

When Spelling Indicates Meaning: Words that End with /S/ or /Z/ Sounds

Suffixes S and ES
Mean Plural Nouns

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| cars | geodes |
| stars | whales |
| moons | verses |
| sons | tires |
| ideas | lessons |
| bees | stripes |
| notes | rhymes |
| songs | stones |
| caves | books |
| breaks | foxes |
| brakes | peaches |
| themes | nouns |
| topics | syllables |
| subjects | letters |
| babies | numbers |

S, 'S' and 'S'
Mean Possessives

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| his | cars' |
| hers | car's |
| ours | lamp's |
| yours | pens' |
| theirs | lions' |
| its | book's |
| Fox's | mothers' |
| baby's | father's |
| teacher's | sisters' |
| girls' | brother's |
| boys' | country's |
| Kitty's | city's |
| bees' | lake's |
| dragon's | horse's |

Proper Nouns
Always End with S

Suffixes S and ES
Mean Third Person Verb

S, 'S' and 'S'
Mean Possessives

Suffixes S and ES
Mean Plural Nouns

Double S or Z
Shows Sound
Belongs to Root

Final Silent E
Shows Sound
Belongs to Root

Spelling
Can
Show Meaning
Final SSS and ZZZ Sounds

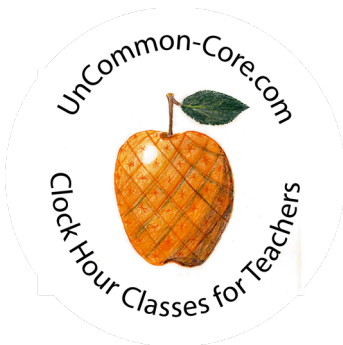
Exceptions

| | |
|--------|--------|
| topaz | circus |
| lotus | genius |
| bus | pizzaz |
| yes | bias |
| chorus | alas |
| atlas | joyous |
| loris | iris |
| gyros | this |
| us | his |
| as | basis |
| is | axis |
| fez | mine |
| focus | thine |
| abacus | |

Spelling
can
Show Meaning
Final SSS and ZZZ Sounds

Example

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Academic standards define the content
and learning goals teachers use in class.

[UnCommon-Core.com](https://uncommon-core.com)
helps teachers decide
how to present content
so students reach the learning goals.

Dear Teachers,

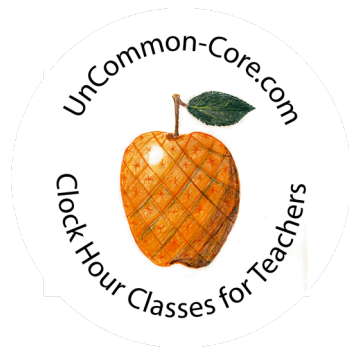
I'm so excited about this refreshing way to integrate spoken and written English.

Looking at groups of words that end with S and Z gives students a big picture point of view. From this new vantage point students can connect spoken and written English, understand when a final S might be voiced or unvoiced, and learn another purpose for a final silent E when it follows letters S and Z.

English has had centuries to grow and change, while we only have one lifetime to make sense of it.

Enjoy,

Isabelle



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Words that End with S or Z

name: **Teacher Tips**

In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.

This is a completely new way to review spelling, grammar, punctuation, and language with your students. Showing how **spelling indicates meaning** gives your students additional information about English and opens their minds to thinking about English in a more organized and systematic way.

These activities help students connect **spoken English with written English**, improving their reading and writing.

Focusing on words that end with /s/ and /z/ brings all the words that end in S and ES, 'S, S', SS, SE, Z, EZ, and ZE together for a closer look. Students discover another reason for final silent E following S or Z. They also learn a fantastic way to remember the difference between its and it's ~ possessive pronouns do not use an apostrophe: his, hers, ours, yours, theirs, and its.

Teachers know that **/s/ and /z/ are closely related**. The /z/ is voiced and the /s/ is not. Have your students gently place fingers on either side of their voice box while pronouncing /s/ and /z/. Bring their attention to the placement of their lips, teeth, tongue, and breath when saying each sound.

When it comes to predicting the sound of the final S, teach your students to think about the letter that comes just before it. After an unvoiced sound the S will also be unvoiced. However, when the S comes after a vowel, another S, or a voiced consonant, it will sound like /z/.

