



2008

Spell It!

Tricks and Tips for
Spelling Bee
Success





2008



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ABOUT THE BEE

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is an educational promotion sponsored by The E.W. Scripps Company in conjunction with over 260 newspapers 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 16th birthday on or before the date of the 2008 national finals and must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before February 1, 2008. A comprehensive set of eligibility requirements may be found in the *Suggested 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 82 National Spelling Bee champions, 43 have been girls and 39 have been boys. Co-champions were declared in 1950, 1957, and 1962. The 2008 Scripps National Spelling Bee will involve more than ten million students at the local level and over 270 national finalists.



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2006 Champion
Katharine "Kerry" Close

Check your local television listings for broadcast times for the 2008 Scripps National Spelling Bee on ESPN and ABC.

For additional challenge words and other activities, visit www.myspellit.com. You may be asked to spell these additional challenge words in competition.

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Welcome to the 2008 edition of *Spell It!*, the Scripps National Spelling Bee study booklet! *Spell It!* will be published annually, just as its predecessor, *Paideia*, was published from 1995 to 2006.

This year's study booklet focuses on about 874 words. Almost all the words are divided into sections by language of origin. (The list 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!

Each section contains one or more “challenge words” in addition to its basic study list. The challenge words, unlike those in the basic study lists, have pronunciations and short definitions that often resemble those found in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary* and provide just enough information to introduce you to the words. However, the official dictionary of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is the 2002 edition of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged* (also published by Merriam-Webster), whose definitions and pronunciations are often much more detailed than those you will find here. The etymological information in *Webster's Third* is likewise far more detailed than what you will find in this booklet, which concentrates on the influence of only one or two languages on any particular word.

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. However, in some highly competitive local spelling bees, 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 2008, 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!

For additional challenge words and other activities, visit www.myspellit.com. You may be asked to spell these additional challenge words in competition.



No language has been more influential in the development of English 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, until relatively recently, the language of culture, religion, education, and science in the Western world. 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.



inane	precipice	obstinate	corporal
relevant	susceptible	discern	patina
impetuous	condolences ⁴	mediocre	Capricorn
ambivalent	benefactor	insidious	participant
dejected	candidate	rupture	library
postmortem	bugle	precipitate	cognition
incriminate	formidable	erudite	primal
access	canary	intractable	filament
plausible	subterfuge	exuberant ⁷	unity
interrupt ¹	abdicate	ingenious	ventilate
alliteration	lunatic	retrospective	aquatic
refugee	colloquial	ominous	igneous
amicable	carnivore ⁵	vulnerable	reptile
lucid ²	gregarious	omnipotent	providence
percolate	ostentatious	consensus	message
meticulous	prosaic ⁶	discipline	foliate
fastidious	herbivore	alleviate	nasal
trajectory	prodigal	spectrum	opera
transect	magnanimous	prescription	renovate
animosity	benevolent	capitulation	temporal
implement	mercurial	incredulous	canine
ambiguity	simile	affinity	measure
curriculum	jovial	necessary	femininity
omnivorous	ridiculous	adjacent	triumvirate
bellicose	innate	dissect	popularity
electoral		conjecture	diary
crescent ³		imperative	humble
obsequious		predicate	



(For footnotes, see Spelling Tips, page 4.)



CHALLENGE WORDS

soliloquy \sə-ˈli-lə-kwē\ *n* a dramatic monologue that represents a series of unspoken reflections.
accommodate \ə-ˈkă-mə-dāt\ *v* provide with lodgings.
pernicious⁸ \pər-ˈni-shəs\ *adj* very harmful or destructive.
efficacy \ˈe-fi-kə-sē\ *n* the power to produce an effect.
visceral \ˈvi-sə-rəl\ *adj* instinctive rather than intellectual.
exacerbate \ig-ˈzə-sər-bāt\ *v* make more violent, bitter, or severe.

indigenous \in-ˈdi-jə-nəs\ *adj* native to a particular place.

belligerent \bə-ˈlij-rənt\ *adj* tending to be hostile and favoring war.

vernacular \vər-ˈnə-kyə-lər\ *n* the dialect of a particular region.

infinitesimal \(\j)in-ˈfi-nə-ˈte-sə-məl\ *adj* extremely small or few but still greater than zero.

recalcitrant \ri-ˈkəl-sə-trənt\ *adj* defiant of authority.

innocuous \i-ˈnə-kyə-wəs\ *adj* harmless or inoffensive.

precocious \pri-ˈkō-shəs\ *adj* showing mature qualities at an early age.

ameliorate \ə-ˈmēl-yə-rāt\ *v* improve something.

commensurate \kə-ˈmen(t)s-rət\ *adj* equal in measure or extent.

facetious \fə-ˈsē-shəs\ *adj* joking or jesting inappropriately.

prerogative \pri-ˈrā-gə-tiv\ *n* an exclusive right or privilege.

ubiquitous \yü-ˈbi-kwə-təs\ *adj* found in all places.

egregious \i-ˈgrē-jəs\ *adj* conspicuously bad.

aggregate \ˈa-gri-gət\ *n* a body of units or parts somewhat loosely associated with one another.

SPELLING TIPS FOR LATIN WORDS

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

² The \ü\ sound (as in *ooze*) is nearly always spelled with a *u* in words from Latin. It typically follows a \d\, \j\, \l\, \r\, or \s\ sound. After other consonants, this sound normally becomes \yü\ (as in *bugle*, *refugee*, and *meticulous*).

³ Beware of words like *crescent* in which the \s\ sound is spelled with *sc* in words from Latin. Other examples include *visceral*, *discern*, and *discipline*.

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



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

⁶ The letter *k* rarely appears in words from Latin, and its sound is nearly always represented by *c* as in *canary*, *prosaic*, *canine*, *mediocre*, *Capricorn*, *aquatic*, *cognition*, *precocious*, and many other words.

⁷ The letter *x* often gets the pronunciation \gz\ in words from Latin, as in *exacerbate*, and *exuberant*.

