a longer phrase, like 'they're after us' or 'they're taking over'.



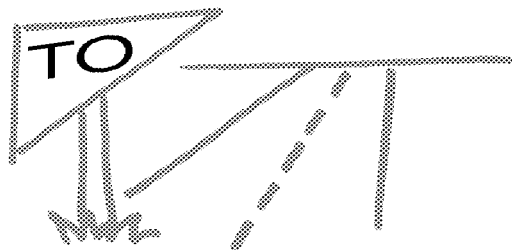
Now try these!

- 1 '___ down ___, ' she said nervously.
 - 2 ___ was no reason why the children should not have taken ___ pets to school today.
 - 3 '___ all mad over ___: ___ is no sense in what they say.'
 - 4 ___ clothes were torn, but ___ was an air of importance about them.
- '___!' she said. 'I know they are ___!' 'Nonsense,' I replied. '___'s no one ___! '___ getting closer, I tell you,' she insisted. 'I can hear ___ voices, and smell ___ breath. Oh Charles, ___ terrible!' ___
- '___'s no need to get excited,' I replied. '___ may be someone ___, but if ___ is, then ___ certainly not coming any closer.' By now I, too, felt that ___ were some strange beings out ___. 'If ___, I'll find them!' I said. I stepped out – and felt a blow on the back of my head. '___!' she said. 'I told you! They're there!'

—TO, TOO, TWO—

These three words can seem quite confusing, but taken one at a time, their meanings are a lot clearer.

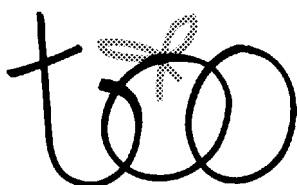
To is the most common. Often it's used to indicate a direction – 'to the shops', 'to India', even being sent 'to Coventry'. It's a signpost saying where somebody or something is going.



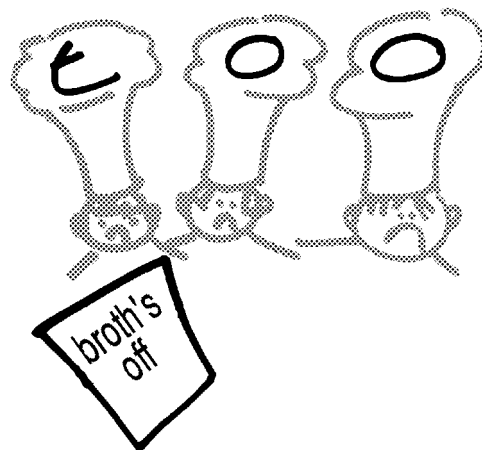
You can also use **to** as a signpost for what you're going to do next. If you want 'to stay' or 'to go', 'to watch' a video or 'to read' a book, it's the same word you need to use.

So, **to** spelt with one **o** is a signpost for both directions and actions.

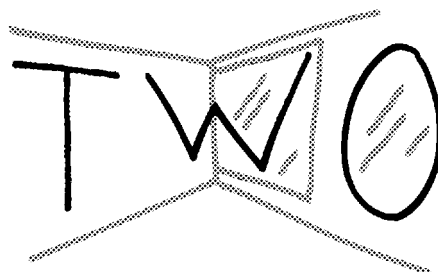
Too has a different meaning: it can mean 'as well' as in 'this, too, is important'. It's a link to join things together, and is quite different from the other word **to**.



Then there's the second meaning of **too**: 'too much' of something. You use this one in expressions like 'too hot', 'too cold', 'too dark', or 'too expensive'. Or, in the case of the famous spoiled broth, 'too many'.



The last one is the number **two** – the awkward one with **w** in the middle. You'll need it particularly for writing a sum of money in figures, on a cheque or a giro.



Now try these!

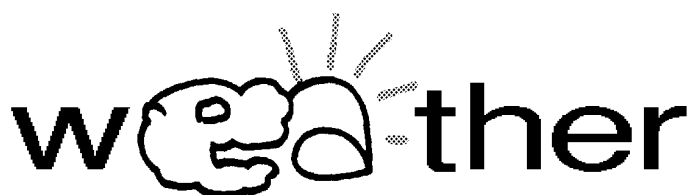
- 1 As there were ___ sets of twins, it was ___ complicated ___ tell them apart.
- 2 It was ___ much of a coincidence that ___ people had come ___ ask me about the accident on the same day.
- 3 ___ swans circled the pond lazily and then came down ___ land a little ___ far away from me.
- 4 He was ___ dazed ___ be certain, but he thought there were ___ people in the lane ___ his right.

When I got ___ the gates, it was ___ foggy ___ see very much. Then, ___ the left of the drive, ___ figures crept forward. They came out ___ the lawn, getting closer ___ me all the time. My hand crept ___ my pocket: I was glad ___ feel my revolver. The ___ men came up ___ the gate! They were bound ___ see me soon. ___ stop making any noise, I held my breath. But it was ___ late: they had seen me. Ought I ___ shoot? No; that would be ___ simple...

— WEATHER, WHETHER; — THREW, THROUGH

One pair of words with the same sound and different meanings is **weather** and **whether**.

Weather is the one we all moan about – rain, sleet, snow and the odd day of sun.



