How To Spell

The Five-Step Method: Know the meaning of the word. If not sure, look it up in the dictionary.

I. Look carefully at the word as a whole and pronounce each syllable. Look at the letters.
II. Close your eyes and recall how the word looks. See the word as a whole. See the letters.
III. Look at the word again to check your memory.
IV. Write the word from memory and then check your spelling.
V. Repeat the writing and checking twice. If at any point you misspell the word, go back to the step one and begin again. You might circle, enlarge or underline the part(s) of the word which gives you trouble: sep(er)ate, privil(age), calend(er).

Spelling Rules

I. Doubling the Final Consonant:
   A. On words with one syllable
      1. ending in a single consonant
      2. proceed by a single vowel
      3. double the final consonant
      4. before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel
         
         hop – hopped
         red – reddish
         hit – hitting
         bit - bitten
         beg - begged
         map – mapping
   
   B. On words with more than one syllable (multi-syllable)
      1. ending in a single consonant
      2. preceded by a single vowel
      3. where the accent is on the last syllable
      4. double the final consonant
      5. before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel
        
        refer – referred
        forbid – forbidding
        compel – compelled
        equip - equipping
        excel - excelled
        prefer – preferred
        
        refer’  refer’ring  refer’ence
        infer’  infer’red  in’ference
        Me’tal  metal’lic
   
   C. When the accent shifts to another syllable after a suffix is added, the stress in the new word determines the application of the rule:
        
        Refer’  refer’ring  refer’ence
        Infer’  infer’red  in’ference
        Me’tal  metal’lic
        
   D. Examples of words where the final consonant would not be doubled:
        
        Ben’eﬁt – ben’eﬁted  tra’vel – tra’veling
        Gal’lop – gal’loped  can’cel – can’celing
        Li’bel – li’belous  coun’sel – coun’seling
II. Dropping the Final e:

A. When a word ends in e:

1. Drop the e before a suffix beginning with a vowel.

   Hope – hopping          accuse - accusing
   Lose – losing           decide - deciding
   Write – writing         dine - dining
   Oppose – opposed        advise - advisable
   Complete – completing    eliminate – eliminated

2. To preserve the soft sound of a c or g, the e is retained even though the suffix begins with a vowel.

   Change – changeable     service - servicable
   Notice – noticeable     advantage – advantageous

3. The e is dropped after a soft c or g when the suffix begins with i or e.

   Change – changed – changing
   Manage – managed – managing
   Trace – traced – tracing
   Rage – raged – raging
   Embrace – embraced – embracing
   Enforce – enforced – enforcing

4. After the letter u the e is silent; it can be dropped without changing the pronunciation.

   Due – duly
   True – truly
   Argue – argument

5. In the words singe and dye the e is kept to distinguish the words from singing and dying. Learn the following words which are exceptions: acreage, cagey, mileage, ninth, wisdom, wholly.

6. Words ending with oe retain the final e before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel:

   Canoe- canoeing
   Hoe – hoeing
   Shoe – shoeing
**III. Prefixes**

A. Mis, dis and de
   1. When *mis* is added to a word beginning with *s*, the result will be a double *s* (misspell).
   2. When *dis* is added to a word beginning with *s*, the result will be a double *s* (dissatisfy).
   3. The prefix *dis* means not (dissimilar).
      The prefix *de* means down, away or from (descend = climb down).
      
      a. **Anti and ante**
      1. *Anti* means against (anti-aircraft).
      2. *Ante* means before (antedate).

**IV. Suffixes**

A. Cede, ceed, sede
   1. Only one word ends in *sede* = supersede.
   2. Only three words end in *ceed* = proceed, succeed, exceed.
   3. All others end in *cede* = cede, recede, accede, intercede, concede, secede.

B. Ise, ize, and yze
   1. Two words end in *yze* = paralyze, analyze.
   2. Most *ise* words end in wise, vise, rise, prize, mise, cise or guise.
   3. Almost all other words have spelling *ize* = criticize, realize, authorize, apologize, emphasize, recognize, etc.

C. Ally and ly
   1. *Ally* is added only to words ending in *ic* = academically, artistically, realistically, etc.
   2. One word ending in *ic* takes *ly* = publicly.
   3. A word ending in *l* takes *ly* as a suffix = really, finally, fully, annually, etc.

D. Efy and ify
   1. Only four common words end in *efy* = putrefy, rarefy, liquefy, stupefy.
   2. All others, except derivatives of the previous four are spelled with *ify* = classify, testify, clarify, glorify, fortify, etc.

E. K after c
   1. When a suffix beginning with *e* or *i*, such as ed, er, ing, is added to a word which ends in *c*, a *k* is inserted to keep the hard *c* sound = picnicker, trafficking, frolicked, shellacked, etc.

F. Ary and ery
   1. Only seven common words likely to be misspelled end in *ery* = confectionery, cemetery, stationery, monastery, distillery, millinery, and dysentery.
   2. Almost all other words end in *ary* = secretary, dictionary, dignitary, etc.

G. Able
   1. Use *able* if:
      a. The base is a full word ending in a consonant (detestable);
      b. The base is a full word lacking an *e* (blamable);
      c. Base ends in *i* (enviable – in the word envy the *y* changes to *I*).
      d. Derivatives end in *a* (demonstrate – demonstrable);
      e. Based ends in hard *c* or *g* (practicable, applicable, navigable, etc.).