



Improving Reading & Spelling Performance of Nigerian students while maintaining our language!

STUDY GUIDE
2024 SEASON

Prepared by:
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Nigeria Spelling Bee

2024 SEASON STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The Nigeria Spelling Bee is aimed at improving the spelling prowess of Nigerian students and rewarding excellence with the grand prize of **One Million Naira scholarship** for the Senior National Champion to any Nigerian University, **N500,000** and **N300,000** for the first and second runners-up.

Juniors would win cumulative university scholarships worth **Five Hundred Thousand Naira** for the Junior National Champion, **N300,000** and **N200,000** for the first and second runners-up respectively.

All National Finalists get an opportunity to represent Nigeria at the **African Spelling Bee 2024**. In addition to winning the African Spelling Bee prizes, a Nigerian Speller who emerges **African Champion** will also win an additional **N1,000,000** & **N500,000 scholarships** for the Senior & Junior category respectively.

In this regard, spellers are expected to study and read broadly to develop their spelling prowess and better engage with words daily. This English Study Guide has been compiled for use as a base for the development of a more comprehensive study guide for individual spellers by their coaches. It is not an exhaustive guide to be relied upon solely for winning the Nigeria Spelling Bee championship. Spellers and coaches are advised to build on this guide by doing more individual practices such as using flash-cards, playing spelling word games and building a practice-word list.

Make sure to read the spelling bee rules on our website at www.nigeriaspellingbee.com/the-bee.

Take your time to understand the word you are to spell! You have 60 whole seconds to spell your word after you pronounce the first letter.

Repeat the word before you begin. By repeating the word, the pronouncer and judges can make sure that you are spelling the right word by re-pronouncing the word for you.

You are expected to pronounce the word after you spell it to indicate that you are done with the spelling. If you run out of time before pronouncing the word, it will be counted against you.

Ask your questions! It is your **responsibility** to ask the Pronouncer:

- To **repeat** the word
- To **define** the word
- To say the **part of speech** of the word
- To use the word in a **sentence**
- To give you an **alternate pronunciation** of the word if it has any.
- To say the **word tense**

! INFO BOX !

You will find an addendum from Page-22 containing words from our Word-Bank.

This words may be used for the WRITTEN ROUNDS.





Asking for the **origin** of a word here is important. It can give you a clue to what root the word is derived from - unless it's an eponym


Have fun! A spelling bee is a fun activity. Smile, laugh and enjoy spelling your words.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ROUND 1:

The first round of all State and Regional contests will be a written test. This is a Written Spelling Bee as spellers will be required to write down the correct spelling of words in a card provided for them.

Basic rules of the written round include instructions not to **Cancel, Change, Shine or Re-write any letter.**

This implies that spellers should not attempt to correct any error on their papers nor shine any letter to make it bold as that will be considered an alteration of the letter. **(Coaches are expected to make this clear to spellers).**



NIGERIA SPELLING BEE

WRITTEN TEST RULES

Write each letter in **CAPITAL** form in each box
Do **NOT** cancel, change or re-write any letter

1.												
2.												
3.												
4.												

SAMPLE

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ROUND 2:

Round 2 will be an oral spelling bee where students are expected to go up the stage and spell words that will be picked randomly for each speller. Spellers are expected to make use of their live-lines and ask questions in order to narrow down the word to the correct spelling. Please do not rely only on the pronunciations.

Spellers are required to be **audible** and **clear** on their spellings.





A Speller has **60 seconds** after saying the first letter of the word, to spell his/her word and pronounce the word.

The speller may ask the pronouncer to say the word again, define it, use it in a sentence, provide the part of speech, and/or provide the language of origin. The pronouncer shall grant all such requests until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the speller. The pronouncer will not entertain root word requests.

Spellers are required to **pronounce the word after** they have spelt it to indicate that they are through with the spelling. (A speller may be disqualified for not pronouncing the word after spelling it within the time frame).

A speller **can NOT change the order** of the letters after pronouncing the letters

Note that both British and American spellings of words will be allowed and the “Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (SOED)” will be used in the competition as the final authority on all spellings and pronunciations.

The competition shall be conducted in rounds. Each speller remaining in the spelling bee at the start of an oral round shall spell one word in the round. Upon missing the spelling of a word, a speller drops out of the competition and would not progress to the next round.

STRATEGIES FOR BECOMING A BETTER SPELLER

If you're preparing for a spelling bee, you don't have to read a dictionary cover to cover, but you do need to study! Whether you're competing at your school or at a higher level, improving your vocabulary and learning word patterns can get you closer to victory. With a lot of hard work and perseverance, you can master the spelling bee and take home a trophy!

These tips to improve your spelling are based on expert advice. Check out the basics below.

Learn With Your Eyes

There are plenty of spelling rules (and exceptions to those rules), and it's good to be familiar with them. But memorizing spelling conventions may not be the best way to





become a better speller. Instead, expose your brain to an image of a word several times. This can involve using flashcards to master specific words, or just reading a lot – books, newspapers, signs, even menus and billboards – to subconsciously memorize how words are spelt. Ask your coach to help you develop a **flashcard**.

Look For Common Spelling Bee Words

The Nigeria Spelling Bee doesn't have set word lists, but you can find frequently used words through online study sources. Find words that you find challenging and focus your time on learning them. Start with words in your grade level before studying higher-level words.