Whether, the other one, is the one you use when not knowing what to do. You don't know 'whether to go or not', or 'whether to go with George or with Julie', or 'whether to watch television or to wash your hair'. Think of this word as a finely balanced choice between two things, as it is in the drawing.



Another awkward pair of words is **threw** and **through**.

Threw is the past tense of throw, as in 'he threw the ball over the touch line'.



The other word – **through** – is used to describe passing through something, from one side to the other. You could try thinking of it as 'through the looking glass', or as going 'through a tunnel', as shown in the drawing. It can also mean because of – 'through your action, I've succeeded'.



Now try these!

- 1 I don't know w___ the w___ will change this evening.
- 2 There's nothing we can do except see w___ we can w___ the storm.
- 3 She reached the summit entirely th___ her own efforts, looked th___ her binoculars, and th___ up her hands in horror.
- 4 The sudden attack th___ him off his guard, but somehow he got th___ it and th___ his attacker to the ground.

W___ or not the w___ held, he had to get th___ . He coiled the rope and th___ it th___ the darkness. W___ he'd been heard or not he couldn't tell, but he had to go th___ with it. He th___ a glance behind him and hauled himself along the rope. He made heavy w___ of it, and in a few minutes had rubbed th___ his thick gloves. W___ he succeeded depended on the w___ : he pulled on the rope and in a moment was th___ tunnel and in daylight. He th___ his gloves behind a rock and walked on, enjoying the bright summer w___ .

WHO'S, WHOSE; THEIRS, THERE'S

Two words which often give problems are **who's** and **whose**. They sound the same, but mean two different things.

Who's with an apostrophe is short for **who is**. If you want to ask 'who's coming with me?' or 'who's going to tell him?' this is the one you use.

It can also be short for **who has**, as in 'who's let the cat out?'. It's easier to remember this word by thinking of its full meaning – **who is** or **who has** – and this will also tell you when to use **who's** and when to use **whose**.

who is
who's
who's

The second word – **whose** – means something belonging to whom. It's 'the woman whose car is outside' or 'whose book is this?'. You use it in all situations like these. Remember that it's one word in its own right, not two combined, like **who's** – that way you shouldn't get confused between them.

whose

There's and **theirs** are also confusing.

Theirs means simply something which belongs to them, as in 'the party was theirs'.

Try thinking of **whose** and **theirs** together, the first asking a question about ownership, and the second answering it. Whose is it? It's theirs.

theirs

There's is short for **there is** or **there has** – as, for example, in 'there's been an accident'. Like **who's**, it's much easier to get right if you think of it as two words shortened to one.

there has
ha
ha
there has
there's

Now try these!

'It's all very well to say it's th____,' I said, 'but th____ such a thing as responsibility. W____ going to pay for it? If it's th____, th____ no reason why they shouldn't.'. 'I don't know w____ it is,' he said, 'and th____ no need to take it out on me.' 'If it's th____,' I said, 'they've got to move it, and

if it isn't, we've got to find out w____ it is. Th____ no more to be said,' I said. Well, today it had gone – and we still don't know if it was th____, or w____ it was, or w____ paid to move it. Th____ something funny going on...

