Tricks & Tips for Spelling Bee Success

Spell It!

2010

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Tricks & Tips for Spelling Bee Success
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 in their locales and send their champions to the finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. The national program is coordinated by The E.W. Scripps Company corporate headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition to planning and conducting the national finals, the national office annually publishes several word publications utilized by students, educators, and sponsors.

The program is open to students attending public, private, parochial, charter, and home schools. Participants must not have reached their 15th birthday on or before September 1, 2009, and must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before February 1, 2010. A comprehensive set of eligibility requirements may be found in the Rules for Local Spelling Bees at www.spellingbee.com.

The National Spelling Bee was begun in 1925. Nine students participated in the first national finals. In 1941 Scripps Howard acquired the rights to the program. There was no Scripps National Spelling Bee during the World War II years of 1943, 1944, and 1945. Of the 85 National Spelling Bee champions, 44 have been girls and 41 have been boys. Co-champions were declared in 1950, 1957, and 1962. The 2010 Scripps National Spelling Bee will involve more than ten million students at the local level.
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
alliteration
refugee
amicable
lucid
percolate
meticulous
fastidious
trajectory
animosity
implement
ambiguity
curriculum
omnivorous
bellicose
electoral
crescent
obsequious
transect
precipice
susceptible
condolences
benefactor
candidate
bugle
formidable
canary
suberfuge
abdicade
lunatic
ostentatious
carnivore
gregarious
animosity
herbivore
prodigal
magnanimous
benevolent
mercurial
simile
jovial
ridiculous
innate
obstinate
discern
mediocre
insidious
rupture
precipitate
erudite
colloquial
intractable
exuberant
ingenious
reverspective
ominous
vulnerable
omnia
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
A related tip: When you hear within a word from Latin the \ls\ sound followed by any of the sounds of e (long, short, or schwa), there’s a possibility that the \ls\ sound is spelled with c as in exacerbate, access, adjacent, condolences, facetious, and necessary.

3. 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 (\ls\) and is spelled with i. Can you think of three such words?

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

   jjustcė  trečė  rptcjeo  cotbej

5. 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?

1. 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?

2. Some of the Latin study-list words end with the sound \sh\, 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?

Challenge Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>soliloquy</th>
<th>vernacular</th>
<th>prerogative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accommodate</td>
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<td>perennial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belligerent</td>
<td>facious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).

2. The \u sound (as in ooze) is nearly always spelled with u in words from Latin. It typically follows a \l, \s, \ls, \rs, or \ls sound. After other consonants, this sound normally becomes \u (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.

5. The letter i is a vowel often used to connect two Latin word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (\a\) 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 \sh\ 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!

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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.

### Challenge Words

- azure
- Islamic
- sultan
- artemis
- mummy
- tarragon
- adobe
- morish
- borax
- talc
- arsenic
- lemon
- tuna
- admiral
- hazard
- apricot
- carmine
- monsoon
- average
- gazelle
- orange
- sequin
- macrame
- algebra
- guitar

### Spelling Tips for Words from Arabic

1. Double consonants are often seen in words from Arabic. More often than not, they occur in the middle of a word as in *mummy, cotton, henna, foggara, 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.

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

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

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

5. The schwa sound (\(\mathbf{\check{a}}\)) 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 a word that is already familiar to them. The original word is, they might even change a part of it to match the word is, they might even change a part of it to match

### NOW YOU TRY!

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

2. Arabic has three different letters, all with different sounds, that English speakers convert to a \(\mathbf{\check{a}}\) sound. How many different ways is \(\mathbf{\check{a}}\) 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.

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.

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French nearly always spells the \h 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\ sound is usually spelled with ette as in croquette and layette.

A long a sound \u sound 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.

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.

A long e sound \v sound 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 \zh sound are common in French. This sound is spelled age as in collage, mirage, dressage, and barrage. Camouflage, entourage, and fuselage.

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

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

When the \h 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.

Words ending with an \d sound are common in French. This sound is spelled ade as in fusillade.

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 \az.

### CHALLENGE WORDS

| gauche | recidivist |
| rapport | garçon |
| camouflage | croissant |
| genre | ecrù |
| virgule | lieutenant |
| debacle | protégé |
| fusillade | mélangé |
| saboteur | tasé |
| renaissance | faucette |
| chauvinism | ingénue |

### 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 \u can be spelled at the end of a word from French: \ka-fǎ \mā-g̃lə.

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 pronunciation \u. Others, like levee, have a long e \v. Can you think of two other words from French ending in ee that have the long a sound and two that have the long e sound?