The handouts on pages 6 and 7 can be used in many different ways according to the needs of your students. You could present this information in discussion format without showing these handouts to your students. You might make large posters to share the information with everyone. Older students might be better off reading the handouts for homework and bringing their questions to class. Use these ideas to assess the level of your students' understanding. Some students might need a more detailed review of the information before they can move on.

Words that End with S or Z

name: [Teacher Tips](#)

In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.

The worksheets on pages 8, 9, and 10 can also be used, or not used, according to your students' needs. You might have your students make word cards from the vocabulary they collect on page 8. These cards can be sorted using pages 9 and 10 as sorting mats. With any of these pages, you could have students use them as worksheets.

Once complete, you could have students use highlighters to identify certain groups of words such as words in which the letter S says /z/, all the plural nouns, or all the third person verbs.

Page 8 invites your students collect samples of words that end with /s/ and /z/ from their reading, or from websites for Scrabble players, or anytime they notice words ending with those sounds.

Pages 9 and 10 are very similar. **Page 9** asks students to place words in two distinct groups: the plural nouns, possessive nouns, and third person present tense verbs would all go into the column on the left. Proper nouns ending with /s/ or /z/, words with final double SS or ZZ, words with final silent E after S or Z, and words that are exceptions to the rules, would all go in the right hand column.

Page 10 allows your students to make their own groups. They have to take in the information and decide what titles to use for each group before they sort the words. Ideally, they would sort words into six groups (or seven if they add 'exceptions'). This could be used as an assessment.

The final project starts on page 11 and shows students how to make a little booklet containing the same information. The template names the groups for your students. To make the activity more difficult, give them a blank page to start with.

If you use the template on page 13 practice printing before you make a lot of copies. You may have to make adjustments to get it printed correctly.

English Words with a Final S or Z Sound

There are many words in English that end with sss or zzz, the sounds made by the letters S or Z. In some of these words, the final letter can act like a road sign helping us understand the meaning of the word better.

In spoken English, we depend on context to understand the meaning of individual words. The context is the big picture, the story being told, the recipe we are talking about, or the conversation we are having.

In written English, we also depend on context to help us understand each word. But in writing, there is more context than the story we are reading or the recipe we are following ~ there is also spelling.

In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.

What does the final S indicate in these words?

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| foxes | numbers | oceans |
| tables | socks | books |
| planets | pencils | screens |
| trucks | lights | trees |
| cards | stars | leaves |

Adding an -S or -ES to nouns lets us know that the word means more than one.

one beach ~ many beaches
one plant ~ many plants
one wolf ~ many wolves

What does the final S indicate in these words?

| | | |
|-------|--------|----------|
| yours | Jane's | ocean's |
| ours | girls' | books' |
| hers | dog's | screen's |

Adding an -S to pronouns tells indicates ownership. Adding an apostrophe S or an S followed by an apostrophe signals the same idea along with showing us which words are plural or singular.

bee's knees ~ cat's pajamas ~ theirs ~ cups' handles ~ pups' paws

What does the final S indicate in these words?

| | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|
| plays | mixes | conveys |
| jumps | reads | explains |
| swings | writes | questions |
| runs | calculates | reaches |
| catches | listens | reports |

Regular third person present tense verbs have an -S or -ES ending.

she punches her lunch card ~ he teaches surfing ~ she faxes

There are many other words that end with an S,
not because a suffix has been added but because the root ends with sss or zzz sounds.
Spelling can indicate when the sss or zzz sound belongs to the root words.

How does the spelling of these words show that the S or Z belongs to the root?

| | | |
|------------|--------|--------|
| Des Moines | glass | nurse |
| Las Vegas | fuzz | browse |
| James | guess | cruise |
| Charles | across | course |
| Anais | bliss | house |

Proper nouns do not need to signal when they end with S. Some words double the S to show that it belongs to the root and is not a suffix with additional meaning. Other words add a final silent e to show that the S belongs to the root and does not change the meaning.

Massachusetts ~ buzz ~ cheese ~ please ~ freeze

In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.

Words change meanings when the suffix S or ES is added. A final S can indicate plural nouns, show possession, or show that the word is a verb used with he or she.

Spelling helps readers know when the final S is not due to a suffix, but is part of the root word. These words might end with a double S or have a final silent E after the S.