⁸ The combination *ious* ends many adjectives of Latin origin. When the consonant that precedes *ious* is *c* or *t*, the sound of the final syllable is \shəs\ as in *precocious*, *facetious*, *ostentatious*, and *pernicious*.

NOW YOU TRY!

- Curriculum* is another word from Latin like *necessary* and *interrupt* that has an internal double consonant. Can you think of an adjective related to *curriculum* that also has double *r*?
- Some of the Latin study-list words end with the sound \shəs\, and the consonant that begins the last syllable is *c* or *t* (see tip 8, above). Can you think of two words in English that end with this sound and are spelled with *xious*?
- The rarely used plural of *consensus* is *consensuses*, but some words from Latin that end in *us* have a plural that ends in a long *i* sound (\ī\), and is spelled with *i*. Can you think of three such words?
- Several words in the study list come from the Latin verb that means "throw." These words are *conjecture*, *dejected*, and *trajectory*. See if you can unscramble these letters to find four other common English words that have the same root:
 jburstce trecje rptcjeo cotbej
- The consonants *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 *gn* in a single syllable. In this case, the *g* is silent, as in *design*. Can you think of three other words from Latin in which this happens?

For additional challenge words and other activities, visit www.myspellit.com. You may be asked to spell these additional challenge words in competition.





Words from Arabic have come into English in two different ways. A relatively few, in more modern times, have made the jump directly as loanwords. In these instances, Arabic had a name for something that was either unknown in English or lacked a name. The more frequent route of Arabic words into English was in previous eras, often traveling through other languages on the way. For that reason the spelling of Arabic words in English is not consistent, but there are nevertheless a few clues that you can watch out for.

azure
Islamic
sultan
artichoke
macrame
mummy¹
tarragon
adobe
apricot
borax
talc
arsenal

lemon
tuna
admiral
hazard
carmine
monsoon
average
gazelle²
crimson
orange
sequin
algebra

guitar
nabob
giraffe
mattress
elixir
saffron
cotton
albatross³
zero
safari⁴
magazine
mohair

mosque
zenith
alfalfa
imam
alcohol
tariff
lilac
alcover
massage
henna⁵
alchemy
sugar



CHALLENGE WORDS

muslin \ˈmæz-lən\ *n* a woven cotton fabric.

camphor \ˈkɑm(p)-fər\ *n* a medicinal substance obtained from tree bark.

algorithm \ˈal-gə-ri-θəm\ *n* a procedure for solving a problem.

minaret \mi-nə-ˈret\ *n* the tower of a mosque, from which people are called to prayer.

tamarind \ˈtɑ-mə-rənd\ *n* a flavoring made from the pods of a tropical tree.

carafe \kə-ˈraf\ *n* a container for pouring liquids.

julep \ˈju-ləp\ *n* a drink made from flavoring, syrup, and water.

marzipan \ˈmɑrt-sə-ˈpæn\ *n* a candy made from sugar and ground almonds.

Tips from the Top

The Arabic alphabet has 28 letters, and among these are letters that represent half a dozen sounds that do not even exist in English. Thus, 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.

SPELLING TIPS FOR ARABIC WORDS

- 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*, and *henna*. When they are at the end of a word (*albatross* or *tariff*), this is usually because of the spelling conventions of English or some other language that the word passed through to get here.
- A typical word in Arabic has three consonant sounds, with or without vowels between them: *Gazelle*, *safari*, *talc*, and *carafe* are typical examples.
- 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*.
- A long e sound (\ē\) at the end of an Arabic word is often spelled with *i* as in *safari* but may also be spelled with *y* as in *alchemy*.
- The schwa sound (\ə\) at the end of an Arabic word is usually spelled with *a* as in *henna*, *tuna*, *algebra*, and *alfalfa*.



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* is *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!



NOW YOU TRY!

- Elixir* is typical of Arabic words in that it has three consonant sounds, not counting the *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?
- Arabic has three different letters, all with different sounds, that English speakers convert to a \k\ sound. How many different ways is \k\ spelled in the list of words from Arabic?



dugong
guru
cushy
seersucker
jungle
oolong

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.

nirvana
bangle
cummerbund
juggernaut
pangolin
mahatma

rupee
mongoose
shampoo
typhoon
bamboo
jackal

dungaree
bungalow
gunnysack
chutney
karma
jute

CHALLENGE WORDS

gymkhana \jīm-ˈkā-nə\ *n*
a sports or athletic competition.

basmati \bāz-ˈmā-tē\ *n*
a kind of long-grained rice.

gingham ˈɡɪŋ-əm\ *n*
a dyed fabric used to make clothes.

NOW YOU TRY!

- One sound is spelled with the same double vowel in five of the words from Asian languages on this page. What sound is that, and how is it spelled?
- The long e sound (\ē\) is spelled ee in *dungaree* and *rupee*. Name three other ways it is spelled in the words above.
- Why do you think *bungalow* is spelled with a w at the end? (Hint: See the second paragraph under Tips from the Top, above.)



Tips from the Top

Most of the words on this page from various Asian languages were introduced into English by people who spoke English. Therefore, an approach that you might find useful is to simply spell the word the way you would spell it if you were hearing it for the first time. In other words, use the letters you would use if the spelling were completely up to you!

Another approach that is sometimes useful is to spell a borrowed word or part of a borrowed word in the way that an English word you already know with similar sounds is spelled. This approach would work for spelling *mongoose*, for example.



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, English words with French credentials 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.

peloton
barrage
clementine
chagrin¹
pacifism
manicure
altruism
bureaucracy
mascot
parfait
mystique
layette²
boutique
dressage
croquet
gorgeous
denture
mirage
denim
cachet³
neologism
beige
diplomat
motif
suave
foyer⁴

ambulance
rehearse
leotard
prairie⁵
diorama
entourage
fuselage
boudoir
collage⁶
amenable
expertise
matinee
plateau
sortie

croquette
physique⁷
egalitarian
deluxe
nougat
rouge⁸
escargot
crochet
regime

doctrinaire
tutu
bevel
menu
quiche
fatigue
garage
morgue
stethoscope
elite

Tip from the Top

French has many different vowel sounds and diphthongs that are distinctly French, but it has only the same 26 letters to spell them with that English has. Therefore, French relies on certain combinations of vowels and consonants in spelling to show what vowel sound is meant. When pronounced in English, many of these sounds are simplified. The result is that many different English spellings stand for the same sound in French words.



