

2018

Merriam-  
Webster



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](http://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](http://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.



**W**elcome 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](http://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](http://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 <sup>1</sup>  
 alliteration  
 refugee  
 amicable  
 lucid <sup>2</sup>  
 percolate  
 meticulous  
 fastidious  
 trajectory  
 animosity  
 implement  
 ambiguity  
 curriculum  
 omnivorous  
 bellicose  
 electoral  
 crescent <sup>3</sup>  
 obsequious  
 transect

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

mediocre  
 insidious  
 rupture  
 precipitate  
 erudite  
 colloquial  
 intractable  
 exuberant <sup>7</sup>  
 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*



(For footnotes, see Spelling Tips, pages 4–5.)



femininity  
confidence  
triumvirate  
popularity  
diary  
humble  
vivisection  
strict

prosecute  
contiguous  
ductile  
gradient  
current  
perfidy  
fidelity  
incorruptible

### CHALLENGE WORDS

soliloquy  
accommodate  
pernicious<sup>8</sup>  
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

- <sup>1</sup> 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*).
- <sup>2</sup> 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*).
- <sup>3</sup> 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*.
- <sup>4</sup> 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

- <sup>5</sup> 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*.
- <sup>6</sup> 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.
- <sup>7</sup> The letter *x* often gets the pronunciation \gz\ in words from Latin (as in *exacerbate* and *exuberant*).
- <sup>8</sup> 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 (\ī\ ) 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:
 

<b>j</b> bu <b>s</b> t <b>c</b> e	t <b>r</b> e <b>c</b> j <b>e</b>	r <b>p</b> t <b>c</b> j <b>e</b> o	c <b>o</b> t <b>b</b> e <b>j</b>
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------------	----------------------------------
- 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  
mummy <sup>1</sup>  
tarragon  
adobe  
mohair  
borax  
talc  
arsenal  
lemon  
tuna

admiral  
hazard  
apricot  
carmine  
monsoon  
average  
gazelle <sup>2</sup>  
crimson  
orange  
sequin  
macrame  
algebra  
guitar

nabob  
giraffe  
mattress  
elixir  
saffron  
cotton  
albatross <sup>3</sup>  
zero  
safari <sup>4</sup>  
magazine  
zenith  
alfalfa  
imam

mosque  
alcohol  
tariff  
lilac  
alcove  
massage  
henna <sup>5</sup>  
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

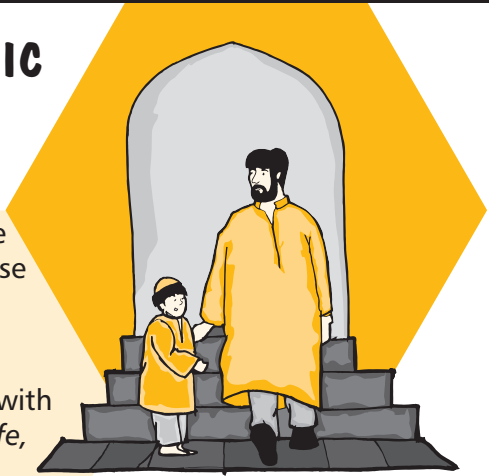
The Arabic alphabet has 28 letters, and among these are letters that represent half a dozen sounds that do not exist in English. Therefore, when a word crosses over from Arabic to English, there is always a compromise about how it will be spelled and pronounced, which sometimes results in inconsistencies. 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

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> 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*.
- <sup>4</sup> 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*.
- <sup>5</sup> 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 sometimes 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!