- Spell It! From Merriam-Webster lists over 1,000 words that are commonly used in bees along with tips and tricks on how to remember their spelling. See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/word-games/spell-it>
- Look on online flashcard websites like Quizlet for study options that other people preparing for spelling bees have made.

Target Your Problem Words

Whether it's *bureau*, *conscientious* or *restaurant*, most people have at least a few problem words that they just can't seem to spell correctly. Quickly master your problem words by first creating a list of them and then practising them until you're able to spell them correctly without hesitation. If you do most of your writing on a word processing program, copy and paste your problem words into a separate document and use that as your list.

Spell It Out Loud

Some experts recommend a multisensory approach for improving spelling skills. In addition to practising word spellings by writing them down, pretend you're at a spelling bee and spell words out loud to help make the correct spellings stick.





Create Word Groups

Forming associations between words based on spelling similarities is a key strategy for memorizing word spellings. For instance, make a group of words that end in “*mn*”, such as *hymn* and *column*. Another example is grouping words that have the suffix “*arian*”, such as *librarian* and *veterinarian*.

Work With Others

Many people find group work more stimulating than solo study sessions. In addition to the obvious reasons that groups can break the monotony, there are a couple of not-so-obvious ones here. Firstly, by divvying up spelling tasks (finding all words having a certain tricky-to-spell quality, for example), you can pool your resources. Secondly, the only way to test yourself on spelling a word from its pronunciation is if you get another person to pronounce it! When you work in groups you can take turns testing each other, and the sessions are not only more useful but far more entertaining.

Pretend you're standing in front of a microphone just like you would at the actual spelling bee. When your friend or parent reads off the word, ask any questions you have, such as the definition or country of origin, or have them repeat the word. Practice spelling each word aloud.

- Having someone read the words for you helps prepare you for being on stage as well as work on spelling under pressure.
- Make sure they pronounce the words correctly when they announce the words.

Familiarize Yourself With Common Word Roots

Many words are made by combining 2 or more roots that give hints on what the word means. A majority of words in English are formed with Latin or Greek roots. Make a list of common roots you find in your words. When you hear a new word, think back to the definition and the root word to figure out the spelling.

- For example, the word *telephone* is made up of the roots “*tele-*” which means “at a distance” and “*-phone*” which means voice. Knowing these roots can help you spell words like *television*, *telekinesis*, or *phonograph* based on their definitions.





Focus On The Unfamiliar

Repeating long lists of familiar words, stumbling across a new and interesting word only every now and then, is boring. By weeding out all the familiar words, only revising them occasionally, and filling your lists with weird and wonderful words that you're just not 100% sure about, keeps your mind alert, interested, and far less likely to drift on to something going on outside.

Conquer Stage Fright

Stay calm while you're on stage by taking slow, deep breaths. Look directly at the announcer rather than anyone in the crowd so you don't get distracted. Listen to the announcer carefully so you hear each word.

- Practicing spelling in front of your friends and family before the day of the spelling bee can help prepare you for standing in front of a larger audience.

Ask Questions About The Word

The Nigeria Spelling Bee allows all spellers to ask for the definition, language of origin, and what part of speech the word is so you know what patterns or roots you can expect from your word. If you have trouble hearing the announcer, ask them to repeat the word until you have a clear understanding of it.

- The pronouncer can also use the word in a sentence so you can hear it in context.

Spell Words On Your Palm With Your Finger

Pretend your finger is a pencil and your other hand is a piece of paper. As you hear the word, start writing it out one letter at a time in your palm. This can help you visualize the word better and recognize any mistakes before you spell the word out loud.

- Take your time when spelling the word. Once you start saying it out loud, you can't make any changes.
- Try writing the words with your finger when you're practising for the spelling bee to get used to the motions.





In the next pages, you will find helpful tips for spelling words based on their origins.

BASIC ENGLISH RULES

Learning to spell can be very tasking (this is why the Prize is there for you), but some basic rules can help you. Just remember, there are exceptions to rules!

Learn the 'i' before 'e' rhyme:

Put i before e (examples: belief, yield, frieze)

Except after c (examples: receive, conceit)

Or when it sounds like a (examples: eight, freight, weight)

As in neighbour or neigh

If there is a final e when adding a suffix or verb ending:

If the suffix or verb ending begins with a vowel, drop the final e.

Examples: change + ing = changing festive + ity = festivity

If the suffix or verb ending begins with a consonant, keep the final e.

Examples: measure + ment = measurement, definite + ly = definitely
use + ful = useful

To add a suffix or verb ending when a word ends in y:

If the word has a consonant before the y, change the y to i.

Examples: mercy + less = merciless carry + ed = carried

If the word has a vowel before the y, keep the y.

Example: employ + ed = employed

The letter q in a word is followed by a u.

Examples: relinquish, equation, quality

Double final consonants when adding suffixes:

The final consonant of a word is often doubled when adding -ed, -ing, -er, -est.

Double final b, d, g, l, m, n, p, r and t at the end of words.

Examples: sob – sobbing, mad – madder, big – biggest, swim – swimming, win – winner, hop – hopping, pot – potted, transfer - transferred

Words of more than one syllable have their consonants doubled only when the final syllable is stressed:

If the word is one syllable or is stressed on the last syllable and has a single final consonant, and that single final consonant is preceded by a single vowel and the suffix begins with a vowel, then double the final consonant.





Example: patrol + ing

The stress is on the last syllable. - **trol**

There is a single final consonant. - **l**

The final consonant has a vowel before it. - **o**

The suffix, **ing**, begins with a vowel.

