How Parents Can Assist Students With Spelling

"ie" or "ei"

Rule: "i" before "e" except after "c".
Examples: Believe, receive, receipt, ceiling, relief, niece, shield
Exceptions: Neither, leisure, foreigner, counterfeit, stein, Seize, weird, height

Rule: If the sound is "ay" the spelling is "ei"
Examples: eight, deity, neigh, neighbour, freight, weigh

Prefixes

Rule: The spelling of a word does not change when you add a prefix to it even when the first letter of the word and the last letter of the prefix are the same.
Examples: mis + step = misstep
pre + eminent = preeminent

Doubling final consonants

Rule: A word of more than one syllable ending in a single consonant after a single vowel, doubles the consonant before adding -ed or -ing
Examples: occur/occurring, begin/beginning, compel/compelled, prefer/preferring, control/controlling

Remember - Words of more than one syllable have their consonants doubled only when the final syllable is stressed (say the word out loud).
Examples: begin - beginn ing BUT open - opening
defer - deferr ing BUT offer - offering

Rule: If the preceding vowel is unstressed or spelled with two vowels, do not double the consonant.
Examples: enter/entering, visit/visiting, develop/developing, dread/dreading, appeal/appealing, shout/shouting
Exceptions: worship/worshipping, kidnap/kidnapping, handicap/handicapped

Rule: Final consonants are not doubled before suffixes beginning with a consonant.
Examples: enrol/enrolment, commit/ commitment, fulfil/fulfilment, prefer/preferment, quarrel/quarrelsome, rival/rivalry

Rule: Words of more than one syllable ending in "l" double the "l" even if the stress does not fall on the last syllable.
Examples: cancel/cancelled, travel/travelling, jewel/jeweller
Exceptions: appeal/appealing, parallel/paralleled

The final "e"

Rule: Keep the final "e" of the base word before adding a suffix beginning with a consonant (-ment, -ness, -less, -ful).
Examples: commencement, pronouncement, amusement
Exceptions: argument, awful, truly, wholly

Rule: If the suffix or verb ending begins with a vowel, drop the final "e".
Examples: commencing, pronouncing, amusing
Rule: To retain the soft sound of the "c" (s sound) and of the "g" (j sound) in words ending in "ce" and "ge", we keep the final "e". Examples: peace/peaceable, replace/replaceable, arrange/arrangement, advantage/advantageous, notice/noticeable, change/changeable

Rule: Words ending in two vowels (a vowel + final "e") retain the final vowel "e" before adding a suffix. Examples: see/seeable, shoe/shoeing, canoe/canoeing

"c" or "g" endings
Rule: For words ending in "c", insert "k" before adding -ing or -y. Examples: picnic/picnicking, traffic/trafficking, panic/panicky

"y" endings
Rule: If the word has a consonant before the "y", and when adding -ed or -er after "y", change the "y" to "i". Examples: mercy/merciless, fly/flier, carry/carried

Rule: If the word has a vowel before the "y", or when adding -ing keep the "y". Examples: employ/employed, annoy/annoying, carry/carrying

"o" endings
Rule: If a Noun ends in "o", add -es.
Examples: potato/potatoes, echo/echoes, hero/heroes
Exceptions: studio/studios, piano/pianos, kangaroo/kangaroos, zoo/zoos

The "shen" sound
The sounds at the end of musician and condition sound alike but...
• cian always means a person, where...
• tion or sion are never used for people.

How do you tell whether to use tion or sion?

Rule: If the root word ends in "t", use -tion.
Examples: complete/completion

Rule: If the root word ends in "s" or "d", use sion.
Examples: extend/extension, supress/supression

Rule: If the sound of the last syllable is the "heavy" sound of /zhun/ rather than the light sound, /shun/, use "s".
Examples: confusion, vision, adhesion
Exceptions: The ending, -mit becomes -mission: permit/permission, omit/omission, submit/submission, commit/commission