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 \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

guru

cushy

seersucker

jungle

oolong

nirvana

bangle

cummerbund

juggernaut

pangolin

mahatma

rupee

mongoose

shampoo

typhoon

bamboo

jackal

dungaree

bungalow

gunnysack

chutney

karma

jute

yamen

raj

kama

pundit

loot

kavya

jiva

pandit

chintz

patel

## CHALLENGE WORDS

gymkhana

basmati

gingham

mandir

bhalu

gourami

masala

raita

tanha

asana

batik

charpoy

durwan

mahout

prabhu

Buddha

topeng

lahar

jnana

Holi

## NOW YOU TRY!

1. 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?
2. The long e sound (\ē\ ) is spelled ee in *dungaree* and *rupee*. Name three other ways it is spelled in the words above.
3. 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

**B**efore 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 <sup>1</sup>  
pacifism  
manicure  
altruism  
bureaucracy  
mascot  
parfait  
mystique  
layette <sup>2</sup>  
boutique  
dressage  
croquet  
gorgeous  
denture  
mirage  
denim  
cachet <sup>3</sup>  
neologism  
beige  
diplomat  
motif  
suave  
foyer <sup>4</sup>  
clementine

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

menu  
egalitarian  
quiche <sup>9</sup>  
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 <sup>11</sup>	protégé
debacle	surveillance	mélange
fusillade <sup>10</sup>	repertoire	blasé
saboteur	dossier	fête
renaissance	taupe	ingenu
chauvinism	poignant	rendezvous

## SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM FRENCH

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> A word from French ending with a stressed \et\ is usually spelled with *ette* as in *croquette* and *layette*.
- <sup>3</sup> 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*.
- <sup>4</sup> 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*.
- <sup>5</sup> 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.)
- <sup>6</sup> Words ending with an \āzh\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelled *age* as in *collage*, *mirage*, *dressage*, *garage*, *barrage*, *camouflage*, *entourage*, and *fuselage*.
- <sup>7</sup> A \k\ sound at the end of a word from French is often spelled *que* as in *mystique*, *boutique*, and *physique*.
- <sup>8</sup> 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*.
- <sup>9</sup> 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*.
- <sup>10</sup> Words ending with an \äd\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelled *ade* as in *fusillade*.
- <sup>11</sup> French speakers have a number of vowels that English speakers modify in pronunciation. Our way of pronouncing the French *aise* (pronounced \ez\ in French) is usually \āz\.



## 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!



**E**ponyms 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](http://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 <sup>1</sup>  
pretzel  
waltz  
haversack  
nosh  
sauerbraten  
hinterland  
verboten  
liverwurst  
streusel  
umlaut  
wanderlust  
eiderdown  
schnauzer  
lederhosen  
kohlrabi

sitzmark  
langlauf  
autobahn  
Backstein  
inselberg  
gestalt  
einkorn  
kitsch <sup>2</sup>  
gestapo  
schloss  
rucksack  
echt  
bratwurst  
knapsack  
feldspar  
poltergeist

noodle  
spareribs  
Meistersinger <sup>3</sup>  
pumpnickel  
Bildungsroman  
strudel  
bagel  
hamster  
cobalt  
nachtmusik  
vorlage <sup>4</sup>  
graupel  
Wagnerian  
cringle  
fife  
glitz

homburg  
kuchen  
pitchblende  
spritz <sup>5</sup>  
prattle  
zwinger  
spitz  
realschule  
panzer  
stollen  
dachshund  
seltzer



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

## CHALLENGE WORDS

schadenfreude <sup>6</sup>  
dreidel  
weimaraner  
ersatz  
fräulein  
blitzkrieg <sup>7</sup>  
gesundheit

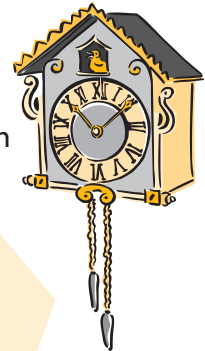
pfeffernuss  
edelweiss <sup>8</sup>  
glockenspiel  
rottweiler  
schottische  
anschluss  
wedel

springerle  
zeitgeber  
pickelhaube  
schnecke  
Weissnichtwo



## SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM GERMAN

- <sup>1</sup> 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*.
- <sup>2</sup> 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*).
- <sup>3</sup> A long *i* sound (\ī\ ) usually has the spelling *ei* in words from German, as in *fräulein*, *Meistersinger*, *zeitgeber*, and several other words on the list.
- <sup>4</sup> 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*.
- <sup>5</sup> 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.
- <sup>6</sup> 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!
- <sup>7</sup> A long *e* sound (\ē\ ) usually has the spelling *ie* in words from German, as in *blitzkrieg* and *glockenspiel*.
- <sup>8</sup> 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*, *graupel*, and *pickelhaube*, which word would you say has been more anglicized in its usual pronunciation? Why do you think this is?

