

ArivArk General English Video Series

Spelling: Practice Questions

Group 2/2A Prelims: General English, Vocabulary (Spelling, Plurals, Homophones)

Real questions: the spelling, plural and homophone questions of the TNPSC Group 2/2A Prelims 2025 and Group 4 2025 General English papers, with the answers as printed in our copy of the papers (arivark.com), and one Group 2 2024 question. They are printed as they appear there. Rules: Oxford Learner's Dictionaries and Cambridge spelling guidance (British spelling). Method, word lists and practice questions: ArivArk Academy.

Spelling questions in the exam

What this topic is: spelling questions come under Vocabulary in the General English syllabus. In 2025 they came in four forms: **choose the correct spelling** (Bourgeoisie, Victuals), **the correct plural** (cactus, criteria, premises), **homophones and homonyms** (bear / bare, aloud / allowed, bat / bat) and **the word that fits the sentence** (exhilaration / exasperation).

Why it feels hard: the four options look almost the same. You do not have to read every letter of every option. Look only at the place where they differ, and check that one place.

The method: find where the options differ

Step 1. Find where the options differ. Put the four options one below the other. The letters that are the same in all four are not the question; only the changing part is. In Bourggiese / Borgieoise / Bourgeoisie / Bourgeoisie, the start BOUR and the middle GEOI are what change.

Step 2. Break the word into parts. Say it slowly, part by part: ne-ces-sa-ry, de-fi-nite-ly, ac-com-mo-da-tion, BOUR-GEOI-SIE. A part you can say is a part you can spell.

Step 3. Check that part with a rule. Is it ie or ei? Is the last letter doubled? Did the silent e go? Did y turn into i? The four rules below decide most options.

Step 4. Look for a word inside the word. There is a rat in separate; finite is inside definitely; a piece of pie is in piece.

Silent letters

Silent letter	Words (the silent letter marked)
k	knife, knee, know, knock, knowledge
w	write, wrist, wrong, answer, sword
b	doubt, debt, thumb, climb, comb
h	honest, hour, honour, heir
g	sign, foreign, design, gnaw
l	calm, talk, half, salmon
t	listen, castle, whistle, often
d	Wednesday, handsome, sandwich
s	island, aisle, debris
p	psychology, receipt, pneumonia
c	muscle, scissors, victuals (said "vittles")
n	autumn, column, hymn, condemn

The four spelling rules

Rule	Examples	Exceptions and notes
1. I before e, except after c	believe, field, piece, achieve; after c: receive, ceiling, deceive, receipt	seize, weird, either, neither, leisure, foreign, height, their. When the sound is "ay", it is ei: neighbour, weigh, eight. When c is said "sh", it is ie: ancient, efficient, science.
2. Doubling the last consonant	One syllable, one vowel, one consonant at the end: running, stopped, bigger, sitting. Longer words stressed on the last part: be-GIN, beginning; oc-CUR, occurred; pre-FER, preferred; ad-MIT, admitted.	No doubling when the stress is earlier: VIS-it, visited; O-pen, opened; HAP-pen, happened; BEN-e-fit, benefited. Never double w, x or y: fixed, played, snowing. British spelling doubles a final l after one vowel: travelled, cancelled, labelled (American: traveled).
3. Dropping the silent e	Before an ending that starts with a vowel (-ing, -ed, -able, -er), the e goes: make + ing = making, write + ing = writing, hope + ing = hoping, love + able = lovable. Before an ending that starts with a consonant (-ful, -ment, -less, -ly), the e stays: hopeful, careful, movement, useless, lately.	argument, truly, ninth, wholly, duly drop the e. The e stays after a soft c or g before a or o: noticeable, changeable, courageous, manageable. dyeing (colour) stays apart from dying (death); words ending in ee keep both: seeing, agreeing.

Rule	Examples	Exceptions and notes
4. Changing y to i	After a consonant, y becomes i: happiness, carried, cries, beautiful, easily, tried.	Before -ing the y stays: carrying, trying, studying. After a vowel the y stays: played, enjoyed, obeyed, keys, delayed. Learn these: daily, paid, said, laid; shyness, dryness.

