Eleven basic spelling rules

1. ‘I’ before ‘E’, except after ‘C’ when the sound is a long ‘E’.
   **Examples:** receive, ceiling, achieve, relieve
   **Exceptions:** leisure, seize, weird

2. “ys” or “ies” rule
   a. For words ending in a vowel + y: add s: attorneys, boys
   b. For words ending in a consonant + y: change to ‘ies’: armies, copies
   **Exception:** proper names like Kennedys, Palmoroys

3. Drop-dropped-dropping rule
   If a one syllable word ends in a single consonant after a vowel, and the suffix begins with a vowel, double the consonant.
   **Examples:** drop + ed = dropped
   brag + ing = bragging
   big + er = bigger

4. Referred-reference rule
   Words of more than one syllable will double the consonant if they end in a vowel-consonant with the accent on the last syllable.
   **Examples:** refer’ – referred
   occur’ – occurred
   occur’- occurrence
   refer’ – refer’ence
   confer’ – con’ference

5. Amusing-amusement rule
   Words ending in a silent ‘e’ will drop the ‘e’ when a suffix beginning with a vowel is added (amuse + ing = amusing). They keep the ‘e’ when a suffix beginning with a consonant is added (amuse + ment = amusement).
   **Examples:** argue – arguing
   shine – shining
   love – loveable
   entire – entirely
   hope - hopeless
6. **Outrageous rule**
   Words ending in a silent ‘e’ preceded by ‘ce’ or ‘ge’ keep the ‘e’ before a suffix beginning with ‘a’ or ‘o’.
   **Examples:** changeable, noticeable, and advantageous

7. **Frolic – frolicking rule**
   Words ending in ‘c’ add ‘k’ before a suffix beginning with ‘e’, ‘i’, or ‘y’.
   **Examples:** mimicked, trafficked, panicking, panicky, picnicking

8. **Illiterate soulless roommate rule**
   When a prefix ends in the same letter that begins the main stem, keep both letters. When the main stem ends with the same letter that begins a suffix or combined word, keep both.
   **Examples:** dis satisfied, il logical, mis spelled, total ly, can not, book keeping, bar room, drunken ness,
   **Exception:** wherever

9. **Maintain – maintenance rule**
   Many words show a major change in spelling when the part of speech changes, as from the verb maintain to the noun maintenance.
   **Examples:** concede (v) – concession (n)
   curious (v) – curiosity (n)
   explain (v) – explanation (n)
   proceed (v) – procedure (n)

10. **The Sede – ceed – cede rule**
    Supersede is the only word in English spelled with sede. Only three words are spelled with ceed: exceed, succeed, and proceed.

11. **Echo – solo rule**
    Some words ending in ‘o’ form plurals by adding ‘es’; others, especially musical terms, add only ‘s’; a few can be spelled either way.
    **Examples:** alto – altos  potato – potatoes
                 ratio – ratios  hero – heroes
                 soprano – sopranos  veto – vetoes

                 volcano (e) s
                 buffalo – buffalo (e) s
                 ghetto (e) s