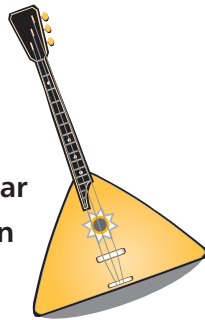


## WORDS FROM SLAVIC LANGUAGES

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  
sevruga  
trepak  
babka  
purga

baba  
cossack  
nelma  
kovsh  
lokshen  
feldsher  
barabara  
aul

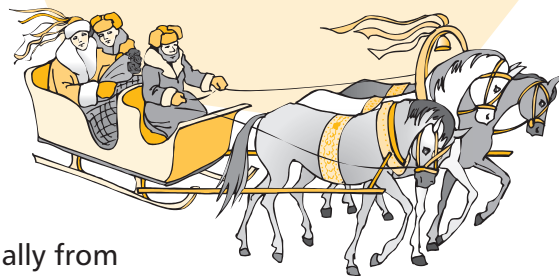
### CHALLENGE WORDS

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 \ə\ at the end of words is usually spelled with *a*, and the \k\ sound is nearly always spelled with *k*.



### NOW YOU TRY!

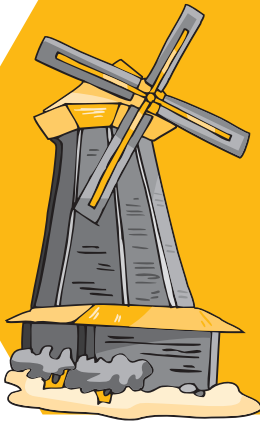
1. The suffix *-nik* as in *sputnik* comes originally from Slavic languages to denote a person of a certain type. Can you think of any other words in English (most of them informal) that use this suffix?
2. Look up these four study-list words in a dictionary and study the etymologies. Which is the odd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

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  
clipboard  
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	roodebok
springbok	galjoen	
maelstrom	schipperke	

## 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

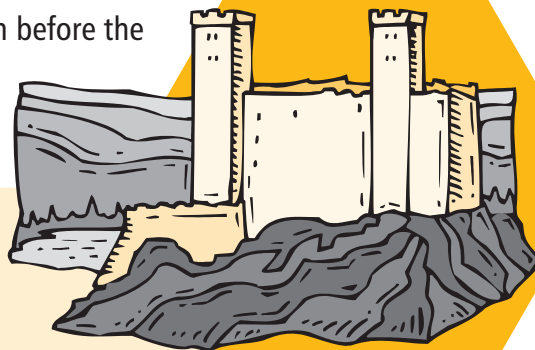


## True in Part

*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").

## 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 <sup>1</sup>	fickle	hawthorn	bookkeeping	womanly
barrow	nestle <sup>5</sup>	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 <sup>6</sup>	aspens	daily	hurdle
mongrel	gospel	mermaid	gnat	kipper
reckless	furlong	anvil	broadleaf	hundredth
alderman	linseed	barley	stringy	icicle
whirlpool	nether	linden	dairy	pinafore
belay <sup>2</sup>	fathom	hassock	workmanship	yieldable
cleanser	nightingale	orchard	newfangled	hue
dreary <sup>3</sup>	farthing	hearth <sup>8</sup>	timely	
bequeath	threshold	watery	dogged	(For footnotes, see Spelling
sallow <sup>4</sup>	kith	fiend	mootable	Tips, pages 18–19.)
dross	wanton	goatee		
lithe	loam <sup>7</sup>	earthenware		
gristle	yield	windily		
earwig	mattock	dealership		



### CHALLENGE WORDS

heifer	Wiccan
mistletoe	shrieval
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

- <sup>1</sup> 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*.
- <sup>2</sup> A long *a* sound (\ā\ ) at the end of words from Old English is nearly always spelled *ay* as in *belay*.
- <sup>3</sup> 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*.
- <sup>4</sup> 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*.
- <sup>5</sup> 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*).
- <sup>6</sup> 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\.
- <sup>7</sup> 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*.