(For footnotes, see Spelling Tips, page 10.)

CHALLENGE WORDS



- gauche** ⁹ \ˈgōsh\ *adj* lacking social experience or grace.
- rapport** \ra-ˈpɔr\ *n* harmonious and easy relations between parties.
- camouflage** \ˈka-mə-ˌflāzh\ *n* concealment by means of disguise.
- genre** \ˈzhän-rə\ *n* a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition.
- virgule** \ˈvər-(,)gyül\ *n* a forward slash.
- debacle** \dē-ˈbā-kəl\ *n* a great disaster or failure.

fusillade ¹⁰ \ˈfyü-sə-ˌläd\ *n* a number of shots fired in succession.

saboteur \sa-bə-ˈtər\ *n* someone who carries out an act or process tending to hamper or hurt.

renaissance \re-nə-ˈsän(t)s\ *n* a period of renewed activity.

chauvinism \ˈshō-və-ˌni-zəm\ *n* an unfair attitude of superiority over a group.

recidivist \ri-ˈsi-də-ˌvist\ *n* someone who relapses, especially to a life of crime.

chassis \ˈcha-sē\ *n* the supporting frame or structure of a machine or car.

détente \dā-ˈtānt\ *n* a relaxation of strained relations.

raconteur \,ra-ˌkän-ˈtər\ *n* a good storyteller.

mayonnaise ¹¹ \ˈmā-ə-ˌnāz\ *n* a thick sauce made from egg yolks and oil.

surveillance \sər-ˈvā-lən(t)s\ *n* close watch over someone or something.

repertoire \ˈre-pər-ˌtwär\ *n* a list of things that can be performed.

SPELLING TIPS FOR FRENCH WORDS

- French nearly always spells the \sh\ sound with *ch*, and this spelling of the sound is very common in words from French. *Chagrin*, *chauvinism*, and *crochet* are examples.
- A word from French ending with a stressed \et\ is usually spelled with *ette* as in *croquette* and *layette*.
- A long *a* sound (\ā\) 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*.
- A somewhat unfamiliar way to spell long *a* (\ā\) at the end of a word from French is with *er* as in one pronunciation of *foyer*.
- A long *e* sound (\ē\) 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.)
- Words ending with an \āzh\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelled *age* as in *collage*, *mirage*, *dressage*, *garage*, and *barrage*.
- A \k\ sound at the end of a word from French is often spelled *que* as in *mystique*, *boutique*, and *physique*.



⁸ The \ü\ sound (as in *boutique* and *rouge*) is usually spelled with *ou* in words from French. Sometimes, however, it is spelled with *u* as in *tutu*.

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

¹⁰ Words ending with an \äd\ 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 *aise* (pronounced \ez\ in French) is usually \āz\.

NOW YOU TRY!

- 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 (\ā\) can be spelled at the end of a word from French: \ka-ˈfā\ \ˈmā-ˌlā\
- The consonant *w* is rare in French. You get ten points for using it in French SCRABBLE®! Find the three words in the study list that have a \w\ sound and tell how this sound is spelled in each word.
- 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?
- English has dozens of words from French that end in *ee*. Some, like *melee*, have a long *a* pronunciation (\ā\). Others, like *levee*, have a long *e* (\ē\). 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?
- Of the words in 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?

All Around the Mediterranean

If you're getting an odd sense of déjà vu looking at some of these French words, you're not mistaken! Some of them are purely French—that is, they have no obvious roots in another language. A large number, however, have roots in Latin (such as *ambulance* and *renaissance*) and Greek (such as *diplomat*, *neologism*, and *stethoscope*). Long before France was an independent country it was part of the Roman Empire, and its language was close to Latin. The Roman Empire was, in turn, influenced by the civilization of classical Greece that preceded it. With so rich a heritage, the French did not have to travel very far to find a word for just about everything! *Diorama* is a special case. If you see elements in it that remind you of Greek words, you are correct; but the French actually modeled this word on a word they saw in English—*panorama*—which was, in turn, made from Greek roots!



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 in 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
begonia
samaritan
Panglossian
quixote

jeremiad
hector
Geronimo
shrapnel



CHALLENGE WORDS

- forsythia** \fər-'si-thē-ə\ *n* a shrub that has yellow flowers in the spring.
madeleine \'ma-də-lən\ *n* a small, shell-shaped cake.
bromeliad \brō-'mē-lē-'ad\ *n* any plant in the pineapple family.
mercerize \'mər-sə-'rīz\ *v* treat fabric chemically to give it strength and shine.
Fahrenheit \'fer-ən-'hīt\ *adj* relating to a scale for measuring heat.
narcissistic \,när-sə-'sis-tik\ *adj* excessively concerned for or devoted to oneself.
dahlia \'dal-yə\ *n* a flowering plant that grows from a tuber.
Baedeker \'bā-di-kər\ *n* a guidebook to a foreign country.

NOW YOU TRY!

- Three of the eponyms listed above are inspired by characters from Greek or Roman mythology. Which three eponyms are they?
- 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?

For additional challenge words and other activities, visit www.myspellit.com. You may be asked to spell these additional challenge words in competition.

