

The Spalding Marking System

The Spalding Marking System facilitates automatic word recognition by helping students connect speech sounds to the written symbols that represent those sounds. By using underlines, numbers, brackets, and syllabication, students are required to think as they analyze the spelling and pronunciation of words.

1. A space is used to indicate the break in syllables.

e lec tion

o ver

yel low

2. A vowel is underlined at the end of a syllable when it says /ā/, /ē/, /ō/, or /ū/ and when y says /ī/.

me

o pen

Ju ly

3. Phonograms of two or more letters are underlined to indicate a single sound.

thin

bridge

eight

4. Silent letters are underlined twice.

half

walk

climb

5. Phonogram sounds that are not given on the phonogram cards are underlined twice.

of

who

warm

6. There are five different kinds of silent final e. Each is distinguished by the job it does and is marked accordingly.

Job 1 – The silent final e lets the vowel say its name.	t i m e *Spacing is used to show marking not syllabication.*
Job 2 – English words do not end with v or u.	have ₂ blue ₂
Job 3 – The silent final e lets c and g say their second sound.	chance ₃ charge ₃
Job 4 – Every syllable needs a vowel.	lit tle ₄
Job 5 – No job e. There is no reason for the silent final e.	are ₅

Please note, the only markings indicated are those of silent final e. Additional markings are not indicated.

7. Numbers are placed above a phonogram when its sound is not the first sound. When no number is written above, this signifies that the first sound is the one used in the word.

do³

low²

you³

8. Some words are bracketed together for comparison.

- A derived word with a base word (coming, come)
- Words with the same spelling pattern (catch, catcher, kitchen)
- Words that sound the same but use different phonograms to denote meaning (meet, meat)
- Two words that might easily be confused (form, from)

Rules of Pronunciation, Spelling, and Language

1. q is always followed by u (queen)
2. c before e, i, or y says /s/ (city, cent, cyanide), but followed by any other letter says /k/ (cat, cut, cot)
3. g before e, i, or y *may* say /j/ (page, giant, gym), but followed by any other letter says /g/ (gate, go)
4. a, e, o, and u usually say /ā/, /ē/, /ō/, /ū/ at the end of a syllable (me, na vy, o pen, mu sic)
5. i and y usually say /ī/ (big, gym), but may say /i/ (si lent, my, type)
6. y, not i, is used at the end of English words (my, by)
7. five jobs of silent final e (see *The Spalding Marking System* number 6)
8. 5 spellings for the sound /er/ (her, first, nurse, works, early)
9. 1-1-1 rule: One-syllable words with one vowel and ending with one consonant need another final consonant before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel (hop + ed = hop ped)
10. 2-1-1 rule: Two-syllable words in which the second syllable is accented need another final consonant before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel (be gin + ing = be gin ning)
11. words ending with a silent final e are written without the e when adding a suffix that begins with a vowel (come + ing = coming)
12. i before e (field) except after c (receive) or when saying /a/ (vein)
13. sh is used at the beginning or end of a base word (she, dish), at the end of a syllable (fin ish), but never at the beginning of a syllable after the first syllable except for the suffix ship (wor ship, friend ship)
14. ti, si, and ci are most frequently used to say /sh/ at the beginning of a second or subsequent syllable in a base word (na tion, ses sion, fa cial)
15. si is used to say /sh/ when the syllable before it ends with an s (ses sion) or when the base word has an s where the base word changes (tense, ten sion)
16. si may also say /zh/ (vi sion)
17. double l, f, and s when following a single vowel at the end of a one-syllable word (will, off, miss)
18. use ay to say /ā/ at the end of a base word (play, day, say)
19. i and o may say /ī/ and /ō/ when followed by two consonants (find, old)
20. s never follows x
21. all written alone has two l's, but when written with another syllable only has one l (al so, al most)
22. till and full written alone have two l's, but when written with another syllable only have one l (un til, beau ti ful)
23. dge may only be used after a single vowel that says /ă/, /ĕ/, /ĭ/, /ŏ/, or /ŭ/ (badge, edge, bridge, lodge, budge)
24. when adding a suffix to a word that ends with a consonant and y, use i instead of y unless the suffix is ing (cry + ed = cried, cry + ing = crying)
25. ck may only be used after a single vowel that says /ă/, /ĕ/, /ĭ/, /ŏ/, or /ŭ/ (back, neck, lick, rock, duck)
26. capitalize proper nouns
27. words beginning with the sound /z/ are always spelled with a z, never an s (zoo, zip)
28. ed has three sounds and is used to form the past tense of verbs (paint ed, played, looked)
29. divide words between double consonants (lit tle, ap ple, din ner)