

2018



Spell It!

Tricks & Tips
for Spelling Bee Success



2018

ABOUT THE BEE

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is an educational promotion sponsored by The E.W. Scripps Company in conjunction with sponsoring newspapers and 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 near their locales and send their champions to the finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee near 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, virtual, and home schools. Participants must not have reached their 15th birthday on or before August 31, 2017, and must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before February 1, 2018. A comprehensive set of eligibility requirements may be found 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 96 National Spelling Bee champions, 49 have been girls and 47 have been boys. Co-champions were declared in 1950, 1957, 1962, 2014, 2015 and 2016. The 2018 Scripps National Spelling Bee will involve more than eleven million students at the local level.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information

- 2 About This Booklet

Word Lists and Spelling Tips

- 3 Words from Latin
 6 Words from Arabic
 8 Words from Asian Languages
 9 Words from French
 12 Eponyms
 13 Words from German
 15 Words from Slavic Languages
 16 Words from Dutch
 17 Words from Old English
 20 Words from New World Languages
 22 Words from Japanese
 23 Words from Greek
 26 Words from Italian
 28 Words from Spanish
 30 Key to Exercises



2017 Champion
Ananya Vinay

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.

Copyright © 2017
 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

All rights reserved. No part of this book covered by the copyrights hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, taping, or information storage and retrieval systems—without written permission of the publisher.

Made in the United States of America

Credits

Text: Orin K. Hargraves
 Editing: Carolyn B. Andrews
 Mark A. Stevens
 Merriam-Webster Inc.
 Design: Lynn Stowe Tomb
 Merriam-Webster Inc.



Welcome to the 2018 edition of *Spell It!*, the Scripps National Spelling Bee study booklet for school spelling champions. 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 *Merriam-Webster Unabridged* (www.Merriam-WebsterUnabridged.com). The etymological information in *Merriam-Webster Unabridged* 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 district- and regional-level spelling bees this year. In some highly competitive district and regional spelling bees, however, spellers remaining at the end of the contest will receive words that do not appear in this booklet. Some organizers of district and regional 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 an official list of study words for 2018 district- and regional-level bees, 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! 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.



WORDS FROM LATIN

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.



inane
 relevant
 impetuous
 ambivalent
 dejected
 postmortem
 incriminate
 access
 plausible
 interrupt ¹
 alliteration
 refugee
 amicable
 lucid ²
 percolate
 meticulous
 fastidious
 trajectory
 animosity
 implement
 ambiguity
 curriculum
 omnivorous
 bellicose
 electoral
 crescent ³
 obsequious
 transect

precipice
 susceptible
 condolences ⁴
 benefactor
 candidate
 bugle
 formidable
 canary
 subterfuge
 abdicate
 lunatic
 carnivore ⁵
 gregarious
 ostentatious
 prosaic ⁶
 herbivore
 prodigal
 magnanimous
 benevolent
 mercurial
 simile
 jovial
 ridiculous
 innate
 obstinate
 discern

mediocre
 insidious
 rupture
 precipitate
 erudite
 colloquial
 intractable
 exuberant ⁷
 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

*study words
 continued on
 page 4*





femininity
confidence
triumvirate
popularity
diary
humble
vivisection
strict

prosecute
contiguous
ductile
gradient
current
perfidy
fidelity
incorruptible

CHALLENGE WORDS

soliloquy
accommodate
pernicious⁸
efficacy
visceral
exacerbate
indigenous
belligerent

vernacular
infinitesimal
recalcitrant
innocuous
precocious
ameliorate
commensurate
facetious

prerogative
ubiquitous
egregious
aggregate
tertiary
corpuscle
perennial

SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM LATIN

- 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 *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*, *subterfuge*, *ambiguity*, and *prosecute* and in one pronunciation of *refugee*).
- ³ Beware of words like *crescent* in which the \s\ sound is spelled with *sc* in words from Latin. Other examples include *visceral*, *discern*, *discipline*, *susceptible*, and *corpuscle*.
- 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*.