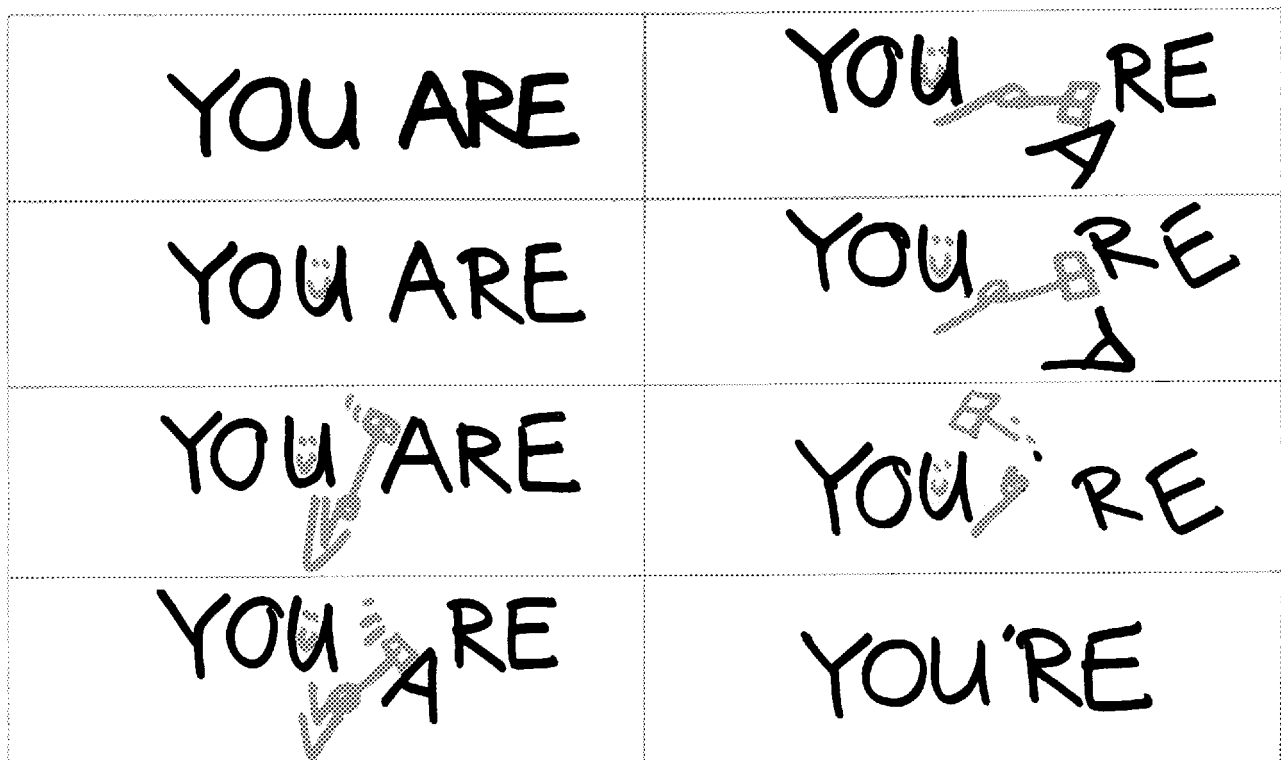
YOUR, YOU'RE

It's easy to get muddled about **your** and **you're** – but they are really quite different.

The first one shows that something belongs to you, as in 'your money or your life'.

You're, on the other hand, is a shorter version of **you are**. Try saying **you are** quickly a few times, and you'll soon see how the **a** gradually disappears: it's much easier to say **you're** than **you are**.

Of course, there are more interesting explanations of how the **a** vanished. Cut out each of these boxes, staple them together at the left and flick them through quickly. The whole story will then flash before you in glorious black and white.



Now try these!

_____ a rat, Luigi. _____ face is gonna get changed, you bet your life. Not that _____ fit to live, Luigi. When the boss hears of _____ mistakes, _____ a dead parrot. Be sad if all _____ windows got broken, wouldn't it? But _____ not gonna put us to that trouble, are ya? _____ not worth the price of a brick, anyway. Don't get _____ library books renewed, Luigi, 'cos _____ not gonna get to read them.

_____ bottle's gone, Luigi, and _____ gonna join it soon. So mind _____ step; _____ friends are watching you. We're fond of ya, Luigi baby – so fond we're gonna put ya out of _____ misery, soon as we get the chance. _____ miserable life's as good as over. Say _____ prayers, Luigi: _____ gonna need to, 'cos _____ a dead man, Luigi.

—ACCEPT, EXCEPT, EXPECT—

You've probably noticed that there are some particularly nasty words which go about in two or threes, sounding alike but meaning quite different things. It's worth while trying to sort them out.

A couple which often cause problems are **accept** and **except**. The first means to take or receive, the second means apart from.

You **accept** a present, congratulations and a tricky situation.



You're happy, except for one problem. Be careful, too, about the word **exception**, which means the odd one out and is also used in the expression 'take exception' which means to object.



It's not quite so easy, though. There's also **expect**, which somehow manages to write itself when you mean to write **except**. If you **expect** something, you think it's going to happen, or look forward to it.



Now try these!

- 1 I didn't e_____ your gift, but I a_____ it with much pleasure.
- 2 They were all there e_____ Jones, who had not a_____ed the invitation.
- 3 I find it hard to a_____ the e_____ions to the rule.
- 4 I e_____ you all to be there tomorrow, with no e_____ions.
- 5 He had high e_____ations of everybody e_____ himself.
- 6 After a while, she a_____ed that she couldn't e_____ anything better.

Well, what did you e_____? You wanted the job, so you can't e_____ to have it all your own way. There are no e_____ions. It's the same for all of us. A_____ it: you have to go along with things as they are. E_____ for you, everybody's happy. I agree with some of your criticisms, but there are some I take e_____ion to. I e_____ to be blamed for things that go wrong, but there are e_____ions which I don't like. If you can't a_____ it, you can try being head-teacher yourself, and see how that fulfils your e_____ations!

LEAD, LED; BOUGHT, BROUGHT

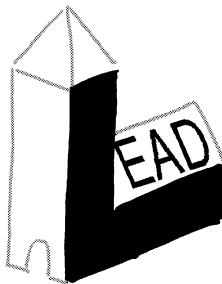
Lead and **led** often cause problems.

Lead – pronounced ‘leed’ – is what you do to a dog, and you do it now, in the present.

Led – pronounced ‘ledd’ – is what you’ve done in the past – you may have **led** your dog home yesterday, or **led** someone into committing a crime.



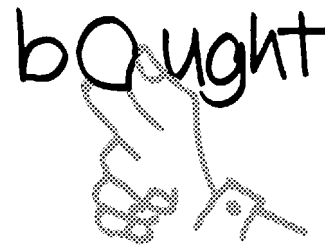
Things are made a little more tricky by the word **lead** – pronounced ‘ledd’ – as in piping, pencils and church roofs.



