

Step by Step Spelling Lessons

IE/EI Words

Begin with this short pretest. Write *ie* or *ei* in each blank.

1. My n__ghbor bel__ves he can ach__ve almost anything.
2. N__ther the dog nor the cat w____ghs more than our pet turkey.
3. When my fr__nd drinks too much caff__ne, he starts acting w____rdly!
4. Clare hopes to rec__ve a job after the interv__w.
5. Our v__ns move blood to and from the heart.

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Step One

Memorize this rule. It doesn't always work, but it will help you with many of these tricky words.

Put *i* before *e*
 Except after *c*
 Or when sounded like *a*
 As in *neighbor* and *weigh*.

Now let's look at each part of the rule, one piece at a time.

Step Two

Put *i* before *e*...

IE words that fit the rule: achieve, belief, believe, brief, chief, die, field, fierce, friend, grief, grieve, niece, pie, piece, relief, retrieve, shield, siege, thief, tie, view, yield

Finish spelling these words:

th__f	br__f	fr__nd	gr__f	n__ce
rel__f	f__ld	y__ld	v__w	ach__ve

Write sentences for these words:

shield _____

piece _____

believe _____

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Step Three

Except after c...

EI words that fit the rule: ceiling, conceive, conceited, deceive, perceive, receipt, receive

Finish spelling these words:

rec ___pt conc ___ted perc ___ve

Write sentences for these words:

receive _____

ceiling _____

deceive _____

Step Four

Now practice both sets of words that you've learned so far. Finish the words.

1. The winds blew f___rcely, and no one could bel___ve the damage they caused.
2. I will need a rec___pt for the money you rec___ved from me.
3. My mom was so rel___ved to have the bathroom c___ling painted.
4. The th ___f did not want to y___ld to the police.
5. My fr___nd's coach retr___ved the lost soccer ball.

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Step Five

Or when sounded like a
As in *neighbor* and *weigh*.

EI words that fit the rule: beige, eight, freight, neigh, neighbor, reign, rein, reindeer, sleigh, veil, vein, weigh, weight

Finish spelling these words:

v__l __ghteen n__gh r__ndeer b__ge
w__gh r__n __ght w__ght r__gn

Write sentences for these words:

veil _____

neighbor _____

freight _____

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Step Six

Review all the words that you've learned so far. Underline all the misspelled words in this paragraph. Write the words correctly in the blank below.

My neice was ready to play her first piece in a piano recital. She wore a biege top. She was eighth in the program, so she had to wait backstage out of view. She did not want to yeild to her nerves. She looked first at the floor, then at the ceiling. Finally it was her turn. She played so well that she recieved much applause. She felt great releif!

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Step Seven

Now you're ready to add two more lines to the rhyme to cover some of the common exceptions to the first part of the rhyme:

Put i before e
 Except after c
 Or when sounded like a
 As in *neighbor* and *weigh*.
Either, neither, leisure and seize
Are exceptions, so watch for these!

The words we've just added to the rhyme are some of the most common words that don't fit the first four lines of the rule. In all of these words, *ei* makes the long e sound. Two more words like this are *caffeine* and *protein*. It's best to just memorize them.

In these sentences, if a bold word is spelled wrong, cross it out and write it correctly in the blank at the end.

1. You should **either** go outside or close the door. _____
2. My **nieghbor** says that weekends are meant for relaxation and **leisure**. _____
3. The doctor told me I needed to eat more foods with **protien**. _____
4. **Niether** rain nor snow will keep me from visiting you tomorrow! _____
5. The **theif** tried to **sieze** a lot of cash from the register. _____

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Step Eight

Now let's look at some exceptions to the rhyme. Many exceptions fall into these categories:

Words spelled *cie* in which the *c* is pronounced *sh*:

ancient, conscience, efficient, glacier, proficient, species

Words in which *ei* spells the long *i* sound:

height, sleight, science, scientist

Words in which *EIT* is pronounced *fit*:

forfeit, counterfeit

Other words we haven't covered elsewhere:

heir, heifer, weird

Circle the words that are spelled correctly. Cross out the incorrect words and write them correctly in the blanks below.

science	hieght	forfeit	hier	weird
leisure	anceint	believe	sleight	counterfiet
heifer	perceive	cieling	glacier	efficeint

Step Nine

Practice every type of word in this lesson. Write *ie* or *ei* in each blank.

1. I found a w_____rd new spec_____s of insects in the garden.
2. My fr_____nd found some of these bugs in the wheat f_____ld.
3. One sc_____ntist wanted to w_____gh the insects.
4. Our team had to forf_____t the baseball game because we had only _____ght players.
5. The clouds were dec_____ving because we didn't rec_____ve rain.
6. The storm blew so f_____rcely that it knocked a fr_____ght train off the track.
7. As we rode in the sl_____gh, the horse n_____ghed when I pulled on its r_____ns.
8. The actor was so conc_____ted that he bel_____ved no one could take his place.
9. The lawyer hoped to ach_____ve justice with the papers he carried in his br_____fcase.
10. Can you retr_____ve my password?

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Step Ten

Make a list of any words you missed in Step Nine to study. Review this lesson occasionally to remind yourself of tricky IE/EI words.

Congratulations on completing this Step-By-Step lesson!

Answers

Pretest – 1. neighbor, believes, achieve 2. Neither, weighs 3. friend, caffeine, weirdly
4. receive, interview 5. veins

Step Two – thief, belief, friend, grief, niece, relief, field, yield, view, achieve

Step Three – receipt, conceited, perceive

Step Four – 1. fiercely, believe 2. receipt, received 3. relieved, ceiling 4. thief, yield
5. friend's, retrieved

Step Five – veil, eighteen, neigh, reindeer, beige, weigh, rein, eight, weight, reign

Step Six - My niece was ready to play her first piece in a piano recital. She wore a beige top. Since she was eighth in the program, she had to wait backstage out of view. She did not want to yield to her nerves. She looked first at the floor, then at the ceiling. Finally it was her turn. She played so well that she received much applause. She felt great relief!
niece, beige, yield, received, relief

Step Seven –These corrections are needed: 2. neighbor 3. protein 4. Neither 5. thief, seize

Step Eight – These corrections are needed: height, heir, ancient, counterfeit, ceiling, efficient

Step Nine – 1. weird, species 2. friend, field 3. scientist, weigh 4. forfeit, eight
5. deceiving, receive 6. fiercely, freight 7. sleigh, neighed, reins 8. conceited, believed
9. achieve, briefcase 10. retrieve