Therefore, you double the **l** before adding the suffix. -**patrolling**

Example: market + ed

The stress is on the first syllable - **mar** - not the last. Therefore, you do not double the final consonant.

marketed

The spelling of a word does not change when you add a prefix to it even when the first letter of the word and the last letter of the prefix are the same.

Examples: mis + step = misstep, pre + eminent = preeminent, un + necessary = unnecessary

Plural nouns:

Most words simply add **s** for the plural. In words that end in **ss, sh, ch** or **x**, add **es**.

Example: switch = switches

In words that have a consonant before a final **y**, change the **y** to **i** before adding **es**.

Example: summary = summaries

Most nouns ending in **f** or **fe** add **s**. However, some change the **f** to **v** and add **s** or **es**.

There is no rule to follow here.

Examples: belief = beliefs, half = halves

Some nouns ending in **o** add **s**. However, some add **es**.

There is no rule to follow here.

Examples: studio = studios; potato = potatoes; echo = echoes; hero = heroes; cargo = cargoes; piano = pianos; kangaroo = kangaroos

Sometimes words have silent letters.

Examples: gn, pn, kn = n >gnome, pneumonia, knife

Examples: rh, wr = r >rhyme, wrestle

Examples: pt, ght = t >ptomaine, height

Examples: ps, sc = s >psalm, science

Example: wh = h >whole

Memorizing rules is nice, but there are other good ways to learn to spell.

There are exceptions to most rules, so it's important to learn other strategies too. Try to break words into syllables. Look for prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Practice each short part and then the whole word.





Break the word apart, then compare it to other words you know. **Find patterns among words to help you learn to spell.**

Examples: un-ac-com-mo-dat-ed, pol-y-gen-e-sis col-lo-qui-al-ism, chro-ma-tog-ra-phy

Incidentally and coincidentally have similar spellings. February and library both have a hard-to-hear r after the b.

Mnemonics (pronounced with a silent **m** at the beginning) are little memory aids you can use to remember how to spell words. For example, you can remember that *dessert* is richer, so it has the double *s*. A *desert* is vast and empty, so only ones. You can remember that there are three **e**'s in *cemetery* because cemeteries are "ee"rie. Does it help you to spell *separate* by remembering there is "a rat" in the middle? Try to think of mnemonic devices for words you have trouble remembering how to spell.

Reduplication

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*, *muumuu*, and *wikiwiki*. Such words are usually easy to spell. If the syllables are identical, they are spelt 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.

WORDS FROM LATIN

No language has been more influential in the development of English 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, until relatively recently, the language of culture, religion, education, and science in the Western world. 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.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. inane
2. relevant
3. impetuous
4. ambivalent
5. dejected





LATIN WORDS SPELLING TIPS

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 altogether (like *interrupt* along with *interruption* or *necessary* along with *necessity*).
2. The \ü\ sound (as in *ooze*) is nearly always spelt 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*, and *prosecute* and in one pronunciation of *refugee*).
3. Beware of words like *crescent* in which the \s\ sound is spelt with *sc* in words from Latin. Other examples include *discern*, *discipline* and *susceptible*.
4. 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 spelt with *c* as in *access*, *adjacent*, *condolences*, 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 (\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 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*, *canine*, *vernacular*, and other words you may encounter in the Nigeria Spelling Bee.
7. The letter *x* often gets the pronunciation \gz\ in words from Latin (as in *exuberant*).
8. The combination *ious* ends many adjectives of Latin origin. When the consonant that precedes *ious* is *c* or *t*, the sound of the final syllable is \shəs\ as in *facetious* and *precocious*. 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 *cetaceous*, and *lilaceous*.

WORDS FROM ARABIC

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 travelling 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.





SAMPLE WORDS

1. azure
2. Islamic
3. sultan
4. artichoke
5. mummy

ARABIC WORDS SPELLING TIPS

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*, and several other words may come across in the Nigeria Spelling Bee. Their appearance at the end of a word (as in *albatross*) 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*, *alkali*, *hafiz*, and *salaam* are typical examples.
3. Note how many Arabic words 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 (\ē\) at the end of a word from Arabic is often spelt with *i* as in *safari* and several other words but may also be spelt with *y* as in *mummy*.
5. The schwa sound (\ə\) at the end of a word from Arabic is usually spelt with *a* as in *henna*, *tuna*, *algebra*, and *diffa*.

WORDS FROM ASIAN LANGUAGES

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.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. dugong
2. guru
3. cushy
4. seersucker
5. oolong





ASIAN LANGUAGE WORDS SPELLING TIPS

Most of the words 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. In other words, use the letters you would use if the spelling were completely up to you!

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 spelt. This approach would work for spelling *cushy*, for example.

WORDS FROM FRENCH

Before the Modern English that we speak today was fully settled, the French of the Middle Ages—a direct offshoot of Latin—was widely spoken in the British Isles, as a result of the conquest of Britain by France in 1066. English is so rich in vocabulary today partly because we often have words with similar or overlapping meanings, one of which came via the Germanic route (that is, from Anglo-Saxon or another Germanic language) and one via French. So, for example, we may call the animal a *hog* (Old English), but the meat it produces is *pork* (from French).