WORDS FROM LATIN

- 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*, *cognition*, *ductile*, *incorruptible*, *vernacular*, *innocuous*, and many other words on the list.
- 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*. It is important to keep in mind that several adjectives from Latin ending with this sound end in *eous* rather than *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 *herbaceous*, *cetaceous*, and *lilaceous*.



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 (\i\) and is spelled with *i*. Can you think of three such words?
- Three words on 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:

jbstuce

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?





Words from Arabic have come into English in two different ways. A relative 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
mummy¹
tarragon
adobe
mohair
borax
talc
arsenal
lemon
tuna

admiral
hazard
apricot
carmine
monsoon
average
gazelle²
crimson
orange
sequin
macrame
algebra
guitar

nabob
giraffe
mattress
elixir
saffron
cotton
albatross³
zero
safari⁴
magazine
zenith
alfalfa
imam

mosque
alcohol
tariff
lilac
alcove
massage
henna⁵
alchemy
sugar
taj
mahal
khan
ghoul



CHALLENGE WORDS

muslin	tahini	alim
camphor	Qatari	Swahili
algorithm	alkali	mihrab
minaret	serendipity	salaam
serdab	nadir	mukhtar
tamarind	douane	khorr
carafe	fennec	foggara
julep	hafiz	diffa
marzipan	azimuth	coffle
nenuphar	bezoar	
alcazar	halal	

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.

WORDS FROM ARABIC

SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM ARABIC

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



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 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 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?
- Arabic has three different letters, all with different sounds, that English speakers convert to a \k\ sound. How many different ways is \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.

dugong	bangle	shampoo	gunnysack	pundit
guru	cummerbund	typhoon	chutney	loot
cushy	juggernaut	bamboo	karma	kavya
seersucker	pangolin	jackal	jute	jiva
jungle	mahatma	dungaree	yamen	pandit
oolong	rupee	bungalow	raj	chintz
nirvana	mongoose		kama	patel

CHALLENGE WORDS

gymkhana	batik
basmati	charpoy
gingham	durwan
mandir	mahout
bhalu	prabhu
gourami	Buddha
masala	topeng
raita	lahar
tanha	jnana
asana	Holi

NOW YOU TRY!

- 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?
- 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, if you aren't familiar with a word and don't know any rules for spelling words from its language of origin, as a last resort you might try spelling it the way a speaker of English who is an untrained speller would spell it.

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.



WORDS FROM FRENCH

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.



peloton
barrage
chagrin ¹
pacifism
manicure
altruism
bureaucracy
mascot
parfait
mystique
layette ²
boutique
dressage
croquet
gorgeous
denture
mirage
denim
cachet ³
neologism
beige
diplomat
motif
suave
foyer ⁴
clementine

ambulance
rehearse
leotard
prairie ⁵
diorama
entourage
fuselage
boudoir
collage ⁶
amenable
expertise
matinee
plateau
sortie
croquette
physique ⁷
elite
deluxe
nougat
rouge ⁸
escargot
crochet
regime
doctrinaire
tutu
bevel

menu
egalitarian
quiche ⁹
fatigue
garage
morgue
stethoscope
vogue

musicale
palette
flamboyant
baton
souvenir
impasse
finesse
maladroit

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	recidivist	garçon
rapport	chassis	croissant
camouflage	détente	ecru
genre	raconteur	lieutenant
virgule	mayonnaise ¹¹	protégé
debacle	surveillance	mélange
fusillade ¹⁰	repertoire	blasé
saboteur	dossier	fête
renaissance	taupe	ingenu
chauvinism	poignant	rendezvous

SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM FRENCH

- ¹ 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.
- ² A word from French ending with a stressed \et\ is usually spelled with *ette* as in *croquette* and *layette*.
- ³ 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*.
- 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 (\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.)
- ⁶ Words ending with an \äzh\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelled *age* as in *collage*, *mirage*, *dressage*, *garage*, *barrage*, *camouflage*, *entourage*, and *fuselage*.
- ⁷ 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 *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 \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 \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 *aïse* (pronounced \ez\ in French) is usually \āz\.



