Tricks & Tips
for Spelling Bee Success

2009

Merriam-Webster

Spell It!

Tricks & Tips
for Spelling Bee Success
ABOUT THE BEE

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is an educational promotion sponsored by The E.W. Scripps Company in conjunction with more than 280 sponsoring newspapers or organizations around the world. Its purpose is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabulary, learn concepts, and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives.

The program takes place on two levels: local and national. Sponsors organize spelling bee programs in their locales and send their champions to the finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. The national program is coordinated by The E.W. Scripps Company corporate headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition to planning and conducting the national finals, the national office annually publishes several word publications utilized by students, educators, and sponsors.

The program is open to students attending public, private, parochial, charter, and home schools. Participants must not have reached their 15th birthday on or before September 1, 2008, and must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before February 1, 2009. A comprehensive set of eligibility requirements may be found in the Rules for Local Spelling Bees at www.spellingbee.com.

The National Spelling Bee was begun in 1925. Nine students participated in the first national finals. In 1941 Scripps Howard acquired the rights to the program. There was no Scripps National Spelling Bee during the World War II years of 1943, 1944, and 1945. Of the 84 National Spelling Bee champions, 43 have been girls and 41 have been boys. Co-champions were declared in 1950, 1957, and 1962. The 2009 Scripps National Spelling Bee will involve more than ten million students at the local level and over 275 national finalists.
Welcome to the 2009 edition of Spell It!, the Scripps National Spelling Bee study booklet. This year’s study booklet focuses on about 1150 words. Almost all the words are divided into sections by language of origin. (The booklet also contains one special section: eponyms.) This division by language of origin will enable you to learn and remember several important rules, tips, and guidelines for successfully spelling words in English—the most challenging language of all for spellers!

The official dictionary of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is the 2002 edition of Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, published by Merriam-Webster. The etymological information in Webster’s Third is far more detailed than what you will find in this booklet, whose categorization of words by language of origin concentrates on the influence of primarily one language.

Each section contains “challenge words” in addition to its basic study list. The basic study-list words and the challenge words are typical of the words that will be used in most local spelling bees this year. In some highly competitive local spelling bees, however, spellers remaining at the end of the contest will receive words that do not appear in this booklet. Some organizers of local bees will even create their own competition word lists, which may contain none of the words you will find here!

Although this booklet’s main purpose is to provide you with the official list of study words for 2009, each of its sections also contains at least one exercise. The exercises are intended to give you further information about words that come from a particular language and help you better understand how the words behave in English. Some of the exercises are quite challenging. Don’t feel discouraged if you can’t answer all of them! Your teacher may have you work on them in groups or as a class. The solutions to the exercises are printed on pages 30–31.

We hope that you’ll find this short booklet as enjoyable as it is educational and that the fascinating facts you’ll learn about the words discussed here will stay with you for many years to come!

Be sure to visit www.myspellit.com for other activities, a list of “Words You Need to Know,” and links to definitions and pronunciations of words on the Spell It! study lists.

No language has been more influential in the development of advanced English vocabulary than Latin. There are two reasons for this. First, when the French conquered England in 1066, their language was very similar to Latin, and French remained England’s official language for 200 years. Second, Latin was the language of culture, religion, education, and science in the Western world from the Middle Ages until relatively recently. It is still used today to name newly discovered species of plants and animals and to form some compound words in various scientific and technological fields.

The words from Latin include:
- inane
- relevant
- impetuous
- ambivalent
- dejected
- postmortem
- incriminate
- access
- plausible
- interrupt
- alliteration
- refugee
- amicable
- lucid
- percolate
- meticulous
- fastidious
- trajectory
- animosity
- implement
- ambiguity
- curriculum
- omnivorous
- bellicose
- electoral
- crescent
- obsequious
- transect
- precipice
- susceptible
- condolences
- benefactor
- candidate
- bugle
- formidable
- canary
- subterfuge
- abdicate
- lunatic
- carnivore
- gregarious
- ostentatious
- prosaic
- herbivore
- prodigal
- magnanimous
- benevolent
- mercurial
- simile
- jovial
- ridiculous
- innate
- obstinate
- discern
- mediocrity
- insidious
- rupture
- precipitate
- erudite
- colloquial
- intractable
- exuberant
- ingenious
- retrospective
- ominous
- vulnerable
- omnipotent
- consensus
- discipline
- alleviate
- spectrum
- prescription
- capitulation
- incredulous
- affinity
- necessary
- adjacent
- dissect
- conjecture
- imperative
- predicate
- corporal
- patina
- Capricorn
- participant
- library
- cognition
- primal
- filament
- unity
- ventilate
- aquatic
- igneous
- reptile
- providence
- message
- foliate
- nasal
- opera
- renovate
- credentials
- temporal
- canine
- measure
- credible

(For footnotes, see Spelling Tips, pages 4–5.)
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SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM LATIN

1. One of the hardest things to remember about words from Latin is whether an internal consonant (like \textit{rr} in \textit{interrupt}) is doubled. To reinforce your memory of the correct spelling, try to remember related words all together (like \textit{interrupt} along with \textit{interruption} or \textit{necessary} along with \textit{necessity}).

2. The \texttt{\textbackslash u} sound (as in \textit{ooze}) is nearly always spelled with \texttt{u} in words from Latin. It typically follows a \texttt{\textbackslash a}, \texttt{\textbackslash e}, \texttt{\textbackslash o}, or \texttt{\textbackslash i} sound. After other consonants, this sound normally becomes \texttt{\textbackslash u} (as in \textit{bugle, subterfuge, ambiguity, and prosecute} and in one pronunciation of \textit{refugee}).

3. Beware of words like \textit{crescent} in which the \texttt{\textbackslash s} sound is spelled with \texttt{sc} in words from Latin. Other examples include \textit{visceral, discern, discipline, susceptible, and corpuscle}.

4. A related tip: When you hear within a word from Latin the \texttt{\textbackslash s} sound followed by any of the sounds of \textit{e} (long, short, or schwa), there’s a possibility that the \texttt{\textbackslash s} sound is spelled with \texttt{c} as in \textit{exacerbate, access, adjacent, condolences, facetious, and necessary}.

5. The letter \texttt{i} is a vowel often used to connect two Latin word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (\texttt{\textbackslash a}) and you must guess at the spelling of this sound, the letter \texttt{i} might be a good guess: See \textit{carnivore} and \textit{herbivore}. Other examples include non-study-list words that end in \textit{iform} such as \textit{oviform} and \textit{pediform}.

6. The letter \texttt{k} rarely appears in words from Latin, and its sound is nearly always represented by \texttt{c} as in \textit{canary, prosaic, canine, mediocre, Capricorn, cognition, ductile, incorruptible, vernacular, innocuous, and many other words on the list}.