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. Most English borrowings from German happened relatively early in the history of English, but occasionally there are new arrivals. These tend to become English with fewer spelling changes than the early borrowings did.



angst¹
pretzel
waltz
haversack
nosh
sauerbraten
hinterland
verboten
kitsch²
liverwurst
streusel
umlaut
wanderlust
eiderdown

schnauzer
Meistersinger³
lederhosen
kohlrabi
sitzmark
vorlage⁴
langlauf
autobahn
Backstein
inselberg
gestalt
einkorn
gestapo
rucksack

echt
knapsack
feldspar
poltergeist
noodle
spareribs
pumpnickel
bratwurst
strudel
seltzer
bagel
hamster
spritz⁵
cobalt

nachtmusik
graupel
Wagnerian
cringle
fife
glitz
homburg
Bildungsroman
kuchen
pitchblende
prattle
zwinger

CHALLENGE WORDS

(For footnotes, see Spelling Tips, page 14.)

- schottische**⁶ \'shā-tish\ *n* a round dance similar to a polka.
dreidel \'drā-d'əl\ *n* a four-sided toy like a top.
weimaraner \,vī-mə-'rā-nər\ *n* a breed of large, gray-haired pointers.
ersatz \'er-'sāts\ *adj* being an inferior or artificial substitute.
fräulein \'fröi-,līn\ *n* an unmarried German woman.
blitzkrieg⁷ \'blits-,krēg\ *n* war conducted with great speed and force.
gesundheit \gə-'zūnt-'hīt\ *interj* said to acknowledge that someone has sneezed.
pfeffernuss \'fe-fər-'nūs\ *n* a small, hard, spicy Christmas cookie.
edelweiss⁸ \'ā-d'əl-,vīs\ *n* a small, white, alpine flower.
glockenspiel \'glä-kən-'spēl\ *n* a percussion instrument somewhat like a xylophone.
rottweiler \'rät-,wī-lər\ *n* a breed of black-and-tan, short-haired guard dogs.
anschluss \'än-'shlūs\ *n* political or economic union of two states.



SPELLING TIPS FOR GERMAN WORDS

- 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 *gst* in *angst*, *schn* in *schnauzer*, and *nschl* in *anschluss*.
- 2 A \k\ sound in a word from German is usually spelled with *k* at the beginning of a word or syllable (as in *einkorn*, *kitsch*, and *kuchen*) and often with *ck* at the end of a word or syllable (as in *glockenspiel* and *rucksack*).
- 3 A long *i* sound (\i:) usually has the spelling *ei* in words from German, as in *fräulein*, *Meistersinger*, and several other words in the list.

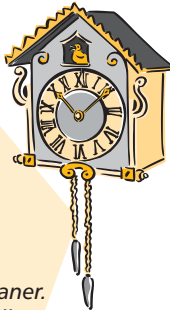
⁴ The \f\ sound, especially at the beginning of a word, is sometimes spelled with *v* in German words as in *vorlage*. Other examples include the non-study-list words *herrenvolk* and *volkslied*.

⁵ The letter *z* is far more common in German than in English. Note that its pronunciation is not usually the same as English \z\. When it follows a *t*, which is common, the pronunciation is \s\ as in *spritz*, *pretzel*, and *seltzer*.

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

⁷ A long *e* sound (\ē) usually has the spelling *ie* in words from German, as in *blitzkrieg*.

⁸ The letter *w* is properly pronounced as \v\ in German, as you hear in one pronunciation of *edelweiss*. Many German words, however, have become so anglicized that this pronunciation has vanished. Most Americans, for example, say "bratwurst," not "braturust."



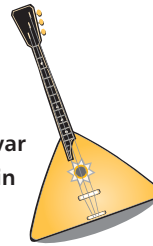
NOW YOU TRY!

1. A surprising number of words in English for dog breeds come from German. In our list there are three: *rottweiler*, *schnauzer*, and *weimaraner*. See if you can fill in the blanks in the following words to correctly spell some other dog breeds from German:
da __ s __ nd p __ __ le affenp __ sch __ Do __ __ m __ n
2. The spellings of the words *streusel*, *pretzel*, and *snorkel* are all typical of German words. The spelling of *noodle*, 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* in words from German is usually pronounced about the same way when these words arrive in English. Looking at *umlaut*, *sauerbraten*, *autobahn*, *schnauzer*, and *langlauf*, which word would you say has been more anglicized in its usual pronunciation? Why do you think this is?

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.



gulag
parka
Slav
robot
samovar
kremlin
troika
slave
mammoth
Siberian



tundra
Permian
kishke
glasnost
paprika
sable
kasha
nebbish
polka
Bolshevik

vampire
sputnik
knish
cravat
babushka
Soviet
Borzoï
gopak

cheka
sevruga
trepak
purga
kovsh
baba

CHALLENGE WORDS

balalaika \,ba-lə-'lī-kə\ *n* a three-stringed Russian musical instrument.

kielbasa \kēl-'bā-sə\ *n* a smoked sausage from Poland.

perestroika \,pɛr-ə-'strɔi-kə\ *n* economic and political reform in the former Soviet Union.

apparatchik \,ä-pə-'rä(t)-chik\ *n* a blindly devoted official or follower.

commissar \'kä-mə-'sär\ *n* a Communist party official.

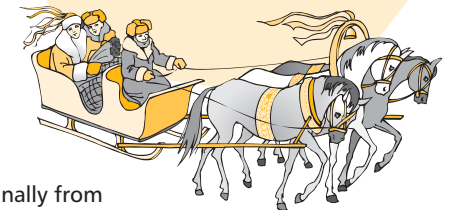
NOW YOU TRY!

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?

nebbish kishke cravat knish

Tip from the Top

The "sound it out" strategy works well with most words of Slavic origin. Although some Slavic languages use the Roman alphabet and some, like Russian and Bulgarian, use the Cyrillic alphabet, our spellings of most of these words are fairly English-friendly. Take note: The frequent schwa \ə\ at the end of words is spelled with *a*, and the \k\ sound is nearly always spelled with *k*.





cockatoo
keelhaul
harpoon
furlough
bowery
easel
holster
howitzer

freebooter
waffle
trawl
uproar
beleaguer
cruller
yacht
wiseacre
brackish
decoy
caboose
buckwheat

walrus
crimp
bluff
stipple
floss
cruiser
hustle
klompen
polder
bundle
catkin
splice

Flemish
grabble
huckster
frolic
ravel
tattle
scum
trek
scrabble
clapboard
gruff

CHALLENGE WORD

maelstrom \ˈmāl-strəm\ *n* a powerful, violent whirlpool.