WORDS FROM FRENCH

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 (\ā\) can be spelled at the end of a word from French:
 \ka-'fā\
 \'mā-,lā\
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 \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 (\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?
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?



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 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
begonia
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



NOW YOU TRY!

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 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 ¹	sitzmark	noodle	homburg
pretzel	langlauf	spareribs	kuchen
waltz	autobahn	Meistersinger ³	pitchblende
haversack	Backstein	pumpernickel	spritz ⁵
nosh	inselberg	Bildungsroman	prattle
sauerbraten	gestalt	strudel	zwinger
hinterland	einkorn	bagel	spitz
verboten	kitsch ²	hamster	realschule
liverwurst	gestapo	cobalt	panzer
streusel	schloss	nachtmusik	stollen
umlaut	rucksack	vorlage ⁴	dachshund
wanderlust	echt	graupel	seltzer
eiderdown	bratwurst	Wagnerian	
schnauzer	knapsack	cringle	
lederhosen	feldspar	fife	
kohlrabi	poltergeist	glitz	



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

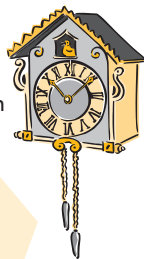
CHALLENGE WORDS

schadenfreude ⁶	pfeffernuss	springerle
dreidel	edelweiss ⁸	zeitgeber
weimaraner	glockenspiel	pickelhaube
ersatz	rottweiler	schnecke
fräulein	schottische	Weissnichtwo
blitzkrieg ⁷	anschluss	
gesundheit	wedel	



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 *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 *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 (\iː\ usually has the spelling *ei* in words from German, as in *fräulein*, *Meistersinger*, *zeitgeber*, and several other words on 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*, *blitzkrieg*, and several other words on the list.
- ⁶ The \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 (\ē\ usually has the spelling *ie* in words from German, as in *blitzkrieg* and *glockenspiel*.
- ⁸ The letter *w* is properly pronounced as \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!

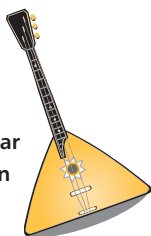
1. A surprising number of words in English for dog breeds come from German. On our list there are five: *rottweiler*, *schnauzer*, *weimaraner*, *spitz*, and *dachshund*. See if you can fill in the blanks in the following words to correctly spell some other dog breeds from German:
 dr _ ht _ a _ r p _ _ _ le affenp _ _ sch _ _ Do _ _ _ 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*, *langlauf*, *graupele*, and *pickelhaube*, which word would you say has been more anglicized in its usual pronunciation? Why do you think this is?

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.



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
Borzoi
gopak
cheka
sevruka
trepak
babka
purga

baba
cossack
nelma
kovsh
lokshen
feldsher
barabara
aul

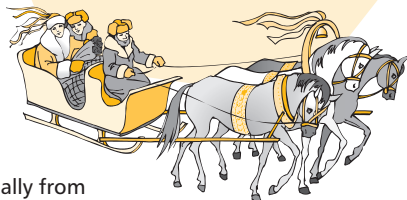
CHALLENGE WORDS

balalaika
kielbasa
tchotchke
barukhzy
perestroika
apparatchik

commissar
tokamak
pogrom
taiga
Beetewk

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 $\text{\textbackslash}\text{\textbackslash}\text{\textbackslash}$ at the end of words is usually spelled with *a*, and the $\text{\textbackslash}\text{\textbackslash}\text{\textbackslash}$ sound is nearly always spelled with *k*.



NOW YOU TRY!