7. The letter \texttt{x} often gets the pronunciation \texttt{\textbackslash g\textbackslash} in words from Latin (as in \textit{exacerbate} and \textit{exuberant}).

8. The combination \texttt{ious} ends many adjectives of Latin origin. When the consonant that precedes \texttt{ious} is \texttt{c} or \texttt{t}, the sound of the final syllable is \texttt{\textbackslash sh\textbackslash a} as in \textit{precocious, facetious, ostentatious, and pernicious}. It is important to keep in mind that several adjectives from Latin ending with this sound end in \textit{eus} rather than \textit{ious}. In such instances, the definitions of the words usually contain phrases such as “consisting of,” “resembling,” or “having the characteristic of.” Examples include non-study-list words \textit{herbaceous, cetaceous, and lilaceous}.

**CHALLENGE WORDS**

- femininity
- confidence
- triumvirate
- popularity
- diary
- humble
- vivisection
- strict
- Prosecute
- contiguous
- ductile
- gradient
- current
- perfidy
- fidelity
- incorruptible
- vernacular
- infinitesimal
- recalcitrant
- innocuous
- precocious
- ameliorate
- commensurate
- perennial
- soliloquy
- accommodate
- pernicious
- efficacy
- visceral
- exacerbate
- indigenous
- belligerent
- prosecucize
- plurivorous
- terrificity
- diversus
- susceptirious
- obsequious
- pejorative
- facetious
- dirigeable
- pagodaceous
- commissive
- incipient
- corporal
- pediment
- curial
- erudite
- spectre
- pernicious

**NOW YOU TRY!**

1. \textit{Curriculum} is another word from Latin like \textit{necessary} and \textit{interrupt} that has an internal double consonant. Can you think of an adjective related to \textit{curriculum} that also has double \texttt{r}?

2. Some of the Latin study-list words end with the sound \texttt{\textbackslash sh\textbackslash a}, and the consonant that begins the last syllable is \texttt{c} or \texttt{t} (see tip 8, above). Can you think of two words in English that end with this sound and are spelled with \texttt{xious}?

3. The rarely used plural of \textit{consensus} is \textit{consensuses}, but some words from Latin that end in us have a plural that ends in a long \texttt{i} sound (\texttt{\textbackslash i\textbackslash}) and is spelled with \texttt{i}. Can you think of three such words?

4. Three words on the study list come from the Latin verb that means “throw.” These words are \textit{conjecture, dejected, and trajectory}. See if you can unscramble these letters to find four other common English words that have the same root: \texttt{jjustce treje rptcjeo cotbej}

5. The consonants \texttt{gn} often occur in words from Latin. When they divide two syllables of a word, both of them are pronounced. Some words from Latin, however, have the consonants \texttt{gn} in a single syllable. In this case, the \texttt{g} is silent, as in \textit{design}. Can you think of three other words from Latin in which this happens?
**Spelling Tips for Words from Arabic**

1. Double consonants are often seen in words from Arabic. More often than not, they occur in the middle of a word as in *mummy*, *cotton*, *henna*, *foggara*, *coffee*, *tarragon*, and several other words on the list. Their appearance at the end of a word (as in *albatross* and *tariff*) is usually because of the spelling conventions of English or some other language that the word passed through to get here.

2. A typical word from Arabic has three consonant sounds, with or without vowels between them. *Gazelle*, *safari*, *talc*, *carafe*, *mahal*, *tahini*, *alkali*, *hafiz*, and *salaam* are typical examples.

3. Note how many words on this list begin with *al*: This spelling can be traced to the definite article *al* (*“the”*) in Arabic, which sometimes gets borrowed along with a word. Most of the time the spelling is *al* in English, but note *el in elixir*.

4. A long e sound (\(\varepsilon\)) at the end of a word from Arabic is often spelled with *i* as in *safari* and several other words on the list but may also be spelled with *y* as in *mummy* and *alchemy*.

5. The schwa sound (\(\alpha\)) at the end of a word from Arabic is usually spelled with *a* as in *henna*, *tuna*, *algebra*, *alfalfa*, *fooggara*, and *diffa*.

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**Challenge Words**

- azure
- Islamic
- sultan
- artichoke
- mummy
- tarragon
- adobe
- mohair
- borax
- t alc
- arsenal
- lemon
- tuna
- admiral
- hazard
- apricot
- carmine
- monsoon
- average
- gazelle
- crimson
- orange
- sequin
- macrame
- algebra
- guitar
- nabob
- giraffe
- mattress
- elixir
- saffron
- cotton
- albatross
- zero
- safari
- magazine
- zenith
- alfalfa
- imam
- mosque
- alcohol
- tariff
- lilac
- alcove
- massage
- henna
- alchemy
- sugar
- taj
- mahal
- khan
- ghoul

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**Tip from the Top**

The Arabic alphabet has 28 letters, and among these are letters that represent half a dozen sounds that do not exist in English. Therefore, when a word crosses over from Arabic to English, there is always a compromise about how it will be spelled and pronounced, which sometimes results in inconsistencies. Some English consonants have to do double or triple duty, representing various sounds in Arabic that native speakers of English don’t make.

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**Folk Etymology**

Is it just coincidence that *mohair* describes the hair of a goat? Not exactly. Mohair—like dozens of other words in this book—is the result of a process called “folk etymology.” Folk etymology sometimes occurs when a word travels from one language to another. Speakers of the new language (ordinary “folks”) often change the word in a way that makes it more like words in their language. To help them remember just what the word is, they might even change a part of it to match a word that is already familiar to them. The original Arabic for *mohair*—*mukhayyar*. The element *hayyar* doesn’t mean “hair,” but its sound was close enough for English speakers to make the connection. Watch out for other words that you suspect might have elements of folk etymology in them!

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**Now You Try!**

1. *Elixir* is typical of a word from Arabic in that it has three consonant sounds, not counting the sound of the letter *l* that is from the Arabic definite article (see tip 3, above). Why do you think *elixir* is spelled with only two consonants after the *l* in English?

2. Arabic has three different letters, all with different sounds, that English speakers convert to a \(\text{\textbackslash k}\) sound. How many different ways is \(\text{\textbackslash k}\) spelled on the list of words from Arabic?
When English-speaking people—mainly the British—began to trade with the Indian subcontinent and the Far East, it was necessary to find words for many things never before encountered, whether foods, plants, animals, clothing, or events. Many words that were borrowed from Asian languages as a result of trade have become well established in English, and the process continues today. It is difficult to find reliable patterns to help you spell these words because they were borrowed at different times by different people.

1. One sound is spelled with the same double vowel in six of the words from Asian languages on this page. What sound is that, and how is it spelled?