True in Part

Buckwheat is an example of a "part translation." When a word that has two parts (like English *rowboat*) travels from another language to English, we sometimes translate one part and keep the sound of the other part without translating it. The original Dutch for *buckwheat* is *boekweit*. When this word came into English, we kept the sound of *boek* and translated *weit* ("wheat").

NOW YOU TRY!

1. All of the following non-study-list words are part translations from another language. Can you guess the original language of each? Use a dictionary if you can't guess!

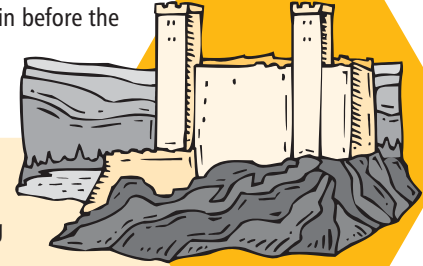
cranberry grosbeak alpenglow smearcase



Tip from the Top

A typical Dutch word in English is often a hybrid. It gives some clues to its Dutch origins either in sound or spelling, but it has also been made more English-friendly as a result of spending years on the tongues and pens of English speakers. When you hear "Dutch origin," the best bet to start with is just to spell the word as it sounds. But be on the lookout for unusual vowel-sound spellings such as those you see in *furlough* and *maelstrom*.

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!



quell¹
barrow
dearth
bower
paddock
blithe
keen
mongrel
reckless
alderman
whirlpool
belay²
cleanser
dreary³
bequeath
sallow⁴
dross
lithe
gristle
earwig
fickle
nestle⁵
fennel



nostril
abide
behest
slaughter⁶
gospel
furlong
linseed
nether
fathom
nightingale
farthing
threshold
kith
wanton
loam⁷
yield
mattock
hawthorn
tithe
behoove
aspens
mermaid
anvil

forlorn
quiver
hustings
barley
linden
hassock
orchard
hearth⁸
watery
fiend
goatee
earthenware
windily
dealership
bookkeeping
fiery
learned
nosiest

creepy
errand
daily
broadleaf
stringy
workmanship
newfangled
timely
dogged
mootable
womanly
folksiness
dairy

(For footnotes, see Spelling Tips, page 18.)

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 in the list, try to remember them together with another word or words with a similar sound and spelling.

CHALLENGE WORDS

heifer \ˈhe-fər\ *n* a young cow that has not produced a calf.

mistletoe \ˈmi-səl-tō\ *n* a semiparasitic shrub with white berries that grows on trees.

salve \ˈsæv\ *n* a healing ointment.



Peer Pressure: Words Feel It Too!

Have you ever noticed that when someone joins a group, he or she often does whatever possible to blend in? Believe it or not, words often do the same thing! The best way for a new word to survive in a language is to look or sound like other words. Before long, the new word is accepted as a native.

For example, our list has three words that (a) have two syllables, (b) have a double consonant, and (c) end with *ock*: *paddock*, *mattock*, and *hassock*. The *-ock* part of these words is an Old English suffix used to form diminutives (smaller versions of something). Now, look at these non-study-list English words: *cassock*, *haddock*, and *hammock*. If you guessed that they all came from Old English using the same suffix, you would be wrong! All these words came into English later and some came from other languages, but it was easy and convenient to spell them according to a familiar pattern.

SPELLING TIPS FOR OLD ENGLISH WORDS

- ¹ Old English likes double consonants following short vowels, especially if the vowel is in a stressed syllable. Examples include *quell*, *paddock*, *mattock*, *sallow*, *fennel*, *hassock*, and *errand*.
- ² A long *a* sound (\ā\) at the end of an Old English word is often 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*, and *womanly*.
- ⁴ Long *o* (\ō\) at the end of Old English words is typically spelled with *ow* as in *sallow*. 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 \səl\ ends an Old English word, it is nearly always spelled *stle*, with the *t* being silent. The only common exception to this rule is *pestle*, which some people pronounce as \ˈpes-təl\.
- ⁶ Silent *gh* after a vowel is common in Old English words, 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 \ī\.
- ⁷ The vowel combination *oa* in Old English words is nearly always pronounced as long *o* (\ō\) as in *loam* and *goatee*. Examples not on the study list include *shoal*, *loathe*, 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*, and *hearth* versus *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.

example: paddock

clue: a small hill

pattern: double consonant followed by *ock*

answer: hillock

A. example: harrow

1. **clue:** a pointed weapon
2. **clue:** the filling of bones
3. **clue:** a small songbird
4. **challenge clue:** a wild plant with yellow or white flowers

pattern: double consonant followed by *ow*

answer: _____

answer: _____

answer: _____

answer: _____

B. example: sallow

5. **clue:** not deep
6. **clue:** thick fat from cattle
7. **challenge clue:** a plant with showy flowers
8. **challenge clue:** (of a field) not cultivated

pattern: consonant sound followed by *allow*

answer: _____

answer: _____

answer: _____

answer: _____

C. example: lithe

9. **clue:** what your lungs do
10. **clue:** churn or foam as if boiling
11. **challenge clue:** twist from pain or suffering
12. **challenge clue:** a cutting tool with a curved blade

pattern: ending \th\ spelled as *the*

answer: _____

answer: _____

answer: _____

answer: _____

D. example: nestle

13. **clue:** a stiff hair
14. **clue:** a common weed with prickly leaves
15. **challenge clue:** a frame that supports
16. **challenge clue:** a formal word for a letter

pattern: ending \səl\ spelled as *stle*

answer: _____

answer: _____

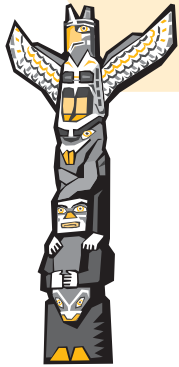
answer: _____

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.

condor
iguana
hurricane¹
kahuna
hogan
jerky
muskrat
hominy
wigwam
pampas
caribou²
toboggan
persimmon
quinine
powwow
bayou
coyote³
tamale
toucan
poi
petunia
cashew
luau



totem
mahimahi
hickory
cacao
kona
malihini
wikiwiki
Tuckahoe
pecan

chipotle
skunk
woodchuck⁴
chocolate
muumuu
puma
tomato

Tip 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. *Cashew*, for example, 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.

