



The Floss Rule (FLSZ)

At the end of a **one-syllable** word, right after a **short vowel**, the sounds /f/, /l/, /s/ and /z/ are usually spelled **ff**, **ll**, **ss**, **zz**.

1 One syllable

Clap it. **hill** has one beat.

2 A short vowel

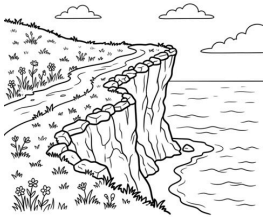
The i in **hill** says /i/, as in itch.

3 Right after the vowel

The /l/ comes straight after the i. In **elf**, an l gets in the way, so it keeps one f.

Yes, yes, yes? Double it. Two letters, one sound.

ff



cliff

puff
off
cuff
stuff
sniff

ll



hill

bell
doll
yell
gull
spell

ss



grass

mess
kiss
boss
dress
class

zz

buzz

fizz
fuzz
jazz
frizz

Only a handful of words end in zz.

Not a short vowel: one letter
seal, snail, roof, peel

A letter in between: one letter
elf, self, shelf, golf

Rule breakers. Heart words (the s says /z/): **is, as, has, his**.
These read fine but keep one letter: **if, yes, us, bus, gas**.



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Floss Rule Words List

Every word has a short vowel and ends in ff, ll, ss or zz: **two letters, one sound**. Start with the short words. Blends and digraphs come later. Check off each word your child reads.

Short words CVC-shaped, once CVC words are solid

ff ☐ off ☐ puff ☐ cuff ☐ huff

ll ☐ hill ☐ fill ☐ will ☐ pill ☐ bill ☐ mill ☐ ill ☐ doll ☐ bell ☐ fell
☐ sell ☐ tell ☐ well ☐ yell ☐ dull ☐ gull ☐ hull

ss ☐ pass ☐ mass ☐ hiss ☐ kiss ☐ miss ☐ boss ☐ moss ☐ toss ☐ loss ☐ less
☐ mess ☐ fuss

zz ☐ jazz ☐ fizz ☐ buzz ☐ fuzz

With blends two consonants at the start

ff ☐ staff ☐ cliff ☐ sniff ☐ stiff ☐ stuff ☐ fluff ☐ gruff ☐ bluff

ll ☐ still ☐ spill ☐ drill ☐ grill ☐ skill ☐ frill ☐ spell ☐ smell ☐ swell ☐ skull

ss ☐ class ☐ grass ☐ glass ☐ brass ☐ floss ☐ cross ☐ dress ☐ press ☐ bless

zz ☐ frizz

With digraphs after sh, ch, th and wh are taught

ff ☐ whiff

ll ☐ chill ☐ shell ☐ thrill ☐ shrill

ss ☐ chess

Two l's, but a new vowel sound: ball, call, roll, full, pull. They keep the ll, but the vowel is not short, so learn them as chunks. Free -all, -oll and -ull sheets: luvinci.app/printables.

Watch out: words that don't follow the rule

Heart words [♥]is, [♥]as, [♥]has, [♥]his (the s says /z/) · ^{♥♥}was · [♥]of (ends in /v/) · [♥]have

Read fine, one letter if, yes, us, bus, gas, plus, pal, this (only matters for spelling)

Just one z quiz (z is the least reliable floss letter)

Doubled, not a floss letter add, egg, odd, inn (compare in and inn)



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1. Listen and write the ending

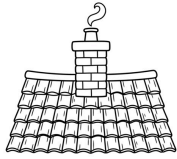
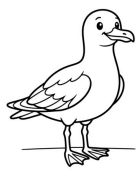
Grown-up: read each word aloud from the upside-down answer key at the bottom (fold it back so your child can't see it). Your child writes the ending: **ff, ll, ss or zz**.

1. **pu** _____
2. **bu** _____
3. **me** _____
4. **o** _____
5. **fi** _____
6. **ki** _____
7. **cu** _____
8. **ja** _____
9. **to** _____
10. **te** _____

2. One letter or two?

Say the picture word. Is the vowel short, with /f/, /l/, /s/ or /z/ right after it? Write **two letters**. If not, write **one**.

★ = a rule breaker: it keeps one letter.

					
hi _____	sea _____	cli _____	do _____	roo _____	gra _____
			 ★		
be _____	snai _____	gu _____	bu _____	we _____	ye _____

3. Read it out loud

1. The bell **ll** fell **ff** off the hill **ll**.
2. The bug will **ll** buzz **zz** in the sun.
3. Kim will **ll** kiss **ss** his doll **ll**.
4. Tom did not miss **ss** the bus.

Answer key. 1. Grown-up reads: 1 puff, 2 buzz, 3 mess, 4 off, 5 fizz, 6 kiss, 7 cuff, 8 jazz, 9 toss, 10 tell. 2. Two letters: hill, cliff, doll, grass, bell, gull, well, yell. One letter: seal, roof, snail (not a short vowel) and bus (a rule breaker).



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