2. The long e sound (\(\varepsilon\)) is spelled ee in dungaree and rupee. Name three other ways it is spelled in the words above.

3. Why do you think bungalow is spelled with a w at the end? (Hint: See the second paragraph under Tips from the Top, above.)

Before the Modern English that we speak today was fully settled, the French of the Middle Ages—a direct offshoot of Latin—was widely spoken in the British Isles as a result of the conquest of Britain by France in 1066. English is so rich in vocabulary today partly because we often have words with similar or overlapping meanings, one of which came via the Germanic route (that is, from Anglo-Saxon or another Germanic language) and one via French. So, for example, we may call the animal a hog (Old English), but the meat it produces is pork (from French).

Today, words with French ancestry are everywhere in English. Our pronunciation of vowels and consonants is quite different from the modern French of today, but there are many consistent spelling patterns that can help us make educated guesses about how to spell words that come from French.
### Challenge Words

| gauche | recidivist | garçon |
| rapport | chassise | croissant |
| camouflage | détente | ecru |
| genre | raconteur | lieutenant |
| virgule | mayonnaise | protégé |
| debacle | surveillance | mélange |
| fusillade | repertoire | blâse |
| saboteur | dossier | fête |
| renaissance | taupe | ingénue |
| chauvinism | poignard | rendezvous |

### Spelling Tips for Words from French

1. French nearly always spells the \( \text{sh} \) sound with ch, and this spelling of the sound is very common in words from French. Chagrin, chauvinism, and crochet are examples.

2. A word from French ending with a stressed et\( \text{sh} \) is usually spelled with ette as in croquette and layette.

3. A long a sound \( \text{a} \) at the end of a word from French can be spelled a number of ways. One of the more common ways is with et as in cachet, crochet, and croquet.

4. One way to spell long a at the end of a word from French is with er as in dossier and in foyer. Most Americans, however, do not pronounce the ending of foyer with a long a.

5. A long e sound \( \text{e} \) at the end of a word from French can be spelled with ie as in prairie and sortie. (But see exercise 4 on page 11 for another spelling of the long e ending.)

6. Words ending with an \( \text{zh} \) sound are common in French. This sound is spelled age as in collage, mirage, dressage, garage, barrage, camouflage, entourage, and fuselage.

7. A \( \text{k} \) sound at the end of a word from French is often spelled que as in mystique, boutique, and physique.

8. The \( \text{u} \) sound (as in rouge and many other words on the list) in words from French is usually spelled with ou. Sometimes, however, it is spelled with u as in tutu and ecru.

9. When the \( \text{sh} \) sound occurs at the end of a word from French, there is nearly always a silent e that follows it, as in quiche and gauche.

10. Words ending with an \( \text{ad} \) sound are common in French. This sound is spelled ade as in fusillade.

11. French speakers have a number of vowels that English speakers modify in pronunciation. Our way of pronouncing the French a\( \text{i} \)e (pronounced \( \text{ez} \) in French) is usually \( \text{az} \).

### Now You Try!

1. Read these two pronunciations of non-study-list French words and then spell them. You’ll discover two other ways that a long a sound \( \text{a} \) can be spelled at the end of a word from French:

   - \( \text{ka} \-\text{f} \)a\( \text{m} \)a\( \text{h} \)a
   - \( \text{m} \)a\( \text{h} \)a\( \text{m} \)a

2. The consonant w is rare in French. You get ten points for using it in French SCRABBLE®! Find the four words on the study list that have a \( \text{w} \) sound and tell how this sound is spelled in each word.

3. The word mirage has two common related words in English that come ultimately from the Latin root mirari, a word that means “wonder at.” One of these English words has three r’s; the other has only one. Can you guess the words?

4. English has dozens of words from French that end in ee. Some, like melee, have a long a pronunciation \( \text{a} \). Others, like levee, have a long e \( \text{e} \). Can you think of two other words from French ending in ee that have the long a sound and two that have the long e sound?

5. Of the words on the study list, three could also have been listed on the Eponyms page (page 12) because they are based on the name of a person or character. Which three words are these?

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**Challenge Words**

- gauche
- rapport
- camouflage
- genre
- virgule
- debacle
- fusillade
- saboteur
- renaissance
- chauvinism

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Eponyms are words based on a person’s or character’s name. Sometimes the person’s name and the word are exactly the same and the word simply takes on a new meaning. In other cases the person’s name is slightly changed. When this happens, the stressed syllable of the new word can also change and you won’t always recognize the origin, which might be a somewhat familiar name. Take, for example, gardenia. It’s really just a man’s name (Alexander Garden) with the plant-naming suffix -ia. In fact, all of the words on this list that end with ia are names for plants and are based on the last names of botanists.

praline
magnolia
boysenberry
hosta
poinsettia
macadamia
salmonella
newton
saxophone
tortoni
greengage
angstrom
gardenia
melba
tantalize
zinnia
quisling
gardenia
bégonia
samaritan
Panglossian
quixote
jeremiad
hector
Geronimo
shrapnel
vulcanize
Frankenstein
Boswell
ampere
cupid
Fletcherism
yahoo
diesel
bandersnatch
Crusoe
mentor
Dracula

CHALLENGE WORDS

forsythia
madeleine
bromeliad
mercerize
Fahrenheit
narcissistic
dahlia
Baedeker
philippic
guillotine
Bobadil
mesmerize
gnathonic
pasteurize
Croesus
braggadocio

CHALLENGE WORDS

praline
magnolia
boysenberry
hosta
poinsettia
macadamia
salmonella
newton
saxophone
tortoni
greengage
angstrom
gardenia
melba
tantalize
zinnia
quisling
gardenia
bégonia
samaritan
Panglossian
quixote
jeremiad
hector
Geronimo
shrapnel
vulcanize
Frankenstein
Boswell
ampere
cupid
Fletcherism
yahoo
diesel
bandersnatch
Crusoe
mentor
Dracula

WAYS FROM GERMAN

English and German are in the same language family, and because of that you might expect that they would look more like each other than they do! While many words of German origin in English have some telltale signs, others have been anglicized (made to look and sound more English). Therefore, you might not know at first glance where they came from.

