
Here's an Instant Activity for November 18, 2002



STRATEGY FOR SPELLING SUCCESS

For most learners, spelling well doesn't just happen. It is the result of a conscientious spelling curriculum that:

1. provides a menu of skill-building activities that range in sophistication to teach critical concepts at a student's own level,
2. uses assessment to gather information to target word study to the specific words each student has not learned from among all previously introduced words in the program, as well as to identify skills not yet mastered,
3. equips teachers with guidelines for spelling expectations in everyday writing that increase as students develop as writers, making the classroom a rehearsal for real-world writing, and
4. proposes multiple opportunities to engage parents in the acquisition of spelling skills with their child.

This Instant Activity helps teachers achieve item number 1 above—it complements the skill-building component in the SPELLING SOURCEBOOK Series, Second Edition, 2002.



LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Approximately Grade 4



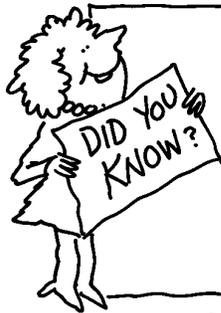
PURPOSE

Concept: Some words are spelled the way they sound, while others are not.

Skills: phonics, spelling rules, word analysis, visual skills, vocabulary development, more words, writing an explanation

This Instant Activity takes a realistic look at an old spelling rhyme that has little credibility—*i* before *e*, except after *c*. The *ie/ei* spellings are among the most frequent spelling errors made by writers of all ages, therefore students must learn to examine words with this challenge, and in most cases, just remember the spelling.

This activity grows from the high-use Core Word *piece*, word 392 on a frequency-of-use list of writing words. The purpose of the activity is not to specifically teach or reinforce the spelling of *piece*, but to springboard from this word to explore many words with *ie/ei* spellings. Note that the activity grows many more words—the more words with which students have experiences, the better they are able to think, read, and write.



Is it *ie* or *ei*? The old jingle “*i* before *e*, except after *c* or when sounded as /ā/, as in neighbor and weigh” is only partially correct. Do not rely on “*i* before *e*, except after *c*” as there are too many exceptions. Some credibility exists for the latter part of the rhyme. Yet, forewarn students that they must rely on their memory for most *ie/ei* spellings.



SUGGESTED USE

This Instant Activity can be used to coincide with Activity 3B, Unit 12, page 114, in Level 4 of the Spelling Sourcebook Series, Second Edition.



TEACHING DIRECTIONS

Write on the chalkboard, or have a student do so: *piece, friend, mischief, view*. Note the *ie* spelling and the sound that *ie* spells in each word. Repeat with these *ei* words: *their, either, beige, foreign*. Conclude that *ie* and *ei* can spell several different sounds.

Next, explore the old spelling rhyme: *i* before *e*, except after *c* or when sounded as /ā/, as in *neighbor* and *weigh*. Have students brainstorm *ie/ei* words to use to verify the supposed spelling aid. Help students conclude that the latter part of the rhyme has some credibility, but its first statement is an unfaithful spelling aid.

Print the Instant Activity and distribute a copy to each student. Ask students to silently read the directions, look at the activity, and determine what is expected. Then discuss the directions before students begin the exercise.



FOLLOW-UP

Have students work in pairs to proofread their Instant Activities. Discuss students' word responses. You may wish to ask selected students to compile a word collection that includes these and other *ie/ei* words into a class book—"Weird Words."

Answers: 1. counterfeit; 2. friend; 3. heir; 4. fierce; 5. reins, reigns; 6. unbelievable; 7. seize; 8. weird; 9. theirs; 10. diesel; 11. receive; 12. vein; 13. achieve; 14. deficient; 15. unveil; 16. neighbors; 17. niece; 18. reindeer; 19. quietly; 20. pier; 21. overweight; 22. shriek; 23. receipt; 24. insufficient; 25. eight; 26. deceive



FOR MORE

For more activities to teach all the essential skills and concepts, and to develop a total spelling and language-related program, use the Spelling Sourcebook for your grade level.

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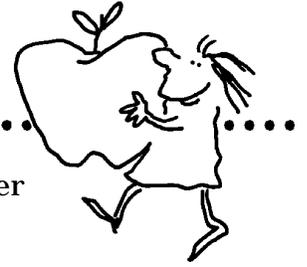
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Name _____, Super Speller

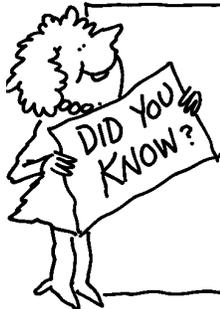
Spelling *ie/ei* Words

Use the clues to write an *ie* or an *ei* word. The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of letters in the answer word(s). Write your answers on the back of this sheet or on a separate sheet of paper. Check unfamiliar answers.

1. something fake, phony (11)
2. companion, pal (6)
3. homophone of air (5)
4. violent, ferocious (6)
5. homophones for rains (5, 6)
6. incredible, improbable (12)
7. to apprehend or capture (5)
8. bizarre, strange (5)
9. opposite of ours (6)
10. kind of fuel (6)
11. opposite of give (7)
12. blood vessel (4)
13. to accomplish, succeed (7)
14. lacking, not up to normal standards (9)
15. to uncover, reveal (6)
16. people next door (9)
17. opposite of nephew (5)
18. animal with antlers (8)
19. opposite of noisily (7)
20. dock, wharf (4)
21. opposite of too thin (10)
22. yell, scream (6)
23. cash register tape, proof of payment (7)
24. not enough, inadequate (12)
25. twenty-two minus fourteen (5)
26. to lie, misrepresent (7)

Write clues for more *ie/ei* words, such as—*view, wield, shield, science, premier, lieutenant, fiend, convenient, foreign, protein, perceive, leisure, height, forfeit, feint, freight, ancient, glacier, thief, pierce*.

Explain in your own words on another sheet of paper why the *ie/ei* jingle below is untrustworthy.



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