Words that End with S or Z

name:

In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.
During the week collect and record words that end with the following letters:

S, ES, 'S, S', SE, SS, Z, ZE, or ZZ

Words that End with S or Z

name: _____

In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.
Arrange words that end with sss or zzz sounds in two groups.

Suffix S Adds Meaning

S is Part of Root Word

Words that End with S or Z

name:

In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.
Arrange words that end with sss or zzz sounds into groups.

English Words with a Final S or Z Sound

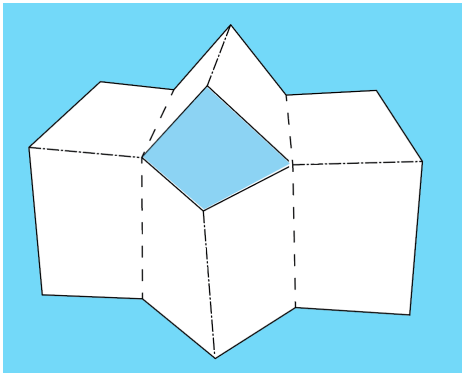
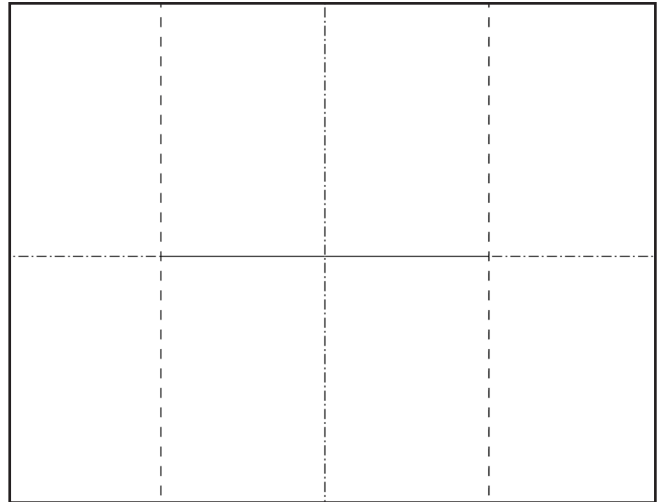
In written English, spelling can help us understand the meaning of words.

Make a handy little booklet to remember what the final letters in words ending with SSS or ZZZ sounds tell us about meaning.

First, fold a piece of printer paper in half each way. Then carefully fold the edges to the middle following the guidelines to the right.

Snip along the solid line to make a slit down the middle of the paper. The dashed lines are valley folds and the dash dot lines are mountain folds.

When you are done, you can arrange the paper to look like a booklet.



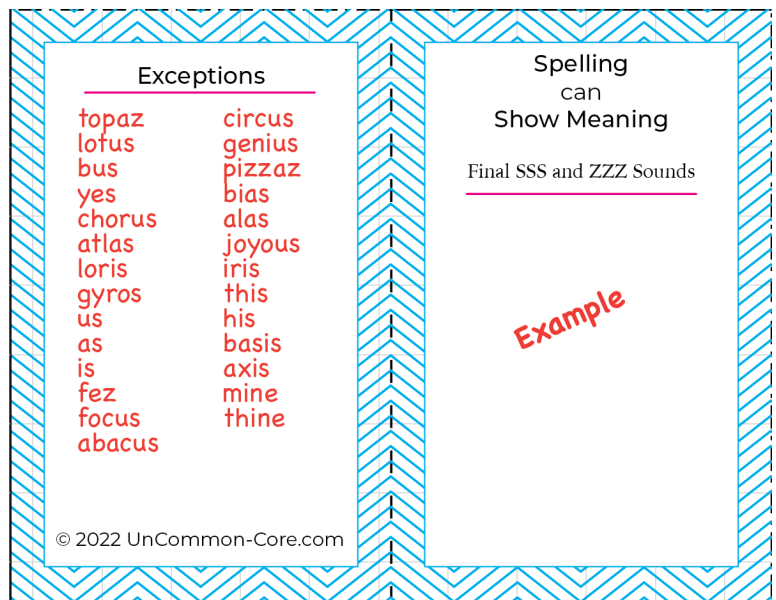
Next, paste the backs of each page together to make the booklet more stable.

Finally, add a title, word lists, and decorations to each page to remind you of the various ways that spelling indicates meaning when words end with SSS or ZZZ sounds.

