

Spelling Bee

"English spelling: It's anarchy disguised as order." - Dave Kellett



Warm up

- Have you heard of a *spelling bee* competition? What is it? **A spelling bee competition is a contest where participants are asked to spell words aloud. They take turns spelling words given by the judge, and must spell each word correctly to continue in the competition. If a participant misspells a word, they are eliminated. The last person remaining who spells all their words correctly is declared the winner.**
- How do you find spelling in English? Is it easy or challenging for you, and why?
- Can you name some English words that you find particularly tricky to pronounce?
- What is the longest word you know how to spell in English?
- Can you think of any English words that have silent letters?
- Are there any English words that are the same or similar to words in your native language?



1. How quickly can you guess what the words below are?

aletb	<i>table</i>
tchneki	<i>kitchen</i>
hilosoppyh	<i>philosophy</i>
acidenc	<i>accident</i>
polgyoa	<i>apology</i>
rneigeen	<i>engineer</i>
yaplp	<i>apply</i>
dwarrobe	<i>wardrobe</i>





2. In pairs or small groups, each person reads one story. Then, share what you read with your partner, and listen to their story too.

The Silk Road and English Vocabulary: A Journey of Trade and Words

Centuries ago, the Silk Road served as a bustling highway of trade between East and West, not only transporting goods like silk and spices but also fostering a vibrant exchange of languages and ideas. This ancient network of routes left a lasting mark on the English language through a fascinating array of borrowed words.

Imagine merchants traveling from China to Europe, bringing with them exotic treasures and cultural influences. Alongside silk and spices, they introduced words like "saffron" (from Arabic "za'faran"), "lemon" (from Arabic "laymūn"), "tea" (from Chinese "chá"), and "bazaar" (from Persian "bāzār") into the English lexicon.

These borrowed words not only enriched English vocabulary but also sparked curiosity and cultural exchange among people along the Silk Road. Interestingly, the word "silk" itself originates from the ancient Chinese word "sī." This connection highlights how trade routes not only facilitated commerce but also connected languages and cultures across continents.

Why English Says "Cow" but Serves "Beef"

Ever wondered why English sometimes has different words for animals and the meat we eat? It's a bit like having two names for the same thing—one for when it's alive and another for when it's on your plate.

Back in medieval England, society had a clear divide. The Anglo-Saxon farmers who raised the animals called them by their everyday names: "cow," "pig," "sheep." Meanwhile, the Norman nobles, who spoke French, enjoyed the prepared dishes at their feasts: "beef," "pork," "mutton."

You see, in 1066, the Normans conquered England and brought their French language and customs with them. They liked to eat well and used their French words for the meat on their tables. Over time, this linguistic split stuck around, giving us the everyday words and the fancy ones.



Vikings and the English Language: Norse Words in Everyday Speech

Long ago, fierce warriors known as Vikings sailed across the seas from Scandinavia, leaving a lasting mark on the English language. Their raids and settlements brought Old Norse words into everyday speech, shaping the vocabulary we use today.

Imagine Vikings arriving on British shores in their longships, bringing words like "sky" (from Old Norse "ský"), "leg" (from Old Norse "legg"), "window" (from Old Norse "vindauga"), and "knife" (from Old Norse "knífr"). These Norse words blended with Old English, creating a unique linguistic fusion.

The influence of the Vikings didn't stop with words. Place names such as "York" and "Derby" bear Norse origins, marking the locations of Viking settlements. Even days of the week like "Wednesday" (Woden's day, named after the Norse god Odin) and "Thursday" (Thor's day, named after the Norse god Thor) reflect their impact.



3. Where do these words come from?

Persian	Arabic	French	Chinese	Norse
saffron	Arabic		knife	Norse
lemon	Arabic		beef	French
bazaar	Persian		window	Norse
tea	Chinese		pork	French
sky	Norse		Thursday	Norse



4. Before watching the video on *Why don't tough and dough rhyme?* familiarize yourself with the following vocabulary. Match each word to its definition below.