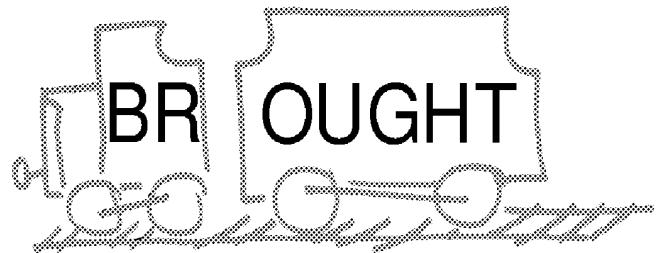
Today’s dog-walk – pronounced ‘leed’ – is always spelt **lead**. **Led** (yesterday’s dog-walk) and **lead** (church roofs) – both pronounced ‘ledd’ – can be confusing. If you’re not sure which you need, ask yourself if you’re writing about having walked the dog or about heavy metal. The first is **led**: the second is **lead**.

Another awkward pair are **bought** and **brought**. Although they sound very similar, they’re actually about two quite different things.

Bought means that you’ve purchased something.



Brought means that you’ve carried something with you to a particular place.



Now try these!

- 1 Although he confessed to stealing the l_____ from the roof, he said he’d been l_____ to it by his brother.
- 2 She began to l_____ the dog away down the road that l_____ to the canal, feeling sad that all her efforts had l_____ to failure.
- 3 I’ve b_____ you a present but haven’t b_____ it with me.
- 4 He b_____ a length of rope and b_____ it back home, together with the groceries he had b_____.

Your honour, I know I’ve b_____ shame on my family by stealing the l_____. I’ve l_____ an honest life, but was l_____ astray by an unfortunate accident. I b_____ a bottle of whisky and drank it. When I woke up, someone was l_____ing me to the church. I could’ve b_____ as much l_____ as I wanted, but by then I was being l_____ up a ladder – I suppose the other bloke had b_____ it with him. Then the police came, and l_____ me down and b_____ me here. Before they l_____ me away, yer honour – d’you want some cheap l_____?

—LOOSE, LOSE; CHOOSE,— CHOSE; OF, OFF

It's easy to get confused over **loose** and **lose**.

Loose is used about teeth, screws and boards.

Lose, on the other hand, is what people do with dogs, tickets, keys and (sometimes) their tempers.

lose

Choose and **chose** are difficult too, but for a different reason.

Choose is what you do now – select one thing out of several.

Chose has the same meaning, but in the past: I **choose** one thing today, but **chose** another yesterday.

choose
chose

Of and off are another awkward couple. **Of** is about being part of something, or what it's made from: 'a box of matches', 'a heap of coins', 'a book of stamps', 'the ace of clubs', and expressions like 'of course' are examples.

Ace of clubs



Off is more complicated. You 'go off to work', 'cut off a piece of wood', or 'take off a wheel'. If you're late for lunch, you'll be told 'chips are off, love!'

It's easy to write **of** when you mean **off**, so you need to think carefully when writing it.

Now try these!

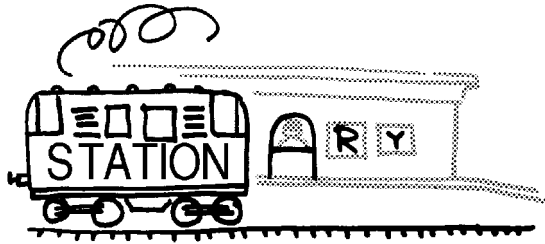
- 1 He ch__se to stay behind and mend the l__se board.
- 2 To ch__se the wrong one now would be to l__se everything.
- 3 Suddenly he jumped out o__ his chair, took his jacket o__ and dashed o__ down the corridor.
- 4 The room was full o__ smoke. Two men were fighting on a table, and he saw them fall o__ onto the floor in a whirl o__ fists.

We c_____ to l_____ no time, and set o_____ straight away. Our route lay through the roughest part o_____ the desert, full o_____ strange perils and quite cut o_____. Should we l_____ our way, no one would find us, and vultures would pick o_____ our flesh until we joined the rest o_____ the l_____ bones in the desert. Not something either of us would c_____. We made sure nothing was l_____ on the truck, to keep flies o_____ our food and out o_____ the petrol cans, and drove o_____. I c_____ to drive first, while Georgina nodded o_____ under some l_____ blankets.

-STATIONARY, STATIONERY;- QUITE, QUIET

Stationary and **stationery** form a well-known double act which causes a lot of confusion.

One of them – **stationary** – means standing still.



The other – **stationery** – is a word for paper, envelopes, notebooks and that sort of thing.

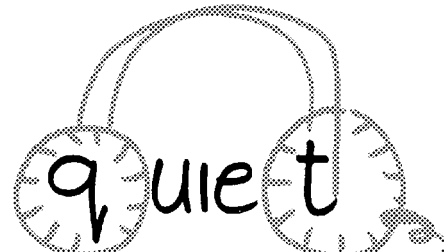


Quite and **quiet** aren't easy either. Their meanings are totally (or **quite**) different.

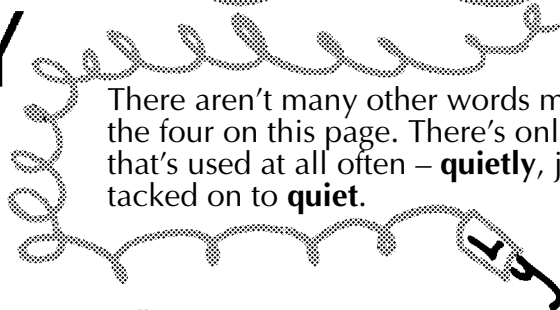
Quite has two opposite meanings – very or completely, as in 'she was quite overcome', and **partly**, as in 'the shops are quite full today'.



