

Years 5 & 6 · Free resource

## Endings: **-cial** and **-tial**

Year group: 5/6

Source: DfE, *English Appendix 1: Spelling*, National Curriculum for England (2013) — Years 5–6, Suffixes

Curriculum requirement: Statutory

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### The rule

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The endings *-cial* and *-tial* both make the /ʃəl/ sound ("shul"). They create adjectives.

**-cial** is used after a vowel (*official, special, artificial*)

**-tial** is used after a consonant (*partial, essential, confidential*)

This is the most reliable pattern, though there are exceptions.

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## **-cial words (after a vowel)**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Vowel before - <i>cial</i></b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>official</b>	<i>i</i>	<b>authorised; formal</b>
<b>special</b>	<i>e</i>	<b>different from ordinary; of particular importance</b>
<b>artificial</b>	<i>i</i>	<b>made by humans, not natural</b>
<b>facial</b>	<i>a</i>	<b>relating to the face</b>
<b>racial</b>	<i>a</i>	<b>relating to race</b>
<b>social</b>	<i>o</i>	<b>relating to society or companionship</b>
<b>commercial</b>	<i>e</i>	<b>relating to trade or business</b>
<b>financial</b>	<i>a</i>	<b>relating to money and finances</b>
<b>crucial</b>	<i>u</i>	<b>extremely important</b>
<b>judicial</b>	<i>i</i>	<b>relating to a court of law</b>
<b>beneficial</b>	<i>i</i>	<b>producing good results</b>
<b>superficial</b>	<i>i</i>	<b>on the surface; not deep</b>

## **-tial words (after a consonant)**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Consonant before <i>-tial</i></b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>partial</b>	<i>r</i>	<b>not complete; favouring one side</b>
<b>essential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>absolutely necessary</b>
<b>confidential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>secret; private</b>
<b>potential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>possible; capable of developing</b>
<b>residential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>relating to where people live</b>
<b>consequential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>important; following as a result</b>
<b>credential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>a qualification or achievement</b>
<b>sequential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>following in order</b>
<b>exponential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>increasing very rapidly</b>
<b>preferential</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>giving preference or advantage</b>
<b>substantial</b>	<i>n</i>	<b>large; solid; of real importance</b>
<b>initial</b>	<i>t</i>	<b>first; at the beginning</b>
<b>spatial</b>	<i>t</i>	<b>relating to space and position</b>
<b>martial</b>	<i>r</i>	<b>relating to war or combat</b>



## Tricky cases

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**special:** the *e* before *-cial* is part of the base (*spec-* from Latin *specialis*) — confirms *-cial*.

**essential:** from Latin *essentia* — the *n* before *-tial* confirms *-tial*.

**initial:** *init-* ends in *t*, so *-ial* follows — giving *-tial*.

**potential:** *potent* ends in *t*, so the *-ial* follows the *t* → *-tial*.

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## Common mistakes

Wrong	Right	Reason
<i>speciel</i>	<b>special</b>	vowel <i>e</i> before ending → <i>-cial</i>
<i>offical</i>	<b>official</b>	vowel <i>i</i> before ending → <i>-cial</i>
<i>essencial</i>	<b>essential</b>	consonant <i>n</i> before ending → <i>-tial</i>
<i>confidencial</i>	<b>confidential</b>	consonant <i>n</i> → <i>-tial</i>
<i>partical</i>	<b>partial</b>	consonant <i>r</i> → <i>-tial</i>

## Word sort

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*Identify what comes before the ending. Sort accordingly.*

**Words:** official · partial · special · essential · artificial · potential · social · confidential · crucial · initial · financial · residential

<b>-cial (after vowel)</b>	<b>-tial (after consonant)</b>

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## Dictation sentences

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It was **essential** that the **confidential** documents remained **official** records.

She had the **potential** to make a **substantial** difference to the **financial** situation.

The **artificial** lake was **special** — it was part of a **residential** development.

The **initial** response was **partial** at best; the full picture was more **crucial**.

His **social** skills were **superficial** — he struggled with anything more than **facial** pleasantries.

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*Source: DfE English Appendix 1: Spelling (2013). All statutory word examples verified against the published statutory word lists for Years 5–6.*