
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Vocabulary

Words with double letters



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Catherine

Hello! And welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary with me, Catherine...

Finn

...and me Finn. In this programme, we're looking at spelling.

Catherine

And the area of spelling we're looking at is words with double letters.

Finn

Let's start by listening to David. He's a student welfare officer at London University. He's welcoming a new student to the campus.

Catherine

And while you listen, here's a question for you.

Finn

What word means: the rooms, flats and houses that people live in? Here's David.

INSERT

David

Congratulations on **getting** a place at our University. It's a **brilliant opportunity** and I'm sure that you will be **happy** and **successful** here. I'm here to help you find **accommodation**. We've got rooms, flats and houses all over the city, but I **recommend** that you **apply** as soon as **possible** so you're not **disappointed**. Here's a list of **addresses**.

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Catherine

David there. And we asked: what's the word for rooms, flats and houses that people live in?

Finn

And the answer is: **accommodation**.

Catherine

Now **accommodation** is one of our words with double letters. How do you spell it, Finn?

Finn

a-double c-o-double m-o-d-a-t-i-o-n.

Catherine

Well done Finn. Now listen to this clip. Which 6 words have double letters?

INSERT | CLIP |

Congratulations on **getting** a place at our University. It's a **brilliant opportunity** and I'm sure that you **will** be **happy** and **successful** here!

Finn

So we had **getting** – with **double t**, **brilliant** with **double l**, **opportunity** with **double p**, **will** with **double l**, **happy** – also with **double p** and **successful** – with **double c** and **double s**.

Catherine

Correct! Let's take a look at some spelling rules. The first rule is about verbs. If the final three letters of a verb are consonant, vowel, consonant, we double the final consonant before we add **i-n-g** or **e-d**. So **get**, spelt **g-e-t** becomes **getting** with **double t**, and **begin** ends in **g-i-n** so it becomes **beginning** with **double n**. Now, our next rule is to do with short vowel sounds. Finn can you demonstrate some short vowel sounds please?

Finn

a, o, i, e, a, u

Catherine

Fantastic. Thanks enough, thank you. And now some long vowel sounds?

Finn

u, e, a, ei

Catherine

Ok, so, when there is a **short** vowel sound before a consonant, like **a** in **happy**, we often double the consonant after it. The **short a** in **happy** gives us a **double p**. The short **o** in **opportunity** gives us a **double p**, the short **i** in **brilliant** gives us **double l**.

Finn

And this can happen more than once in the same word. So in the word **successful**, we get **u double c** and **e double s**, and in **accommodation** we get **a double c** and **o double m**. Easy!

Catherine

Exactly. And lots of short words like **summer**, **coffee**, **apple** and **will** follow this general rule.

Finn

So let's listen to another clip and put this general rule to the test. Listen carefully...

INSERT 1 CLIP 2

But I **recommend** that you apply as soon as **possible** so you're not **disappointed**. To start with, here's a list of **addresses** ...

Catherine

So: following the rule, we've got **recommend** with **o double m**, **possible** with **o double s** and **disappointed** with **a double p**.

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6 Minute Vocabulary from BBC Learning English.

Catherine

And we're talking about words with double letters.

Finn

Right, quiz time! Number one: Is there a double **n** in the verb **happening**?

Catherine

No, there isn't.

Finn

Well done! Number two: Are there any double letters in the word **immediately**?

Catherine

Yes, there's a double M.

Finn

Very good! Number three: Which of these words have a **double c**? **occasion**, **accident**, **succeed**?

Catherine

And the answer is – they all do! They all have a short vowel sound followed by **double c**. That was a Finn trick question.

Finn

It was indeed. And that's the end of the quiz. You're **brilliant** with **double l** if you got them all right!

Catherine

And now here's a top tip for vocabulary learning. If you're struggling to learn the spelling of a word, get a keyboard and type it a hundred times and your fingers might learn the spelling more quickly than your brain! What do you think Finn – would that work for you?

Finn

My fingers are much quicker than my brain, Catherine. It's a good idea. It's a very good tip. There's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again soon for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both

Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away:

For verbs ending in a consonant, vowel, consonant like **get** and **begin** double the final consonant before **-ing** and **-ed**:

I've **stopped sitting** in the sun because it's **beginning** to get too hot.

BUT If the final syllable of the verb is not stressed, don't double the consonant:

They've been **listening** to what's **happened** on the news.

When there is a short vowel sound before a consonant, we often double the consonant:

He sent me a **message** asking me to **collect** him at the station.

BUT this is only a general guide, so you need a technique for learning how to spell these words:

Cheerful **C**harlie and **M**ad **M**ary share **a**ccommodation.