

Silent Letters

English spelling is difficult. Many words are not said the same way they are spelled. Also, there are many words which have letters that we do not say.

For example: The word "wrong" is spelled with a "w", but we say "rong." The "w" is silent.

With some words it is difficult to know if a letter is silent or not, but there are some rules you can remember to help you.



1. Each of the words below has 1 silent letter. Work with a partner and underline the letter you think is silent.

a) like

h) half

b) two

i) autumn

c) talk

j) should

d) walk

k) guest

e) dumb

l) write

f) know

m) schhool

g) washed

n) muscle



2. The text below has 13 silent letters. Circle the letters you think are silent.

My friiend Tom is 30 years old. Every day he takes the bus to work. He likes the bus, he does not likee to drivee his car. The bus takeses too much timee for me, and it is too loud, so I ridee my bikee or walk if the weathaer is good. I livee closee to work. If it is raining, usually I just stay at homee.



3. Now listen to the audio to see if you are right.

The Silent "E"

Most of the silent letters in exercise 2 were "silent e's" at the end of words. This is one of the most common silent letters in English. When the letter 'e' is at the end of a word, it often makes the vowel before it sound long.

For example "Bike" is said with a long "i" sound, but if remove the "e" from the end of the word, the "i" sound is shorter. Bike (biiik) vs bik (bik).

There are many words that follow this rule, but there are some exceptions, such as "live", "love", "come", and "have."



4. Practice reading the words below out loud. Do you know what they mean?

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| a) make | h) rate |
| b) take | j) hate |
| c) lose | k) broke |
| d) gave | l) came |
| e) bite | m) lake |
| f) same | n) smoke |
| g) use | o) hope |

Pronouncing "ed"

Many words in English end in "ed," particularly past tense verbs

For example: *He loved chocolate when he was a boy.*

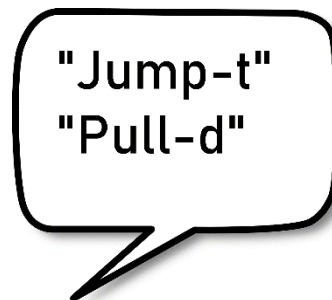
In most words that end in "ed" , the "e" is silent.

For example: "liked" is pronounced "liek-t" not "liekid."



5. Say the sentences out loud

- I washed my car today
- He looked good.
- I talked to my teacher about my homework.
- They laughed at my new haircut.
- He tried to help me
- I loved cartoons when I was a kid.



“ed” after “t” or “d”

Usually the “e” in “ed” is silent, but not after a “t” or a “d” sound.

For example, want ends in a “t” sound, so “wanted” is said “*want-id*”, and “decide” is said “*decied-id*”



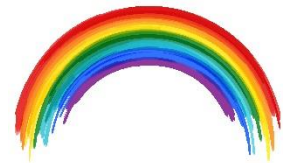
6. Practice saying the sentences below using the rules you have learned.

- a) We should have a picnic next to the lake.
- b) He decided to leave the party.
- c) They wanted to make a cake for my friend Kate.
- d) After the movie ended, we decided we did not like it.
- e) He looked very sick today.
- f) Can I please take this cat home?



7. There are some rules to help with silent letters, but many you just have to learn. Each sentence below contains 2 silent letters. Circle the silent letters.

- a) My namee is Jenny, pleased to meet you.
- b) The rainbow has beautiful colours.
- c) We should leave now.
- d) Thesee apples taste amazing.
- e) Four people needed water.
- f) Whhen do you want to go to schhool?
- g) Do we have enough time?
- h) I have a lot of friiends.
- i) I hate that bulilding, it's so ugly!



 8. Listen to the man reading a story and circle the silent letters as he reads.

A **y**oung boy **call**ed Jeff **liv**ed in a small town surrounded by a **be**autiful forest. Jeff **lov**ed to **expl**ore the forest near his **hom**e, and he **lov**ed looking for animals.

One sunny afternoon, Jeff walked through some flowers, he saw a tiny, **injur**ed bird. Its wing was hurt, and it **cou**ldn't fly. Jeff **pick**ed up the bird and **carri**ed it **hom**e.




At **hom**e, he **mad**e a **nice** nest for the bird in a small box and **bandag**ed its wing. Every day, Jeff **gav**e the bird food and **talk**ed to it. He **hop**ed it **wou**ld get better soon. As the days **pass**ed, the bird grew stronger, and its wing got better.



One morning, the bird was **read**y to fly again. Jeff took the bird **outsid**e and **open**ed his hands. The bird flew into the sky, singing a **be**autiful song.



Now, every **tim**e Jeff walks through the forest, the bird **flies** down and sits on his **shou**lder. The bird is now **on**e of Jeff's best **fr**iends.

 9. Now read the story out loud yourself to practice saying the words.