Today, English words with French credentials 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.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. peloton
2. barrage
3. chagrin
4. pacifism
5. manicure

FRENCH WORDS SPELLING TIPS

1. French nearly always spells the \sh\ sound with *ch*, and this spelling of the sound is very common in words from French. *Chagrin* and *crochet* are examples.
2. A word from French ending with a stressed \et\ is usually spelt with *ette* as in *layette* and *croquette*.
3. A long *a* sound (\ā\) at the end of a word from French can be spelt a number of ways. One of the more common ways is with *et* as in *cachet*, *croquet*, and *crochet*.
4. One way to spell long *a* at the end of a word from French is with *er* as in *dossier* and in *foyer*.





5. A long e sound (\ē\) at the end of a word from French can be spelt with *ie* as in *prairie* and *sortie*.
6. Words ending with an \äzh\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelt *age* as in *mirage*, *garage*, *barrage*, and *camouflage*.
7. A \k\ sound at the end of a word from French is often spelt *que* as in *physique*, and *boutique*.
8. The \ü\ sound (as in *rouge* and many other words on the list) in words from French is usually spelt with *ou*. Sometimes, however, it is spelt with *u* as in *tutu* and *ecru*.
9. When the \sh\ sound occurs at the end of a word from French, there is nearly always a silent e that follows it, as in *quiche* and *gauche*.
10. Words ending with an \äd\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelt *ade* as in *fusillade*.
11. French speakers have many vowels that English speakers modify in pronunciation. Our way of pronouncing the French *aïse* (pronounced \ez\ in French) is usually \āz\.

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 tell-tale signs, others have been anglicized (made to look and sound more English). Therefore, you might not know at first glance where they came from. Most English borrowings from German happened relatively early in the history of English, but occasionally there are new arrivals. These tend to become English with fewer spelling changes than the early borrowings did.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. angst
2. pretzel
3. waltz
4. haversack
5. nosh

GERMAN WORDS SPELLING TIPS

1. Don't shy away from consonant clusters! German words often have combinations of three or more consonants that don't occur in thoroughly English words. Examples include *ngst* in *angst*, *sch* in *schadenfreude*, *schn* in *schnauzer*, and *nschl* in *anschluss*.
2. A \k\ sound in a word from German is usually spelt with *k* at the beginning of a word or syllable (as in *kitsch* and *einkorn*) and often with *ck* at the end of a word or syllable (as in *knapsack* and *glockenspiel*).





3. A long *i* sound (\i/) usually has the spelling *ei* in words from German, as in *fräulein*, *Meistersinger*, *zeitgeber*, and several other words.
4. The \f\ sound, especially at the beginning of a word, is sometimes spelt with *v* in German words as in *vorlage*.
5. The letter *z* is far more common in German than in English. Note that its pronunciation is not usually the same as English \z\. When it follows a *t*, which is common, the pronunciation is \s\ as in *spritz*, *pretzel*, *blitzkrieg*, and several other words.
6. The \sh\ sound in words of German origin is usually spelt *sch* as in *schadenfreude*, whether at the beginning or end of a word or syllable. In *schottische*, you get it in both places!
7. A long *e* sound (\ē\ usually has the spelling *ie* in words from German, as in *blitzkrieg* and *glockenspiel*.
8. The letter *w* is properly pronounced as \v\ in German, as you hear in one pronunciation of *edelweiss* and in *wedel* and *Weissnichtwo*. Many German words, however, have become so anglicized that this pronunciation has vanished. Most Americans, for example, say "bratwurst," not "bratvurst."

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 travelled through another language first, reflecting the fact that contacts between English-speaking and Slavic-speaking cultures have not always been direct.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. gulag
2. parka
3. Slav
4. robot
5. samovar

TIPS TO SPELL SLAVIC LANGUAGES

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 spelt with *a*, and the \k\ sound is nearly always spelt with *k*.





WORDS FROM DUTCH

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.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. cockatoo
2. keelhaul
3. harpoon
4. furlough
5. bowery

DUTCH WORDS SPELLING TIPS

A typical Dutch word in English is often a hybrid. It gives some clues to its Dutch origins either in sound or spelling, but it has also been made more English-friendly as a result of spending years on the tongues and pens of English speakers. When you hear "Dutch origin," the best bet to start with is just to spell the word as it sounds. But be on the lookout for unusual vowel-sound spellings such as those you see in *furlough* and *maelstrom*.

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 type of words represents some of the real success stories in English: words coined long ago that have not lost their usefulness over dozens of generations!

SAMPLE WORDS

1. quell
2. barrow
3. dearth
4. bower
5. paddock





SPELLING TIPS FOR OLD ENGLISH WORDS

1. Old English likes double consonants following short vowels, especially if the vowel is in a stressed syllable. Examples include *quell*, *barrow*, *sallow*, *kipper*, and *Wiccan*.
2. A long *a* sound (\ā\) at the end of words from Old English is nearly always spelt *ay* as in *belay*.
3. Long *e* (\ē\) at the end of an adjective or adverb from Old English is nearly always spelt with *y*. Examples include *watery*, *fiery*, *creepy*, *daily*, *timely*, *womanly*, and *chary*.
4. Long *o* (\ō\) at the end of words from Old English is typically spelt 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 spelt with *o*.
5. When the syllable \səl\ ends words from Old English, it is nearly always spelt *stle*, with the *t* being silent (as in *gristle* and *nestle*).
6. Silent *gh* after a vowel is common in words from Old English, as in *slaughter*. Silent *gh* usually appears after *i* in words like *plight* and *nightingale*, and it signals that the vowel is pronounced \ī\.
7. The vowel combination *oa* in words from Old English is nearly always pronounced as long *o* (\ō\) as in *loam* and *goatee*.
8. 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*, *hearth*, and *hundredth* versus *blithe*, and *tithe*. Interestingly, the word *blithe* can be pronounced both ways.

