

## Chapter 2

# WHAT CONSONANTS SAY

### THEORY

This chapter is the first to use the **Student Spelling Dictionary**. It is now time for your students to begin writing the rules of English spelling. They will write **examples** of words which follow these rules. For homework, they will find more examples from their readers and from their everyday lives.

Your students will also be encouraged to find **exceptions** to the rules. The idea is to get students to *revel* in the exceptions. Too often, a child is proud to learn and demonstrate a rule, only to be confounded by an exception. Looking for exceptions leads to **confidence** in the rules and the realisation that English spelling and reading is **easy**.

Not only that, but a teacher's credibility can be somewhat diminished when a rule she has laboured to teach is then broken by a word. Often, words which don't "play fair" (i.e. that are

orthographically irregular) are very common, so a student is likely to run into an exception very quickly. The only way round this is to **boldly announce** that there are exceptions to every rule and that they should be **celebrated!**

This method will not only **build confidence** and reinforce these very important rules, but will **build vocabulary** and the students' **ability to investigate.**

We will deal with some basic rules surrounding consonants first.

Consonants comprise a smaller body of work than vowels. This will also help students to familiarise themselves with the program and its requirements before the tasks become more complex.

What makes Spelling For Life such fun, though, is that if you follow the program step by step, your students will not notice that the tasks have increased in complexity, as they will have everything they need to tackle each new task.



## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED**

Aside from an A4 exercise book, your students will need a red pen.

PRINTOUT: [Student Spelling Dictionary Page 1](#)

# Student Spelling Dictionary Page 1

1

b c d f g h j k l m n p q u r s t v w x y z

RULE: q is always written with the letter u

Examples: quite, quick, question

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Exceptions:

RULE: when c comes before e, i or y, it MUST say /s/

Examples: once, circle, cycle

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Exceptions:

RULE: when g comes before e, i or y it MAY say /j/

Examples: /g/ get, give, buggy  
/j/ age, religion, gym

- /g/
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

- /j/
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

4

## **THE LESSON**

Ask your students to turn to page one and number it. (fig. 4)

### **Script:**

"The title of this page is *Consonants*. Because it is a title, what does the word *consonants* begin with?"

(STUDENT ANSWER: A CAPITAL LETTER)

"Write the title on the top line in the middle and underline the vowels with red pen."

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### **NOTE:**

Underlining the vowels in the title words is an invaluable exercise for counting syllables. This will become clearer as the course progresses.

Show the students how to write the word if they do not know how to spell it. This lesson is about vowels and consonants, not about spelling anything, so keep the focus on the task at hand.

Do not show the students the completed page, as in **fig. 4**, instead, model the page for them to copy. The action of writing the dictionary will help them process the information.

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SCRIPT:

"How many vowels did you underline?" (THREE)

"So how many syllables do you think there might be in the word *consonants*?" (THREE)

You are now familiarising the students with a very effective method of reading unfamiliar words called *word attack*.

From this point on, you will ask your students to write the title and underline the vowels as above on every page. When working out unfamiliar words in their oral reading sessions, remind your students to use this method to count the syllables.

As you may know, some vowels are digraphs (i.e. /oa/ai/ee/ etc.). When counting vowels, explain to your students that some vowels go in pairs, but are still counted as one.

For example, "eating" has three letters in it that can be called vowels, but the *e* and the *a* go in a pair to make one sound. Therefore we count *ea* as one, bringing the total amount of vowels in this word to two. There is more about this in the Vowels and Vowel Generator chapters of this book.

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Now get them to write all the consonants in the alphabet across the page.

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**Q**

When all the consonants are written, point to the letter *q*

"In English words, what is the letter *q* always written with?"

(THE LETTER *U*)

"That is the first rule of English spelling. Please put the letter *u* next to the letter *q* and write it in red. Now skip a line and write down the rule like this:"

**RULE: *q* is always written with the letter *u***

Ask the students to write the following example words underneath the rule:

quite, quick, question

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**HOMEWORK:**

UNDERNEATH THIS RULE, STUDENTS WRITE THE NUMBERS:

1

2

3

And Exceptions

Find 3 words which follow this rule. Ask your students to write their homework and the exceptions directly into their dictionary.

For your convenience, exceptions to all the rules are written in the **Appendix 2, Exceptions** section at the end of this book.

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**C**

Ask your students to skip a line and write the following:

**RULE : when c comes before e, i or y , it MUST say /s/**

Ask the students to write  
the following example words underneath the rule:  
once, circle, cycle

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The letter /s/ is in slanted brackets to show that we are talking about a **sound**.

Get the students to read the rule back to you and make sure they say “**ssssss**” when they read /s/. They are not to **name** the letter as they would when saying the alphabet. They must make its **sound**, like the first sound in the word *si*ng.

Students who have difficulty with literacy often don't know the difference between the **name** of a letter and the **sound** of a letter.

There is a **free download** at [www.linguistlearning.com](http://www.linguistlearning.com) called the **phoneme triangle**, which can be used to help students distinguish between letter names and sounds.

**HOMEWORK:**

Underneath this rule, students write the numbers:

1

2

3

And Exceptions:

Find 3 words which follow this rule. Ask your students to write their homework and the exceptions directly into their dictionary.

For your convenience, exceptions to all the rules are written in the **Exceptions** section at the end of this book.

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## G

Ask your students to skip a line and write the following:

**RULE: when g comes before e, i or y , it MAY say /j/**

Ask the students to write "Examples" and the following example words underneath the rule:

/g/: get, give, buggy

/j/: age, religion , gym

The letter /j/ is in the slanted brackets to show that we are talking about a **sound**.

Get the students to read the rule back to you and make sure they say “**j**” when they read /j/. They are not to **name** that letter as they would when saying the alphabet. They must make its **sound**, like the first sound in the word *jump*.

See [URL](#) for a lesson on this.

### **HOMEWORK:**

UNDERNEATH THIS RULE, STUDENTS WRITE THE NUMBERS IN TWO COLUMNS:

/g/ 1.

2.

3.

/j/ 1.

2.

3.

Find 3 words which follow this rule. Ask your students to write their homework and the exceptions in the lines directly into their dictionary.

NOTE: There are no exceptions to this rule, as g has the option of saying either of its two sounds before e, i or y.

## Spelling For Life Chapter 2 Spelling Drill

### "What Consonants Say"

1. Write out all the vowels in the alphabet.
2. Write out all the consonants.

#### **SPELL:**

3. queen
4. quick
5. question
6. once
7. circle
8. cycle
9. get
10. give
11. buggy
12. age
13. religion
14. gym