There are two main reasons why older borrowings from German tend to look less German and more English. First, English patterns have had more opportunity to influence older Germanic words, both because they’ve had more time to do so and because spelling wasn’t standardized until well after these words entered English. Second, the German language has itself evolved since English borrowed these words, so the spelling patterns characteristic of modern German didn’t necessarily govern the spelling of older German words.

angst
pretzel
waltz
haversack
nosh
sauerbraten
hinterland
verboten
liverwurst
streusel
umlaut
wanderlust
eiderdown
schnauzer
lederhosen
kohlrabi
sitzmark
langlauf
autobahn
Backstein
inselberg
gestalt
einkorn
kitsch
gestapo
schloss
rucksack
echt
bratwurst
knapsack
feldspar
poltergeist
nudle
spareribs
Meistersinger
pumpeninkel
Bildungsroman
strudel
bagel
hamster
cobalt
nachtmusik
vorlage
graupel
Wagnerian
cringle
fife
glitz
homburg
kuchen
pitchblende
spritz
prattle
zwerger
spitz
realschule
panzer
stollen
dachshund
seltzer

challenGe Words

1. Six of the eponyms listed above are inspired by characters from Greek or Roman mythology. Which six eponyms are they?
2. If you discovered a new plant and you could use your first or last name to give a name to the plant, what would you call it? How would you pronounce it?

Be sure to visit www.myspellit.com for other activities, a list of “Words You Need to Know,” and links to definitions and pronunciations of words on the Spell It! study lists.
Words from Slavic Languages

Many people in Eastern Europe and Asia speak a Slavic language such as Czech, Ukrainian, Croatian, or Bulgarian. And that's completely apart from Russian, a Slavic language spoken by more than 200 million people! Some words of Slavic origin that have made their way into English traveled through another language first, reflecting the fact that contacts between English-speaking and Slavic-speaking cultures have not always been direct.

1. The suffix -nik as in sputnik comes originally from Slavic languages to denote a person of a certain type. Can you think of any other words in English (most of them informal) that use this suffix?

2. Look up these four study-list words in a dictionary and study the etymologies. Which is the odd one out, and why?

Kishke, cravat, knish, babushka

ChallenGe Words

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Kishke, cravat, knish, babushka

Spelling tips for words from German

1. Don't shy away from consonant clusters! German words often have combinations of three or more consonants that don't occur in thoroughly English words. Examples include *ngst in angst, sch in schadenfreude, schn in schnauzer, and nisch in anschluss.*

2. A \(\text{\text{"a}}\) sound in a word from German is usually spelled with *k* at the beginning of a word or syllable (as in kitsch and einkorn) and often with *ck* at the end of a word or syllable (as in knapsack and glockenspiel).

3. A long *i* sound (\(\text{\text{"a}}\)) usually has the spelling *ei* in words from German, as in fräulein, Meistersinger, zeitgeber, and several other words on the list.

4. The \(\text{\text{"e}}\) sound, especially at the beginning of a word, is sometimes spelled with *v* in German words as in vorlage. Other examples include the non-study-list words herrenvolk and volkslied.

5. The letter *z* is far more common in German than in English. Note that its pronunciation is not usually the same as English \(\text{\text{z}}\). When it follows a *t*, which is common, the pronunciation is \(\text{\text{ts}}\) as in spitz, pretzel, blitzkrieg, and several other words on the list.

6. The \(\text{\text{sh}}\) sound in words of German origin is usually spelled *sch* as in schadenfreude, whether at the beginning or end of a word or syllable. In schottische, you get it in both places!

7. A long *e* sound (\(\text{\text{e}}\)) usually has the spelling *ie* in words from German, as in blitzkrieg and glockenspiel.

8. The letter *w* is properly pronounced as \(\text{\text{v}}\) in German, as you hear in one pronunciation of edelweiss and in wedel and Weissnichtwo. Many German words, however, have become so anglicized that this pronunciation has vanished. Most Americans, for example, say “bratwurst,” not “bratvurst.”

Now You Try!

1. A surprising number of words in English for dog breeds come from German. On our list there are five: rottweiler, schnauzer, weimaraner, spitz, and dachshund. See if you can fill in the blanks in the following words to correctly spell some other dog breeds from German:

   dr _ ht _ a _ r _ s _ m _ Do

   af _ n _ m _ n

2. The *el* spelling at the end of words such as streusel, pretzel, and dreidel is typical of German words that end with this sound. The *le* spelling of this sound in noodle, cringle, and prattle, on the other hand, is more typical of English. What generalization can be made about the differences in these spellings?

3. The vowel combination *au* is usually pronounced the same way in English words from German as it is in German words. Looking at umlaut, sauerbraten, autobahn, schnauzer, langlauft, graupel, and pickelhaube, which word would you say has been more anglicized in its usual pronunciation? Why do you think this is?
Like German, Dutch is a member of the same language family as English: the Germanic family. Many of the original European settlers in North America came from the country that later became the Netherlands, and those early settlers were one of the sources of Dutch words in American English today.

Old English was the language spoken in Britain before the French arrived in 1066. If you could listen to a conversation in Old English, you would probably be scratching your head a lot. A few of the words would make sense, but most of them wouldn’t. Like plants and animals, languages evolve—keeping the things that they find useful, discarding others, and picking up new things along the way. This study list represents some of the real success stories in English: words coined long ago that have not lost their usefulness over dozens of generations!

**Challenge Words**

- Myneer
- Waterzooi
- Flesse
- Muishond
- Witloof
- Springbok
- Maelstrom
- Bobbejaan
- Keeshond
- Voortrekker
- Uitlander
- Hollandaïsche roodebok
- Spel
- Drinks
- Bed
- Sallow
- Slobber
- Earwig
- Heifer
- Mistletoe
- Shriaval
- Salve
- Kirtle
- Wiccan
- Shrieval
- Chary
- Fiend
- Goatee
- Earthenware
- Windily
- Dealership

**Tip from the Top**

You have a great advantage in learning to spell a word that has been in English for a very long time. Chances are that the word belongs to a group of words that show the same spelling pattern, since words in all languages have a habit of conforming to each other over time. As you study the words on the list, try to remember them together with another word or words with a similar sound and spelling.

**Challenge Words**

- Wiseacre
- Brackish
- Decoy
- Caboose
- Buckwheat
- Walrus
- Howitzer
- Crimp
- Bluff
- Stipple
- Floss
- Cruiser
- Hustle
- Klompen
- Polder
- Bundle
- Catkin
- Spice
- Foist
- Staple
- Gulden
- Mart
- Screen
- Guarder
- Etch
- Netherlander
- Dune
- Croon
- Ticket
- Buckwagon
- Hock
- Boodle
- Guy
- Quell
- Barrow
- Deearth
- Bower
- Paddock
- Blithe
- Keen
- Mongrel
- Reckless
- Alderman
- Whirlpool
- Delay
- Cleanser
- Dreary
- Bequeath
- Sallow
- Dross
- Lithe
- Gristle
- Gristle
- Earwig
- Fickle
- Nestle
- Fennel
- Nostril
- Abide
- Behest
- Slaughter
- Gospel
- Furlong
- Linseed
- Nether
- Fathom
- Nightingale
- Farthing
- Threshold
- Kith
- Wanton
- Loam
- Yield
- Mattock
- Hawthorn
- Tithe
- Behoove
- Forlorn
- Quiver
- Hustings
- Aspen
- Mermaid
- Avil
- Barley
- Linden
- Hassock
- Orchard
- Hearth
- Watery
- Fiend
- Goatee
- Earthenware
- Windily
- Dealership

**Tip from the Top**

You have a great advantage in learning to spell a word that has been in English for a very long time. Chances are that the word belongs to a group of words that show the same spelling pattern, since words in all languages have a habit of conforming to each other over time. As you study the words on the list, try to remember them together with another word or words with a similar sound and spelling.
SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM OLD ENGLISH

1. Old English likes double consonants following short vowels, especially if the vowel is in a stressed syllable. Examples include qell, paddock, mattock, sallow, fennel, hessock, errand, barrow, kipper, and Wiccan.