## WORDS FROM OLD ENGLISH

<sup>8</sup> Silent e on the end or not? For words from Old English that end in either hard *th* (\th\), or soft *th* (\th\), remember this: More often than not, soft *th* will have a silent e at the end of the word. Consider, for example, *bequeath*, *dearth*, *kith*, *hearth*, and *hundredth* versus *blithe*, *tithe*, and *lithe*. Interestingly, the word *blithe* can be pronounced both ways.



### NOW YOU TRY!

Now's your chance to fill up some of the empty spots in your memory with a few non-study-list words in English that look like some words on the study list. We'll give you a pattern and then some clues to see if you can think of other words in English that are spelled according to the same pattern.

**pattern:** double consonant followed by *ock*

**clue:** a small hill

**example:** paddock

**answer:**           hillock          

**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

**example:** harrow

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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

**example:** shallow

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**C. pattern:** ending \th\ 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

**example:** lithe

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**D. pattern:** ending \səl\ 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:** nestle

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

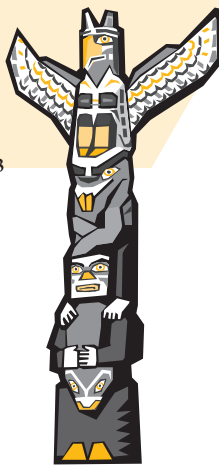
**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**answer:** \_\_\_\_\_



The people of the tribes and nations who lived in the New World before the arrival of European explorers were like people everywhere: They had a name for everything! Often, the language of the newly arrived people simply absorbed the native term, imposing changes on it that would make it fit in better with the newcomers' language. Some of these terms jumped directly to English from a native language. Others traveled through some other language along the way. Though Hawaiian isn't a true New World language, it is included here because Hawaii is now a part of the United States.



condor  
iguana  
hurricane <sup>1</sup>  
kahuna  
hogan  
jerky  
muskrat  
hominy  
wigwam  
pampas  
caribou <sup>2</sup>  
toboggan  
persimmon  
quinine  
powwow

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

chipotle  
skunk  
woodchuck <sup>4</sup>  
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

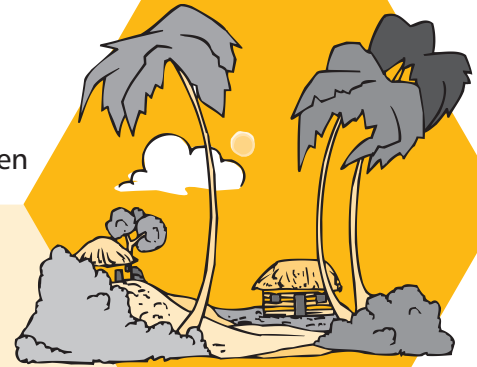
All of the source languages of words in this study list are unrelated to English, and many of them are unrelated to each other. For example, *cashew* is from the native South American language Tupi, which has no connection with Hawaiian, the source of *kahuna*, or Algonquian, which gives us *caribou*.

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.



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

<sup>3</sup> *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*.

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

#### It Feels Nice to Say It Twice

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

### NOW YOU TRY!

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?

**pennyroyal    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**



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 <sup>1</sup>

tofu

shogun

honcho

karate <sup>2</sup>

samurai

teriyaki

sashimi

tsunami

haiku <sup>3</sup>

futon

mikado <sup>4</sup>

hibachi

origami

geisha <sup>5</sup>

wasabi

ramen

kudzu

banzai

tycoon

sumo

koan

satori

tatami

kami

sukiyaki

kuruma

Meiji

Romaji

odori

miso

Kabuki

geta

sayonara

## CHALLENGE WORDS

karaoke

sansei

kibe

nisei

issei



## SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM JAPANESE

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> The sound of long e is spelled simply with *e* in some words from Japanese. Examples include *karate* and *karaoke*.

