

Useful Spelling Rules - Part II

'se' and 'ce'; 'sy' and 'cy'

When two words, verb and noun, are spelt alike, 'se' and 'sy' are verb endings; 'ce' and 'cy' are noun endings. The following are therefore verbs: *license, practise, prophesy, advise*.

The following are nouns: *licence, practice, prophecy, advice*

Promise is an exception to this rule. It is a noun.

This rule does not hold good when verb and noun are not spelt alike, so 'suspense' and 'hypocrisy' are nouns.

The final 'e'

1. When followed by 'ment'

Till recently the final 'e' was dropped from words ending in 'dge'. Example: judgment

Nowadays, it is not necessary to drop the final 'e' before 'ment'. So you can write '*judgement, acknowledgement, arrangement and advertisement*'. (See The Concise Oxford Dictionary)

2. The final 'e' must be dropped before 'able'.

Move; movable (NOT moveable)

Like; likable (NOT likeable)

The exceptions are words ending in 'ge' and 'ce'. For instance

Change; changeable (NOT changable)

Peace; peaceable (NOT peacable)

3. The final 'e' is also dropped before 'ous', 'age' or 'ish'.

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Virtue; virtuous

Mile; milage (occasionally still: mileage)

Blue; bluish

Courage is an exception to this rule. We write courageous and not couragous.

4. The final 'e' is always dropped before 'ing' except when it is preceded by a vowel with which it forms one sound.

Love; loving

Like; liking

See; seeing (Here the final 'e' and the preceding vowel forms one sound.)

Dye; Dyeing (Here the final 'e' and the preceding y forms one sound.)

Words ending in 'c' and 'ck'

Words ending in 'c' take 'k' after the 'c' before adding 'ed' or 'ing'.

Examples:

Frolic; frolicked

Mimic; mimicked