

The Patterns of English Spelling with their Word Families Put in Sentence Context

Volume 7

The Ending -Y Families -- Including

The -IER, -IEST, & -INESS Relatives

Such as: happy happier happiest happiness
 naughty naughtier naughtiest naughtiness

and the -y suffixes as in:

-cy	privacy
-ify	simplify
-ity	sincerity
-ary	library
-ology	biology

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Some Observations

If it is true as the experts¹ tell us that phonics need only be taught in the first two grades, then third graders should have no trouble with the double consonant plus the y ending families (CVDC+y) as in *silly*, *sunny*, *pretty*, etc. Yet, only 10% could correctly spell *silly* and *sunny*. Only 4% could spell *pretty*. Obviously, something is wrong. And if it is true that students today don't spell as well as the students did when the *New Iowa Spelling Scale*² was constructed, something is seriously wrong with our spelling curriculum or how spelling is—**or is not**—taught. Mostly, is not. As nearly every spelling program is based upon the same word frequency studies as the *New Iowa Spelling Scale* we can estimate quite accurately the number of CVCC+y words that occur in traditional spelling texts from grades 2 through 8. Of the 132 possible, only 10 regularly occur. Of the 40 CVDC+ies words such *pennies*, the odds say that only one will be found in today's spelling texts.

Adding -ly to words shouldn't be very difficult if the concept is taught—not merely presented in a lesson or two. Yet of the 10% (the gifted?) who could spell bare in the 3rd grade, 80% could not add -ly to correctly spell barely. That is, barely 2% of the 3rd graders could spell *barely*. And how many learn the concept of the addition of -ly to words by the time they reach the 8th grade. You would think that all of them would. Yet, of the 70% who could spell *scarce*, 40% could not add the -ly to correctly spell *scarcely*. Hmm.

Of the hundreds of CVDCY (but change the y to i and add -est) words only two are liable to be taught. These two, *earliest* and *prettiest* were misspelled by 30% and 37% of the 8th graders, respectively.

¹Anderson, Richard C., Elfrieda H. Heibert, *et. al.* *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*. Washington, D.C., The National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education.

²Greene, Harry. *The New Iowa Spelling Scale*. Iowa City: The University of Iowa, 1954.

Does **your** Adult Community School Program offer courses for the **minority** of people who want to:

1. learn how to make flower arrangements?
2. play bridge?
3. operate computers?
4. learn CPR?
5. decorate cakes?

Most probably they do. And they should. **All minorities** should have **equal opportunity** rights to the **education** they need.

Now, what about that **minority** of adults **who would like to learn how to tutor** their husband, wife, child, or friend who has severe reading/writing/spelling problems?

AVKO would like to see this **minority** have equal opportunities to learn how to help those they love and who cannot afford the luxury of private expensive tutoring.

You can help them by having your Community School Director write for the Free AVKO pamphlet, *How to Set Up a Course for Adults Whose Children or Spouses have Reading/Spelling Problems*. **Write to**

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