CHALLENGE WORDS

opossum \('ə-)'pā-səm\ *n* a marsupial native to eastern North America.

terrapin \('ter-ə-pən\ *n* an aquatic turtle native to North America.

SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM NEW WORLD LANGUAGES

- 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.
- 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 \ü\ 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*.
- Coyote* shows evidence of having passed through Spanish on its way to English: The voiced final *e* is typical of Spanish words. Another example from this list is *tamale*.
- 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.

It Feels Nice to Say It Twice

Did you ever lose a *flip-flop* at a *wingding* where all the *bigwigs* were eating *couscous*? Well, maybe not. But it would be fun to say that you did! All human languages have a feature called "reduplication." It applies to words that fit any of three patterns: (a) both syllables are identical (as in *couscous*), (b) the second syllable rhymes with the first (as in *wingding* and *bigwig*), and (c) the second syllable has a different vowel but the same consonants as the first (as in *flip-flop*). The reason that all languages have reduplicative words is that people like them! They're fun to say and easy to remember. This study list has four reduplications: *powwow*, *mahimahi*, *wikiwiki*, and *muumuu*. Such words are usually easy to spell. If the syllables are identical, they are spelled identically. If they differ only by the vowel sounds or only by the consonant sounds, then only that part of the word changes from one syllable to the next.

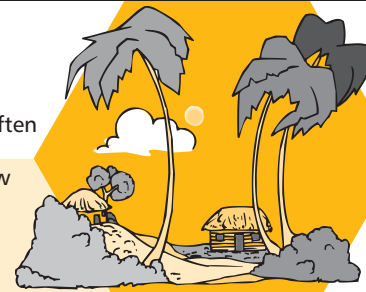
NOW YOU TRY!

- The two words in 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?

pennyroyal campanula
brooklime chickling poppy

- 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





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. Japanese is written in English according to the sound of Japanese words and is not influenced by the Japanese writing system, which uses symbols for words rather than letters.

ninja
sushi¹
tofu
shogun
sayonara

honcho
karate²
samurai
teriyaki
sashimi
tsunami
tycoon

haiku³
futon
mikado⁴
hibachi
origami
geisha⁵
wasabi

ramen
kudzu
banzai
sumo
koan
satori
tatami
sukiyaki

CHALLENGE WORD

karaoke \,ker-ē-ō-kē\ *n* a form of entertainment in which ordinary people sing popular songs.



SPELLING TIPS FOR JAPANESE WORDS

- ¹ A long e sound (\ē\) is very common at the end of Japanese words and is usually spelled with *i* as in *sushi*, *teriyaki*, *wasabi*, and several other words on the list.
- ² Be careful, however, of some Japanese words in which long e is spelled simply with *e* as in *karate* and *karaoke*.
- ³ An \ü\ 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*, and *sumo*.
- ⁵ A long a sound (\ā\) heard in *geisha* is spelled *ei* in some words from Japanese.

NOW YOU TRY!

1. Study the sounds that occur at the ends of words from Japanese in 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 pundit 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 Japanese words has?
matsutake kamikaze netsuke wakame

The words in this list are all 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.



lethargy
android
chronic
biopsy
irony
automaton
enthusiasm
synopsis
homogeneous
odyssey
megalopolis
acme¹
synonym
orthodox
aristocracy
calypso
patriarch
hierarchy
character²
isobar
asterisk
eclectic
melancholy
stoic
chronology
eulogy
didactic
cosmetic
Spartan
geothermal

cynical³
homonym
cryptic
hypothesis
academy
pentathlon
antibiotic
diatribe
etymology
hydraulic⁴
trauma
topography
hygiene
semantics
thesaurus
phenomenon
cosmos
protagonist
acronym
paradox
synchronous
misanthropy
sarcasm
ephemeral⁵
polygon
nemesis

syntax
eureka
panic
apostrophe
geranium
metaphor
spherical
xylophone⁶
dynamic
myriad
epiphany
apathy
synergy
amnesia
philanthropy
democracy
strategy⁷
diagnosis
topical
matriarch
endemic
analysis⁸
rhetoric
eponym
agnostic
dogma
idiom
thermal

dyslexia
Olympian
allegory
pragmatic
adamant
protocol
tragic
hydrology
polymer
notochord
biblical
ergonomic
mathematics
tachometer
protein
rhinoceros
hyphen
autopsy
pyre
herpetology
angelic
tritium
androcentric
demotic
geode
hedonism

CHALLENGE WORDS



dichotomy \dī-'kă-tə-mē\ *n* a division into two things or groups.

misogynist \mə-'să-jə-nist\ *n* someone who dislikes women.

hypocrisy \hi-'pă-krə-sē\ *n* pretending to believe or practice something when in fact one does not.

diphthong \dɪf-'thŏŋ\ *n* two vowel sounds pronounced together.

mnemonic \ni-'mă-nik\ *adj* related to memory or intended to assist memory.

anomaly \ə-'nă-mə-lē\ *n* something that is abnormal or peculiar and cannot be easily explained.

zephyr \ze-'fər\ *n* a warm, westerly breeze.

hippopotamus \hi-pə-'pă-tə-məs\ *n* a large, gray-skinned mammal that lives in rivers in Africa.

euphemism \yü-fə-'mi-zəm\ *n* an acceptable word that substitutes for one that is rude or offensive.

anachronism \ə-'na-krə-'ni-zəm\ *n* something that seems unlikely or impossible in the time that it occurs.

metamorphosis \,me-tə-'mŏr-fə-səs\ *n* change of physical form or substance.

hyperbole \hī-'pər-bə-(j)lē\ *n* extreme exaggeration.

arachnid \ə-'răk-nəd\ *n* a group of animals that includes spiders, scorpions, mites, and ticks.

paradigm \pə-'rə-'dīm\ *n* a very clear or useful example.