WORDS FROM NEW WORLD LANGUAGES

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 travelled through some other language along the way. Though Hawaiian isn't a true New World language, it is included here.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. condor
2. iguana
3. hurricane
4. kahuna
5. hogan





NEW WORLD LANGUAGES SPELLING TIPS

1. Remember that words settling down in English are often spelt 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 others.
2. Take note of the language(s) a word may have travelled 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 \`u sound at the end of *caribou* would probably have been spelt *oo*; but the influence of French gives us the current spelling because French usually spells this sound *ou*.
3. *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 are *tamale* 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 spelt by the settlers in a familiar way, as in *woodchuck*. *Muskrat* is also probably a result of folk etymology.

WORDS FROM JAPANESE

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 spelt more consistently than are those from languages that English has been borrowing from for centuries. Japanese is written in English according to the sound of Japanese words and is not influenced by the Japanese writing system, which uses symbols for words rather than letters.

STUDY WORDS

1. ninja
2. sushi
3. tofu
4. shogun
5. honcho

JAPANESE WORDS SPELLING TIPS

1. A long *e* sound (\`e) is very common at the end of Japanese words and is usually spelt with *i* as in *sushi*, *wasabi*, *Meiji*, and several other words.
2. In some Japanese words, long *e* is spelt simply with *e* (not *i*) as in *karate* and *karaoke*.
3. An \`u sound is also a common way to end Japanese words and is spelt with *u* as in *tofu*, and *kudzu*.





4. Long *o* (\ō\) at the end of a word from Japanese is spelt with *o* as in *sumo* and *miso*.
5. A long *a* sound (\ā\) heard in *geisha* is spelt *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."

WORDS FROM GREEK

The words in this category are all 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.

SAMPLE WORDS

1. lethargy
2. android
3. chronic
4. biopsy
5. irony

GREEK SPELLING TIPS

1. In a few words from Greek, *e* appears at the end of a word and has long *e* sound (\ē\): Some examples are *acme*, and *hyperbole*.
2. A \k\ sound in English often represents a sound from Greek that we don't actually use, and the most common spelling of this sound in English is *ch*: See, *arachnid*, *character*, *chronic*, *chronology*, *matriarch*, *melancholy*, *patriarch*, and *gynarchy*.
3. The most frequent sound that *y* gets in words from Greek is short *i* (\i\) as in *acronym*, *calypso*, *cryptic*, *cynical*, *synonym*, *synopsis*, and *polymer*.
4. A long *i* sound (\ī\) in a word that comes from Greek is sometimes represented by *y*, especially after *h*, as in *hydraulic*, *hydrology*, *hyphen*, *dynamic*, *xylophone* and *pyre*.
5. In ancient Greek, the letter *phi* (pronounced \fī\) represented a breathy or "aspirated" version of the sound that is represented in English by *f*. Speakers of Roman-alphabet languages did not have this sound or a corresponding letter, so they substituted the \f\ sound but memorialized the original sound of *phi* by using *ph* to spell it. As a result, the English \f\ sound almost always





appears as *ph* in words of Greek origin. Consider, for example:, *apostrophe*, *hyphen*, *metamorphosis*, *metaphor*, and *zephyr*. Hundreds of words in English derived from Greek show this spelling.

6. The letter *o* is the vowel most often used to connect two Greek word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (\ə\) as in *xylophone*, and *asthmogenic* and you must guess at the spelling of this sound, the letter *o* is a very good guess. The words *hypnotist*, *geometric*, and *electrolyte* are among the many, many words made of Greek word elements connected by *o*.
7. The \j\ sound is always spelt 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 hardly see a Greek origin word with a letter *j*.
8. A schwa in words from Greek is occasionally spelt with *y*: See *analysis*, *etymology*, *odyssey*, and *zephyr*.

WORDS FROM ITALIAN

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 first started catching on of giving some instructions to performers of musical scores, 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 English particularly as a result of 19th-century immigration, but chances are we might have adopted them anyway: Who doesn't like Italian food?

SAMPLE WORDS

1. staccato
2. ballot
3. piazza
4. semolina
5. influenza

ITALIAN WORDS SPELLING TIPS

1. Long *e* (\ē\) at the end of a word from Italian is usually spelt with *i* as in *graffiti*, and many other words. In Italian, a final *i* usually indicates a plural form. This is not always true, however, of Italian words in English.
2. Long *o* (\ō\) at the end of an Italian word is spelt with *o* as in *incognito*, *concerto*, *vibrato* and many other words you may encounter in the Nigeria Spelling Bee





3. A long *e* sound (\ē\) at the end of a word from Italian can be spelt with *e* as in *finale*, and one pronunciation of *vivace*, although this spelling of the sound is less common than *i*.
4. The \sh\ sound has various spellings in words from Italian; a spelling it usually doesn't have is *sh*! It can be spelt *sc* as in *crescendo* and *prosciutto* or *ch* as in *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 spelt *cc* when it comes before long *o* (\ō\) as in *stucco* or when it comes before \ä\ as in *staccato*.
6. Another Italian spelling of \k\ is *ch* as in *scherzo*.
7. The sound \ē-nē\, common at the end of Italian words (it forms diminutives), is usually spelt *ini* (as in *zucchini* and *fantoccini*).
8. The double consonant *zz* is typically pronounced \ts\ in words from Italian, as in *paparazzo*, , *pizzicato*, and one pronunciation of *piazza*.

