

'I' before 'E' except after 'C'

In words which have an 'i' and an 'e' next to each other, the 'i' always comes first unless they come after the letter 'c'. If they do, then the 'e' comes first, followed by the 'i'.

For example:

The 'i' comes before the 'e' in the word

believe

because there is no letter 'c' before the pair.

For example:

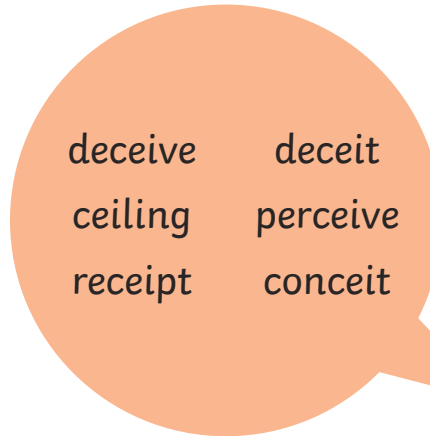
The 'e' comes before the 'i' in the word

receive

because there is a letter 'c' before them.



lie field
cried thief
chief shield



deceive deceit
ceiling perceive
receipt conceit

If you are writing a word and you are unsure, stop and think:

- Check for the letter 'c' first. If the letters come after one, you use the 'ei' spelling rule, regardless of sound.
- The 'ie' spelling pattern is used most of the time if those letters make the sound 'igh' or 'ee' in a word.
- The 'ei' spelling pattern is used most of the time if those letters make the sound 'ay' in the word.

Remember:

If a word ends with letters 'i' and 'e', it will always be the 'ie' spelling pattern. If a word begins with letters 'i' and 'e', it will always be the 'ei' spelling pattern.