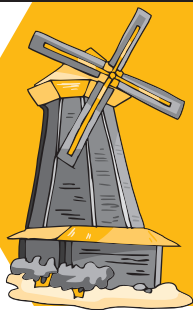
- The suffix *-nik* as in *sputnik* comes originally from Slavic languages to denote a person of a certain type. Can you think of any other words in English (most of them informal) that use this suffix?
- Look up these four study-list words in a dictionary and study the etymologies. Which is the odd one out, and why?

nebbish

kishke

cravat

knish



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.

cockatoo
keelhaul
harpoon
furlough
bowery
easel
holster
freebooter
waffle
trawl
uproar
beleaguer
culler
yacht

wiseacre
brackish
decoy
caboose
buckwheat
walrus
howitzer
crimp
bluff
stipple
floss
cruiser
hustle
klompen
polder
bundle
catkin
splice

Flemish
grabble
huckster
frolic
ravel
tattle
scum
trek
scrabble
clapboard
gruff
isinglass
excise
blister
rabbit
package
muddle
handsome

foist
staple
gulden
mart
screen
guilder
etch
Netherlander
dune
croon
ticket
buckwagon
hock
boodle
guy

daffodil
loiter
potash
scow
wintergreen
trigger
stripe
bruin
skipper
waywiser
spoor
mizzle
school
pickle
snuff

CHALLENGE WORDS

mynheer	bobbejaan	apartheid
waterzooi	keeshond	hartebeest
flense	voortrekker	keest
muishond	uitlander	wainscot
witloof	hollandaise	rodeboek
springbok	galjoen	
maelstrom	schipperke	

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

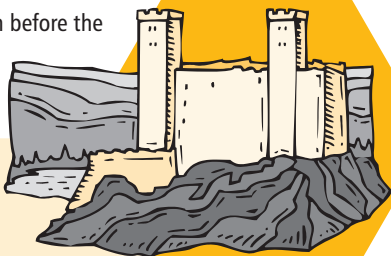
grosbeak

alpenglow

smearcase

WORDS FROM OLD ENGLISH

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!



quell ¹	fickle	hawthorn	bookkeeping	womanly
barrow	nestle ⁵	tithe	fiery	manhandle
dearth	fennel	behoove	learned	folksiness
bower	nostril	forlorn	nosiest	worrisome
paddock	abide	quiver	creepy	roughhewn
blithe	behest	hustings	errand	knavery
keen	slaughter ⁶	aspen	daily	hurdle
mongrel	gospel	mermaid	gnat	kipper
reckless	furlong	anvil	broadleaf	hundredth
alderman	linseed	barley	strairy	icicle
whirlpool	nether	linden	dairy	pinafore
belay ²	fathom	hassock	workmanship	yieldable
cleanser	nightingale	orchard	newfangled	hue
dreary ³	farthing	hearth ⁸	timely	
bequeath	threshold	watery	dogged	(For footnotes, see Spelling
sallow ⁴	kith	fiend	mootable	Tips, pages 18–19.)
dross	wanton	goatee		
lithe	loam ⁷	earthenware		
gristle	yield	windily		
earwig	mattock	dealership		



CHALLENGE WORDS

heifer	Wiccan
mistletoe	shrivael
salve	chary
kirtle	

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.



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 WORDS FROM OLD ENGLISH

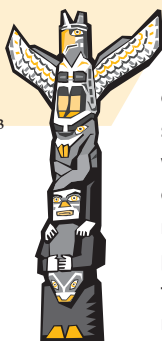
- ¹ Old English likes double consonants following short vowels, especially if the vowel is in a stressed syllable. Examples include *quell*, *paddock*, *mattock*, *sallow*, *fennel*, *hassock*, *errand*, *barrow*, *kipper*, and *Wiccan*.
- ² A long *a* sound (\ā\) at the end of words from Old English 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 \səl\ 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 \ī\.
- 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*.