<sup>3</sup> An \ü\ sound is also a common way to end Japanese words and is spelled with *u* as in *haiku*, *tofu*, and *kudzu*.

<sup>4</sup> Long o (\ō\ ) at the end of a word from Japanese is spelled with *o* as in *honcho*, *mikado*, *sumo*, and *miso*.

<sup>5</sup> 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	homonym	panic	protocol
android	cryptic	apostrophe	tragic
chronic	hypothesis	geranium	hydrology
biopsy	academy	metaphor	polymer
irony	pentathlon	spherical	notochord
automaton	antibiotic	xylophone <sup>6</sup>	biblical
enthusiasm	diatribe	dynamic	ergonomic
synopsis	etymology	myriad	mathematics
homogeneous	hydraulic <sup>4</sup>	epiphany	tachometer
odyssey	trauma	apathy	protein
megalopolis	hygiene	synergy	rhinoceros
acme <sup>1</sup>	semantics	amnesia	hyphen
synonym	thesaurus	philanthropy	autopsy
orthodox	phenomenon <sup>5</sup>	democracy	pyre
aristocracy	cosmos	strategy <sup>7</sup>	herpetology
calypso	protagonist	diagnosis	angelic
patriarch	acronym	topical	tritium
hierarchy	paradox	matriarch	androcentric
character <sup>2</sup>	synchronous	endemic	demotic
isobar	misanthropy	analysis <sup>8</sup>	geode
asterisk	sarcasm	rhetoric	hedonism
eclectic	ephemeral	eponym	periscope
melancholy	polygon	agnostic	geoponics
stoic	nemesis	dogma	asthmogenic
chronology	syntax	idiom	monotonous
eulogy	eureka	thermal	amphibious
didactic	topography	dyslexia	symbiosis
cosmetic		Olympian	macron
Spartan		allegory	periphery
geothermal		pragmatic	
cynical <sup>3</sup>		adamant	

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



## CHALLENGE WORDS

dichotomy  
misogynist  
hypocrisy  
diphthong  
mnemonic  
anomaly  
zephyr  
hippopotamus

euphemism  
anachronism  
metamorphosis  
hyperbole  
arachnid  
paradigm  
Eocene  
gynarchy

pneumatic  
Hemerocallis  
cynosure  
philhellenism  
euthanasia  
philately  
cacophony

## SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM GREEK

- <sup>1</sup> 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*.
- <sup>2</sup> 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*.
- <sup>3</sup> 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*.
- <sup>4</sup> 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*, *cynosure*, *dynamic*, *gynarchy*, *pyre*, and *xylophone*.
- <sup>5</sup> 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.
- <sup>6</sup> 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*, *geonics*, 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

<sup>7</sup> 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!

<sup>8</sup> A schwa in words from Greek is occasionally spelled with *y*: See *analysis*, *etymology*, *misogynist*, *odyssey*, and *zephyr*.



### 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*.

### 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** \ə-ˈnā-lə-səs\  
*n* separation of something into its parts. The *lysis* part of this word means “loosening” or “breaking up” in Greek.
2. **android** \ˈan-,drɔɪd\  
*n* a robot that looks like a human. The *andr* part of this word comes from the Greek word that means “man.”
3. **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.
4. **isobar** \ˈī-sə-,bär\  
*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** \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.”
6. **polygon** \ˈpā-lē-,gän\  
*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** \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](http://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 <sup>1</sup>  
semolina  
influenza  
cavalry  
piazza  
cadenza  
pistachio  
spinet  
cantata  
incognito <sup>2</sup>  
vendetta  
contraband  
mascara  
graffiti  
credenza  
parapet

falsetto  
ditto  
provolone <sup>3</sup>  
extravaganza  
scampi  
belladonna  
gondola  
rotunda  
cauliflower  
galleria  
regatta  
crescendo <sup>4</sup>  
balcony  
portfolio  
antipasto  
libretto  
virtuoso  
harmonica

maestro  
bravura  
fresco  
stucco <sup>5</sup>  
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 <sup>6</sup>  
adagio  
segue  
zucchini <sup>7</sup>  
capricious  
archipelago  
charlatan