2. A long o (ā) at the end of words from Old English is nearly always spelled ay as in belay.

3. Long e (ē) at the end of an adjective or adverb from Old English is nearly always spelled with y. Examples include dreary, watery, windily, fiery, creepy, daily, stringy, timely, womanly, and chary.

4. Long o (ō) at the end of words from Old English is typically spelled with ow as in sallow and barrow. By contrast, a long o at the end of a word in many languages that English has borrowed from is simply spelled with o.

5. When the syllable \s\ ends words from Old English, it is nearly always spelled stle, with the t being silent (as in gristle and nestle).

6. Silent gh after a vowel is common in words from Old English, as in slaughter. Silent gh usually appears after i in words like plight (not on the study list) and nightingale, and it signals that the vowel is pronounced \\.

7. The vowel combination oa in words from Old English is nearly always pronounced as long o (ō) as in loam and goatee. Examples not on the study list include shoal, boastful, and gloaming.

8. Silent e on the end or not? For words from Old English that end in either hard th (\th\) or soft th (\th\), remember this: More often than not, soft th will have a silent e at the end of the word. Consider, for example, bequeath, dearth, kith, heath, and hundredth versus blithe, tithe, and lithe. Interestingly, the word blithe can be pronounced both ways.

NOW YOU TRY!

Now’s your chance to fill up some of the empty spots in your memory with a few non–study-list words in English that look like some words on the study list. We’ll give you a pattern and then some clues to see if you can think of other words in English that are spelled according to the same pattern.

**pattern:** double consonant followed by ock
**clue:** a small hill

**example:** paddock
**answer:** hillock

A. **pattern:** double consonant followed by ow
**clue:** a pointed weapon
1. example: bequeath
   answer:
2. example: dearth
   answer:
3. example: kith
   answer:
4. **challenge clue:** a wild plant with yellow or white flowers
   example: lithe
   answer:

B. **pattern:** consonant sound followed by allow
**clue:** not deep
5. example: sallow
   answer:
6. example: barrow
   answer:
7. **challenge clue:** a plant with showy flowers
   example: sallow
   answer:
8. **challenge clue:** of a field not cultivated
   example: sallow
   answer:

C. **pattern:** ending \th\ spelled as the
**clue:** feel strong dislike for
9. example: lithe
   answer:
10. example: heath
    answer:
11. **challenge clue:** twist as a result of pain
    example: lithe
    answer:
12. **challenge clue:** a cutting tool with a curved blade
    example: sallow
    answer:

D. **pattern:** ending \s\ spelled as stle
**clue:** a stiff hair
13. example: nestle
    answer:
14. **clue:** a common weed with prickly leaves
    example: sallow
    answer:
15. **challenge clue:** a frame that supports
    example: nestle
    answer:
16. **challenge clue:** a formal word for a letter
    example: nestle
    answer:
The people of the tribes and nations who lived in the New World before the arrival of European explorers were like people everywhere: They had a name for everything! Often, the language of the newly arrived people simply absorbed the native term, imposing changes on it that would make it fit in better with the newcomers’ language. Some of these terms jumped directly to English from a native language. Others traveled through some other language along the way. Though Hawaiian isn’t a true New World language, it is included here because Hawaii is now a part of the United States.

Challenge Words

- opossum
- terrapin
- ocelot
- hoomalimali
- coati
- jacamar
- ipecac
- menhaden
- sachem

Words from New World Languages

- condor
- iguana
- hurricane
- kahuna
- hogan
- jerky
- muskrat
- hominy
- wigwam
- pampas
- caribou
- pampas
- wigwam
- caribou

Spelling Tips for Words from New World Languages

1. Remember that words settling down in English are often spelled according to English word patterns. If you’re completely unsure of how to spell a word from a New World language, you can try just “sounding it out.” This strategy would work for hurricane, muskrat, wigwam, and several other words on the list.

2. Take note of the language(s) a word may have traveled through on its way to English, for the path to English often gives a clue about spelling. For example, if it had been up to an English speaker, the \u sound at the end of caribou would probably have been spelled oo; but the influence of French gives us the current spelling because French usually spells this sound ou.

3. Coyote shows evidence of having passed through Spanish on its way to English: The voiced final e is often seen in Spanish words. Two other examples on this list are tamale and mole.

4. Remember what folk etymology is? Words that entered English from New World languages were prime candidates for this process. If parts of a native word sounded familiar, they were often spelled by the settlers in a familiar way, as in woodchuck. Muskrat is also probably a result of folk etymology.

Now You Try!

1. The two words on the study list that suggest folk etymology denote animals. Which of the following non-study-list words for plants would you think have folk etymologies? pennroyal, campanula, chickling, brooklime, poppy

2. Cashew, persimmon, hickory, cacao, and pecan are all New World trees and have names from New World languages. Based on your knowledge of typically English words, which of the following tree names do you think are from New World languages?
   - oak
   - ash
   - catalpa
   - beech
   - elm
   - maple
   - guava
   - pine

Tips from the Top

All of the source languages of words in this study list are unrelated to English, and many of them are unrelated to each other. For example, cashew is from the native South American language Tupi, which has no connection with Hawaiian, the source of kahuna, or Algonquian, which gives us caribou.

Many of these words are from languages that had no alphabet at the time of borrowing or that had their own unique writing system. The result is that introduction into English, whether direct or indirect, involved some compromise in pronunciation and spelling which often reflects the rules of English or some intermediary language.
Japanese is a relative latecomer among the languages that have influenced English, making it a welcome language of origin for spellers: Recently borrowed words are spelled more consistently than are those from languages that English has been borrowing from for centuries. Keep in mind that the Japanese writing system uses symbols for words, so English words from Japanese are written with the Roman alphabet according to the way the words sound.

1. Study the sounds that occur at the ends of words from Japanese on the study list. Now you try!

2. From what you have learned about Japanese words in English, how many syllables do you think each of these non–study-list words from Japanese has?