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
hurricane ¹
kahuna
hogan
jerky
muskrat
hominy
wigwam
pampas
caribou ²
toboggan
persimmon
quinine
powwow

bayou
coyote ³
tamale
poi
cashew
luau
totem
mole
hickory
cacao
kona
malihini
wikiwiki
Tuckahoe
pecan



chipotle
skunk
woodchuck ⁴
chocolate
muumuu
puma
tomato
maraca
petunia
jaguar

buccaneer
llama
succotash
caucus
wampum
mahimahi
toucan

CHALLENGE WORDS

opossum
terrapin
ocelot
hoomalimali
coati
jacamar
ipecac
menhaden
sachem

Tips from the Top

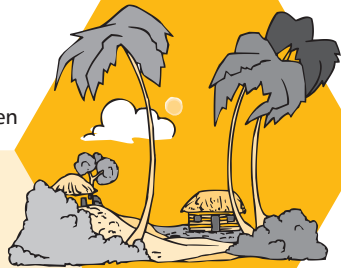
All of the source languages of words in this study list are unrelated to English, and many of them are unrelated to each other. For example, *cashew* is from the native South American language Tupi, which has no connection with Hawaiian, the source of *kahuna*, or Algonquian, which gives us *caribou*.

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.

WORDS FROM NEW WORLD LANGUAGES

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 \u028a\u028a 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 often seen in Spanish words. Two other examples on this list are *tamale* and *mole*.
- 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 *muumu*. 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 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?

pennyroyal **campanula**
chickling **brooklime** **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. 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.

ninja

sushi ¹

tofu

shogun

honcho

karate ²

samurai

teriyaki

sashimi

tsunami

haiku ³

futon

mikado ⁴

hibachi

origami

geisha ⁵

wasabi

ramen

kudzu

banzai

tycoon

sumo

koan

satori

tatami

kami

sukiyaki

kuruma

Meiji

Romaji

odori

miso

Kabuki

geta

sayonara

CHALLENGE WORDS

karaoke

sansei

kibei

nisei

issei



SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM JAPANESE

- 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*, *Meiji*, *odori*, and several other words on the list.
- ² The sound of long e is spelled simply with *e* in some words from Japanese. Examples include *karate* and *karaoke*.
- ³ An \ū\ 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 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.



lethargy
 android
 chronic
 biopsy
 irony
 automaton
 enthusiasm
 synopsis
 homogeneous
 odyssey
 megalopolis
 acme ¹
 synonym
 orthodox
 aristocracy
 calypso
 patriarch
 hierarchy
 character ²
 isobar
 asterisk
 eclectic
 melancholy
 stoic
 chronology
 eulogy
 didactic
 cosmetic
 Spartan
 geothermal
 cynical ³

homonym
 cryptic
 hypothesis
 academy
 pentathlon
 antibiotic
 diatribe
 etymology
 hydraulic ⁴
 trauma
 hygiene
 semantics
 thesaurus
 phenomenon ⁵
 cosmos
 protagonist
 acronym
 paradox
 synchronous
 misanthropy
 sarcasm
 ephemeral
 polygon
 nemesis
 syntax
 eureka
 topography

panic
 apostrophe
 geranium
 metaphor
 spherical
 xylophone ⁶
 dynamic
 myriad
 epiphany
 apathy
 synergy
 amnesia
 philanthropy
 democracy
 strategy ⁷
 diagnosis
 topical
 matriarch
 endemic
 analysis ⁸
 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
 periscope
 geaponics
 asthmogenic
 monotonous
 amphibious
 symbiosis
 macron
 periphery



(For footnotes, see Spelling Tips, pages 24–25.)



CHALLENGE WORDS

dichotomy	euphemism	pneumatic
misogynist	anachronism	Hemerocallis
hypocrisy	metamorphosis	cynsure
diphthong	hyperbole	philhellenism
mnemonic	arachnid	euthanasia
anomaly	paradigm	philately
zephyr	Eocene	cacophony
hippopotamus	gynarchy	