Quiet is to do with silence, or with things being not busy.



There aren't many other words made from the four on this page. There's only one that's used at all often – **quietly**, just **ly** tacked on to **quiet**.



Now try these!

- 1 She worked in a small s_____ shop in the centre of the town.
- 2 He waited until the bus was s_____, and then jumped off.
- 3 The garden was q_____ still, and the birds sang q_____ in the trees.
- 4 It was deathly q_____ in the old warehouse: I felt q_____ afraid.

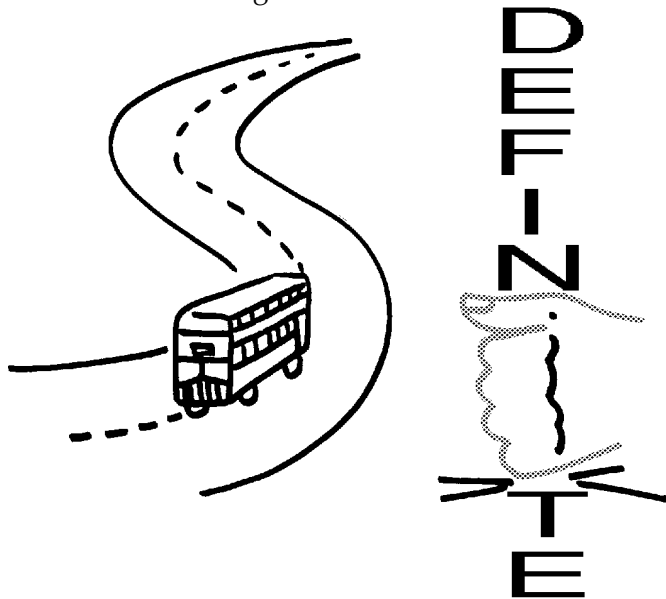
Q_____ please! Right. This is the s_____ van, which will be s_____ outside the office supplies shop next to the bank. Ern, you'll be in the shop looking at s_____.

Alf, you'll be standing still outside: well, not q_____ still, not exactly s_____, but moving about q_____ slowly. As soon as the smoke grenades go off, Ern, you run q_____ly out of the s_____ shop, past the s_____ van and into the bank. Do the heist q_____ly; no rough stuff. Come out quickly, into the s_____ van, which will be moving slowly because Bert'll have got it going by then, and we're away. Got it? Not q_____? Then you haven't been listening: I'll tell you again. Q_____ please!

— DIFFICULT WORDS 1 —

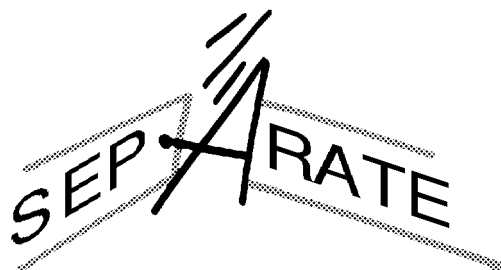
However many spelling rules you try to work out, some words are awkward.

Take **business**, for instance. The way you spell it and the way you say it seem totally different. You can try thinking of it as **busi-ness**, and the state of being busy, or you could think of it as **bus-in-ess**, as it's shown in the drawing.

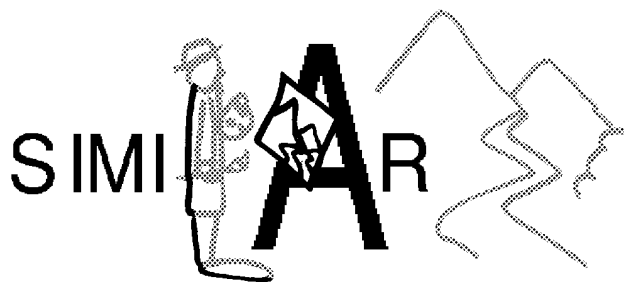


Definite is another odd one. It's the last **i** that's the problem – it seems so much more sensible to have an **a** there. But **i** it is, and it stays there for all the other forms of the word too – **definition**, **definitely** and **definitive**. Think of it as a big, forceful word determined to have its own way.

Separate is a strange one, too. That second vowel is definitely an **a**, not an **e**. That's true of other versions of the word too – **separately**, **separation** and **separated**.



It's easy to mis-spell **similar**. The last **a** is the problem here – it often gets turned into an **e**. Think of the **a** in **same** if you find it hard to remember – **similar** means the same, too.



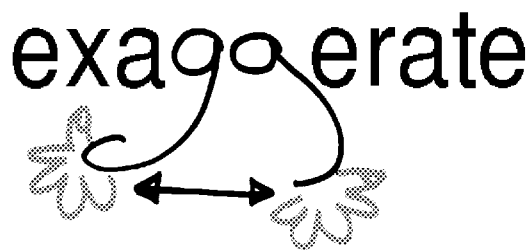
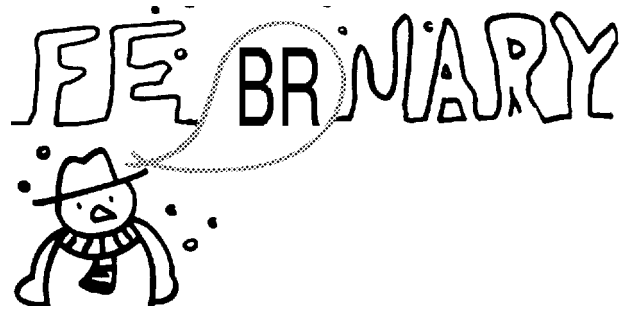
Now try these!

