

**Hyphenation forever!**

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## Rules of hyphenation

Native speakers of English used to learn rules such as “i before e except after c” to remember how to spell: **achieve**, **retrie**ve, but **recei**ve.



## Rules of hyphenation, continued

These rules are just mnemonics, tricks, and they may miss some important cases, but they do help with spelling, even foreign-language speakers.



## Rules of hyphenation, continued further

Sometimes these rules extend to typography, for in example in German: *vor und kommt kein Komma*, a simplified and incomplete rule, but that can nonetheless sometimes help.



## Rules and exceptions

These rules obviously have limitations, that are sometimes brushed away with phrases like “it’s the exception that proves the rule”, a patronising misunderstanding of the legal maxim *exceptio probat regulam in casibus non exceptis*.



# Rules

What about hyphenation?



## No rules for hyphenation

In my experience, very few such rules are ever taught, at school or elsewhere, and the only ones that people seem to know are simply common sense. For example: do not break between 'e' and 'a' in "reading" – no sh\*t, Sherlock.



## Still no rules for hyphenation

Where does one break in “reading”, by the way?





## Hyphenation in practice

The correct hyphenation is (almost) always read-ing: the morpheme *-ing* is (almost) systematically separated, with some deviating patterns: get-ting, dwindle-ing, set-ting.



## Hyphenation in practice, continued

When typesetting lyrics one may want to emphasise that the first syllable is long by hyphenating rea-ding; but Read-ing for the towns in Berkshire, Massachussets, and Pennsylvania.



## Someone must know

When it comes to hyphenation, scholarly opinions are – in my not so humble opinion – *even less* useful.

Case study: Ancient Greek.