1. influence <i>e</i>	a. A machine used for printing books and newspapers.
2. evolve <i>f</i>	b. The way words are written.
3. standardization <i>d</i>	c. A word borrowed from another language.
4. pronunciation <i>g</i>	d. Making something fit a rule."
5. spelling <i>b</i>	e. The effect of something on another thing.
6. printing press <i>a</i>	f. To develop gradually over time.
7. loanword <i>c</i>	g. How words are spoken.



5. Watch the video *Why don't tough and dough rhyme?* and answer the following questions.

1. How did the arrival of Roman missionaries and the Norman invasion impact the development of the English language? *Roman missionaries introduced the Latin alphabet to write Old English, while the Norman invasion added French words and influenced English through the high society's use of French.*
2. Why did English spelling become so varied before the standardization efforts of the printing press? *English spelling became varied because different writers used different spellings based on their influences, including French and Latin, and there was no standardization.*
3. How did the introduction of the printing press in 1476 affect English spelling? *The printing press in 1476 affected English spelling by fixing spellings in print, even though pronunciations changed over time.*
4. What was the Great Vowel Shift, and how did it contribute to the complexity of English pronunciation and spelling? *The Great Vowel Shift was a major change in vowel pronunciation between the 14th and 18th centuries, which caused discrepancies between spelling and pronunciation.*

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFhY4Vy3IHc&t=1s&ab_channel=TED-Ed

5. Why did words like "dough" and "tough" end up with similar spellings but different pronunciations? *Words like "dough" and "tough" ended up with similar spellings but different pronunciations due to inconsistent application of French spelling influences and changes in pronunciation over time.*
6. Why might English be considered a difficult language for non-native speakers to learn, according to the text? *English is considered difficult for non-native speakers because of its complex history and irregularities in spelling and pronunciation.*
7. What does the history of English language evolution reveal about the influence of historical events on language development? *The history of English language evolution reveals that historical events, like invasions and technological advancements, significantly influenced and complicated the development of the language*



6. Which word doesn't rhyme?

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. | tough | enough | <i>through</i> | rough |
| 2. | dough | row | <i>paw</i> | bow |
| 3. | beef | <i>field</i> | chief | leaf |
| 4. | quit | kit | <i>quite</i> | hit |
| 5. | <i>beard</i> | bear | tear (v) | hair |
| 6. | blood | <i>good</i> | flood | mud |
| 7. | bread | red | dead | <i>beach</i> |
| 8. | soon | moon | <i>book</i> | noon |
| 9. | glove | <i>move</i> | love | above |
| 10. | rush | hush | brush | <i>bush</i> |



7. Take part in the *Spelling Bee Competition*.

In the spelling bee competition, each participant will take turns spelling words given by the teacher. The words will become more challenging as the competition progresses. If a participant misspells a word, they are eliminated from the competition. The last participant remaining will be the winner.



Spelling Bee Competition



Explain Rules: Inform the students that they will take it in turns spelling words. The level of difficulty will increase as they move forward. When a student spells a word incorrectly they are eliminated. The last remaining participant or the one with the most correct spellings wins.

Tip: Repeat words and use them in sentences if needed.

Round 1: Easy

apple, book, cat, dog, egg, fish, green, house, island, juice, kite, lemon, moon, night, orange, pen, queen, rain, sun, tree

Round 2: Medium

bicycle, camera, doctor, elephant, family, garden, horizon, internet, jacket, kitchen, library, monster, nurse, octopus, puzzle, quiet, rocket, student, travel, umbrella

Round 3: Challenging

adventure, beautiful, courage, dinosaur, exercise, furniture, glamorous, happiness, important, juxtapose, knowledge, language, mysterious, navigate, operation, prescription, question, reliable, signature, temporary

Round 4: Difficult

architecture, beneficiary, chocolate, determine, efficient, fascinate, guarantee, historical, infrastructure, juxtaposition, legitimate, monumental, negligible, overwhelming, psychology, qualification, recognizable, satisfactory, theoretical, vocabulary