Commonly misspelt words (the tricky part marked)

- 
- accommodation
 - achieve
 - address
 - apparent
 - argument (no e)
 - beginning
 - believe
 - business
 - calendar
 - cemetery
 - colleague
 - committee
 - conscience
 - conscious
 - definitely
 - dilemma
 - disappear
 - embarrass
 - environment
 - exaggerate
 - existence
 - February
 - foreign
 - government
 - grammar
 - guarantee
 - harass (one r)
 - immediately
 - independent
 - knowledge
 - liaison
 - library
 - maintenance
 - millennium
 - necessary
 - noticeable
 - occasion
 - occurrence
 - parliament
 - privilege
 - pronunciation
 - questionnaire
 - receive
 - recommend
 - rhythm
 - separate
 - successful
 - threshold (one h)
 - tomorrow
 - until (one l)
 - vacuum
 - Wednesday
 - weird

Latin and Greek plurals

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
criterion	criteria	phenomenon	phenomena
crisis	crises	analysis	analyses

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
thesis	theses	hypothesis	hypotheses
basis	bases	oasis	oases
diagnosis	diagnoses	prognosis	prognoses
medium	media	datum	data
curriculum	curricula	memorandum	memoranda
bacterium	bacteria	stratum	strata
cactus	cacti (Latin), cactuses (English)	fungus	fungi
nucleus	nuclei	radius	radii
stimulus	stimuli	alumnus	alumni
syllabus	syllabi or syllabuses	formula	formulae or formulas
larva	larvae	vertebra	vertebrae
index	indices or indexes	appendix	appendices or appendixes
matrix	matrices	axis	axes
tuna	tuna (no change)	species, series	species, series (no change)

Watch out: *premises* (a building and its land) is always plural: "Smoking is not allowed on the premises." *Crises* and *media* are already plural; their singulars are *crisis* and *medium*. When a question says "Not the Latin form", give the English plural with -s or -es.

Homophones

Word	Meaning	Sounds like	Meaning
bear	a large animal; to carry	bare	uncovered, empty
aloud	in a voice others can hear	allowed	permitted
principal	the head of a school; main	principle	a rule or belief
stationary	not moving	stationery	pens, paper, envelopes (e for envelope)
compliment	praise	complement	something that completes
council	a group that makes decisions	counsel	advice; a lawyer
weather	rain, sun, wind	whether	if
their	belonging to them	there	in that place
site	a place	sight	the power to see
coarse	rough	course	a path; a set of classes

Word	Meaning	Sounds like	Meaning
peace	no war	piece	a part
steal	to take without asking	steel	a strong metal
break	to make something fall to pieces	brake	the part that stops a vehicle
pray	to speak to God	prey	an animal that is hunted
waive	to give up a right	wave	to move the hand; a moving ridge of water
hoard	a hidden store	horde	a large crowd

Homonyms

Homonym (same spelling, same sound)	Meaning 1	Meaning 2
bat	a cricket bat	a flying animal
bank	where money is kept	the side of a river
bark	the sound a dog makes	the outer skin of a tree
match	a game	a stick that makes fire
spring	the season	a coiled wire
fair	just, honest	a festival with stalls
left	opposite of right	went away

Homophones sound the same, but the spelling and the meaning differ (bear / bare). **Homonyms** have the same spelling and the same sound, only the meaning differs (bat / bat). Words with the same spelling but a different sound are **homographs**: read (now) and read (past, said "red"); lead (to guide) and lead (the metal).

TNPSC PYQs with answers

1. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2/2A, 2025]

Identify the correct spelling of the word which denotes the following sentence.

A class of people in society who are interested mainly in having more money and a higher social position.

- (A) Bourggiese (B) Borgioise (C) Bourgeoisie (D) Bourgeoisie

Answer: (C) Bourgeoisie. Why: Bourgeoisie is a French word: break it into BOUR + GEOI + SIE. Only (C) has all three parts; the other options drop or move the letters of the middle part.

2. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4, 2025]

Fill in the blanks with correct spelling.

"The restaurant offers a wide variety of delicious _____

- (A) Victuals (B) Victuls (C) Victuels (D) Vistuals

Answer: (A) Victuals. Why: Victuals (food and drink) is said "vittles", but it is written with a silent c: victuals. (B), (C) and (D) change the ending or the c.

3. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4, 2025]

What is the plural form of 'Cactus' in English? (Not the Latin Form)

- (A) Cactuse (B) Cactuses (C) Cacts (D) Cactose

Answer: (B) Cactuses. Why: The question asks for the English plural, not the Latin one: cactus + es = cactuses. The Latin plural is cacti.

4. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4, 2025]

Choose the correct plurals given in the options and fill in the blanks.

- (1) The (1) _____ is for more people to work part-time in the future.
 (2) We are having (2) _____ casserole tonight.
 (3) Smoking is not allowed on the (3) _____
 (4) We discussed the success (4) _____ together

Options:

- (1) Prognosis Prognoses Prognosus Prognos
 (2) Tuna Tunas Tunae Tunii
 (3) Premisis Premisus Premises Premisas
 (4) Criterion Criteria Criterius Criterian

- (A) (1)-B (2)-B (3)-A (4)-A (B) (1)-A (2)-C (3)-B (4)-A
 (C) (1)-C (2)-A (3)-A (4)-B (D) (1)-A (2)-A (3)-C (4)-B

Answer: (D) (1)-A (2)-A (3)-C (4)-B. Why: "The prognosis is" (one forecast, singular); tuna stays tuna; "the premises" (a building, always plural); "the success criteria" (more than one criterion). So (1)-A (2)-A (3)-C (4)-B.

5. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2/2A, 2025]

Which pair is an example of homophones?

- (A) Read and Read (B) Light and dark
 (C) Bear and bare (D) Pretty and beautiful

Answer: (C) Bear and bare. Why: Homophones sound the same but have different spellings and meanings: bear (the animal, or to carry) and bare (uncovered). Read and read have the same spelling; light / dark and pretty / beautiful are opposites and synonyms.

6. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4, 2025]

Match the categories in Column A with the words in Column B:

(a) Abbreviations	1. Bat, Bat
(b) Acronyms	2. Aloud, Allowed
(c) Homonyms	3. WHO, PAN
(d) Homophones	4. ATM, CEO

(A) 3 4 2 1

(B) 4 3 1 2

(C) 2 1 4 3

(D) 1 2 3 4

Answer: (B) 4 3 1 2. Why: Abbreviations are said letter by letter (ATM, CEO) = 4; acronyms are read as a word (WHO, PAN) = 3; homonyms have the same spelling and sound (bat, bat) = 1; homophones only sound the same (aloud, allowed) = 2.

7. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4, 2025]

Which of the following word is incorrect in the context of the sentence?

"After the team's success, the coach felt a great sense of _____ for his player's performance".

(A) Exhilaration

(B) Exultation

(C) Exasperation

(D) Ecstasy

Answer: (C) Exasperation. Why: Exasperation means great annoyance, which does not fit a coach who is happy with his team. Exhilaration, exultation and ecstasy all mean great joy. Mind the spelling: ex-HIL-a-ra-tion.

Your question from the video [TNPSC PYQ Group 2, 2024]

Identify which is the correct singular word and select the answer from the codes given below.

(a) Crises / (b) Media

(A) (a) is a singular word

(B) (b) is a singular word

(C) Both (a) and (b) are singular word

(D) Both (a) and (b) are plural word

Answer in the comments, then check the answer key at the end.**Practice questions****1. Choose the correct spelling.**

