**The rules**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **When to double a consonant before adding -*ed*and -*ing* to a verb** | | |
| We double the final letter when a one-syllable verb ends in **consonant + vowel + consonant**.\* | stop, rob, sit | sto**pp**ing, sto**pp**ed, ro**bb**ing, ro**bb**ed, si**tt**ing |
| We double the final letter when a word has more than one syllable, and when the final syllable is stressed in speech. | beGIN, preFER | begi**nn**ing, prefe**rr**ing, prefe**rr**ed |
| If the final syllable is **not** stressed, we do **not** double the final letter. | LISten, HAPpen | liste**n**ing, liste**n**ed, happe**n**ing, happe**n**ed |

In British English, **travel** and **cancel** are exceptions to this rule:  
  
*travel, trave****ll****ing, trave****ll****ed; cancel, cance****ll****ing, cance****ll****ed.*  
  
\* We do **not** double the final letter when a word ends in two consonants (*-rt*, *-rn*, etc.):  
*sta****rt****– star****t****ing, star****t****ed; bu****rn****- bur****n****, bur****n****ed.*  
  
\* We do **not** double the final letter when **two** vowels come directly before it:  
*rem****ai****n – remai****n****ing, remai****n****ed.*  
  
\* We do **not** double **w** or **y** at the end of words:  
*pla****y****– pla****y****ing, pla****y****ed; sno****w****- sno****w****ing, sno****w****ed.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Comparatives and superlatives: when to double a consonant before adding -*er* and -*est*** |
| When forming a comparative or superlative form, we double the final letter of a one-syllable adjective ending in **consonant + vowel + consonant**:  bi**g** ⇒ bi**gger** ⇒ bi**ggest**, fa**t** ⇒ fa**tter** ⇒ fa**ttest**, thi**n** ⇒ thi**nner** ⇒ thi**nnest** |
| We **don't** double the final letter when the adjective ends in **-y** or **-w**:  gre**y** ⇒ gre**yer** ⇒ gre**yest**, slo**w** ⇒ slo**wer** ⇒ slo**west** |
| We **don't** double the final letter when the adjective ends in **vowel + vowel + consonant** or **vowel + consonant + consonant**:  chea**p** ⇒ chea**per** ⇒ chea**pest**, ol**d** ⇒ ol**der** ⇒ ol**dest** |

*from speakspeak.com*