The OCR Guide to

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Version 1

OCR

In order to help you with the increased focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in assessment, OCR has produced this short guide to help you improve your written English. This guide provides you with some basic rules and skills related to spelling, punctuation and grammar. We suggest that you make use of the links to the exercises provided to practise and improve your knowledge in order to make your writing more accurate and skilful in a whole range of contexts. Other skills guides are available at www.ocr.org.uk.

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Using this guide

What is this guide designed to do?

- Help you understand why SPaG is important.
- Give you some tips on certain areas of SPaG such as:
  - proofreading
  - using a thesaurus
  - sentence structure
  - verbs
  - punctuation marks
  - apostrophes
  - bullets and lists.
- Give advice on common mistakes such as:
  - using the wrong word
  - homophones
  - misuse of apostrophes
  - subject/verb agreement
  - comma splicing.
- Offer you some exercises and links to useful websites where you can find more information and practise your skills.

This skills guide also contains a number of appendices listing further resources: interactive exercises and links to websites.

^ denotes a link to a website in the appendix giving further information.

Note for teachers

From 2013, GCSE examinations for English Literature, Geography, History (including Ancient History) and Religious Studies will allocate marks to reflect the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

The assessment of SPaG, and the number of marks available for SPaG, will be detailed on both the front cover of the exam paper and in the question where applicable.

Rubric

The explanatory information given on each exam paper.

J382 Geography A

In the external assessment for unit A731, questions marked as indicated in the rubric will carry additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

J085 Geography B (short course)

In the external assessment for unit A772, questions marked as indicated in the rubric will carry additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

J385 Geography B

In the external assessment for unit B563, questions marked as indicated in the rubric will carry additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

J620 Religious Studies A (short course)
J621 Religious Studies B (short course)

All of the external assessment units will carry additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar. The questions will be marked as indicated in the rubric.

J151 Ancient History (short course)
J415 History A: Schools History Project
J117 History B: Modern World (short course)

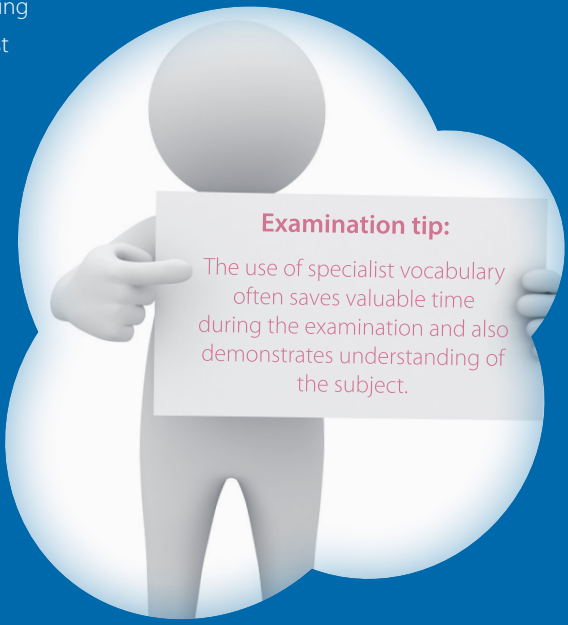
All of the external assessment units will carry additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar. The questions will be marked as indicated in the rubric.

J360 English Literature

Unit A662 will carry additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar. The questions will be marked as indicated in the rubric.

The quality of written communication is assessed in all units and is integrated in the marking criteria. In the subjects listed above, and in other qualifications, candidates are expected to:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear
- present information in a form that suits its purpose
- use an appropriate style of writing and, where applicable, specialist terminology.



Introduction

Why do you need to improve your understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar?

Knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar will help you to properly arrange words in sentences and add the correct punctuation. This will allow you to communicate effectively with others.

In the short term, the ability to spell, punctuate and produce grammatically-correct sentences in assessment is important. However, it is also a life-long skill that is well worth practising and improving.

Text speak is great for social media but formal language is needed in your academic life, when applying for a job, and in many workplaces.

Additional marks are allocated to some GCSEs to reflect the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar. It's always worth aiming for the best standard of writing in any assessment as it helps to convey your meaning.

Spelling and grammar checkers on computers are not always correct! They sometimes suggest changing words that are perfectly correct and often miss glaring errors. Unlike you, they are not concerned with the meaning of the sentence and are simply following a predefined set of rules. While there is no doubt that they are useful, relying on them completely is not sensible and can lead to confusion or embarrassing mistakes.

