

# FYI...Sounding Off about Spelling

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## ***Teaching the Sounds of C***

C is a strange letter. It has no sound of its own. Usually, c sounds like /k/ as in cut, cap, or code. However, when it is followed by e, i, or y, as in cent, city or cyst, c always has its “soft sound” and sounds like /s/.

Figuring out the correct sounds of c, (decoding) presents very little difficulty in *reading*. Simply keep in mind that normally it is sounded as /k/ and only when it is followed by e, i, or y does it sound like /s/. With this in mind, it is easy to *read* words such as bicycle or success.

## **But how does one know whether to use c or k in *spelling*?**

Making a choice between c or k in spelling must be presented to young children in an orderly and systematic way. We recommend the following sequence:

1. Introduce c with its regular sound first (/k/). This means using c only as the initial letter in a word, or as part of an initial blend, making sure that it is only followed by a, o, or u. (Examples: cat, cot, cup, scalp, scum)
2. When the child is secure with the regular sound of c, and has learned at least nine other letters (a, t, m, s, l, c, d, i, g), introduce the letter k ... which has the same sound as c. Instruct the student that now that he has *two* letters with the same sound, he should use c at the beginning and k at the end. (Examples: cod, clam, ask, milk, cask)
3. Teach the soft sound of c (c followed by e, i, or y has the sound of /s/) and then show how in words such as kid, kit, or kelp the letter k **must** be used. If you were to use c in these words, you would be required to pronounce them with the soft sound of /s/: cid would sound like /sid/, cit would sound like /sit/ and celp would sound like /selp/.

Developing an understanding of the sounds of c and when to use k takes time. So, too, does knowledge about ***when to use c or s in spelling!***

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## INTRODUCTORY LIST FOR LEARNING THE SOUNDS OF C...and the use of K

**Step I** – The sound of c is /k/ as in:

cat cot cut  
cap cop cup  
camp cod cud  
cast cog cult  
cram clop crust crimp crest  
scram clog scrub cling cleft  
scrap crop club crib

**Step II** – The sound of k is /k/ as in:

ask honk hulk milk desk  
mask dusk risk  
bulk bilk

(When introducing the letter k as the second letter with the sound /k/, instruct the student that until further instructions are given, he is to always use c at the beginning and k at the end for spelling. To complete Step II successfully, the student must have many opportunities to spell words similar to those listed under Step 1 **and** Step II.)

**Step III** – The sound of c before e, i, or y is /s/. If the regular, hard sound is required, always spell with the letter k before the letters e, i, or y.

kit kelp sky  
skit keg risky  
skid ken milky