Communication skills are essential in every aspect of life today. Yet weak spelling skills can interfere with successful communication. For example, a prospective employer will think twice before he hires the applicant who writes, “I believe I will be an asset to your company.” Even misspelled words in personal notes and letters to family and friends stand out like the proverbial sore thumb. Everyone makes a spelling mistake once in a while, however. In fact, most people can think of a handful of words they often misspell. Few people can achieve complete mastery over spelling without training and a desire to improve their spelling skills. The gain of solid spelling skills is a lifelong task, one that offers satisfying rewards.

The purpose of this course is to help you recall spelling rules and their exceptions so you can accurately spell words. Specific objectives explain what you will learn as you build spelling precision. The spellings in this course are based on American English. Also, this course relies on Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate
Dictionary. You may use another dictionary, but try to consistently rely on one dictionary. Some words have alternate spellings, and dictionaries may prefer different spellings.

This course introduces common spelling problems. Lesson 1 explains how to spell words that contain *ie* or *ei*. Lesson 2 explores rules for words ending in *y*, while Lesson 3 covers rules for words ending in silent *e*. Lesson 4 explains all the rules for doubling a consonant. Lesson 5 identifies words that end in *c*, *cede*, *ceed*, and *sede*, and Lesson 6 demonstrates how to form the plural ending of a word. Lesson 7 introduces homophones, that is, words that sound alike but have different meanings. Lesson 8 covers abbreviations and the use of the apostrophe. Lesson 9 explains prefixes, hyphenation, and spelling demons. Lesson 10 is an important guide for dictionary use. The final examination covers all of the material in the course.

The Appendix discusses the structure, function, and sound of words. You can familiarize yourself with it before you begin the course. You can also use the
Appendix as a quick reference while completing this course. If you come across a difficult term or concept, check the Appendix for an explanation.

The course is designed to help you achieve success with specific spelling problems. Each lesson begins with a short activity called Check Your Prior Knowledge, which tests you on the material covered in that lesson. By checking your answers immediately, you can know exactly which spelling skills to concentrate on while you complete the lesson. Each lesson also includes several practice quizzes designed to build spelling accuracy and self-confidence. Again, immediately checking your answers reinforces correct spelling. Finally, the spelling rules are organized so that you can gradually assemble a notebook of rules and difficult words to keep for reference.

The Check Your Prior Knowledge activity and the practice quizzes are for your personal development only. Do not send your answers to your Hadley instructor. You can always contact your instructor to either clarify an activity or discuss your answers.
Each lesson ends with an assignment, which enables your instructor to determine how well you have mastered the learning objectives. You must also complete the final exam at the end of the course. Follow the instructions at the beginning of each assignment and in the Welcome Letter.

Note that Assignments 1 through 8 include an activity called Optional Writing Extension, which you may submit with your assignment. This activity allows you to use the spelling words in your writing. Although the Optional Writing Extension is not graded, your instructor will provide feedback and return it with your assignment.

If you are ready to apply spelling rules and their exceptions to your work, begin Lesson 1: Words Spelled with \textit{ie} and \textit{ei}.
Lesson 1: Words Spelled with *ie* and *ei*

Check Your Prior Knowledge

Choose the word that is spelled correctly in each pair. When you are finished, compare your answers with those that follow.

1. wieght weight
2. yield yeild
3. ancient anceint
4. breif brief
5. conceive concieve
6. seive sieve
7. ceiling cieling
8. sufficeint sufficient
9. foriegner foreigner
10. neighbor nieghbor

Answers to Check Your Prior Knowledge

1. weight
2. yield
3. ancient
4. brief
5. conceive
6. sieve
7. ceiling
8. sufficient
9. foreigner
10. neighbor

**Introduction**

This first lesson enables you to practice correctly spelling words with *ie* or *ei*. This common spelling problem readily stumps novices and experts alike. But you will discover a frequently used jingle that is a valuable guide for deciding which rule to use when spelling words with these letter combinations. Recalling this jingle and recognizing its exceptions will help you accurately spell words that contain *ie* or *ei*.

**Objectives**

After completing this lesson, you will be able to
a. apply the rules in the jingle to spell words with *ie* or *ei*

b. spell words that are exceptions to the rules in the jingle
Spelling Words with *ie* or *ei*

How many words can you spell with the letters *ie* or *ei*? Probably more than you think. More than a hundred fairly common words in the English language are spelled with *ie* or *ei*. Many people incorrectly spell words with these combinations of letters because they don’t know when to use *ie* or *ei*. The following popular jingle will guide you in correctly spelling *ie* and *ei* words. Recite this jingle as you read:

Write *i* before *e* except after *c* or when sounded like *a* as in *neighbor* and *weigh*.

This jingle applies when the pronunciation of *ie* or *ei* is a long *e* sound as in *receive* or a long *a* sound as in *eight*. Read and recite these words:

*i* before *e*

belief brief
relieve grief
piece thief
Except after *c*

- conceive
- deceive
- deceit
- ceiling
- receive
- perceive

Or when sounded like *a* as in *neighbor* or *weigh*

- eight
- freight
- rein
- vein
- sleigh
- beige

If you remember this simple little jingle, you will have learned the rules for spelling most of the words with these letters. Remember, in most cases you will discover that *ie* is the likely form for words with a long *e* sound, as in *brief*. It’s time to take a practice quiz and put this jingle to work.

**Practice Quiz 1.1**

Spell the entire word that includes either *ie* or *ei*.

