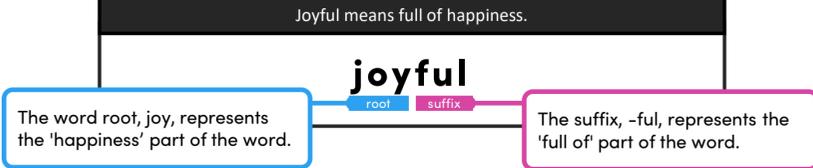


4

SIMPLE RULES for spelling medical terms

Understanding Structure

Everyday words and medical terms have similarities in structure. For example, the word joyful has the word root, joy, and the suffix, -ful.



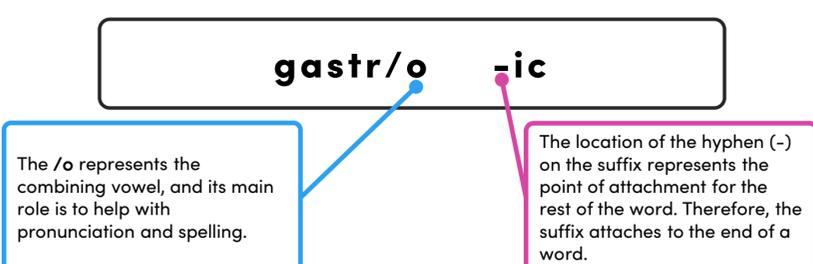
The medical term gastric has a similar structure.



Good to Know

Notice that when you define a medical term, you begin with the suffix, then define the remaining word parts from the start of the term and beyond.

Let's separate the word parts in gastric and examine them closely.



Good to Know

When a word root (gastr) includes a combining vowel (/o), it is called a combining form (gastr/o).

Attaching a Suffix

RULE 1

If the suffix begins with a vowel (AEIOU), do not use the combining vowel.

Example		Correct spelling
Root	Suffix	gastric
gastr/o	-ic	
gastr/o -ic		
		Here's why
		Since the suffix (-ic) begins with the vowel (i), do not use the combining vowel in gastr/o.

RULE 2

If the suffix begins with a consonant, use the combining vowel.

Example		Correct spelling
Root	Suffix	gastromegaly
gastr/o	-megaly	
gastr/o -megaly		
		Here's why
		Since the suffix -megaly begins with a consonant, use the combining vowel in gastr/o.

Practice Activity Set 1

Use the rules to connect the word parts and spell the terms correctly. You can check your answers at the end of the document.

cardi/o -rrhaphy

lingu/o -al

Attaching a Prefix

Notice the hyphen placement on the prefix.



Since the location of hyphen represents the point of attachment for the rest of the word, the prefix attaches to the front of a word.

RULE 3

Attach prefixes to other word parts automatically.

Example			Correct spelling
Prefix	Root	Suffix	hypogastric
hypo-	gastr/o	-ic	
hypo-gastric			
			Here's why
			With prefixes, it doesn't matter if hypo- or gastric begins or ends with a vowel or consonant. Attach hypo- to gastr/o automatically to form hypogastr/o. For the suffix (-ic), use Rule 1 to complete the term.

Practice Activity Set 2

Use the rules to connect the word parts and spell the terms correctly. You can check your answers at the end of the document.

peri- cardi/o -rrhaphy

sub- lingu/o -al

Combining Word Roots

Notice the combining vowels at the end of both word roots.



Since we are attaching one word root to another, we will focus only on the combining vowel in between the word roots.

RULE 4

Automatically use the combining vowel in between the word roots to link them together.

Example			Correct spelling
Root	Root	Suffix	nasogastric
nas/o	gastr/o	-ic	
nasogastric			
			Here's why
			Automatically use the combining vowel in between the word roots nas/o- and gastr/o to form nasogastr/o. For the suffix (-ic), use Rule 1 to complete the term.

Practice Activity Set 3

Use the rules to connect the word parts and spell the terms correctly. You can check your answers at the end of the document.

bucc/o lingu/o -al

stern/o cleid/o mast/o -oid

Activity Answers

- Set 1: cardiorrhaphy; lingual
- Set 2: pericardiorrhaphy; sublingual
- Set 3: buccolingual; sternocleidomastoid

Sources

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