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 \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*, *gynarchy*, *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 *acronym*, *calypso*, *cryptic*, *cynical*, *dyslexia*, *eponym*, *homonym*, *myriad*, *Olympian*, *polymer*, *symbiosis*, *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 *hydraulic*, *hydrology*, *hygiene*, *hyperbole*, *hyphen*, *hypothesis*, *cynsure*, *dynamic*, *gynarchy*, *pyre*, and *xylophone*.
- ⁵ In ancient Greek, the letter *phi* (pronounced \fī\) 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 \f\ sound but memorialized the original sound of *phi* by using *ph* to spell it. As a result, the English \f\ sound almost always appears as *ph* in words of Greek origin. Consider, for example: *amphibious*, *apostrophe*, *cacophony*, *diphthong*, *epiphany*, *euphemism*, *hyphen*, *metamorphosis*, *metaphor*, *periphery*, *phenomenon*, *philanthropy*, *philately*, *philhellenism*, *spherical*, *topography*, *xylophone*, and *zephyr*. 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*, *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*.



WORDS FROM GREEK

⁷ The \j\ sound is always spelled with *g* in words from Greek. Why? When the \j\ 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.



EXAMPLE

apathy \ˈa-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 are: *empathy*, *pathology*, *sympathy*, and *telepathy*.



- analysis** \ə-ˈnā-lə-səs\ *n* separation of something into its parts. The *lysis* part of this word means “loosening” or “breaking up” in Greek.
- android** \ˈæn-,drɔɪd\ *n* a robot that looks like a human. The *andr* part of this word comes from the Greek word that means “man.”
- diatribe** \ˈdī-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 barometric reading. The *iso* part of this word means “equal” in Greek words.
- pentathlon** \pen-ˈtath-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** \ˈpō-lē-,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** \ˈthər-məl\ *adj* related to, caused by, or involving heat. The *therm* part of this word appears in other words from Greek involving heat.

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!

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
harpsichord
allegro
virtuosa
spaghetti
piccolo
ravioli
vibrato
pesto
aria
bambino

salami
Parmesan
oratorio
finale
scenario
contrapuntal
illuminati
concerto
macaroni
palmetto
bandit
fiasco
cameo
sonata
coloratura

CHALLENGE WORDS

scherzo ⁶
adagio
segue
zucchini ⁷
capricious
archipelago
charlatan

maraschino
paparazzo ⁸
fantoccini
mozzarella
garibaldi
ocarina
prosciutto

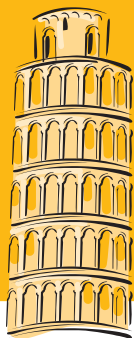
trattoria
vivace
cappelletti
pizzicato
intangio



WORDS FROM ITALIAN

SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM ITALIAN

- ¹ Long e (\ē\) at the end of a word from Italian is usually spelled with *i* as in *confetti*, *graffiti*, *zucchini*, *fantoccini*, *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 (\ō\) 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 (\ē\) at the end of a word from Italian can be spelled with *e* as in *provovone*, *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 (\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* (as in *zucchini* and *fantoccini*).
- 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 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 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?



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

CHALLENGE WORDS

sassafras	novillero
punctilio	picaresque
sarsaparilla	conquistador
comandante	rasgado
embarcadero	vaquero
rejoneador	caballero

SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM SPANISH

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 on this list.

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

Tip 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! Be sure to have a look, though, at the spelling tips on this and the next page.

WORDS FROM SPANISH

- 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* and *conquistador* (in its pronunciations both with and without the \w\ 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 (\ə\ as in *canasta* and *embarcadero*; short *a* (\a\ as in *castanets* and *caballero*; 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 *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; *chinchilla*, *flotilla*, *vanilla*, *peccadillo*, *cedilla*, and *sarsaparilla* 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!

