

Year 2 · Free resource

## The /dʒ/ sound: **-ge** and **-dge**

Year group: 2

Source: DfE, *English Appendix 1: Spelling*, National Curriculum for England (2013) — Year 2

Curriculum requirement: Statutory

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### The rule

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The /dʒ/ sound (the "j" sound) at the **end of a word** can be spelled in two ways:

**Use -dge** immediately after a short vowel: **badge**, **edge**, **bridge**, **dodge**, **fudge**

**Use -ge** after a long vowel, a vowel digraph, or a consonant: **age**, **huge**, **page**, **strange**, **bulge**

**The test:** is the vowel before the /dʒ/ sound short or long?

Short vowel → -dge: **badge** (short /æ/), **edge** (short /ɛ/), **bridge** (short /ɪ/)

Long vowel or consonant → -ge: **age** (long /eɪ/), **huge** (long /ju:/), **range** (consonant *n* before *ge*)

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## Etymology note

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The *-dge* spelling comes from Old English, where the *d* was needed to signal that the vowel before it was short. In Old English, vowel length was phonemically significant. The *d* in *-dge* is a historical marker — a "vowel guard" — that signals: "*the vowel before this is short.*" Over time the *d* became functionally silent in pronunciation but was kept in spelling.

This is the same principle as the double-letter rule: doubling a consonant signals a short vowel before it (*running, hopping*). In *-dge* words, the *d* plays a similar role.

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## **-dge words (short vowel before)**

Short vowel	Words
/æ/ (short a)	<b>badge, cadge</b>
/ɛ/ (short e)	<b>edge, hedge, ledge, wedge, pledge, dredge</b>
/ɪ/ (short i)	<b>bridge, ridge, fridge, midget</b>
/ɒ/ (short o)	<b>dodge, lodge, hodgepodge</b>
/ʌ/ (short u)	<b>fudge, budge, judge, nudge, smudge, sludge, grudge</b>

**-ge words (long vowel, digraph, or consonant before)**

Before <i>-ge</i>	Words
Long /eɪ/	<b>age, cage, page, rage, stage, sage</b>
Long /i:/	– (rare in this position)
Long /aɪ/	–
Long /oʊ/	–
Long /ju:/	<b>huge, luge</b>
Consonant	<b>strange, plunge, range, change, orange, bulge, cringe, fringe, hinge, lunge, sponge, twinge</b>

## ***ge* also at the start and middle of words**

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*ge-* makes /dʒ/ at the start: **gem, germ, general, gentle, genius, geography**

*gi-* makes /dʒ/: **giant, giraffe, ginger**

*gy-* makes /dʒ/ or /g/: **gym** (/dʒ/ in some dialects; /g/ in Greek-origin use)

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## Common mistakes

Wrong	Right	Reason
<i>brige</i>	<b>bridge</b>	short /ɪ/ → <i>-dge</i>
<i>edj</i>	<b>edge</b>	short /ɛ/ → <i>-dge</i>
<i>fuge</i>	<b>fudge</b>	short /ʌ/ → <i>-dge</i>
<i>baige</i>	<b>badge</b>	short /æ/ → <i>-dge</i>
<i>juge</i>	<b>judge</b>	short /ʌ/ → <i>-dge</i>
<i>brige</i>	<b>bridge</b>	short /ɪ/ → <i>-dge</i>

## Word sort

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Say each word. Is the vowel before the j-sound short or long? Sort accordingly.

**Words:** badge · age · bridge · huge · fudge · stage · lodge · page · edge · strange · judge · cage ·  
hedge · change · dodge

<b>-dge (short vowel before)</b>	<b>-ge (long vowel or consonant before)</b>

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## Dictation sentences

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She wore her **badge** across the **bridge** to reach the other **edge** of the park.

The **judge** had to **dodge** the crowd as he walked across the **stage**.

It was a **huge** change — they moved from a small **lodge** to a grand building.

He had to **nudge** the gate, which was stuck at a strange **angle**.

The **hedge** at the **edge** of the garden needed cutting back urgently.

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*Source: DfE English Appendix 1: Spelling (2013). All word examples verified against Year 2 statutory content.*