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

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**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 Latin. The French did not have to travel very far to find a word for just about everything! Diorama is a special case. For just about everything! Diorama—a special case. For just about everything! Diorama—a special case. For just about everything! Diorama—a special case. For just about everything! Diorama—a special case. For just about everything! Diorama—a special case. For just about everything! Diorama—a special case.
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.

### Challenge Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>praline</th>
<th>magnolia</th>
<th>boysenberry</th>
<th>hosta</th>
<th>poinsettia</th>
<th>macadamia</th>
<th>salmonella</th>
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<td>hector</td>
<td>Geronimo</td>
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<td>Boswell</td>
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<td>cupid</td>
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<td>yahoo</td>
<td>diesel</td>
<td>bandersnatch</td>
<td>Crusoe</td>
<td>mentor</td>
<td>Dracula</td>
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</table>

英文和德语属于同一语言家族，所以你可能会认为它们会更像彼此。然而，许多德语借词在英语中的特征并不明显，其他一些词则已经被英语化（使其看起来和听起来更像英语）。因此，你可能在第一眼就无法认出它们来自哪里。

有两个主要的原因解释了为什么来自德语的旧借词看起来更像英语而不是德语。首先，英语的模式有更多的机会影响德语的旧词，因为它们有更多的时间受到影响，而且拼写直到这些词进入英语时才标准化。其次，德语本身在英语借词时已经发生了变化，因此现代德语的拼写模式可能并不完全控制旧德语词的拼写。

### 证实你尝试

1. 六个以上的eponyms（名字词）以上列出的都是受希腊或罗马神话启发的。哪些六个eponyms是它们的?
2. 如果你发现了一种新植物并且你可以使用你第一个或最后一个名字来给它命名，你会如何命名它？你会如何发音？

确保访问www.myspellit.com以获取其他活动、需要知道的“Words”列表以及定义和发音的链接。
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, graupel, and pickelhaube, which word would you say has been more anglicized in its usual pronunciation? Why do you think this is?

4. The \( \v \) 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 herrensach 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 \( \v \). When it follows a t, which is common, the pronunciation is \( \v \) as in spitz, pretzel, blitzkrieg, and several other words on the list.

6. The \( \v \) 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 (\( \v \)) usually has the spelling ie in words from German, as in fräulein, Meistersinger, zeitgeber, and several other words on the list.

8. The letter w is properly pronounced as \( \v \) in German, as you hear in one pronunciation of edelweiss and in weled 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 \( \v \) sound at the end of words such as streusel, pretzel, and dreidel is typical of German words that end with this sound. The \( \v \) 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, graupel, and pickelhaube, which word would you say has been more anglicized in its usual pronunciation? Why do you think this is?

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**CHALLENGE WORDS**

balalaika  
kielbasa  
tchotchke  
barukhzy  
perestroika  
apparatchik  
commissar  
tokamak  
pogrom  
taiga  
Beetewk

---

**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
Like German, Dutch is a member of the same language family as English: the Germanic family. Many of the original European settlers in North America came from the country that later became the Netherlands, and those early settlers were one of the sources of Dutch words in American English today.

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

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”).

Challenge Words

mynameer
waterzooi
flense
muishond
witloof
springbok
maelstrom
bobbejaan
keeshond
voortrekker
uitlander
hollandaise
galjoen
apartheid
hartebeest
keest
wainscot
roodebok

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  
   - wiseacre  
   - brackish  
   - decoy  
   - caboose  
   - buckwheat  
   - walrus  
   - howitzer  
   - cokatoo  
   - keelhaul  
   - harpoon  
   - transfuse  
   - hest  
   - rudder  
   - easy  

Challenge Words

winkle
scratch
pack
rattle
chuckle
The vowel combination o–e (as in loam or goatee) is nearly always pronounced as long o (\(\text{o}^{\text{a}}\)) as in loam and goatee. Examples not on the study list include shoal, boastful, and gloaming.

8 Silent e on the end or not? For words from Old English that end in either hard th (\(\text{th}^{\text{h}}\)) or soft th (\(\text{th}^{\text{h}}\)), 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, hearth, and hundredth versus blithe, tilhe, and lith. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pattern: double consonant followed by ock</th>
<th>example: paddock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clue: a small hill</td>
<td>answer: ________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. pattern: double consonant followed by ow

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

B. pattern: consonant sound followed by allow

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

C. pattern: ending \(\text{th}^{\text{h}}\) spelled as the

9. clue: feel strong dislike for
10. clue: churn or foam as if boiling
11. challenge clue: twist as a result of pain
12. challenge clue: a cutting tool with a curved blade

D. pattern: ending \(\text{sl}^{\text{e}}\) spelled as stle

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

example: sallow

| answer: ________________ | answer: ________________ | answer: ________________ |

example: harrow

| answer: ________________ | answer: ________________ | answer: ________________ |

example: lith

| answer: ________________ | answer: ________________ | answer: ________________ |

example: nestle

| 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.

