Chapter 5:
Soft-C & Soft-G
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Introduction to Soft-c & Soft-g

Most of the time, consonants behave themselves. Each consonant letter almost always makes just one sound. But some consonants can fool you.

This chapter is about sound-shifters. Shift means change. A sound-shifter is a letter that can change its sound depending on which part of the word it is in, or which other letters are next to it.

There are different kinds of sound shifters. In this chapter, you are going to learn all about about c and g. The letters c and g can make different consonant sounds depending on which letter comes next in the word.

The different sounds c and g can make are called hard-c and soft-c, and hard-g and soft-g. Most of the time c and g are hard.

In this chapter, the words with soft-c and soft-g are colored red. The red words are the most important ones for you to practice reading.
The letter \textit{c} can make two different consonant sounds. It usually makes the same sound as the letter \textit{k}. When \textit{c} sounds like \textit{k}, it is called \textbf{hard-c}.

cake

cop

sock

cone

car

cow
But sometimes \textit{c} makes the same sound as \textit{s}. This is called \textit{soft-c}.

Before you move on, do the \textit{Soft-c Worksheet}.
The Soft-c Rule

You can always tell which sound c makes by looking at the next letter.

If the letter after c is i, e, or y, the c sounds like s.
If it’s any other letter, the c sounds like k.

Find every c in these words and look at the letter that comes next. Figure out which sound the c makes and sound out the words:

- ice
- care
- cell
- lace
- circus
- bicycle
- cyclone
- celebrate
Silent-e & Soft-c

Lots of silent-e words have soft-c in them. When silent-e comes right after c, it makes the c sound like s. Do you remember how to read silent-e words?

If a word has silent-e and soft-c, it takes an extra step to read it.

This is what you do:

1. First look at the whole word and see if there is a silent-e at the end.

   nice

2. Then see if the consonant before the silent-e is a c. If it is, it’s a soft-c, so it sounds like s.

   nice

3. Go back to the vowel in the middle of the word. The silent-e at the end makes the middle vowel sound long.

   nice

4. Read the word starting from the beginning. Remember, the vowel in the middle is long, the c sounds like s, and the e at the end is silent!

   nice
Practice reading these silent-e words with soft-c:

- ace
- ice
- face
- mice
Introduction to *I Met Two Mice in Center City*

This is a pretty fun story about some mice who won’t take no for an answer. It will give you lots of practice with the soft-c rule.

**Challenge Words**

- pretty
- stupid
- outer
- around
- found
- noisy

_Stupid_ is a useful word to know. It has a long-u sound even though it doesn’t have a silent-e.

_Pretty_ doesn’t follow the regular rule for short-e. What vowel sound does it have?

_Around_ and _found_ have the vowel team _ou_, which we have not gotten to yet.
I met two mice in Center City.
I was cool and sitting pretty when I met two mice in Center City.

One was short and kind of lazy.
The other was tall and kind of crazy.
“Are you the girl who runs the race
From City Hall to Outer Space?”

“T’d let you run if you were cats
We’ve got no place for mice or rats.”

The two of them were in my face.
“If we don’t run, there will be no race!”
“I told you once, I’ll tell you twice, 
We have no place for stupid mice.

I saw these mice had got to go. 
How many times can you say “No”? 

When I turned and looked around, 
those noisy mice could not be found.
I got a post card from the moon:

“We’re up here now — we’ll see you soon!”
The Soft-g Rule

The letter g acts kind of like c. It can make two different consonant sounds, and they are called hard-g and soft-g.

Hard-g is the g sound in gum and bug.

Soft-g sounds like j. The g is soft in giraffe and at the end of cage.

Try reading these soft-g words:

- gel
- ginger
- gym
- Germany

Usually the g is soft when it comes before e, i and y.
Soft-g & Silent-e

When g comes before silent-e, it is soft. So the g sounds like j in these silent-e words:

age  cage
page  huge

Some soft-g words end with ge and others end with dge. Both ge and dge make the same sound. Even though dge and ge both sound like j, there is one important difference.

The sound of the vowel in a silent-e word depends on how many consonants come between the vowel and the silent-e. If there is one letter between the vowel and silent-e, the vowel is long. If there is more than one letter between the vowel and silent-e, the vowel is short.

The vowel is short in words that end in dge, because two letters—d and g—come between the vowel and silent-e. To read words with dge, remember that the vowel is short, the g sounds like j, and the e at the end is silent.

badge  edge  hedge
wedge  ridge  dodge
budge  fudge  judge
The Soft-g Detention Room

These words are in detention because they broke the rules. They look like soft-g words but they don’t follow the soft-g rule. You might know some of them already.

The words outside of the detention room followed the rules, so the g sounds like j.

Read the words that broke the soft-g rule and try to remember them so you don’t get fooled!
Introduction to *Do Worms Have Germs?*

This story is worth reading in case you have any germs. Also, it has a lot of g-words in it.

The main character is a worm named George. Both of the e’s in George are silent. They are just there to tell you that the g sounds like j.

Challenge Words

- doctor
- wherever
- nasty
- ugliest
- purple
- listen
DO WORMS HAVE GERMS
George was a worm with plenty of zing
He got over the ground like a bird on the wing.

But Monday he was sick, sick, sick.
They sent for the doctor quick, quick, quick.
Doctor said, “George, you have a nasty germ. That is why you are one sick worm.”

George said, “Doctor, you can’t be right. There are no ugly germs in sight. Worms have no germs, we’re too smart for that. We wiggle around them wherever they’re at.”
But George turned purple,
red, and green,
and died the ugliest worm you ever have seen.
If you want to live to a ripe old age,
don’t go through the smart worm stage.
Listen to the doctor when he says what you’ve got.
Because we all have germs, like it or not.
THE END
The Tower Game

Let’s play the Tower Game! You get two dominoes to start. Every time you read a word right, you get another domino from your tutor. See how tall you can make your tower and don’t let your tutor win!

1. age
2. edge
3. huge
4. face
5. badge
6. ginger
7. mice
8. ridge
9. gym
10. page
11. lace
12. dodge
13. rice
14. judge
15. cyclone
16. cage
17. cider
18. germ
19. city
20. race
The Tower Game 2

Let’s play the Tower Game! You get two dominoes to start. Every time you read a word right, you get another domino from your tutor. See how tall you can make your tower and don’t let your tutor win!