maraschino  
paparazzo <sup>8</sup>  
fantoccini  
mozzarella  
garibaldi  
ocarina  
prosciutto

trattoria  
vivace  
cappelletti  
pizzicato  
intaglio



## WORDS FROM ITALIAN

### SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM ITALIAN

- <sup>1</sup> 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.
- <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> A long e sound (\ē\ ) 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).
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> 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*.
- <sup>6</sup> Another Italian spelling of \k\ is *ch* as in *scherzo*.
- <sup>7</sup> The sound \ē-nē\, common at the end of Italian words (it forms diminutives), is usually spelled *ini* (as in *zucchini* and *fantoccini*).
- <sup>8</sup> 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  
embargo <sup>1</sup>  
chimichanga  
gazpacho  
mariachi <sup>2</sup>  
sombrero  
alligator  
canasta  
bonanza  
chinchilla  
machismo  
enchilada

pueblo  
hacienda  
fandango  
quesadilla <sup>3</sup>  
flotilla  
tornado  
flamenco <sup>4</sup>  
vigilante  
adios  
cabana  
gordita  
peccadillo



filibuster  
tortilla  
vanilla  
cilantro  
fiesta  
anchovy  
mesa <sup>5</sup>  
ramada  
junco  
cafeteria  
bongo  
castanets

mantilla <sup>6</sup>  
oregano  
lariat  
chalupa  
buffalo <sup>7</sup>  
renegade  
langosta  
alamo  
barrio  
cedilla  
Argentine  
bolivar

amarillo  
cordovan  
desperado  
empanada  
tomatillo  
diablo  
pochismo  
sierra  
olio  
bolero  
junta  
duenna

## CHALLENGE WORDS

sassafras  
punctilio  
sarsaparilla  
comandante  
embarcadero  
rejoneador

novillero  
picaresque  
conquistador  
rasgado  
vaquero  
caballero

## SPELLING TIPS FOR WORDS FROM SPANISH

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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

- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> 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*.
- <sup>5</sup> 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.
- <sup>6</sup> 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 \l\ pronunciation. Be on the lookout!
- <sup>7</sup> 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 *repartee* can be pronounced with either a long *a* (\ā\ ) or a long *e* (\ē\ ).

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

### Eponyms page 12

1. The 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. *trestle*
16. *epistle*

### Words from New World Languages pages 20–21

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

### Words from Japanese page 22

1. *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](http://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](http://www.spellingbee.com)**

Visit our site on the Web!

Be sure to visit [www.myspellit.com](http://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

**M**erriam-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.

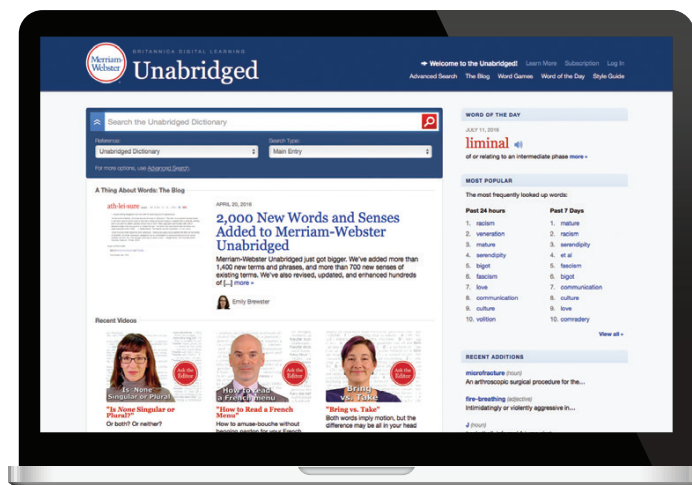
Merriam-Webster has been a strong supporter of the Scripps National Spelling Bee since 1957. The Bee's official dictionary, *Merriam-Webster Unabridged*, is available online at [Merriam-WebsterUnabridged.com](http://Merriam-WebsterUnabridged.com).

## 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

