Endings which sound like /ʃəs/ spelt –cious

The ‘shus’ sound at the end of a word is usually spelt ‘cious’ or ‘tious’.

‘cious’ is often used if the root word ends in ‘ce’.

vice > vicious grace > gracious

Examples:

vicious

precious

malicious

delicious

ferocious

luscious

suspicious

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Endings which sound like /ʃəs/ spelt -tious

The ‘shus’ sound at the end of a word is usually spelt ‘cious’ or ‘tious’.

‘tious’ is often used if the root word would take the suffix ‘tion’ in its noun form.

infectious (infection) cautious (caution)

Examples:

ambitious

cautious

nutritious

fractious

infectious

contentious

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Endings which sound like /ʃəl/ -cial

We normally add ‘cial’ if the root word ends with a vowel.

Examples:

official

financial

crucial

special

facial

beneficial

social

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Endings which sound like /ʃəl/ -tial

We normally add ‘tial’ if the root word ends with a consonant.

Examples:

essential

confidential

initial

potential

residential

martial

partial

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Words ending in –ent, -ence, -ency

We use these word endings after a soft ‘c’, soft ‘g’ and ‘qu’.

Examples:

existence

intelligent

magnificent

frequent

excellency

consequence

confidence

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Words ending in –ant, -ance, -ancy

The suffixes –ant, -ance and –ancy can be added to the same root.

Use ‘ant’ and ‘ance’/‘ancy’ after root words that could end in ‘-ation’.

Observant > observation

Tolerance > toleration

Examples:

observant

hesitancy

significant

importance

attendance

tolerance

vacancy

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Words ending in –able and -ably

We usually use –able if the root word is a complete, recognisable word.

lock > lockable

consider > considerable

-able/-ably endings are far more common than the –ible/-ibly.

Examples:

adorable

available

adaptable

suitable

comfortably

considerably

irritable

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Words ending in –ible and -ibly

We usually use –ible if the root word is not a complete, recognisable word.

poss > possible

consider > considerable

-ible/-ibly endings are far less common than the –able/-ably.

Examples:

possible

possibly

incredible

incredibly

sensible

sensibly

visible

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Adding suffixes beginning with vowel letters to words ending in -fer

The ‘r’ is doubled if the –fer is stressed when the ending is added.

The ‘r’ is NOT doubled if the –fer is no longer stress.

To hear the stress, listen for where the emphasis is in a word.

Refer to –ence for more information with adding –ence after –fer.

Examples:

referring

referred

referral

reference

inference

inferring

inferred

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Use of the hyphen

Hyphens link two words so the word or phrase makes sense, as well as, helping to avoid confusion.

(1) To join the words in a compound adjective, e.g. cold-hearted villain.

(2) To join a prefix to a word > this happens to avoid a vowel crash (e.g. e-e), e.g. re-establish

(3) To help with reading numbers and fractions, e.g. one-third or twenty-four.

Examples:

co-ordinate

re-enter

re-establish

co-operate

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Words with the /i:/ sound spelt ei after c

Notice how the 'i' comes before the 'e' in: believe, achieve and retrieve. But after a 'c', the 'e' comes before the 'i', as in: receive, ceiling and deceit (beware that the word weird likes to break this rule - perhaps because it is weird!).

Examples:

deceive

receive

conceive

receipt

perceive

deceit

ceiling

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Words containing the letter-string ough

This is a rare and tricky sound to spell. Rough, bough and cough are all spelled similarly but pronounced very differently. There are, in fact, seven different ways to pronounce 'ough' in English. This makes some words difficult to spell and read.

1: plough like ow in power
2: cough like off
3: though like o in no
4: through like oo in boo
5: rough like uff in fluff
6: ought like aw in claw

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Examples:

bought

rough

cough

though

through

plough

enough

Words with 'silent' letters

Some letters that are no longer sounded used to be sounded hundreds of years ago, and changes in pronunciation have left us with words that seem to have redundant, "silent" letters. Changing pronunciation accounts for many of the unexpected aspects of the English spelling system.

Here are some tips that can help:

- Silent *b* always occurs after *m* (*lamb, thumb*) and before *t* (*doubt, debt*)
- Silent *k* and g are found before *n* (*gnome or knight*)
- Silent *l* follows vowels *a, o* and *ou* – it produces a flat-sounding vowel (*salmon, palm, could*)
- Silent *w* often precedes *r* (*write, wrong*)
- Silent *t* is often found nestled in between *s* and *le* in words with a "sul" ending (*whistle, castle, nestle*) or between *s* and *n* (*listen, fasten*)
- Silent *n* follows m (*autumn, hymn, solemn*)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Examples:

doubt

island

lamb

solemn

ascend

knight

align

sandwich