

[k] in the Middle of Words

CK-12 English

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Spelling [k] in the Middle of Words

[k] as the beginning or end of a shorter word

[k] in the Middle of Words



Often when a [k] is in the middle of a word, it is actually at the beginning or the end of a shorter word, or free stem, inside the longer one.

For instance, there is a [k] in the middle of *recall*. But *recall* actually is made up of the prefix *re-* and the free stem *call*: *recall* = *re* + *call*. The [k] in *call* behaves just the way it is supposed to when it is **at the front of a word**: It is spelled <c> rather than <k> because it does not have an <e> or <i> after it, and it is not spelled <ck> because words don't start with <ck>.

The word *darkroom* has a [k] in the middle. But *darkroom* is a compound that analyzes to the two free stems *dark* and *room*: *darkroom* = *dark* + *room*. So the [k] in *darkroom* is really at the **end of the free stem** *dark* - and it behaves just as it is supposed to: It is spelled <k> rather than <c> or <ck> because of the consonant in front of it.

In a very few words there is a <ck> spelling that occurs when a free stem that ends in <c> has a suffix added to it that starts with <e>, <i>, or <y>: A <k> is inserted after the <c>: For instance, *panic* + *ed* = *panic* + *k* + *ed* = *panicked*. The <k> is inserted to avoid having the <c> look as if it should be pronounced as a soft <c>, [s] before the <e>, <i>, or <y>, as it would if we wrote **paniced*.

Examples

The following words contain a [k] in the middle of an element.

contractor	subjects	hockey	sacrifice
picnics	perfectly	collects	function
instruction	ankle	affectionate	picture
infection	describe	pickle	electrician
restriction	spectacle	crocodile	intellectual
transcription	production	introduction	instinctive
chuckle	skirts	donkey	wrinkles
sketches	skyscraper	skies	tackle

Review

1. All of the following words have a [k] somewhere in the middle. Each of the words actually contains a free stem that has the [k] either at the beginning or the end.

First, underline the letter(s) that spell [k].

Second, analyze each word enough to show the free stem that begins or ends with [k].

Third, be ready to talk about why the [k] is spelled the way it is in the free stems.

Word	Analysis
checkout	
unconscious	
unkindly	
remarkable	
inconsistent	
unenthusiastically	
trickiest	
passkey	
breakfast	
musicality	
encourage	
trickster	
sickeningly	
wreckage	
mistakenly	
jackknife	
bookcase	
schlockiest	
backcast	
unluckily	

2. Here are some words that involve <k> insertion. Analyze each one to show how the <k> was inserted.

Word	Analysis: Free stem + suffix
panicked	<i>panic + k + ed</i>
panicky	
picnicking	
trafficker	
bivouacked	

Review (Answers)

1.

Word	Analysis
check <u>o</u> ut	<i>check + out</i>
un <u>co</u> nscious	<i>un + conscious</i>
un <u>k</u> indly	<i>un + kind + ly</i>
remark <u>a</u> ble	<i>remark + able</i>
in <u>co</u> nconsistent	<i>in + consist + ent</i>
unenthusiastic <u>a</u> lly	<i>unenthusiastic + al + ly</i>
trick <u>i</u> est	<i>trick + y + i + est</i>
pass <u>k</u> ey	<i>pass + key</i>
break <u>k</u> fast	<i>break + fast</i>
music <u>a</u> lity	<i>music + al + ity</i>
en <u>c</u> ourage	<i>en + courage</i>
trick <u>s</u> ter	<i>trick + ster</i>
sick <u>e</u> ningly	<i>sick + en + ing + ly</i>
wreck <u>a</u> ge	<i>wreck + age</i>
mistak <u>e</u> ly	<i>mistake + en + ly</i>
jack <u>k</u> knife	<i>jack + knife</i>
book <u>c</u> ase	<i>book + case</i>
schlock <u>i</u> est	<i>schlock + y + i + est</i>
back <u>c</u> ast	<i>back + cast</i>
unluck <u>y</u> ly	<i>un + luck + y + i + ly</i>

2.

Word	Analysis: Free stem + suffix
panicked	<i>panic + k + ed</i>
panicky	<i>panic + k + y</i>
picnicking	<i>picnic + k + ing</i>
trafficker	<i>traffic + k + er</i>
bivouacked	<i>bivouac + k + ed</i>

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