

Year 1 · Free resource

## Double letters at the end of short words: *ff, ll, ss, zz, ck*

Year group: 1

Source: DfE, *English Appendix 1: Spelling*, National Curriculum for England (2013) — Year 1

Curriculum requirement: Statutory

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### The rule

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In short words with a **single short vowel**, the sounds /f/, /l/, /s/, /z/, and /k/ at the end are usually spelled with double letters:

/f/ → **ff**: *off, staff, cliff, huff*

/l/ → **ll**: *well, bell, fill, full, pull*

/s/ → **ss**: *hiss, miss, fuss, dress, class*

/z/ → **zz**: *jazz, fizz, buzz, fuzz*

/k/ → **ck**: *back, kick, duck, check, clock*

**Why double?** The double letter signals that the vowel before it is **short**. A single letter after a short vowel would leave the vowel open to misreading as long.

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## Exceptions to know

A small number of very common words do NOT follow this pattern. Learn these individually:

Word	Why no doubling
<b>if</b>	short function word – historical spelling
<b>of</b>	/ɒv/ sound, not /ɒf/ – different phoneme
<b>as</b>	short function word
<b>is</b>	short function word
<b>has</b>	short function word
<b>was</b>	short function word
<b>yes</b>	short function word
<b>bus</b>	follows the rule in some analyses
<b>us</b>	short function word
<b>gas</b>	follows the rule in some analyses
<b>his</b>	short function word

## **ck – the important detail**

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*ck* is used **immediately after a short vowel**. After a consonant or a vowel digraph, use *k* alone:

After short vowel → **ck**: *back, deck, sick, lock, duck*

After consonant → **k**: *bank, silk, mask, milk*

After vowel digraph → **k**: *book, week, look, speak*

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## Examples by pattern

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**-ff words:** off, staff, cliff, huff, cuff, sniff, stiff, gruff, bluff, stuff, scoff, whiff, puff, buff

**-ll words:** well, bell, tell, sell, fell, hill, fill, pill, will, dull, full, pull, bull, ball, call, fall, hall, tall, wall, spell, shell, smell, still, spill

**-ss words:** hiss, miss, fuss, dress, class, grass, glass, press, stress, bless, cross, loss, boss, kiss, pass, mass, mess, less, bliss

**-zz words:** jazz, fizz, buzz, fuzz, whizz, razz, pizzazz

**-ck words:** back, pack, rack, sack, black, crack, stack, track, neck, deck, peck, wreck, check, kick, lick, pick, sick, thick, trick, lock, dock, rock, sock, knock, duck, luck, stuck, truck, block, clock, flock, shock

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## Word sort

Sort these words by their double letter ending.

**Words:** cliff · buzz · miss · back · well · jazz · huff · lock · dress · fizz · tick · bell · class · duck · full · cuff · check · hiss

<b>-ff</b>	<b>-ll</b>	<b>-ss</b>	<b>-zz</b>	<b>-ck</b>

## Dictation sentences

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She sat on the **cliff** and could **tell** the **buzz** was getting **louder**.

**Fill** your **glass** at the **well** at the **back** of the **hall**.

The **duck** gave a **kick** and **fell** off the **dock** with a **splash**.

**Check** the **lock** and make sure the **bell** is on the **wall**.

The **fuzz** on the **grass** was **still full** of **dew** at dawn.

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*Source: DfE English Appendix 1: Spelling (2013). All examples verified against Year 1 statutory content.*