**CHALLENGE WORDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ninja</th>
<th>sushi</th>
<th>tofu</th>
<th>shogun</th>
<th>honcho</th>
<th>karate</th>
<th>samurai</th>
<th>teriyaki</th>
<th>sashimi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tsunami</td>
<td>haiku</td>
<td>futon</td>
<td>mikado</td>
<td>hibachi</td>
<td>origami</td>
<td>geisha</td>
<td>wasabi</td>
<td>ramen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kudzu</td>
<td>banzai</td>
<td>tycoon</td>
<td>sumo</td>
<td>kan</td>
<td>satori</td>
<td>tatami</td>
<td>kami</td>
<td>sukiyaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuruma</td>
<td>Meiji</td>
<td>Romaji</td>
<td>odori</td>
<td>miso</td>
<td>Kabuki</td>
<td>geta</td>
<td>sayonara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM JAPANESE**

1. A long e sound (ě́) is very common at the end of Japanese words and is usually spelled with i in some words from Japanese. Examples include haiku and karaoke.

2. The sound of long e is spelled simply with e in some words from Japanese. Examples include honcho, mikado, sumo, and kudzu.

3. An \(\acute{a}\) sound is also a common way to end Japanese words and is spelled with u as in haiku, tofu, and kudzu.

4. Long o (ō) at the end of a word from Japanese is spelled with o as in honcho, mikado, sumo, and miso.

5. A long a sound (ā) heard in geisha is spelled ei in some words from Japanese. Four of the challenge words have this spelling of the long a sound and contain the word element sei, which means “generation.”

**NOW YOU TRY!**

1. Study the sounds that occur at the ends of words from Japanese on the study list. Based on what you see there, which of the following non–study-list words would you say is not from Japanese, and why?

   kanban | ginger | wok | soba | kendo |

2. From what you have learned about Japanese words in English, how many syllables do you think each of these non–study-list words from Japanese has?

   matsutake | kamikaze | netsuke | wakame

**WORDS FROM JAPANESE 2009**

**WORDS FROM GREEK**

All the words on this list are related to words that were used 2500 years ago! English gets an important part of its vocabulary from the language of ancient Greece. Classical Greek, as it is called, is quite different from but closely related to the language spoken in Greece today. The ancient Greeks provided the foundation for many important ways of looking at the world and for living in society that are still important today; that is one reason their language has remained so influential. It is still used today, for example, when scientists need a word to describe something newly created or discovered.

l lethargy | android | chronic | biopsy | irony | automaton | enthusiasm | synopsis | homogeneous | odyssey | megalopolis | acme | synonym | orthodox | aristocracy | calypso | patriarch | hierarchy | character | isobar | asterisk | eclectic | melancholy | stoic | chronology | eulogy | didactic | cosmetic | Spartan | geothermal | cynical |

h homonym | panic | apophthegm | geranium | metaphor | spherical | xylophone | dynamic | myriad | epiphany | apathy | synergy | amnesia | philanthropy | democracy | strategy | diagnosis | topical | matriarch | endemic | analysis | rhetoric | euphonium | agnostic | dogma | idiom | thermal | dyslexia | Olympian | allegory | pragmatic | adamant | protocol | tragic | hydrology | polymer | notochord | biblical | mathematics | tachometer | protein | rhinoceros | hyphen | autopsy | pyre | herpetology | angelic | tritium | androcentric | demotic | geode | hedonism | periscope | geoponics | asthmogenic | monotonous | amphibious | symbiosis | macron | periphery
SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM GREEK

1. In a few words from Greek, e appears at the end of a word and has long e sound \( \text{\v{e}} \): Some examples are acme, apostrophe, and hyperbole.

2. A \( \text{\ss} \) sound in English often represents a sound from Greek that we don’t actually use, and the most common spelling of this sound in English is ch: See anachronism, arachnid, character, chronic, chronology, dichotomy, gynarchy, hierarchy, matriarch, melancholy, notochord, patriarch, synchronous, and tachometer.

3. The most frequent sound that y gets in words from Greek is short i (\( \text{\i} \)) as in acronym, calypso, cryptic, cynical, dyslexia, eponym, homonym, myriad, Olympian, polymer, symbiosis, synchronous, sympathy, synonym, synopsis, and syntax.

4. A long i sound (\( \text{\ii} \)) in a word that comes from Greek is sometimes represented by y, especially after h, as in hydraulic, hydrology, hygiene, hyperbole, hyphen, hypothesis, cynosure, dynamic, gynarchy, pyre, and xylophone.

5. In ancient Greek, the letter phi (pronounced \( \text{\phi} \)) represented a breathy or “aspirated” version of the sound that is represented in English by f. Speakers of Roman-alphabet languages did not have this sound or a corresponding letter, so they substituted the \( \text{\ss} \) sound but memorialized the original sound of phi by using ph to spell it. As a result, the English \( \text{\ss} \) sound almost always appears as ph in words of Greek origin. Consider, for example: amphibious, apostrophe, cacophony, diphthong, epiphany, euphemism, gynarchy, hyperbole, hypotenuse, dyslexia, eponym, homonym, myriads, Olympian, polymer, symbiosis, synchronous, sympathy, synonym, synopsis, and syntax.

6. The letter o is the vowel most often used to connect two Greek word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (\( \text{\u} \)) as in xylophone, notochord, androcentric, orthodox, ergonomic, geoponics, and asthmogenic, and you must guess at the spelling of this sound, the letter o is a very good guess. The non-study-list words hypnotist, geometric, and electrolyte are among the many, many words made of Greek word elements connected by o.

7. The \( \text{\ss} \) sound is always spelled with g in words from Greek. Why? When the \( \text{\ss} \) sound appears in words of Greek origin, it does so as an anglicized pronunciation of a root originally pronounced with a hard g. Note that no j appears in any of the words on this list!

8. A schwa in words from Greek is occasionally spelled with y: See analysis, etymology, misogynist, odyssey, and zephyr.

NOW YOU TRY!

Here are a few more Greek words with their pronunciations and definitions. After each definition is an explanation of what a part of the word means. See if you can think of other words in English that contain the same Greek word part, spelled in the same way.

1. analysis (\( \text{\a-\na-\nu-s\a} \)), n separation of something into its parts. The \( \text{lysis} \) part of this word means “loosening” or “breaking up” in Greek.

2. android (\( \text{\an-\nu-\t\i\i\d} \)), n a robot that looks like a human. The \( \text{andro} \) part of this word comes from the Greek word that means “man.”

3. diatribe (\( \text{\da-\nu-\t\i\i\b\i} \)), n bitter or abusive writing or speech. The \( \text{dia} \) part of this word means “through,” “across,” or “apart” in Greek words.