(A) Acommodation

(B) Accomodation

(C) Accommodation

(D) Acommmodation

2. Choose the correct spelling.

(A) Neccessary

(B) Necessary

(C) Necessary

(D) Neccesary

3. Choose the correct spelling.

(A) Receive

(B) Recieve

(C) Receeve

(D) Riceive

4. Choose the correct spelling.

- (A) Definately (B) Definitly (C) Definitely (D) Difinitely

5. Choose the correct spelling.

- (A) Seperate (B) Separate (C) Saperate (D) Separete

6. Choose the correct spelling.

- (A) Begining (B) Beggining (C) Bginning (D) Beginning

7. Choose the correct spelling.

- (A) Occured (B) Ocurrred (C) Occurred (D) Ocured

8. Choose the correct spelling.

- (A) Visited (B) Visitted (C) Vissited (D) Visted

9. Choose the correct spelling.

- (A) Embarass (B) Embaras (C) Embarrass (D) Emmbarrass

10. Choose the correct spelling.

- (A) Committee (B) Commitee (C) Comittee (D) Committe

11. Which word is spelt correctly?

- (A) Wierd (B) Weerd (C) Wiered (D) Weird

12. Choose the correct -ing form of "hope".

- (A) Hopeing (B) Hoping (C) Hopping (D) Hopying

13. Choose the correctly spelt word.

- (A) Happiness (B) Happyyness (C) Happines (D) Hapiness

14. Choose the past tense of "enjoy".

- (A) Enjoied (B) Enjoyd (C) Enjoyyed (D) Enjoyed

15. Choose the correctly spelt word.

- (A) Carefull (B) Carful (C) Careful (D) Caerful

16. In which word is the first letter silent?

- (A) Knife (B) Kite (C) Kind (D) Kettle

17. What is the plural of "phenomenon"?

- (A) Phenomenons (B) Phenomenas (C) Phenomeni (D) Phenomena

18. What is the plural of "analysis"?

- (A) Analyseses (B) Analysis (C) Analyses (D) Analysi

19. What is the plural of "bacterium"?

- (A) Bacteriums (B) Bacterias (C) Bacteria (D) Bacteri

20. What is the singular of "data"?

- (A) Datum (B) Datas (C) Date (D) Data

21. Fill in the blank: The _____ of our school called a meeting.

- (A) principal (B) principle (C) principel (D) princeple

22. Fill in the blank: Buy pens and envelopes from the _____ shop.

- (A) stationary (B) stationry (C) stationery (D) stationaery

23. Which pair is an example of homophones?

- (A) Bank and bank (B) Weather and whether
(C) Happy and glad (D) Big and small

24. Which pair is an example of homonyms?

- (A) Peace and piece (B) Bark (of a dog) and bark (of a tree)
(C) Sea and see (D) Write and right

Answer key: 1 C, 2 C, 3 A, 4 C, 5 B, 6 D, 7 C, 8 A, 9 C, 10 A, 11 D, 12 B, 13 A, 14 D, 15 C, 16 A, 17 D, 18 C, 19 C, 20 A, 21 A, 22 C, 23 B, 24 B

More practice: search **SPELLING** on arivark.com for this PDF, and follow t.me/arivarkacademy for daily questions.

Your question from the video (Group 2, 2024): Identify which is the correct singular word: (a) Crises / (b) Media. **Answer: (D) Both (a) and (b) are plural word.** Crises is the plural of crisis, and media is the plural of medium.

Why? One line each

No.	Reason	No.	Reason
1 (C)	Double c and double m: a-cc-o-mm-odation.	13 (A)	y after a consonant becomes i: happy, happiness.
2 (C)	One c, double s: ne-ces-sa-ry.	14 (D)	A vowel (o) comes before the y, so the y stays.
3 (A)	After c, e comes before i: rec-ei-ve.	15 (C)	The e stays before -ful, which starts with a consonant; -ful has one l.
4 (C)	Finite is inside: de-fi-nite-ly.	16 (A)	The k of knife is not said.
5 (B)	There is a rat in sepa-rat-e.	17 (D)	Greek -on becomes -a: phenomenon, phenomena.
6 (D)	be-GIN is stressed on the last part, so the n doubles.	18 (C)	-is becomes -es: analysis, analyses.
7 (C)	Double c, and oc-CUR is stressed on the last part, so the r doubles.	19 (C)	Latin -um becomes -a: bacterium, bacteria.
8 (A)	VIS-it is stressed on the first part, so the t is not doubled.	20 (A)	Latin -um / -a: datum, data.
9 (C)	Double r and double s.	21 (A)	Principal = the head of a school; a principle is a rule.
10 (A)	Double m, double t, double e.	22 (C)	Stationery (with e, for envelope) = pens and paper; stationary = not moving.
11 (D)	Weird is an exception to "i before e".	23 (B)	Same sound, different spelling and meaning. (A) is a homonym pair; (C) synonyms; (D) antonyms.
12 (B)	The silent e goes before -ing. Hopping comes from hop (to jump).	24 (B)	Same spelling and same sound, different meanings. The others are homophones.