
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Vocabulary

Commonly misspelled words

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Finn

Hello! Welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary. I'm Finn.

Catherine

And I'm Catherine. In this programme, we're talking about misspelt words.

Finn

Let's start by listening to Marcus, He's talking about his last holiday.

Catherine

And here's a question for while you're listening: What was the weather like on Marcus's holiday?

INSERT

Marcus

Last year we decided to have a **foreign** holiday. We **travelled** by coach to Rome and the **scenery** in northern Italy was beautiful. Our hotel **accommodation** was great, and we had some **wonderful** meals in **restaurants**. The weather was a bit **changeable** until the third day but it didn't matter. We got to **practise** our Italian and it's a lot better now. The whole thing was a great **experience**.

STING

Finn

We asked you: What was the weather like on Marcus's holiday?

Catherine

And the answer is that the weather was a bit **changeable** and that brings us to our first common spelling mistake. **Changeable** is spelt **c-h-a-n-g-E-a-b-l-e**.

Finn

Yes, there are quite a lot of words with the letters **g-e** in them, and the **e** shows that the **g** is pronounced softly as /dʒ/, **changeable**.

Catherine

Other examples of words with **g-e** in the middle are **manageable**, **management**, **knowledgeable** and **acknowledgement**. And they all have the **e** after the **g**. But what other words with tricky spellings did we hear? Listen.

INSERT

Last year we decided to have a **foreign** holiday. We **travelled** by coach to Rome and the **scenery** in northern Italy was beautiful. Our hotel **accommodation** was great, and we had some **wonderful** meals in **restaurants**.

Finn

Now the spelling of **foreign** is interesting. There's a spelling rule that says you must put **i** before **e** except after **c**. And that's a really good rule for lots of words.

Catherine

Like **believe**, spelt **b-e-l-i-e-v-e** and **receive** spelt **r-e-c-e-i-v-e**.

Finn

Exactly. Or **field** spelt **f-i-e-l-d** but **ceiling**, with a **c**, **c-e-i-l-i-n-g**.

Catherine

Yes, so **foreign** breaks the rule, doesn't it? It's spelt **f-o-r-e-i-g-n**. And there's no letter **c** there.

Finn

No, that's an exception. And there are a few others like **leisure** and **weird**. They both have **e-i** -but not after a **c**. It's really worth learning these.

Catherine

What other tricky spellings were there in that clip? We heard **travelled**. How many **l**s are there in **travelled**?

Finn

There are two. In British English, with verbs that end in a vowel before **l** or **r**, we double the final consonants when we make them into past or continuous forms.

Finn

Finally there were three nouns that can cause spelling problems. What were they, Catherine?

Catherine

They were **scenery**, **accommodation** and **restaurants**.

Finn

Scenery starts with an **s** sound, but it is spelt with **s-c** . It's easy to forget the **c** because you don't hear it. The words **science** and **scissors** are the same.

Catherine

Now **accommodation** has a double **c** and a double **m** and **restaurant** has the letters **au** in the middle. No rule for these I'm afraid! They just have to be learnt. Next clip!

INSERT

We got to **practise** our Italian and it's a lot better now. The whole thing was a great **experience**.

Finn

So how do you spell the verb **practise**?

Catherine

So the verb **practise** is **p-r-a-c-t-i-S-e**. It ends in **s-e** not **c-e**. That's a very common mistake because the noun **practice** is spelt with **i-c-e** at the end.

Finn

And finally we heard **experience**. Now is that **e-n-c-e** or **a-n-c-e** at the end?

Catherine

Experience ends in **e-n-c-e**. Whereas **performance** ends in **a-n-c-e**. And yet again there's no rule for these spellings. You just have to check them and learn them.

IDENT

Catherine

And it's quiz time! Number one. My sister's new baby's very loveable. But how do you spell **loveable**?

Finn

It's **l-o-v-e-a-b-l-e**. Not forgetting the **e** in the middle.

Catherine

You're right! Now question two: The word **ancient** – meaning very old - does not follow the usual rule. Can you spell it?

Finn

Ancient is **a-n-c-i-e-n-t**.

Catherine

Exactly, and question three: How many **l**s are there in **quarrelling**, meaning arguing?

Finn

The answer's two **Is**.

Catherine

Double **I**, that's correct, well done. And well done if you got those right at home. There's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again soon for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Both

Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away:

When words have a letter **g** in them that is pronounced softly as /dʒ/, the word is always spelt with an **e** after the **g**.

advantageous, ageing, changeable, encouragement, marriageable

There is a spelling rule that says **i** before **e** except after **c**, for example **achieve, perceive**. It's a good rule but there are spelt **ei** after other letters.

foreign, height, leisure, neighbour, weird

In British English, with verbs that end in a vowel before **l** or **r**, we double the final consonants when we make them into past or continuous forms.

travel – travelled, travelling.
prefer – preferred, preferring.

There is only one **l** at the end of adjectives ending in **-ful**.

grateful, hopeful, skilful

Words that begin with an **s**, may have a silent **c** after the **s**.

scenery, science, scissors

The verb **practise**, is spelt **-ise** in British English. The noun is spelt **-ice**.

There are a lot of words that end in **-ence** or **-ance**, but they are pronounced exactly the same. There is no rule for learning these.

experience, sequence, acceptance, balance