4. isobar (\( \text{\i-\s\a-\b\a} \)), n a line on a map connecting places that have the same barometric reading. The \( \text{iso} \) part of this word means “equal” in Greek words.

5. pentathlon (\( \text{\p\e-\nt\a-\l\a} \)), n an athletic competition consisting of five events. The \( \text{penta} \) part of this word comes from the Greek word that means “five.”

6. polygon (\( \text{\p\a-\l\a-\g\a} \)), n a drawn figure that encloses a space and has straight sides. The \( \text{gon} \) part of this word means “angle” in words from Greek.

7. thermal (\( \text{\t\e-\r\a-\m\a} \)), adj related to, caused by, or involving heat. The \( \text{therm} \) part of this word appears in other words from Greek involving heat.

T7. The \( \text{\ss} \) sound is always spelled with g in words from Greek. Why? When the \( \text{\ss} \) sound appears in words of Greek origin, it does so as an anglicized pronunciation of a root originally pronounced with a hard g. Note that no j appears in any of the words on this list!

A schwa in words from Greek is occasionally spelled with y: See analysis, etymology, misogynist, odyssey, and zephyr.

Be sure to visit www.myspellit.com for other activities, a list of “Words You Need to Know,” and links to definitions and pronunciations of words on the Spell It! study lists.
English vocabulary owes Italian a big debt in two categories that provide a lot of enjoyment for many people: music and food. During the 17th century, when the idea of giving some instructions to performers of musical scores first started catching on, many of the important composers were Italian—and it was natural for them to use their own language. The result is that the standard terms for musical expression today are Italian. Many Italian food terms made their way into American English particularly as a result of 19th-century immigration. We might have adopted them anyway, though, for many people love Italian food!

**STUCK?**

1. One word on the list of Challenge Words has a \w sound. How is it spelled?
2. One of the sounds we normally associate with j appears in one pronunciation of a word on the Challenge Words list. What is the word, and what letter is used to spell the sound?
3. The Italian word from which we get cavalry is cavalleria. The Italian word from which we get balcony is balcone. Why do you think these words ended up with a y on the end in English?
4. Il Messico is the Italian name of a country. What country do you think it is?

---

**CHALLENGE WORDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>staccato</th>
<th>falsetto</th>
<th>maestro</th>
<th>salami</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ballot</td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>bravura</td>
<td>Parmesan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confetti 1</td>
<td>provolone 3</td>
<td>fresco</td>
<td>oratorio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semolina</td>
<td>extragranza</td>
<td>stucco 5</td>
<td>finale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influenza</td>
<td>scampi</td>
<td>inferno</td>
<td>scenario</td>
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<tr>
<td>cavalry</td>
<td>belladonna</td>
<td>ballerina</td>
<td>contrapuntal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>malaria</td>
<td>illuminati</td>
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<tr>
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<td>rotunda</td>
<td>grotto</td>
<td>concerto</td>
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<td>harpsichord</td>
<td>macaroni</td>
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<td>palmetto</td>
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<tr>
<td>cantata</td>
<td>regatta</td>
<td>virtuosa</td>
<td>bandit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incognito 2</td>
<td>crescendo 4</td>
<td>spicchio</td>
<td>fiasco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vendetta</td>
<td>balchon</td>
<td>piccolo</td>
<td>cameo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contraband</td>
<td>portfolio</td>
<td>ravioli</td>
<td>sonata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mascara</td>
<td>antipasto</td>
<td>vibrato</td>
<td>coloratura</td>
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<tr>
<td>graffiti</td>
<td>libretto</td>
<td>pesto</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>credenza</td>
<td>virtuoso</td>
<td>aria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parapet</td>
<td>harmonica</td>
<td>bambino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WORDS FROM ITALIAN**

- Staccato  
- Ballot  
- Confetti 1  
- Semolina  
- Influenza  
- Cavalry  
- Piazza  
- Cadenza  
- Pistachio  
- Spinet  
- Cantata  
- Incognito 2  
- Vendetta  
- Contraband  
- Mascara  
- Graffiti  
- Credenza  
- Parapet  

**SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM ITALIAN**

1. Long e (\e\) at the end of a word from Italian is usually spelled with i as in *confetti*, *graffiti*, *zucchini*, *fantocci*, *cappelletti*, and many other words on the list. In Italian, a final i usually indicates a plural form. This is not always true, however, of Italian words in English.

2. Long o (\o\) at the end of an Italian word is spelled with o as in *incognito*, *vibrato*, *stucco*, *virtuoso*, *concerto*, *prosciutto*, *pizzicato*, and many other words on the list.

3. A long e sound (\e\) at the end of a word from Italian can be spelled with e as in *provolone*, *finale*, and one pronunciation of *vivace*, although this spelling of the sound is less common than i (see tip 1).

4. The sh sound has various spellings in words from Italian; a spelling it usually doesn’t have is sh! It can be spelled sc as in crescendo and prosciutto or ch as in charlatan and pistachio. The spelling of the sh sound in capricious is also seen in words that come from Latin—the ancestral language of Italian.

5. The k sound can be spelled cc when it comes before long o (\o\) as in stucco or when it comes before \l\ as in staccato.

6. Another Italian spelling of \k\ is ch as in scherzo.

7. The sound \e-ne\, common at the end of Italian words (it forms diminutives), is usually spelled ini (as in zucchini and fantocci).

8. The double consonant zz is typically pronounced \ts\ in words from Italian, as in *paparazzo*, *mozzarella*, *pizzicato*, and one pronunciation of *piazza*.

**NOW YOU TRY!**

Officially, Italian uses only 21 of the 26 letters in the Roman alphabet. The letters (j, k, w, x, and y) do appear in Italian books and newspapers—but usually only to spell foreign words. Young Italians think it’s cool to use these foreign letters, so they may eventually be accepted into the language. But for now, official Italian finds other ways to spell the sounds we normally associate with these letters. In light of that information, see if you can answer these puzzles!

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3. The Italian word from which we get *cavalry* is *cavalleria*. The Italian word from which we get balcony is balcone. Why do you think these words ended up with a y on the end in English?
4. Il Messico is the Italian name of a country. What country do you think it is?
England and Spain had some opportunities for word exchanges through war and trade. The real crossroads for Spanish and English, however, has been North America, starting as early as the 15th century when Spanish explorers first came to the New World. This crossroads is as busy today as ever, for Spanish is the second-most-frequently spoken language in the United States. Because of the long border we share with Mexico and the large number of Americans whose origins go back eventually to Mexico, American English has many words that come directly from Mexican Spanish.

**SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM SPANISH**

1. A long o sound (\|o\|) at the end of a word is often a mark of Spanish origin, and it is nearly always spelled simply with o as in embargo and many other words on this list.

