

# Spelling Rules & Generalizations

## Silent-e Rule

When a word ends in a silent **e**, drop the **e** **IF** the suffix begins with a vowel.

**like + ing = liking**

When the suffix of a silent-e word begins with a consonant, just add the suffix.

**like + ness = likeness**

## Exceptions to the Silent-e Rule

1. A few words retain the silent-e before a suffix beginning with a vowel to maintain the meaning of the word.

Words ending in -age:  
mileage  
acreage

Words ending in -ing:  
Dyeing           not dying  
Singeing       not singing  
hoeing  
shoeing

2. Words ending in **ce** or **ge** retain the **e** before a suffix beginning with **a** or **o** to maintain the soft **c** or **g** sound.

Words ending in -able:  
peaceable       traceable  
noticeable      serviceable  
manageable     pronounceable  
replaceable     changeable  
chargeable

Words ending in -ous:  
outrageous  
advantageous

3. Exceptions that must be memorized because they arbitrarily drop the **e** before a suffix beginning with a consonant.

due.....duly  
true.....truly  
whole.....wholly  
awe.....awful  
judge.....judgment\*  
argue.....argument  
acknowledge.....acknowledgment\*

\*Both judgment and acknowledgment have two spellings. Interestingly, the exception to the spelling rule is the preferred spelling!  
judge.....judgment, judgement  
acknowledge.....acknowledgment, acknowledgement

## Consonant-Y Rule

When a word ends in **y** after a consonant, change the **y** to **i** and add the suffix.

**cry + ed = cried**

If the suffix of a consonant-y word begins with **i**, keep the **y** and add the suffix.

**cry + ing = crying**

If the word ends in vowel-y, simply add the suffix.

**play + er = player**