WORDS FROM SPANISH

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.

The good news about words from Spanish is that they are often spelt the way they sound. There is no need to throw in any silent letters in most cases!

SAMPLE WORDS

1. burrito
2. embargo
3. chimichanga
4. gazpacho
5. mariachi

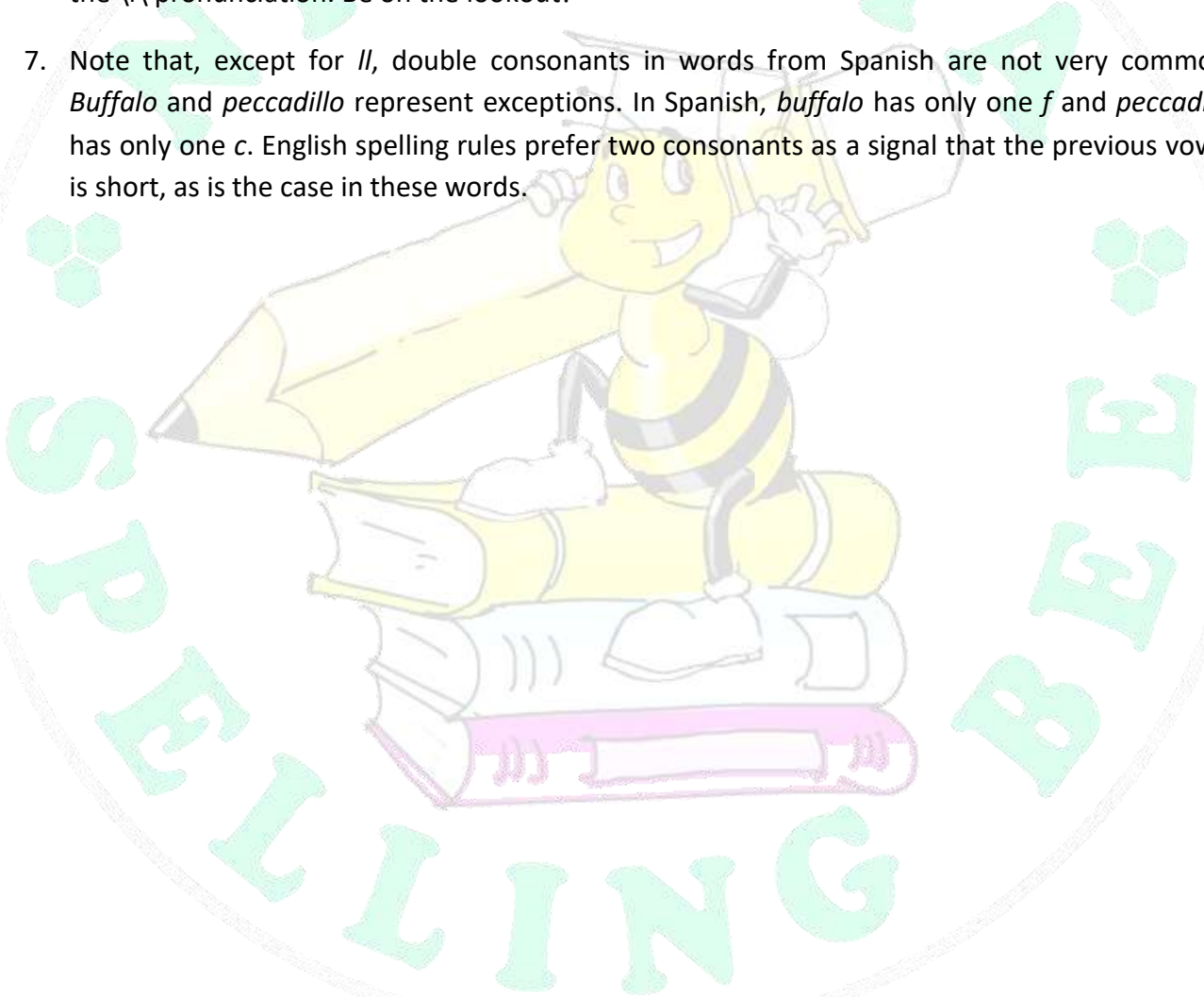
SPANISH WORDS SPELLING TIPS

1. A long *o* sound (\ō\) at the end of a word is often a mark of Spanish origin, and it is nearly always spelt simply with *o* as in *embargo*.
2. 2 A long *e* sound (\ē\) at the end of a word of Spanish origin is usually spelt with *i* as in *mariachi*.
3. The \k\ sound is sometimes spelt 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 with and without the \s\ sound) are examples.





4. It is much more common for the \k sound to be spelt with *c* in words of Spanish origin. This is almost invariable when the vowel sound that follows is a schwa \ə as in *canasta*; short *a* (\a) as in *castanets* and *caballero*; or long *o* (\ō) as in *flamenco* and *junco*.
5. A schwa at the end of a word from Spanish is very common and is usually spelt with *a* as in *mesa*, *bonanza*, and several other words.
6. The combination *ll* in Spanish words is traditionally treated as a single letter and is pronounced as consonant \y in American Spanish. When such words enter English, sometimes that sound persists. At other times it is pronounced just like *ll* would be in an English word: that is, as \l . Some words—such as *mantilla* and *amarillo*—even have two pronunciations in English. *Tortilla*, and *novillero* always have the \y pronunciation in English; *Vanilla* and *peccadillo* always have the \l pronunciation. Be on the lookout!
7. Note that, except for *ll*, double consonants in words from Spanish are not very common. *Buffalo* and *peccadillo* represent exceptions. In Spanish, *buffalo* has only one *f* and *peccadillo* has only one *c*. English spelling rules prefer two consonants as a signal that the previous vowel is short, as is the case in these words.