- One of the two words beginning with *j* on our study list also begins with a \j\ 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
-----------------	-----------------	---------------	---------------
- Why do you think English uses either *c* or *qu* but not *k* to spell the \k\ sound in words of Spanish origin?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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 *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 *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 \ü\ and is spelled with *oo* in *oolong*, *mongoose*, *shampoo*, *typhoon*, *loot*, and *bamboo*.
2. Long *e* (\ē\) is spelled with *y* (in *cushy* and *gunnysack*), *ey* (in *chutney*), and *i* (in *basmati*, *batik*, *gourami*, *jiva*, and *Holi*).
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*, *boudoir*, and *croissant* the *oi* is pronounced \wä\.
3. The two words are *mirror* and *miracle*.
4. Some words ending with long *a* (\ā\) are *entree*, *lycée*, 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 *repatee* 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 six eponyms based on characters from Greek or Roman mythology are *narcissistic*, *tantalize*, *hector*, *vulcanize*, *cupid*, and *mentor*.
2. Answers will vary.

Words from German pages 13–14

1. The breeds are *drahthaar*, *poodle*, *affenpinscher*, and *Doberman*.
2. The terminal sound \əl\ 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.

KEY TO EXERCISES

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. *loathe*
10. *seethe* 11. *writhe* 12. *scythe*
13. *bristle* 14. *thistle* 15. *trestile*
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. *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 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*, *Pentateuchal*, *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 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.



ABOUT THE E.W. SCRIPPS COMPANY

The E.W. Scripps Company (NYSE: SSP) serves audiences and businesses through a growing portfolio of television, radio and digital media brands. Scripps is one of the nation's largest independent TV station owners, with 33 television stations in 24 markets and a reach of nearly one in five U.S. households. It also owns 34 radio stations in eight markets. Scripps also runs an expanding collection of local and national digital journalism and information businesses, including multi-platform satire and humor brand Cracked, podcast industry leader Midroll Media and over-the-top video news service Newsy. Scripps also produces television shows including "The List" and "The Now," runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and serves as the long-time steward of the nation's largest, most successful and longest-running educational program, the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

www.spellingbee.com

Visit our site on the Web!

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.



ABOUT MERRIAM-WEBSTER

Merriam-Webster Inc. acquired the rights to revise and publish Noah Webster's dictionaries in 1843. Since then, Merriam-Webster has maintained an ongoing commitment to innovation, scholarship, and love of language. Today, the company continues as America's leading and most-trusted provider of language information in print and digital media.

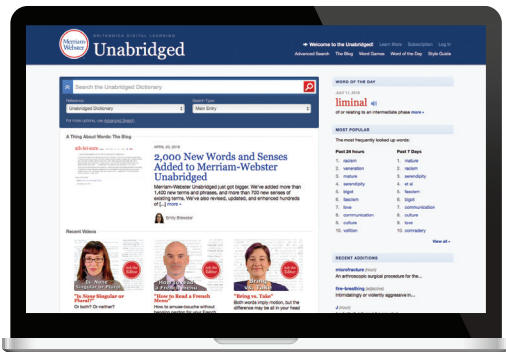
Merriam-Webster has been a strong supporter of the Scripps National Spelling Bee since 1957. The Bee's official dictionary, *Merriam-Webster Unabridged*, is available online at Merriam-WebsterUnabridged.com.

Merriam-Webster on the Web

Merriam-Webster.com—The popular mobile-friendly dictionary site featuring fascinating language information, audio pronunciations, word games and quizzes, videos, Word of the Day, and more.

WordCentral.com—Merriam-Webster's site for kids featuring the fully searchable *Merriam-Webster's Online Student Dictionary*, word games, Daily Buzzword, and more.

Merriam-WebsterUnabridged.com—The largest, most comprehensive American dictionary currently available. It is built on the solid foundation of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged* and is the best source of current information about the English language.





Spell It!

Tricks & Tips for Spelling Bee Success

Spell It!, an official list of study words for school spelling champions, compiled by Scripps and Merriam-Webster, includes:

- More than 1150 words, divided into sections by language of origin
- Basic study lists and special “challenge words”
- Rules, tips, and guidelines for successfully spelling words in English
- Practice exercises to increase understanding of word origins

Merriam-Webster Inc. • Springfield, MA 01102

Merriam-Webster.com • Merriam-WebsterUnabridged.com • WordCentral.com



@MerriamWebster

The E.W. Scripps Company
www.spellingbee.com