At college or university, poor spelling, punctuation and grammar will cause you to lose marks in essays. Good punctuation and grammar will not only improve your marks, but, used skilfully, can make your work easier to read and the points you make more persuasive and engaging.

Almost all employers view effective written communication as an important skill for employability. It is also a skill which many potential candidates lack. So, improving your understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar could help you into the career of your choice. Failure to demonstrate good quality written communication may imply a lack of professionalism – or that you don't pay attention to detail.

As your career progresses, the amount of written communication that you produce is likely to increase. Clearly-written, grammatically-correct and properly-punctuated letters and reports and other written communication will be important for carrying out your role professionally and effectively.

So improving your understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar is a wise investment of your time.

When businesses fail to take care with accuracy, they may appear to be unprofessional to the public and customers. Some internet businesses say that revenue is being lost due to poor spelling.

Proofreading

If you re-read your draft, and then your completed work, thoroughly you will usually spot and be able to correct most mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is also an opportunity to ensure that what you want to say is clear to understand. This is known as proofreading.

If you don't already do so, get into the habit of having a good dictionary and thesaurus by your side – or use an online version – when you are drafting your work. Try restructuring a sentence to see if a few changes make it easier for the reader to understand. Or, if you are unsure of the spelling of a word, use a different one.

Proofreading is important for businesses because it ensures that communication with the public, suppliers and customers is clear, accurate and professional. Many businesses – including OCR – employ proofreaders for this very purpose.

Using a thesaurus

A thesaurus groups together words that are similar in meaning (synonyms) and can help you to find a new word to replace one you already know.

This can avoid repeating words in a sentence as well as beginning successive sentences or paragraphs with identical words. It is, however, important to ensure that the alternative word is appropriate. ^

A thesaurus also lists words with the opposite meaning (antonyms).

English has 90 spelling rules and many of them have exceptions too. A summary of some of the main spelling rules can be found in the appendices.

If working in a computer program such as Word, right clicking on a word will offer a menu from which you can select a list of synonyms and access other thesaurus and dictionary tools.

Sentence structure

It is important to write complete sentences that are correctly punctuated.

A complete sentence always has a noun (name of something) and a verb (action word). It also expresses a complete idea and makes sense standing alone. ^

Try testing your sentences; if you take away all of the surrounding text, does it still make sense on its own?

Many words can be either a noun or a verb. Using the word 'plan' as an example, if the word makes sense when you put 'a' or 'the' in front, it is a noun:

I have a plan. (noun)

I have the plan. (noun)

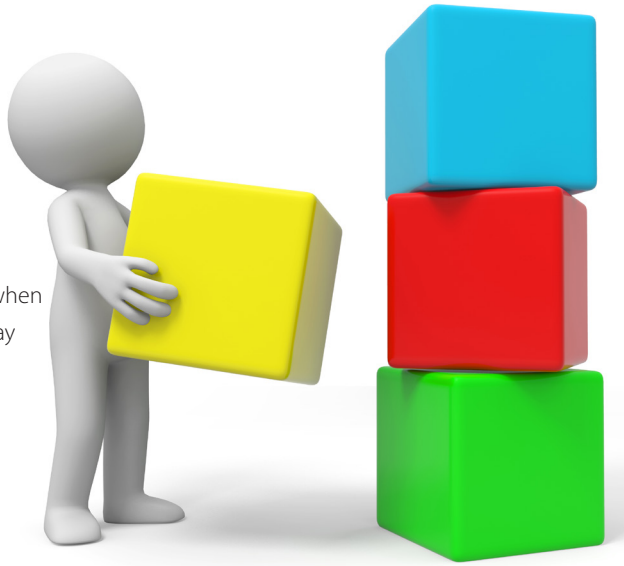
If the word makes sense when you put 'to' in front, it is a verb:

I plan my essays. (verb)

To plan my essays. (verb)

The tense of a verb can change to show when the action took place. The verb ending may then change, for example:

I planned my essay.



Punctuation marks

When speaking, we use many methods to help listeners understand us.

When we speak, we can make ourselves better understood by changing the tone of our voice, pause, stop, use hand gestures and facial expressions. In writing, punctuation marks are an equivalent method for emphasising or clarifying what we mean.