SPELLING TIPS FOR GREEK WORDS

¹ In a few words from Greek, *e* appears at the end of a word and has long *e* sound \ē\ : Some examples are *acme*, *apostrophe*, and *hyperbole*.

² A \k\ 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*, *hierarchy*, *matriarch*, *melancholy*, *notochord*, *patriarch*, *synchronous*, and *tachometer*.

³ The most frequent sound that *y* gets in words from Greek is short *i* (\i\) as in *calypso*, *cryptic*, *cynical*, *dyslexia*, *eponym*, *homonym*, *polymer*, *synchronous*, *synergy*, *synonym*, *synopsis*, and *syntax*.

⁴ A long *i* sound (\ī\) in a word that comes from Greek is sometimes represented by *y*, especially after *h*, as in *dynamic*, *hydraulic*, *hydrology*, *hyperbole*, *hyphen*, and *hypothesis*.

⁵ The Greek letter called *phi* (pronounced \fī\), even though its sound is exactly the same as English *f*, almost always appears as *ph* in words from Greek. Consider, for example: *apostrophe*, *diphthong*, *ephemeral*, *epiphany*, *euphemism*, *hyphen*, *metamorphosis*, *metaphor*, *phenomenon*, *philanthropy*, *spherical*, *topography*, and *zephyr*. These words are only a sample: Hundreds of words in English derived from Greek show this spelling.



⁶ The letter *o* is the vowel most often used to connect two Greek word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (\ə\) as in *xylophone*, *notochord*, and *ergonomic* 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 \j\ sound is always spelled with *g* in words from Greek. No *j* appears in any of the words in 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.



EXAMPLE

apathy \ə-'pə-'thē\ *n* lack of feeling. The *path* part of this word comes from the Greek word for "feeling." Some other words you might think of: *empathy*, *pathology*, *sympathy*, *telepathy*.

- analysis** \ə-'na-lə-səs\ *n* separation of something into its parts. The *lysis* part of this word means "loosening" or "breaking up" in Greek.
- android** \ə-'nɒ-'drɔɪd\ *n* a robot that looks like a human. The *andr* part of this word comes from the Greek word that means "man."
- diatribe** \dī-'ə-'trīb\ *n* bitter or abusive writing or speech. The *dia* part of this word means "through," "across," or "apart" in Greek words.
- isobar** \ī-'sə-'bār\ *n* a line on a map connecting places that have the same barometer reading. The *iso* part of this word means "equal" in Greek words.
- pentathlon** \pen-'tath-'lən\ *n* an athletic competition consisting of five events. The *pent/penta* part of this word comes from the Greek word that means "five."
- polygon** \pə-'lɛ-'gən\ *n* a drawn figure that encloses a space and has straight sides. The *gon* part of this word means "angle" in words from Greek.
- thermal** \thər-'mə\ *adj* related to, caused by, or involving heat. The *therm* part of this word appears in other words from Greek involving heat.

For additional challenge words and other activities, visit www.myspellit.com. You may be asked to spell these additional challenge words in competition.





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 first started catching on of giving some instructions to performers of musical scores, 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, but chances are we might have adopted them anyway: Who doesn't like Italian food?

staccato
ballot
confetti ¹
semolina
influenza
cavalry
piazza
cadenza
pistachio
spinet
cantata
incognito ²
vendetta
contraband
mascara
graffiti
credenza

parapet
falsetto
ditto
provolone ³
extravaganza
scampi
belladonna
gondola
rotunda
cauliflower
galleria
regatta
crescendo ⁴
balcony
portfolio
antipasto
libretto

virtuoso
harmonica
maestro
bravura
fresco
stucco ⁵
inferno
ballerina
malaria
grotto
harpichord
allegro
virtuosa
spaghetti
piccolo
ravioli
vibrato
pesto
aria
bambino
salami
Parmesan
oratorio
finale
scenario
contrapuntal
illuminati
concerto
macaroni
palmetto
bandit



CHALLENGE WORDS

scherzo ⁶ \ˈskert-(j)sō\ *n* a sprightly, humorous, instrumental musical composition.

adagio \ə-ˈdā-j(ē-)ō\ *adv* (as a musical direction) slowly.

segue \ˈse-(j)gwā\ *v* proceed smoothly from one activity, topic, scene, or part to another without pausing.

zucchini ⁷ \zú-ˈkē-nē\ *n* a tube-shaped summer squash.

capricious \kə-ˈpri-shəs\ *adj* impulsive or unpredictable in attitude.

archipelago \,är-kə-ˈpe-lə-gō\ *n* a group of scattered islands.

charlatan \ˈshär-lə-tən\ *n* a pretender to special knowledge or skill : a quack.

maraschino \,mer-ə-ˈskē-(j)nō\ *n* a cherry preserved in syrup.

paparazzo ⁸ \,pā-pə-ˈrät-(j)sō\ *n* an aggressive photographer of celebrities.

SPELLING TIPS FOR ITALIAN WORDS

- ¹ Long e (\ē\) at the end of a word from Italian is usually spelled with *i* as in *confetti*, *graffiti*, *zucchini*, 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 (\ō\) at the end of an Italian word is spelled with *o* as in *incognito*, *vibrato*, *stucco*, *virtuoso*, *concerto*, and many other words on the list.
- ³ A long e sound (\ē\) at the end of a word from Italian can be spelled with *e* as in *provolone* and *finale*, 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* 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* (\ō\) as in *stucco* or when it comes before \ä\ as in *staccato*.
- ⁶ Another Italian spelling of \k\ is *ch* as in *scherzo*.
- ⁷ The sound \ē-nē\, common at the end of Italian words (it forms diminutives), is usually spelled *ini*.
- ⁸ The double consonant *zz* is typically pronounced \ts\ in words from Italian, as in *paparazzo*.



