

The Complete I Before E Rule - With Explanations

Memorize the following poem and learn how to apply each part of the rule.

Use **i** before **e**.....
 except after **c**.....
 Or when sounded as EYE or AY.....
 as in **E**instein and **w**eigh.
Neither, **w**eird, **f**oreign, **l**eisure,.....
Seize, **f**or**f**eit, and **h**eight
 Are exceptions spelled right
 But don't let the **c-i-e-n** words.....
 get you uptight!

Explanation:

Means: Unless you have a reason not to, use **ie** as in **thief**, **believe**, **priest**, etc.
 Means: use **cei** as in **receive**, **deceive**, **ceiling**, etc.
 Means: use **ei** in "EYE" words such as **Eileen**, **Heidi**, **stein**, **Steinbrenner**, etc., and use **ei** in "AY" words such as **eight**, **vein**, **veil**, etc.
 and so are: **prote**i**n** and **caff**e**ine** **f**or**f**eiture, **code**i**ne**, **h**e**ifer**, etc. Memorize these!
 Means: **cien** as in **efficient**, **ancient**, **conscience**, and **sufficient** etc.

Use i before e Family

grief (12.25)	thief	relief (12.00)	chief (7.50)	mischief (11.00)	priest (12.20)
grieve (15.70)	thieve	relieve (14.00)	achieve	sieve	niece (13.30)
piece (9.55)	apiece (11.70)	centerpiece	siege	besiege	pier (11.90)
bier	tier	frieze	field (7.05)	battlefield	yield (13.90)
shield (13.25)	shriek	friend	fiend	view	review (9.80)
preview	patient (12.65)	impatient	patience (15.80)	fielder	wield

Except after c Family (See p. 441 for -ceive receive family)

receipt (17.60)	receiver (14.40)	deceit	deceive (15.70)	deceitful	ceiling (14.05)
conceivable	inconceivable	receipts (17.95)	conceited	conceivably	

Or when sounded as "EYE"

ein	Einstein	fraulein	Eileen	Holstein	eider
eidetic	Pheiffer	Feiffer	feisty	heist	meister
Eisenhower	Eiffel	height (12.45)	Heidi	Heidelberg	Fahrenheit
H. J. Heit	T. J. Heidt	Heifitz	sholem aleichem	stein	heigh-ho
Wisnheimer	Heinlein	Heinrich	Heinz	Heiss	Heisenberg
Weiss	Weissmuller	Poseidon	Rottweiler	apartheid	

Or when sounded as "AY"

weigh (9.25)	weight (7.50)	eight (3.35)	freight (11.60)	freighter	neigh
neighbor (10.30)	sheik	sheikh	heir (15.75)	their (7.05)	heinous
lei	skein	vermeil	Eire	inveigle	feint
sleigh (13.35)	deign	reign (16.75)	rein	Pompeii	feign
veil (16.20)	unveiled	vein (16.30)	Chow mein	seine	reindeer (13.05)

Or when exceptions

neither (10.90)	weird	foreign (14.90)	leisure (16.90)	seize (15.15)	forfeit
height (12.45)	weirdo	foreigner	leisurely	seizure	forfeiture
protein	caffeine	codeine	heifer	surfeit	counterfeit

C-I-E-N words

science (9.15)	conscience (18.60)		ancient (14.60)	efficient (18.55)	sufficient (18.10)
scientist	conscientious	inefficient	efficiency (19.80)	proficient	omniscient
scientific (14.85)	prescience	inefficiency	coefficient	proficiency	omniscience

Homophones: ceiling/sealing weigh/way weighed/wade weight/wait neigh/nay sleigh/slay reign/rein/rain vein/vain/vane lei/lay Eire/heir/air tier/tear they're/there/their seize/sees/seas/c's pier/peer bier/beer piece/peace feign/fain feint/faint bier/beer pier/peer

The complete I before E Rule.

Use i before e	Means: Use ie unless you have a reason not to.
Except after c	Means: Use cei unless you have a reason not to.
Or when sounded as I	Means: Use ei in Eileen, Einstein, Heidi, etc.
Or AY As in <u>E</u>instein or <u>w</u>eigh .	Means: Use ei in vein, eight, veil, etc.
<u>N</u>either, <u>w</u>eird, <u>for</u>eign, <u>le</u>isure,	<u>c</u>ien words: <u>sci</u> ence, <u>consci</u> ence,
<u>S</u>eize, <u>for</u>feit and <u>h</u>eight are exceptions spelled right,	<u>eff</u> icient, <u>eff</u> iciency, <u>suff</u> icient,
But don't let the <u>c</u>ien words get you uptight.	<u>anc</u> ient, <u>prof</u> icient, <u>def</u> icient.

ie (See p. 441 for more ie words)

grief	Good g rief, was the ch ief really a th ief?
relief	What a re lief to find out my be lie f in the ch ief was right.
belief	Don't be lie v e a li e. That's my be lie f .
chief	The ch ief would never be a th ief.
mischie f	The ch ief might get into mis ch ief.
mischie v ous	The ch ief might be very mis ch ie v ous.
grieve	To g rieve is to express g rief, I be lie v e.
believe	I be lie v e for every drop of rain that falls, a flower grows.
friend	Be my fr ie n d. Don't be a cigarette fi end. Don't be fi endish.
field	You can w ie l d a sh ield in the fi eld.
niece	My ni ce wants a pie ce of pie .

cei (See p. 441 for -ceive **re**ceive words)

re ce ipt	Did you get a re ce ip t?
re ce iver	Would you please hang up the re ce iv er?
ce iling	The plaster needs se aling on the ce iling.
de ce it	I hate de ce it so I'll try not to be too de ce it ful.
con ce ited	I'm not con ce it ed, it's just that's it's hard to be humble.

ei (when sounded as "EYE")

Fahren ei t	When it's 32 degrees Fahren ei t, it's 0 degrees centigrade.
fraule ei n	What's the difference between a colleen and a fraule ei n?
he is t	The police arrested Jack right in the middle of the he is t.
he igh t	What's your he igh t and we igh t?
He id i	Have you seen He id i Fle is s around recently?
aparthe id	South Africa is beginning to eliminate aparthe id .

More Important Exceptions:

we ir do	The we ird we irdo took caff eine and code ine and had a se izure.
pro te in	We put the he ifer on a high pro te in diet.
for ei gn	We had to for feit the game because we had a for eign player.