Text written without any punctuation marks would be difficult to understand. Sometimes information with incorrect punctuation changes the meaning from what was intended. ^

The first letter of a sentence after a full stop, question mark and exclamation mark is always a capital letter.

Sentences always begin with a capital letter and end in either:

- a full stop – to end a statement
- a question mark – to let the reader know a question is being asked
- an exclamation mark – to indicate a thought with emotion

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Commas ,

Commas are used to separate parts of a sentence in order to make the meaning clear and the sentence easy to read. They mark a brief pause, usually at a point where you would pause to take a breath if you were speaking rather than writing. ^

Commas are used in two ways:

1. To separate words or phrases that make up a list (but not before 'and'). For example:
   Some questions will carry additional marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2. To separate parts of a sentence. For example:
   The assessment of SPaG, and the number of marks available for SPaG, will be on the front cover of the exam paper and in the question.

If in doubt about how to use commas, read each sentence aloud and pause briefly at each comma. If the sentence flows badly and seems jerky, you may have too many commas. If you are out of breath by the end of the sentence, you may need to add some commas – at appropriate points. Sometimes a very long sentence will be easier to read if divided into two or more separate sentences.

Speech Marks " "

Speech marks are used to separate the words or thoughts of a person from the rest of the sentence. It is usual to use double speech marks to show a direct quote from people within text, for example:

> The question "Why do we have to study spelling, punctuation and grammar?" is often asked.

> At the end of the day, he said, "Tomorrow will be better" and smiled to himself.

The first speech mark is put before the first spoken word. The second speech mark is put after the last spoken word and any other punctuation marks.

Everyday informal speech (also known as colloquialisms) may be used in reported speech; for example, what was said in an interview or a meeting and what someone has written in response to a questionnaire.

Sometimes people express their thoughts and feelings in powerful ways and you may want to capture this in your work to provide authenticity. You may need to include explanatory notes to ensure that the meaning is clear.

Semicolon ;

The semicolon represents a break in a sentence that is stronger than a comma, but less final than a full stop. It can be used to link sentences that are closely related. ^ For example:

> Formal language is needed in work documents; informal language should be reserved for social media.

Colon :

The colon acts as a pause which introduces related information. It indicates that the reader should look forward to information and can be used to introduce the items in a list. ^ For example:

> Unit A731 contains three compulsory themes: extreme environments, the global citizen, similarities and differences in settlements and population.

Apostrophe ’

The apostrophe is used in two ways: ^

1. To stand in for a missing letter when words are shortened in informal writing. For example:
   I’ll revise thoroughly for the exam.
   I’m confident I will pass.
2. To show ownership. For example:
   Bobby’s book
   meaning ‘the book belonging to Bobby’.

Bullet points •

Bullet points can be used instead of numerous sentences or for brief points in a long sentence. Bullet points allow you to:

- make each of your points clear
- give each point equal weight.

If each point is numbered or lettered this can show:

a. the order of events in a sequence
b. the importance of different items by using numbers or letters to rank them.

Common mistakes

Using the wrong word

There are many words which are very similar and can be easily confused. This section looks at some of these words and explains when they should be used.

Of and have

Examiners report that using the word 'of' instead of the word 'have' is one of the most common mistakes in exam papers in recent years. For example:

They should of finished it. (incorrect)

They should have finished it. (correct)

This confusion has probably arisen because the word 'have' is often contracted, as in 'they should've finished it'. The end of the word then sounds more like 'of' than 'have'. The same problem often occurs with could've and would've.

Where and were

'Where' refers to a place or location; 'were' is the past participle tense of 'to be'. For example, in an imaginary phone conversation:

"Where were you?'' (previous/past location, past tense)

(Unheard reply)

"OK, so where are you now?'' (current/present location –present tense)

Caution

These phrases do not exist:

'should of', 'must of', 'could of', 'would of', 'might of'

If you're using a computer, this type of error will be spotted by the grammar check – so take notice of the green wiggly line which will highlight the mistake.

Homophones

The Collins dictionary defines a homophone as 'one of a group of words pronounced in the same way but differing in meaning or spelling or both'. For example:

- to (preposition, eg go to school); too (meaning 'also'); two (a number)
- rain (precipitation); rein (used by horses); reign (what a monarch does)
- practice (a customary action or proceeding); practise (to do repeatedly to gain a skill)

'There', 'their' and 'they're' are perhaps the most commonly confused homophones. ^

'There' refers to a place or location. For example:

The books are over there.