SAMPLE WORDS

Please find below a sample wordlist as may be used during the Written Round
 Note: Junior and Senior Wordlists are differentiated by their level of difficulty.

Jealous	Gallon	Trigger
Acquitted	Significant	Acquisitively
Hockey	Pidgin	Quash
Ballot	Doubt	Westbound
Garbage	Errant	Slavery
Anxious	Toothbrush	Agate
Venture	Vacancy	Misconduct
Sketch	Maintenance	Tempted
Feature	Prompt	Cooperation
Candid	Various	Unity
Weighed	Pursuit	Thermometer
Kitchen	Reference	Ringmaster
Wholly	Hostile	Multiplication
Lunatic	Boycott	Dimly
Adventitious	Commodity	Profiting
Nonfiction	Alacrity	Deficiency
Humiliate	Opulent	Composition
Scattering	Cardigan	Discriminate
Hike	Mitigation	Enthuse
Ghetto	Datable	Punctuate
Hygiene	Unfasten	Saboteur
Coincidence	Cubit	Depravity
Exhilarating	Settee	Pall





Earnest	Articulation	Occult
Touchdown	Contamination	Volk
Fictitious	Columnist	Cemetery
Operable	Shogun	Prophecy
Congeval	Sidekick	Affluent
Handiwork	Cease	Fabric
Unemployed	Deign	Heightened
Algebra	Plough	Variable
Easterly	Confound	Disk
Disillusion	Laundry	Grievance
Brilliance	Secretary	Antibiotic
Marvellous	Exhibit	Diocese
Conflagration	Deterred	Havoc
Vogue	Capitalization	Eligible
Hurdle	Deferred	Filament
Complicit	Palaver	Spasm
Notch	Sensory	Clink
Seoul	Unkempt	Committed
Offspring	Depreciate	Underestimation
Commitment	Disseize	Museum
Evaluate	Perceptive	Mommon
Faucet	Dreary	Commerce
Spicy	Deference	Cellular
Mushroom	Feebless	Hallogen
Enthusiasm	Feeble	Septic
Pinch	Analyse	Diabolic
Sapphire	Predecessor	Noodle





Bungler	Bureau	Cliff
Oasis	Reciprocal	Fierce
Devour	Gorgeous	Contemporary
Dynamic	Beneath	Onerous
Deficit	Explosively	Despondency
Orbed	Paediatrician	Advertisement
Exterior	Guitar	Narrate
Cabal	Federative	Defiant
Deface	Apprentice	Radiolocation
Facial	Pursuant	Declaration
Commerce	Orderly	Vestiges
Vainly	Whilst	Silverback
Activism	Legalises	Acoustic
Consensus	Functor	Reunion
Heir	Antibiotic	Capitalism
Spectacles	Stagnation	Quiver
Committed	Cardigan	Liberation
Ammunition	Obviously	Agriculture
Pilgrim	Tolerance	Peekish
Settee	Distraught	Liaison
Disorient	Neural	Chill
Handily	Unravel	Boutique
Artillery	Permissible	Paralysis
Prosperous	Woubit	Beaut
Triennial	Ramification	Stolid
Controversial	Mythical	Transcendental
Frustrated	Truistic	Whelp





Veal	Juvenile	Nuclei
Feudalism	Startle	Unravel
Differentiating	Altruism	Yonnie
Averse	Multifaceted	Thrust
Nocebo	Moan	Operose
Plaid	Obscure	Lunge
Sympathize	Rumbelow	Staffier
Vicarage	Secluded	Influenza
Recidivism	Clover	Freelancer
Fairish	Wry	Prairie
Alchemy	Nebula	Arabica
Pooch	Pheasant	Mockery
Altimeter	Spaniel	Chaotic
Pica	Ocher	Ormolu
Lurk	Hunk	Derby
Shutter	Neural	Raconteur
Cellar	Quirk	Oddment
Theorem	Grapple	Terrorism
Mesa	Snooker	Spawn
Magistrate	Brilliantine	Reprehension
Shalom	Bobtail	Jeoardise
Cortex	Hexagon	Daunting
Snorkel	Ramp	Jaguar
Milliner	Lingerie	Picturesque
Nosegay	Maze	Unanimous
Protocol	Vocalist	Pellets
Petunia	Thermal	Quirt





Retenue	Tequila	Impede
Earie	Windmill	Satire
Traitorous	Brisket	Prescience
Orchid	Sanctimonious	Throated
Torque	Dude	Ingenuous
Logistician	Hammock	Stomatology
Impartial	Entrepreneur	Nagana
Hilarity	Bewildered	Kidnapped
Tedious	Marsh	Pawn
Zodiac	Quackery	Botanist
Sludge	Luminous	Unabrupt
Rattling	Temblor	Demur
Patella	Shaman	Licit
Ewe	Abernethy	Lyrically
Samovar	Longitude	Bankruptcy
Paunch	Manacle	Conflagration
Cliché	Hedge	Tremor
Niche	Scandalous	Naturalization
Olympiad	Loam	Adolescence
Wharton	Forbade	Saurian
Accolade	Whack	Cobble
Documentary	Stallion	Kaftan
Expiate	Avatar	Slacker
Stagehand	Canary	Lubricious
Lurk	Intuition	Unabrupt
Spectre	Clingy	Caprice
Formatting	Versatile	Articulation