2. A long e sound (\|e\|) at the end of a word of Spanish origin is usually spelled with i as in mariachi.

3. The \|\| sound is sometimes spelled with qu in words of Spanish origin. This is especially true when the vowel sound that follows is long a (\|a\|), long e (\|e\|), or short i (\|i\|). Quesadilla and conquistador (in its pronunciations both with and without the \|\| sound) are examples from our list.

4. It is much more common for the \|k\| sound to be spelled with c in words of Spanish origin. This is almost invariable when the vowel sound that follows is a schwa (\|a\|) as in canasta and embarcadero; short a (\|a\|) as in castanets and caballero; or long o (\|o\|) as in flamenco and junco.

5. A schwa at the end of a word from Spanish is very common and is usually spelled with a as in mesa, bonanza, and several other words on the list.

6. The combination ll in Spanish words is traditionally treated as a single letter and is pronounced as consonant \|y\| in American Spanish. When such words enter English, sometimes that sound persists. At other times it is pronounced just like ll would be in an English word: that is, as \|l\|. Some words—such as mantilla, tomatillo, amarillo, and caballero—even have two pronunciations in English. Quesadilla, tortilla, and novillero always have the \|y\| pronunciation in English; chinchilla, flotilla, vanilla, peccadillo, cedilla, and sarsaparilla always have the \|\| pronunciation. Be on the lookout!

7. Note that, except for ll, double consonants in words from Spanish are not very common. Buffalo and peccadillo represent exceptions. In Spanish, buffalo has only one f and peccadillo has only one c. English spelling rules prefer two consonants as a signal that the previous vowel is short, as is the case in these words.

NOW YOU TRY!

1. One of the two words beginning with j on our study list also begins with a \|b\| sound, but the letter j does not always have this sound in words from Spanish. What is the initial consonant sound in these four non-study-list words, which also come from Spanish?

   jalapeño    jipijapa    jinete    jojoba

2. Why do you think English uses either c or qu but not k to spell the \|k\| sound in words of Spanish origin?

3. You can see from the words on the list that ch is common in words from Spanish and that it usually has the same pronunciation as English normally uses for ch. In which word from the list does ch sometimes have a different pronunciation?

4. We have seen already that c often represents a \|k\| sound in words from Spanish. In which three words on the list does c have a different pronunciation, and what sound does it have?

5. The two l’s in alligator are not the usual ll that you often see in the middle of words from Spanish. When this word was borrowed, the Spanish masculine definite article el (“the”) was borrowed along with it. El lagarto in Spanish became alligator in English. Do you remember in what other language the definite article is often borrowed along with the word when it enters English?
Words from Latin  pages 3–5
1. The adjective is curricular.

2. English words from Latin ending in xios include anxious, noxious, and obnoxious.

3. There are several such plurals in English. The most common ones are probably alumnus/alumni, nucleus/nuclei, cactus/cacti, and fungus/fungi.

4. The words are subject, reject, project, and object.

5. Some other words with a silent g include assign, benign, impugn, and reign.

Words from Arabic  pages 6–7
1. The letter x represents two consonant sounds: \ks\.

2. The \k\ sound is spelled with k (as in alkali), c (as in carmine), q (as in Qatari), que (as in mosque), ch (as in alchemy), and kh (as in mukhtar).

Words from Asian Languages  page 8
1. The sound is \\ä\ or spelled with oo in oolong, mongoose; shampoo, typhoon, loot, and bamboo.

2. Long e (\ë\) is spelled with y (in rusty and gunnysack), ey (in chutney), and i (in basmati, batik, gourami, jiva, and Holi).

3. Bungalow probably got a v on the end because many other English words that have the same final sound end in ow: flow, blow, stow, etc.

Words from French  pages 9–11
1. The words are café and melee.

2. The \w\ sound is spelled with u in suave. In repertoire, boudoir, and croissant the oi is pronounced \w\â\.

3. The two words are mirror and miracle.

4. Some words ending with long a (\ä\) are entree, lycée, and soirée.

5. The three eponyms are leotard, clementine, and chauvinism.

Eponyms  page 12
1. The six eponyms based on characters from Greek or Roman mythology are narcissistic, tantalize, hector, vulcanize, cupid, and mentor.

2. Answers will vary; your teacher can help you.

Words from German  pages 13–14
1. The breeds are drathhaar, poodle, affenpinscher, and Doberman.

2. The terminal sound \ä\ is spelled el in the German style and ie in the more English style.

3. The word autobahn has a more anglicized pronunciation, probably because of the influence of auto and automobile.

Words from Slavic Languages  page 15
1. The -nik suffix occurs in beatnik, pleasantnik, refusenik, and other words that people coin from time to time, such as folknik and neatnik.

2. Cravat is the odd one out; it is the only one of the group that did not enter English via Yiddish.

Words from Greek  pages 23–25
The words provided for these exercises are among the most common ones; you may have thought of others.

1. catalysis, dialysis, paralysis

2. androgenous, misandry, androcracy

3. diadem, diagonal, diagram, diaphragm

4. isopropyl, isosceles, isotherm, isotope

5. pentagram, pentagon, pentameter, Pentateuch, Pentecost

Words from Dutch  page 16
1. Cranberry, alpenglow, and smarecase are all part translations from German. Grosbeak is from French.

Words from Old English  pages 17–19
1. arrow 2. marrow 3. sparrow

4. yarrow 5. shallow 6. tallow

7. mallow 8. fallow 9. loathe

10. see the 11. write 12. scythe

13. bristle 14. thistle 15. trestle

16. epistle

Words from New World Languages  pages 20–21
1. Pennroyal, brooklime, and chickling all are results of folk etymology.

2. Catalpa and guava are from New World languages.

Words from Japanese  page 22
1. Ginger and wok are not from Japanese. Notice that Japanese words nearly always end with a vowel sound or with \n\.

2. matsutake: 4 syllables kamikaze: 4 syllables netsuke: 2 or 3 syllables wakame: 3 syllables

Words from Italian  pages 26–27
1. The \w\ sound is spelled with u in segue.

2. A sound we associate with j is spelled with g in adagio.

3. The reason is probably simply that many words in English, representing all parts of speech, end with y.

4. Il Messico is the Italian name for Mexico.

Words from Spanish  pages 28–29
1. The initial consonant sound is \b\.

2. The standard Spanish alphabet uses k only to spell words borrowed from other languages.

3. Machismo is sometimes pronounced with a \k\ sound rather than a \ch\ sound.

4. The letter c has the \s\ sound in cilantro, hacienda, and cedilla.

5. Words in English from Arabic often borrow the definite article al.

Be sure to visit www.myspellit.com for other activities, a list of “Words You Need to Know,” and links to definitions and pronunciations of words on the Spell It! study lists.
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