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The 'shus' sound

Choosing –cious or –tious at the end of a word.

1 Learn



Delicious, cautious, spacious… the 'shus' ending can be spelt **–cious** or **–tious**. A related word is usually the clue that tells you which.

Clue 1: the root word ends in –ce → –cious

spa~~ce~~ + cious = spacious

grace → gracious · vice → vicious · malice → malicious

Clue 2: a related word ends in –tion → –tious

cau~~tion~~ → cautious

ambition → ambitious · infection → infectious · nutrition → nutritious

Worked example: is it **nutricious** or **nutritious**?

1. Think of a word from the same family: **nutrition** (what food gives us).
2. It ends in **–tion**, so the 'shus' ending is spelt with a **t**.
3. So the answer is **nutritious**. Check: nutrition, nutritious.

Flip's tip: some words have no clue and just need learning: **precious**, **delicious**, **conscious**. And watch out for **anxious**, spelt with an x!

Warm up: write **c** or **t** in each box.

gra ☐ ious cau ☐ ious spa ☐ ious ambi ☐ ious

Grown-ups: say each word and ask "Do you know another word in the same family?" Most clue words end in –ce (grace) or –tion (caution). If there's no clue, it's one to learn by heart.

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2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes

'Shus' word hunt

You need: food packets and tins from the cupboard, a book or magazine, and a pencil.

1. Hunt for words with a 'shus' sound at the end, like **delicious** or **nutritious**. Packets and recipe books are good places to look.
2. Write each word in the table, and whether it ends in –cious or –tious.
3. Look for a clue word from the same family: a root ending in **–ce**, or a word ending in **–tion** or **–cion** (suspicion → suspicious).
4. No clue? Write "learn it" and say the word slowly together, letter by letter.

'Shus' word	–cious or –tious?	Clue word (or "learn it")
nutritious	–tious	nutrition

Grown-ups: if you can't find many, take turns to think of 'shus' words together: precious, ambitious, cautious, gracious, infectious, suspicious, vicious.

3 Practise

A. Use the clue word to write the 'shus' adjective.

Clue word	Adjective	Clue word	Adjective
grace		**ambition**	
caution		**malice**	
vice		**fiction**	

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B. Draw a ring round the correct spelling.

1. The new classroom is bright and **spacious / spatious**.
2. A bowl of soup is warm and **nutricious / nutritious**.
3. Be **caucious / cautious** when you walk on the ice.
4. Chickenpox is very **infectious / infecious**.
5. The detective was **suspitious / suspicious** of the butler.

C. Sort the words into the table.

vicious **ambitious** **conscious** **nutritious** **precious** **fictitious** **malicious** **infectious**

–cious	–tious

D. Write a sentence using each word.

ambitious _____

precious _____

Challenge

Leo wrote **gratious**. He says, "The 'shus' sound is always spelt –tious." Is he right? Explain using a clue word.

_____

_____

I can…

Tick when you can.

- ☐ use a root ending in –ce to spell –cious
- ☐ use a related –tion word to spell –tious
- ☐ explain which clue I used