Put your name on the cover along with a fun decoration or some of the more interesting words that end with SSS.

The back cover is a great space for all the words that end with a single letter S or Z.

'Mine' and 'thine' could be included here as they are possessive pronouns that do not have a final S ending. In most of the these words the last letter is part of the root or part of a longer suffix ending with s, such as -ness, -ous, or -less.



Suffixes S and ES

Mean Plural Nouns

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| cars | geodes |
| stars | whales |
| moons | verses |
| suns | tires |
| ideas | lessons |
| bees | stripes |
| notes | rhymes |
| songs | stones |
| caves | books |
| breaks | foxes |
| brakes | peaches |
| themes | nouns |
| topics | syllables |
| subjects | letters |
| babies | numbers |

S, S' and 'S

Mean Possessives

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| his | cars' |
| hers | car's |
| ours | lamp's |
| yours | pens' |
| theirs | lion's |
| its | book's |
| Fox's | mothers' |
| baby's | father's |
| teacher's | sisters' |
| girls' | brother's |
| boys' | country's |
| kitty's | city's |
| bees' | lake's |
| dragon's | horse's |

Do you play Scrabble? Even if you don't, there are some fantastic websites with words for scrabble players.

Check with your teacher or parents to see if those sites would be a good option for you to find more words.

Naturally, you could copy the words from this example booklet, if you want. The words would look great in alphabetical order.

Alternatively, you could use the booklet as a bookmark and record new words as you find them in your reading.

Suffixes S and ES

Mean Third Person Verb

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| approves | goes |
| spells | teaches |
| writes | adores |
| reads | reaches |
| hopes | swims |
| dreams | glides |
| smiles | rides |
| sings | scores |
| recycles | jumps |
| reuses | hops |
| pulls | leaps |
| pushes | sneaks |
| adds | ambles |
| subtracts | walks |
| laughs | talks |

Proper Nouns

Might End with S

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| Laos | Lois |
| Cyprus | Paris |
| Belarus | Mercedes |
| Dallas | Anais |
| Athens | Atlas |
| Honduras | James |
| Las Vegas | Charles |
| Iris | Miles |
| Doris | Marcus |
| Amaris | Elias |
| Matias | Nicolas |
| | Minneapolis |
| | Indianapolis |
| | New Orleans |
| | Massachusetts |

Double S or Z

Shows Sound

Belongs to Root

| | |
|---------|--------|
| glass | jazz |
| moss | fuzz |
| discuss | press |
| gloss | recess |
| dismiss | mess |
| class | grass |
| kiss | foss |
| guess | emboss |
| criss | fizz |
| floss | chess |
| buzz | dress |
| across | unless |
| boss | brass |

Final Silent E

Shows Sound

Belongs to Root

| | |
|--------|--------|
| ooze | doze |
| snooze | daze |
| wise | maze |
| rose | size |
| noise | use |
| erase | base |
| phrase | false |
| prize | poise |
| cause | goose |
| cease | geese |
| cafe | moose |
| vase | mouse |
| else | freeze |

S, S' and 'S
Mean Possessives

Suffixes S and ES
Mean Plural Nouns

Spelling
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Exceptions

Suffixes S and ES
Mean Third Person Verb

Proper Nouns
Might End with S

Double S or Z
Shows Sound
Belongs to Root

Final Silent E
Shows Sound
Belongs to Root

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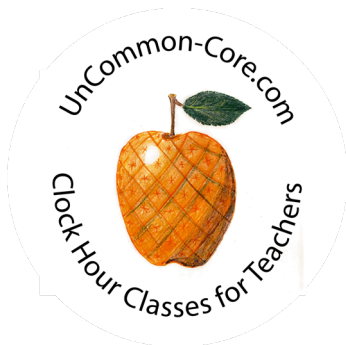
When Spelling Indicates Meaning: Words that End with /S/ or /Z/ Sounds

Students are often taught spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary separately from each other and separately from speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

**From a combined view point,
English orthography makes much more sense.**

These activities help students review:

- Plural nouns ending with S or ES
- Possessive nouns ending with 'S, or S'
- Possessive pronouns ending with S
- Third person present tense verbs ending with S or ES
- Proper nouns ending with S
- Words ending with double letters S and Z
- Words ending with final silent E after S and Z
- And exceptions - of course!



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