NOW YOU TRY!

Officially, Italian uses only 21 of the 26 letters in the Roman alphabet. The letters it doesn't use (*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 puzzlers!

1. One word in 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 a word in the Challenge Words list. What letter is used to spell it?
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.

burrito	pueblo	vanilla	langosta
embargo ¹	hacienda	fiesta	alamo
chimichanga	fandango	anchovy	barrio
gazpacho	quesadilla ³	mesa ⁵	cedilla
mariachi ²	flotilla	ramada	Argentine
sombrero	tornado	junco	bolivar
alligator	flamenco ⁴	cafeteria	amarillo
canasta	vigilante	bongo	cordovan
bonanza	adios	mantilla ⁶	desperado
chinchilla	cabana	oregano	empanada
cilantro	gordita	lariat	tomatillo
castanets	peccadillo	chalupa	diablo
machismo	filibuster	buffalo ⁷	pochismo
enchilada	tortilla	renegade	



CHALLENGE WORDS

sassafras \ˈsɑ-sə-ˈfrɑs\ *n* a tree of the eastern United States with different leaf shapes.

punctilio \ˌpʌŋk-ˈti-lē-ō\ *n* a minor point of conduct.

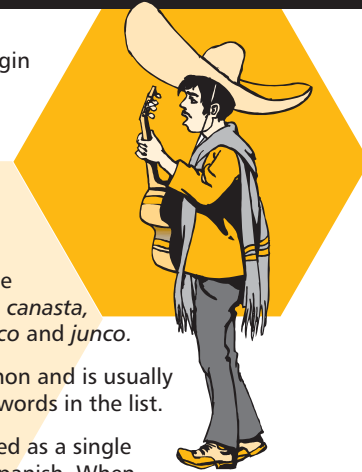
sarsaparilla \ˌsɑs-pə-ˈri-lə\ *n* a flavoring made from the roots of plants.

SPELLING TIPS FOR SPANISH WORDS

¹ A long o sound (\ō\) 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 in this list.

Tips from the Top

The good news about words from Spanish is that they are often spelled the way they sound. There is no need to throw in any silent letters in most cases! Study the list and have a look at the individual tips on the next page.



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

³ The \k\ sound is sometimes spelled with *qu* in words of Spanish origin. This is especially true when the vowel sound that follows is long a (\ā\), long e (\ē\), or short *i* (\i\). *Quesadilla* is an example 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 (\ə\) as in *canasta*, short a (\a\) as in *castanets*, or long o (\ō\) 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 *bonanza*, *canasta*, and several other words in 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* and *tomatillo*, even have two pronunciations in English. *Quesadilla* and *tortilla* always have the \y\ pronunciation in English; *chinchilla*, *flotilla*, *vanilla*, *peccadillo*, and *cedilla* always have the \l\ 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. The only word beginning with *j* on our study list also begins with a \j\ sound, but this is not always the case with words from Spanish. What is the initial consonant sound in these three non-study-list words, which also come from Spanish?

jalapeño junta joboba

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 in 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 legarto* 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 *xious* 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 *artichoke*), *c* (as in *carmine*), *q* (as in *sequin*), *que* (as in *mosque*), and *ch* (as in *alchemy*).

Words from Asian Languages page 8

1. The sound is \ü\ and is spelled with *oo* in *oolong*, *mongoose*, *shampoo*, *typhoon*, and *bamboo*.
2. Long *e* (\ē\) is spelled with *y* (in *cushy* and *gunnysack*), *ey* (in *chutney*), and *i* (in *basmati*).
3. *Bungalow* probably got a *w* on the end because many other English words that have the same final sound end in *ow*: *flow*, *glow*, *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* and *boudoir* the *oi* is pronounced \wä\.
3. The two words are *mirror* and *miracle*.
4. Some words ending with long *a* (\ā\) are *entree*, *lycée*, *protégée*, and *soiree*.
Some words ending with long *e* (\ē\) are *agree*, *apogee*, *degree*, *disagree*, *lessee*, *pedigree*, and *refugee*.

The endings of the words *divorcee* and *repartee* can be pronounced with either a long *a* (\ā\) or a long *e* (\ē\).

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

Eponyms page 12

1. The three eponyms based on characters from Greek or Roman mythology are *narcissistic*, *tantalize*, and *hector*.
2. Answers will vary; your teacher can help you.

Words from German pages 13–14

1. The breeds are *dachshund*, *poodle*, *affenpinscher*, and *Doberman*.
2. The terminal sound \əɪ\ is spelled *el* in the German style and *le* 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*, *peacenik*, *refusenik*, and in 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 Dutch page 16

1. *Cranberry*, *alpenglow*, and *smearcase* 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. *breathe*
10. *seethe* 11. *writhe* 12. *scythe*
13. *bristle* 14. *thistle* 15. *trestle*
16. *epistle*

Words from New World Languages pages 20–21

1. *Pennyroyal*, *brooklime*, and *chickling* all are results of folk etymology.
2. *Catalpa* and *guava* are from New World languages.

Words from Japanese page 22

1. *Pundit* 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 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. *android*, *misandry*, *androcracy*
3. *diadem*, *diagnosis*, *diagonal*, *diagram*, *diaphragm*
4. *isopropyl*, *isosceles*, *isotherm*, *isotope*
5. *pentagram*, *pentagon*, *pentameter*, *Pentateuch*, *Pentecost*

6. *decagon*, *hexagon*, *heptagon*, *pentagon*, *nonagon*, *octagon*, *orthogonal*
7. *hyperthermia*, *hypothermia*, *isotherm*, *thermometer*

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 \h\.
2. The 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*.

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