'Their' shows something belongs to someone or something. For example:

The girls took their books. (The books belong to the girls.)

'They're' is the contracted form of 'they are'. For example:

They're looking forward to the end of term.

An aid to help you remember something is known as a 'mnemonic' (ni-mon-ik).

Try to think of ones that will help you to remember the correct spelling to use. For the correct spelling of 'hear', remember that 'you hear with your ear.'

Here are two ways to remember the difference between 'there' and 'their'.

There - think of the word about places in terms of other 'location' words such as 'where' or 'here' – so if the context is about a place or the location of something then use 'there'. Or think – if something is not 'here' then it must be 'there'.

Their - think about owning, belonging and possession. In families, certain things like jewellery and ornaments are passed on from one generation to the next as 'heirlooms'. People inherit these objects from each other and the person who will own them is known as the 'heir'.

For example, Prince Charles, being the Prince of Wales, will inherit the Crown from his mother Queen Elizabeth the Second – he is the heir to the throne of the United Kingdom.

So, if the context is about owning, belonging or possession, think 'Prince Charles is the heir' - then put a 't' in front of 'heir' and you get 'their'.

Some homophones are also homographs. Collins defines a homograph as one of a group of words spelt in the same way but having different meanings, for example:

I want to read J K Rowling's latest novel.

The teacher suggested a novel idea to help with revision.

Some homographs have multiple meanings.

The word 'fluke' can mean a stroke of luck, but also the ends of a ship's anchor, the fins on a whale's tail and a type of flatworm.

Misuse of apostrophes

In plural words: a common example is the incorrect use of an apostrophe in a simple plural. The following sentences are wrong with an apostrophe:

I need to pass my exam's.

I am taking 8 GCSE's.

I am going to university for 3 year's.

There are advantage's in gaining a degree.

In possessive pronouns: the following words are possessive pronouns and never need an apostrophe^:

its
yours
ours
hers

The comma splice

A comma cannot be used on its own to join two independent sentences. This is known as 'comma splicing'. It is one of the most frequent mistakes made when using a comma, for example:

RE is a popular subject, it covers a variety of topics.

There are several ways to avoid comma splices:

1) Create two sentences using a full stop. This is probably the easiest solution but using too many little sentences may not be ideal in terms of style or developing your argument. For example:

RE is a popular subject. It covers a variety of topics.

2) Use a semicolon to suggest a link between the two sentences, for example:

RE is a popular subject; it covers a variety of topics.

3) Use a conjunction (joining word) to connect the sentences. By doing this, you make the connection between the two sentences more precise, for example:

RE is a popular subject as it covers a variety of topics.

Rules of agreement

The subject and verb must agree in number: both must be singular or both must be plural. This is called subject-verb agreement, for example: ^

History is an enjoyable lesson. (*History is one subject so the verb – 'is' – is singular.*)

History lessons are enjoyable. (*More than one lesson so the verb – 'are' – is plural.*)

I was there on time so where were the others? ('I' is singular; 'the others' is plural.)

Run on sentences

These occur when two sentences are joined into one. They are like comma spliced sentences but without the comma! For example:

> Preparation is important to succeed in exams start revising early.

Correct this using the same methods used for correcting comma splicing:

> Preparation is important to succeed in exams. Start revising early.

> Preparation is important to succeed in exams; start revising early.

> Preparation is important to succeed in exams so start revising early.

Appendix 1: Links

A selection of websites that provide examples and exercises.

A humorous look at the importance of proofreading:
http://www.vappingo.com/word-blog/excuse-letters/

Using a thesaurus:
http://thesaurus.com/features/howtousethesaurus.html

A humorous look at the importance of punctuation:
http://www.vappingo.com/word-blog/the-importance-of-punctuation/
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0blfVLHaY0W

Punctuation worksheet from the TES site, contributed by smudge78
http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/PUNCTUATION-Worksheet-6025468/

Use of commas:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/grammar/grammar-guides/comma

Use of semicolons and colons:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/grammar/grammar-guides/semicolon

Sentence structure:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/grammar/grammar-guides/sentence

Using paragraphs:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/grammar/grammar-guides/paras

Using the apostrophe:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/grammar/grammar-guides/apostrophe

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

How difficult spelling is! Examples of homophones/homographs in poetry:
http://michaelrosenblog.blogspot.pt/2012/07/spelling-hell-have-fun-or-not.html