- 1 It was hard to be d_____, but I felt that something was wrong with the whole b_____.
- 2 'I'm a b_____ man,' he said. 'I'm d_____ly not in b_____ to give money away.'
- 3 Although the two look s_____, they are really quite s_____e things.
- 4 There was a strong s_____ity between the twins, even though they'd been brought up s_____ly.

Okay, let's get down to b_____. First we s_____e the picture from the frame, then you put back the fake. They're so s_____r no one will notice – d_____ly no one. We leave the gallery s_____ly, you by the b_____men's entrance: I leave by the back door. We stay s_____e until we're d_____ly safe, but go to Nobby's by s_____r routes. Then we phone the owner and tell him about this strange s_____ity with the painting we've got. 'Bring the money in two s_____ cases,' we tell him, 'and your s_____ion from your painting will be over.' Then we're in b_____: d_____ly in b_____s?

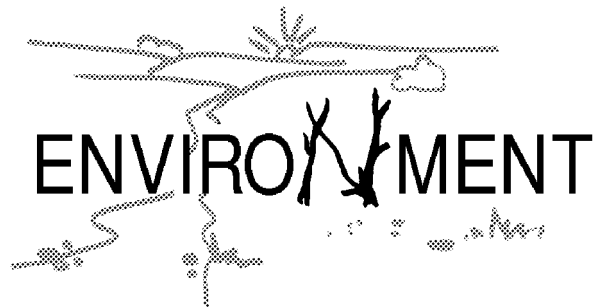
—DIFFICULT WORDS 2—

February is an awkward word. It just doesn't sound at all as if it's spelt like that. It's a miserable word which sounds shrivelled up – rather like the month itself, really, cold and dismal.



Exaggerate is a strange one: it's the two gs that cause the problem. They sound all right, but it always looks as if there's one too many. Try remembering the one that got away.

Environment is easy to mis-spell, too. Here it's the **n** in the middle that often gets left out. It means a place or setting – a working **environment** or a home **environment**, for example. It's also used to mean the nature world, when people talk of conserving the **environment**.



Now try these!

- 1 In F_____, new figures were published by the Department of the E_____.
- 2 E_____al Health Officers will examine the hotel in F_____.
- 3 It was not easy to e_____ the importance of the book.
- 4 He spoke quietly and without e_____ation.

Fellow e_____alists, welcome to the F_____y meeting. I can't e_____ the importance of preserving the e_____ in winter. To say that F_____ is the cruellest month is no e_____ion. E_____ally speaking, F_____ is the low point of the year. E_____ed claims have been made that e_____alists are cranks. Untrue! I'm delighted to launch our new campaign for e_____al protection: 'Save a worm this F_____!'

— DIFFICULT WORDS 3 —

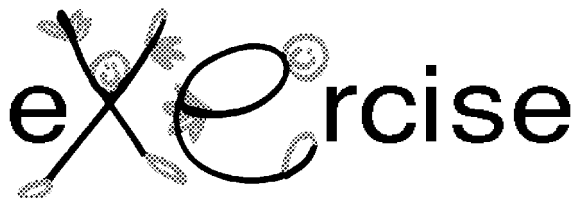
Some words are spelt with an **x** or an **s** which is followed by a **c**. Others, though, have an **x** or an **s** which isn't followed by a **c**. So it can be tricky to sort out which spelling is right for a particular word, especially since there's no easy rule to follow.

Excellent, for example, does have a **c** after the **x**. If you **excel** at something, or anything you do is **excellent**, it's so good that it stands out above everything else. So try remembering the spelling like the drawing with the **c** in a class of its own.



ex^ccellent

Exercise, though, doesn't have a **c** after the **x**. This is true whether you're talking about physical **exercises** or the ones on this page. Whether it's an aerobic work-out or a maths problem, **exercise** is spelt the same – without a **c** after the **x**.



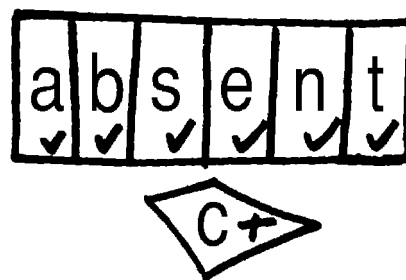
ex^{ercise}

Words with **s** and **c** are difficult ones, too.



fa^sci^cinate

There's **fascinate**, which has both letters. It's the same for other forms of the word, too – **fascinating**, **fascinated** and **fascination** all have the same spelling.



absent

On the other hand, **absent** has no **c**. Other forms of the word follow the same spelling – **absence**, **absentee** and **absenteeism**.