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

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

3. Coyote shows evidence of having passed through Spanish on its way to English: The voiced final \( \text{\textcopyright} \) is often seen in Spanish words. Two other examples on this list are tamele and mole.

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

Now You Try!

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

   - pennroyal
   - campanula
   - chickling
   - brooklime
   - poppy

2. Cashew, persimmon, hickory, cacao, and pecan are all New World trees and have names from New World languages. Based on your knowledge of typically English words, which of the following tree names do you think are from New World languages?

   - oak
   - ash
   - catalpa
   - beech
   - elm
   - maple
   - guava
   - pine

Tips from the Top

All of the source languages of words in this study list are unrelated to English, and many of them are unrelated to each other. For example, cashew is from the native South American language Tupi, which has no connection with Hawaiian, the source of kahuna, or Algonquian, which gives us caribou. Many of these words are from languages that had no alphabet at the time of borrowing or that had their own unique writing system. The result is that introduction into English, whether direct or indirect, involved some compromise in pronunciation and spelling which often reflects the rules of English or some intermediary language.

ChALLENGE WORDS

| opossum | jacamar |
| ocelot | ippec |
| hoomalimali | menhaden |
| coati | sachem |

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.

The voiced final \( \text{\textcopyright} \) is often seen in Spanish words. Two other examples on this list are tamele and mole.

Jaguar is also probably a result of folk etymology.
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.

CHALLENGE WORDS

karaoke  nisei  kibei
nisei  sansei  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, orodori, 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 ā sound is also a common way to end Japanese words and is spelled with u as in haiku, tof u, 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

---

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
homonym
panic
cryp tic
hypothesis
academy
pentathlon
apostrophe
antibiotic
diarrhe a
etymology
trauma
dynamic
hygiene
semantics
diabetes
philanthropy
euphoria
strategy
aptitude
psychology
endemic
democracy
synergy
pharmacology
analysis
psychometrics
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In ancient Greek, the letter \( \alpha \) is a very good guess. The non–\( o \) sound almost always appears as \( \phi \) in words of Greek origin. Consider, for example:


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

**NOW YOU TRY!**

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

1. **analysis** \( \text{em-]a-l[a-s]s} \) **n** separation of something into its parts. The **lys** part of this word means “loosening” or “breaking up” in Greek.
2. **android** \( \text{an-]d[r]o-d[\i]} \) **n** a robot that looks like a human. The **andr** part of this word comes from the Greek word that means “man.”
3. **diatribe** \( \text{dia-]t[ri-b]} \) **n** bitter or abusive writing or speech. The **dia** part of this word means “through,” “across,” or “apart” in Greek words.
4. **isobar** \( \text{i-[sa-b[\i]} \) **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.
5. **pentathlon** \( \text{pen-t[ath]-]l[an]} \) **n** an athletic competition consisting of five events. The **pen/penta** part of this word comes from the Greek word that means “five.”
6. **polygon** \( \text{pi-l[e]-]g[\an]} \) **n** a drawn figure that encloses a space and has straight sides. The **gon** part of this word means “angle” in words from Greek.
7. **thermal** \( \text{the-]r[mal]} \) **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!

**Challenge Words**
- staccato
- ballot
- confetti
- semolina
- cavalry
- piazza
- cadenza
- pistachio
- spinet
- cantata
- incognito
- vendetta
- contraband
- mascara
- graffiti
- credenza
- parapet
- maraschino
- paparazzo
- segue
-Fantocci
- mozzarella
- garibaldi
- ocarina
- prosciutto
- trattoria
- vivace
- cappelletti
- pizzicato
- intaglio

**Spelling Tips for Words from Italian**
1. Long e (\(\varepsilon\)) at the end of a word from Italian is usually spelled with i as in confetti, graffiti, zucchini, Fantocci, cappelletti, and many other words on the list. In Italian, a final i usually indicates a plural form. This is not always true, however, of Italian words in English.
2. Long o (\(\varnothing\)) 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 (\(\varepsilon\)) at the end of a word from Italian can be spelled with e as in provolone, finale, and one pronunciation of vivace, although this spelling of the sound is less common than i (see tip 1).
4. The \(\sh\) sound has various spellings in words from Italian; a spelling it usually doesn’t have is sh! It can be spelled sc as in crescendo and prosciutto or ch as in charlatan and pistachio. The spelling of the \(\sh\) sound in capricious is also seen in words that come from Latin—the ancestral language of Italian.
5. The \(\k\) sound can be spelled cc when it comes before long o (\(\varnothing\)) as in stucco or when it comes before \(\l\) as in staccato.
6. Another Italian spelling of \(\k\) is ch as in scherzo.
7. The sound \(\varepsilon\)-ne\(\varepsilon\), common at the end of Italian words (it forms diminutives), is usually spelled ini (as in zucchini and Fantocci).
8. The double consonant zz is typically pronounced \(\ts\) in words from Italian as in paparazzo, mozzarella, pizzicato, and one pronunciation of piazza.