Tips and interactive exercises on grammar and spelling:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english

Comma splices:
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/page_07.htm

Common mistakes:
http://studyskills.wiki.staffs.ac.uk/@api/deki/files/112/=Engl

Appendix 2: Homophones

Homophones are words pronounced in the same way but differ in meaning or spelling or both, eg flower and flour. You need to learn these words as there are no spelling rules to help you remember them. Here are some common homophones:

allowed	You are not allowed to smoke until you are sixteen.
aloud	Say your sentences aloud to check whether or not you have punctuated them.
bear	Bears can swim, climb trees and run at 30 miles an hour!
bear	Can you bear to dive in the icy water?
bare	She walked on the sand with bare feet.
board	The diver somersaulted off the diving board.
bored	If you get bored easily, you are boring!
break	Everyone needs a break now and then.
break	Be careful not to break that cup!
brake	She applied the brake suddenly to avoid the child who ran into the road.
court	This case will have to go to court.
caught	He was caught driving while using a mobile phone.
check	To learn spelling: look, cover, write, then check.
cheque	Recently, proposals have been made to phase out cheque books by 2018.
find	If you look, you will find.
fined	If you park in a non-designated parking area at the cinema, you will be fined.
flower	The rose is the most beautiful flower.
flour	Make pancakes from flour, eggs and milk.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

hair Her hair was very long.

hare The hare bounded across the field.

here "We are here," sighed the parents with relief after a long car journey.

hear If you listen closely, you can hear the blood pulsing in your brain.

heel Don't wear high heels if you need to be on your feet all day.

heal A slight wound heals better if exposed to the air.

hire You can hire a clown for a child's party.

higher The higher the altitude, the less oxygen there is.

hour An hour contains sixty minutes.

our We should protect our earth.

maid Not many people have maids nowadays.

made Not many products are made in Britain.

knew If I knew the answer, I wouldn't be asking you!

new I buy too many new clothes.

one You only have one life, so use it well.

won The tortoise won the race.

pear A pear is a soft fruit.

pair A pair comprises two things, such as a pair of gloves.

piece A large piece of fruit is healthier than a large piece of cake.

peace Most of us think that world peace is a very important global issue.

plane The plane flew low over the motorway.

plain Plain flour is needed for making pancakes.

pour Pour the milk into the eggs and whisk.

paw The dog held up the paw that was injured.

poor There are still too many poor people in the world.

saw I saw the burglar climb out of the window.

sore My eyes are sore from the salt in the sea.

see I can see the ship on the horizon.

sea The sea and the sky look the same colour.

shore When will the ship come into shore?

sure I'm not sure.

sight The sunset is one of the most beautiful sights in nature.

site The building site is noisy.

stares The prisoner stares out of his cell window.

stairs Climbing stairs is good exercise.

steal It is wrong to steal.

steel Steel is a strong metal.

there The chemist is over there.

their Will they open their doors before 9 o'clock?

they're They're opening them now.

through A hot knife will cut through butter easily.

threw The footballer threw his hands up to protest at the referee's decision.

to I always walk to school.

too My sister walks too.

two We always meet our two friends on the way.

waist The model has a tiny waist.
waste What a waste to throw all that paper in the bin.

weak That is a weak excuse for not doing your homework.
week Lots of schools are moving to a two-week timetable.

where Where is the designer clothes shop?
wear I will wear my designer outfit for the awards ceremony.

witch A witch flies on a broomstick.
which Which story about witches do you like best?

weather In warm weather, we usually feel more cheerful.
whether I don't know whether to wear my boots or my shoes.

hole The water will escape if there is a hole in the bucket.
whole Please tell me the whole story.

worn I have worn this outfit a lot.
warn The computer will warn you to save your documents.

would We would all like to win a million pounds.
wood Most chairs are made of wood.

right Well done! That is the right answer.
write Write tidily so that it is easy to understand.

Appendix 3: Homographs

Homographs are words that are spelt in the same way but have different meanings. Here are some common homographs:

The dump was so full that it had to refuse *(rif-yooz)* more refuse *(ref-yoos)*.

The bandage was wound *(wown-d)* around the wound *(woon-d)*.

The soldier decided to desert *(diz-ert)* his dessert *(diz-ert)* in the desert *(dez-ert)*.

They were too close *(cl-ow-s)* to the door to close *(cl-ow-z)* it.