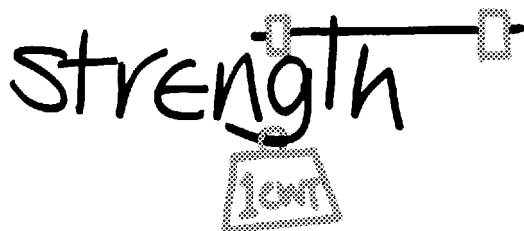
Now try these!

- 1 It was an e_____ idea to e_____ the dog before breakfast.
- 2 She kept in e_____ shape by taking regular e_____.
- 3 There was a f_____ing reason for his a_____ce that morning.
- 4 F_____ion with breakfast television has caused much a_____eeism.

Losing money through a _____ce from work? Has life lost its f _____ion! You need Ron Arkwright's e _____e album. Get in shape to the f _____ing sounds of Bert Twinge, with an e _____t commentary by megastar Ron himself, as used in e _____e periods throughout Wormwood Scrubs. You'll e _____l: your friends will be f _____ted. No more a _____eeism from work: your body will be in e _____t shape. Everybody's e _____sing with good old Ron – heavy breathing was never so f _____ing.

— DIFFICULT WORDS 4 —

Here are some words which often go wrong.



First of all, **strength**. Often the **t** gets left out, or another **h** somehow gets into the word, or it's spelt **strongth**. But it's just **strength** – the stuff that weightlifters have a lot of.

Words which are related to numbers are awkward too. **Fourth** should be simple enough – it's only **four** with **th** stuck on the end. Somehow, though, the **u** tends to get lost. Think of it as **4th** with **our** in the middle.



Maintenance is another one. It's the **e** in the middle that confuses you. It comes from **maintain** – so why does it change to **maintenance**? Whatever the reason, the **e** is there, and it's **maintenance**. Try thinking of it as what you do to cars on ramps, as shown in the picture.



Eighth is another odd one. It's only **eight** with an extra **h**, but it still looks odd – can you think of another English word which ends in **hth**? Try thinking of it as part of a bar of chocolate, like the one in the drawing.



Now try these!

- 1 M_____ of staff levels at their present s_____ is not possible.
- 2 People of average s_____ are quite capable of routine car m_____.
- 3 An e_____ of an inch is called an e_____, but a f_____ is called a quarter.
- 4 The twenty-e_____ annual works outing will be held on the f_____ of May.

The e_____ item on your agenda, brothers, is the f_____ annual 'M_____ is S_____' campaign. We know that motor m_____ makes sense, but does anyone else? An e_____ of cars have no proper m_____ and only a twenty-f_____ are serviced by recognised dealers. No wonder there's no s_____ in their pistons. An e_____ is not enough, brothers. Go out and get in more cars. By the f_____ of next month, I want m_____ contracts for at least another e_____ of these motors. For the f_____ time, brothers, I tell you – 'M_____ is S_____!'

Adult literacy core curriculum: The progression between capabilities

Entry level 1	Entry level 2	Entry level 3	Level 1	Level 2
<p>Speaking and listening At this level, adults can listen and respond to spoken language, including simple narratives, statements, questions and single-step instructions</p> <p>speak to communicate basic information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics</p> <p>engage in discussion with another person in a familiar situation about familiar topics</p>	<p>Speaking and listening At this level, adults can listen and respond to spoken language, including straightforward information, short narratives, explanations and instructions</p> <p>speak to communicate information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics</p> <p>engage in discussion with one or more people in a familiar situation to establish shared understanding about familiar topics</p>	<p>Speaking and listening At this level, adults can listen and respond to spoken language, including straightforward information and narratives, and follow straightforward explanations and instructions, both face to face and on the telephone</p> <p>speak to communicate information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics, using appropriate formality, both face to face and on the telephone</p> <p>engage in discussion with one or more people in a familiar situation, making relevant points and responding to what others say to reach a shared understanding about familiar topics</p>	<p>Speaking and listening At this level, adults can listen and respond to spoken language, including information and narratives, and follow explanations and instructions of varying lengths, adapting response to speaker, medium and context</p> <p>speak to communicate information, ideas and opinions adapting speech and content to take account of the listener(s) and medium</p> <p>engage in discussion with one or more people in familiar and unfamiliar situations, making clear and relevant contributions that respond to what others say and produce a shared understanding about different topics</p>	<p>Speaking and listening At this level, adults can listen and respond to spoken language, including extended information and narratives, and follow detailed explanations and multi-step instructions of varying length, adapting response to speaker, medium and context</p> <p>speak to communicate straightforward and detailed information, ideas and opinions clearly, adapting speech and content to take account of the listener(s), medium, purpose and situation</p> <p>engage in discussion with one or more people in a variety of different situations, making clear and effective contributions that produce outcomes appropriate to purpose and topic</p>
<p>Reading At this level, adults can read and understand short texts with repeated language patterns on familiar topics</p> <p>read and obtain information from common signs and symbols</p>	<p>Reading At this level, adults can read and understand short, straightforward texts on familiar topics</p> <p>read and obtain information from short documents, familiar sources and signs and symbols</p>	<p>Reading At this level, adults can read and understand short, straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently</p> <p>read and obtain information from everyday sources</p>	<p>Reading At this level, adults can read and understand straightforward texts of varying length on a variety of topics accurately and independently</p> <p>read and obtain information from different sources</p>	<p>Reading At this level, adults can read and understand a range of texts of varying complexity accurately and independently</p> <p>read and obtain information of varying length and detail from different sources</p>
<p>Writing At this level, adults can write to communicate information to an intended audience</p>	<p>Writing At this level, adults can write to communicate information with some awareness of the intended audience</p>	<p>Writing At this level, adults can write to communicate information and opinions with some adaptation to the intended audience</p>	<p>Writing At this level, adults can write to communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly using length, format and style appropriate to purpose and audience</p>	<p>Writing At this level, adults can write to communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly and effectively, using length, format and style appropriate to purpose, content and audience</p>