Compare your answers with those that follow this quiz.

1. rel__f
2. s__ve
3. fr__nd
4. n__ce
5. perc__ve
6. dec__ve
7. bel__f
8. dec__t
9. v__n | 15. n__gh
10. rel__ve | 16. __ght
11. c__ling | 17. p__ce
12. th__f | 18. w__ght
13. br__f | 19. conc__ve
14. fr__ght | 20. rec__ve

Answers to Practice Quiz 1.1

Correctly write any words you misspelled under the appropriate *ie-ei* rule in your notebook so you can refer to them easily.

1. relief
2. sieve
3. friend
4. niece
5. perceive
6. deceive
7. belief
8. deceit
9. vein
10. relieve
11. ceiling
12. thief
13. brief
14. freight
15. neigh
16. eight
17. piece
18. weight
19. conceive
20. receive
Principal Exceptions to the *ie–ei* Rules

Every rule has its exceptions. Here are some exceptions to add to your personal store of knowledge in this lesson. Some *ie* or *ei* words are not covered by the jingle. When you encounter exceptions, it is best to find other ways to remember these words. The following words are examples of exceptions to the “except after *c*” rule. Read and recite each of the following words:

ancient, conscience, efficient, sufficient, proficient, deficient

What sound do you hear in these words? If you answered *sh*, you are correct. The words *financier* and *science* also belong to this group of exceptions even though the *sh* sound is not evident in their pronunciation. Memorize these words.

Here is another group of words that breaks the rule in the jingle:

either, neither, leisure, foreigner, seize, weird, height
A good way to remember these exceptions is to memorize this nonsense sentence: Neither leisured foreigner seized the weird height. Practice spelling these dozen or so exceptional words by taking another practice quiz.

**Practice Quiz 1.2**

An example of a postcard one friend might send to another follows. In the postcard, the writer describes what it is like to visit another country. Words containing *ie* or *ei* are italicized. Spell all of them, correcting the ones that are misspelled. Compare your answers with those that follow the quiz.

Dear Ralph, The *anceint* ruins are worth visiting. Yet it is strange being the *foreigner* in another country. I just wish I was *proficient* in the language spoken here. I’m afraid I am a bit *deficeint* in my training. Learning a language is a *sceince* in itself. I must say that the hotel is nice and the employees kind and *efficeint*. As I walk and visit different places, I *perceive* a lightness in the air. People in this country know how to enjoy their *liesure*. Well, I too want to “*seize the day*” and enjoy
the remainder of my visit. By the way, isn’t it weird? My watch says I am seven hours ahead of you.

See you soon, Kathy

*Answers to Practice Quiz 1.2*

The following are the italicized words spelled correctly. Now they are all spelled correctly. Correct and add any words that you misspelled to your notebook.

1. ancient
2. foreigner
3. proficient
4. deficient
5. science
6. efficient
7. perceive
8. leisure
9. seize
10. weird

**Summary**

This lesson gave you practice spelling words with *ie* or *ei*. The jingle, "Write *i* before *e* except after *c* or when sounded like *a* as in *neighbor* and *weigh,*" guides you in
correctly spelling most of these words. You also learned the exceptions to this general rule. Remembering the jingle, as well as the exceptions, helps you accurately spell words that contain *ei* or *ie*. 
Assignment 1

For general instructions on completing assignments, refer to the Welcome Letter. Then start this assignment by giving your full name, address, and phone number. Also list the name of this course, Assignment 1, your instructor’s name, and the date. Be sure to include the item number along with each answer. Also, include ALL responses in each numbered item; note that some of the numbered items may have more than one answer. This assignment is worth 100 points.

Supply the letters and words that complete the following jingle. (13 points)
1. Write i before ____, except after ____ or when sounded like ____ as in neighbor and ____.

Choose the word that is spelled correctly in each of the following pairs. (3 points each item; total 15 points)
2. conceive    concieve
3. yeild       yield
4. nieghbor    neighbor
5. ancient     anceint
6. acheive     achieve
Use *ie* or *ei* to correctly spell the words in the following list. (3 points each; total 15 points)

7. s_ze
8. dec_ve
9. rel_ve
10. effic_nt
11. fr_ght

Choose the word that is spelled correctly inside the parentheses. (3 points each; total 57 points)

12. (Neither, Niether) of the students answered the question.
13. A (seive, sieve) is a strainer.
15. The man gave a (feiry, fiery) speech.
16. How much do you (weigh, wiegh)?
17. I (recieved, received) a letter from Jim.
18. It is an old (sliegh, sleigh).
19. The (reign, riegn) of the king lasted 10 years.
20. A (vien, vein) carries blood.
21. He was the (chief, cheif) investigator.
22. Use sunglasses to (sheild, shield) your eyes from the sun.
23. Joan sang a (brief, breif) song.
24. His (conscience, conscience) made him confess his guilt.
25. My puppy is (mischeivous, mischievous).
26. John is (proficeint, proficient) in math.
27. Do you enjoy your (liesure, leisure)?
28. Mary is (deficient, deficeint) in her English credits.
29. He should watch his (wieght, weight).
30. The ladder is six feet in (height, hieght).

Optional Writing Extension

If you would like additional practice, write a postcard to your instructor using several *ie* or *ei* words. Send it with your assignment for Lesson 1. Although this optional activity will not be graded, your instructor will provide feedback on your work.

When you have completed this assignment, proceed to Lesson 2: Words Ending in *y*.