Since there is no time like the present *(prez-ent)*, he thought it was time to present *(priz-ent)* the present *(prez-ent)*.

To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow *(as in how)* to sow *(rhymes with Joe)*.

The insurance was invalid *(ĭnválĭd)* for the invalid *(ínvălĭd)*.

There was a row *(as in how)* among the oarsmen about how to row *(rhymes with Joe)*.

The wind *(w-in-d)* was too strong to wind *(wine-d)* the sail.

Upon seeing the tear *(t-air)* in the painting I shed a tear *(t-eer)*.

I had to subject *(sŭbjéct)* the subject *(súbjĕct)* to a series of tests.

A bass *(b-a-s)* was painted on the head of the bass *(bay-s)*

How can I intimate *(in-tim-ay-t)* this to my most intimate *(in-tim-et)* friend?

I did not object *(ŏbjéct)* to the object *(óbjĕct)*.

Appendix 4: Prefixes and suffixes

A root word stands on its own as a word, but you can make new words from it by adding beginnings (prefixes) and endings (suffixes).

Prefixes

Prefixes are groups of letters you can add to the beginning of a root word to change or add to their meaning. Here are some examples of common prefixes:

anti + social	***antisocial***
de + mystify	***demystify***
dis + respect	***disrespect***
pre + view	***preview***
re + run	***rerun***
sub + merge	***submerge***
un + necessary	***unnecessary***

Suffixes

A suffix is a word ending. It is a group of letters you can add to the end of a root word. Adding suffixes to words can change or add to their meaning, but also they show how a word will be used in a sentence and what part of speech the word is (for example – noun, verb, adjective).

The most common suffixes are 'ed' and 'ing' but here are some examples of other common suffixes:

walk + ed	***walked***
say + ing	***saying***
tall + er	***taller***
educate + tion	***education***
divide + sion	***division***
music + cian	***musician***
hope + fully	***hopefully***
large + est	***largest***
happy + ness	***happiness***
accident + al	***accidental***
imagine + ary	***imaginary***
accept + able	***acceptable***
love + ly	***lovely***
excite + ment	***excitement***
help + ful	***helpful***
ease + y	***easy***

Adding a suffix to some root words will change the spelling of the new word. Here are some spelling rules to help you learn why and when this happens:

Double letters

Sometimes the spelling changes because of rules about double letters. As always, there are exceptions to these rules, but they are a good starting guide.

For most short (one syllable) words that end in a single consonant (anything but a, e, i, o, u) you need to double the last letter when you add a suffix, for example:

run + ing ***running***

sun + y ***sunny***

If the word ends in more than one consonant, you don't double the last letter, for example:

pump + ed ***pumped***

sing + ing ***singing***

For most longer (more than one syllable) words that end in 'l' you should double the 'l' when you add the suffix, for example:

travel + ing ***travelling***

cancel + ed ***cancelled***

For most longer (more than one syllable) words that have the stress on the last syllable and which end in a single consonant, the last letter should be doubled. For example:

begin + er ***beginner***

prefer + ing ***preferring***

If a word has more than one syllable and ends in a single consonant but the stress isn't on the last syllable, then you don't need to double the last letter before adding a suffix. For example:

offer + ing ***offering***

benefit + ed ***benefited***

If a word ends in a consonant and has a suffix which starts in a consonant, you don't need to double the last letter of the word, for example:

enrol + ment ***enrolment***

commit + ment ***commitment***

Words with silent 'e'

Silent 'e' words are ones that have an 'e' at the end, such as 'hope', 'like', 'love', but if you say the word you don't really hear the 'e' at the end.

If a 'y' or a suffix which starts with a vowel (like 'ing') is added to a word which ends in a silent 'e', drop the silent 'e'. For example:

noise + y ***noisy***

like + ing ***liking***

Exceptions to the rule – If a word ends in 'ce', or 'ge', keep the 'e' if you add a suffix beginning with either an 'a', or an 'o' (this is done to keep the 'c' or 'g' sounding soft). For example:

change + able ***changeable***

'y' to 'i' rule

When a suffix is added to a word which ends in a consonant followed by a 'y', change the 'y' to 'i'. For example:

happy + ness ***happiness***

Exceptions to the rule – if the suffix 'ing' is added to a word ending in 'y', keep the 'y'. So, copy + ing = copying - because, otherwise you would have two 'i's together. For example:

fly + ing ***flying***

From Verbs to Nouns

Adding 'tion' to a root word can change the word from a verb (action word) to a noun (name of person, place or thing), for example:

instruct (verb) + tion ***instruction (noun)***

If the root word ends in 't', you drop the final 't' before adding the suffix.