Adult literacy core curriculum cross-reference

1-2 IS AND ES

Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; **Spelling and handwriting:** Ww/E2.2 Use their knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns (e.g. consonant clusters and vowel phonemes) to help work out correct spellings, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings

3 PLURALS WITH S

Spelling and handwriting: Ww/E2.2 Use their knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns (e.g. consonant clusters and vowel phonemes) to help work out correct spellings, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/E3.1 Write in complete sentences; Ws/E3.2 Use correct basic grammar

4 PLURALS WITHOUT S

Spelling and handwriting: Ww/E2.2 Use their knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns (e.g. consonant clusters and vowel phonemes) to help work out correct spellings, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/E3.1 Write in complete sentences; Ws/E3.2 Use correct basic grammar

5 ADDING ABLE, IBLE, UBLE

Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/L1.1 Use reference material to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.2 Recognise and understand the vocabulary associated with different types of text, using appropriate strategies to work out meaning; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting:** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner

6 ADDING ING

Grammar and punctuation: Rs/E3.2 Use implicit and explicit knowledge of different types of word (e.g. linking words, nouns, verbs, adjectives), of word order, and of possible plausible meanings, to help decode unfamiliar words and predict meaning; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/E3.1 Write in complete sentences; Ws/E3.2 Use correct basic grammar (e.g. appropriate verb tense, subject–verb agreement); Ws/L1.2 Use correct grammar

7 ADDING LY

Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/L1.1 Use reference material to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.2 Recognise and understand the vocabulary associated with different types of text, using appropriate strategies to work out meaning; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting:** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/E3.2 Use correct basic grammar

8-9 MAKING OPPOSITES

Spelling and handwriting: Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner

Adult literacy core curriculum cross-reference

- 10 APOSTROPHES 1: OMISSION
Grammar and punctuation: Ws/L1.2 Use correct grammar (e.g. subject–verb agreement, correct use of tense); Ws/L1.3 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation so that meaning is clear; Ws/L2.4 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation accurately (e.g. commas, apostrophes, inverted commas)
- 11 APOSTROPHES 2: NEGATIVES
Spelling and handwriting: Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner
- 12 APOSTROPHES 3: POSSESSION
Spelling and handwriting: Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner
- 13 HEAR, HERE; WEAR, WHERE
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 14 ITS, IT'S
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/L1.1 Use reference material to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/L1.3 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation so that meaning is clear; Ws/L2.4 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation accurately
- 15 KNOT, NOT; NO, KNOW, NOW
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 16 THERE, THEIR, THEY'RE
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/L1.3 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation so that meaning is clear; Ws/L2.4 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation accurately (e.g. commas, apostrophes, inverted commas)

Adult literacy core curriculum cross-reference

- 17 TO, TOO, TWO
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 18 WEATHER, WHETHER; THREW, THROUGH
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 19 WHO'S, WHOSE; THEIRS, THERE'S
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/L1.3 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation so that meaning is clear; Ws/L2.4 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation accurately (e.g. commas, apostrophes, inverted commas)
- 20 YOUR, YOU'RE
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life; **Grammar and punctuation:** Ws/L1.3 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation so that meaning is clear; Ws/L2.4 Punctuate sentences correctly, and use punctuation accurately (e.g. commas, apostrophes, inverted commas)
- 21 ACCEPT, EXCEPT, EXPECT
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 22 LEAD, LED; BOUGHT, BROUGHT
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life

Adult literacy core curriculum cross-reference

- 23 LOOSE, LOSE; CHOOSE, CHOSE; OF, OFF
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 24 STATIONARY, STATIONERY; QUITE, QUIET
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 25 DIFFICULT WORDS 1: BUSINESS, DEFINITE, SEPARATE, SIMILAR
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 26 DIFFICULT WORDS 2: FEBRUARY, ENVIRONMENT, EXAGGERATE
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life;
- 27 DIFFICULT WORDS 3: EXCELLENT, EXERCISE, FASCINATE, ABSENT
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life
- 28 DIFFICULT WORDS 4: STRENGTH, MAINTENANCE, FOURTH, EIGHTH
Vocabulary, word recognition and phonics: Rw/E3.3 Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words; Rw/L1.3 Recognise and understand an increasing range of vocabulary, applying knowledge of word structure, related words, word roots, derivations, borrowings; **Spelling and handwriting :** Ww/E3.1 Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest; Ww/E3.2 Use their developing knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words, as appropriate for the needs of the learner; Ww/L1.1 Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life