**Now You Try!**
Officially, Italian uses only 21 of the 26 letters in the Roman alphabet. The letters 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 puzzles!

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 balcon is balcon. 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.

A long o sound (\ö\) 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.

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

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 (\a\), long e (\ê\), or short i (\i\). Quesadilla and conquistador (in its pronunciations both with and without the \w\ sound) are examples from our list.

It is much more common for the \ll\ 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 (\o\) as in flamenco and junco.

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.

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

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.

1. 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

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

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

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

5. The two l’s in alligator are not the usual ll that you often see in the middle of words from Spanish. When this word was borrowed, the Spanish masculine definite article el (“the”) was borrowed along with it. El lagarto in Spanish became alligator in English. Do you remember in what other language the definite article is often borrowed along with the word when it enters English?
Words from Latin pages 3–5
1. The adjective is *curricular*.
2. English words from Latin ending in *xious* include *anxious*, *noxious*, and *obnoxious*.
3. There are several such plurals in English. The most common ones are probably *alumnum/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 *regin*.

Words from Arabic pages 6–7
1. The letter *x* represents two consonant sounds: \\ks\ or \\ks\.
2. The \\l\ sound is spelled with *k* (as in *alkali*), *c* (as in *carmine*), *q* (as in *Qatar*), *que* (as in *mosque*), *ch* (as in *alchemy*), and *kh* (as in *mukhtar*).

Words from Asian Languages page 8
1. The sound is \\l\ and is spelled with *oo* in *oolong*, *mongoose*, *shampoo*, *typhoon*, *foot*, and *bamboo*.
2. Long *e* (\\e\) 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 *\w\*.
3. The two words are *mirror* and *miracle*.
4. Some words ending with long *a* (\\a\) are *entree*, *lycée*, and *sooiree*.
Some words ending with long *e* (\\e\) 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* (\\a\) or a long *e* (\\e\).
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 *narcissist*, *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 *\\a\* 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 *beatinik*, *peacenik*, *refusanik*, 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 French pages 9–11
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2. The *\w\* sound is spelled with *u* in *suave*. In *repertoire*, *boudoir*, and *croissant* the *oi* is pronounced *\w\*.
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4. Some words ending with long *a* (\\a\) are *entree*, *lycée*, and *sooiree*.
Some words ending with long *e* (\\e\) 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* (\\a\) or a long *e* (\\e\).
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 *narcissist*, *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 *\\a\* 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 *beatinik*, *peacenik*, *refusanik*, 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*, *marrow*, *sparrow*.
2. *yarrow*.
3. *tallow*.
4. *mallow*.
5. *trestle*.
6. *scythe*.
7. *fallow*.
8. *loaf*.
9. *loathe*.
10. *seethe*.
11. *writhe*.
12. *scythe*.
13. *bristle*.
14. *thistle*.
15. *trelle*.
16. *epistle*.

Words from New World Languages pages 20–21
1. *Pennroyal*, *brooklime*, and *chickling*.
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
3. *Kamikaze*: 3 syllables
4. *Wakame*: 4 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. catalyst, *dialysis*, *paralysis*.
2. androgenous, *misandry*, *androcracy*.
3. *Diadem*, *diagonal*, *diagram*.
4. *Isopropyl*, *isosceles*, *isothermal*, *isotope*.
5. *Pentagram*, *pentagon*, *pentameter*, *Pentateuchal*, *Pentecost*.

Words from Italian pages 26–27
1. The *\w* sound is spelled with *u* in *segue*.
2. A sound we associate with *j* is spelled with *g* in *adagio*.
3. The reason is probably simply that many words in English, representing all parts of speech, end with *y*.
4. *Il Messico* is the Italian name for Mexico.

Words from Spanish pages 28–29
1. The initial consonant sound is *\\b*.
2. The standard Spanish alphabet uses *k* only to spell words borrowed from other languages.
3. *Machismo* is sometimes pronounced with a *\\k* sound rather than a *\\ch* sound.
4. The letter *c* has the *\\s* sound in *cilantro*, *hacienda*, and *cedilla*.
5. Words in English from Arabic often borrow the definite article *al*.

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The E.W. Scripps Company
www.spellingbee.com
e-mail: bee@scripps.com