Sometimes, the spelling of a word changes slightly when a verb becomes a noun and vice versa, for example:

relax (verb) + tion ***relaxation (noun)***

describe (verb) + tion ***description (noun)***

Adding 'sion' to a root word can also change the word from a verb to a noun. Notice again that the spelling often changes slightly, for example:

confuse (verb) + sion ***confusion (noun)***

explode (verb) + sion ***explosion (noun)***

discuss (verb) + sion ***discussion (noun)***

Here's a handy guide for how spelling changes when a verb becomes a noun:

'nd' extend ***extension***

'vert' convert ***conversion***

'de' decide ***decision***

Appendix 5: Spelling plurals

Plural word forms are used to show that there is more than one of something.

There are rules to help to spell plurals:

Add an s

This is the most common way to make a plural, for example:

bike ***bikes***

Words ending in y

If there is a consonant before the y, change the y to i before adding es, for example.

lady ***ladies***

baby ***babies***

If there is a vowel before the y, just add s, for example:

boy ***boys***

donkey ***donkeys***

Words ending in x, sh, ch or s

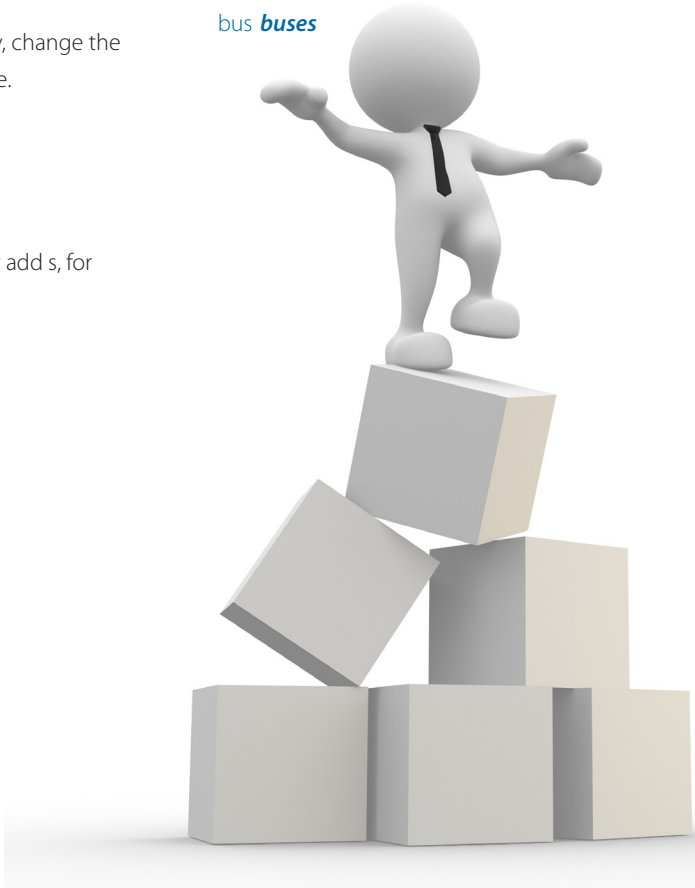
For words ending in x,sh, ch or se, add –es, for example:

church ***churches***

wish ***wishes***

box ***boxes***

bus ***buses***



Words ending in f or fe

For most of these words, change the f or fe to v before adding es, for example:

leaf ***leaves***

life ***lives***

This change in spelling is usually accompanied by a change in pronunciation. (Try saying the word to hear what happens.)

Watch out for the words that don't fit this rule, for example:

chief ***chiefs***

roof ***roofs***

belief ***beliefs***

chef ***chefs***

cafe ***cafes***

safe ***safes***

(To help work out the exceptions to the rule, notice when the pronunciation doesn't change as you say the word in the plural.)

Irregular plurals

Irregular plurals are plural word forms that don't follow any of the plural rules! For example:

man ***men***

woman ***women***

child ***children***

foot ***feet***

tooth ***teeth***

mouse ***mice***

deer ***deer***

sheep ***sheep***

ox ***oxen***

fish ***fish or fishes***

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