Quench	Pesky	Hazardous
Alacrity	Woofer	Implemented
Quintuplication	Azoic	Sleuth
Zebu	Caper	Linchpin
Doyen	Grappier	Marginalia
Damesk	Yiddish	Chummy
Anagram	Auspicious	Lassitude
Lurch	Kirman	Missikin
Perjury	Meander	Humanoid
Supercilious	Yatra	Troadic
Glacier	Spurtle	Buoyant
Doleful	Couscous	Agiotage
Precaval	Longanimity	Apricot
Plexus	Parmesan	Kleptocracy
Amphitheatre	Wacko	Brevity
Patriarch	Memorabilia	Myriad
Humectant	Fledged	Chivvy
Loricata	Umbrage	Sheikdom
Biopsy	Scarecrow	Metaphorical
Ecumenical	Jaunty	Verisimilitude
Hypothesis	Waikiki	Bazaar
Staggeen	Barrage	Trustafarian
Goethite	Capsicum	Feddan
Caveat	Vermiculate	Sluice
Goad	Jonagold	Histone
Peacenik	Malachite	Innocuous
Racquet	Orpharion	Parka





Schism	Stannous	Garland
Clientele	Taxonomy	Beagle
Quasar	Monteith	Taupe
Clasp	Glaucoma	Holocaust
Ensnare	Zein	Gallicize
Condominium	Lobar	Feign
Ballet	Greffier	Inference
Orinasal	Roncador	Barrette
Uxorious	Hullock	Solipsistic
Chimera	Opossum	Trutine
Hiemate	Aardwolf	Contumacious
Hydrolase	Tarpaulin	Autostrada
Holophrastic	Incessant	Ordovician
Patronymic	Fortuitous	Mausoleum
Crunchy	Plangent	Orotund
Squitch	Fermail	Orthodontic
Chocoholic	Longueur	Macabre
Fenchone	Indiscernible	Cistern
Edma	Arboreal	Quagga
Brig	Merengue	Dandle
Phraseology	Avidly	Canorous
Sapience	Dampen	Bureaucracy
Boisterous	Keitloa	Smoggy
Scissile	Terrestrial	Phraseology
Adagio	Excoriate	Acquittal
Braai	Condominium	Perfidious
Desideratum	Anesthesia	Bandeau





Placoderm	Polysyllabic	Palazzo
Bordelaise	Bathysphere	Falsetto
Anarchistic	Jalousie	Alfalfa
Mesophyll	Quadrennial	Masseuse
Phloem	Cauldron	Extant
Carousel	Ideate	Beowulf
Deltoids	Sauerbraten	Autostrada
Antihistamine	Meliorist	Lugubrious
Yinglish	Belabor	Chauvinism
Pootle	Glocalize	Keresan
Quadripartite	Flotsam	Ditty
Annelida	Bealach	Pistachio
Promenade	Paratha	Rupicapra
Ureilite	Quinean	Mistryst
Isthmus	Campimeter	Gladiolus
Farraginous	Amphora	Vorlaufer
Pratiquant	Auriferous	Ventriloquism
Trisomic	Parvenu	Angst
Calefaction	Trotskyism	Quonk
Silhouette	Mitanni	Hotchpotch
Desideratum	Prerumptuous	Bushel
Resplendently	Gouache	Opihi
Namaskar	Boroughs	Berserk
Jingbang	Circumlocution	Histamine
Cuneiform	Jessamy	Orchidaceous
Lonicera	Truantry	Qintar
Obsolescence	Yukawa	Thyroidectomy





Triseme	Hydrotherapy	Ebriosity
Botulin	Xanthate	Scrawny
Doyenne	Jacobian	Lychees
Grisette	Hydrogeology	Epithet
Praecognitum	Balafon	Cantharis
Riboflavin	Fermata	Inane
Stasipatric	Edamame	Columella
Alizarin	Bacciferous	Quaalude
Scherzando	Powhatan	Vespucci
Trochlear	Longiloquence	Houbara
Bronchi	Feldspathic	Diglossia
Agglutination	Roorhebok	Apothecary
Powindah	Algonquian	Bodkin
Trophallaxis	Yeibichai	Lophiodont
Granulocyte	Chorlish	Rukh
Beothuk	Tsaddik	Franglais
Ophicalcite	Minstrely	Battledore
Banns	Iambic	Carborundum
Glyceryl	Caterwaul	Hydrazoic
Orichalc	Kiepersol	Stance
Nothosaur	Hindustani	Creosote
Bauera	Xanadu	Cortisol
Humdudgeon	Klan	Giardia
Hildebrandine	Dado	Rommelpot
Gnathion	Bandh	Jabiru
Noix	Bard	Logodaedalist
Chipolata	Keratinization	Aandblom





Darwinism	Mealymouthed	Staphylorrhaphy
Caecilian	Gipon	Kleywang
Grenzbegriff	Griseofulvin	Mittelschmerz
Heterozygous	Gongoozler	Hitchcockian
Klinefelter	Gharial	Rhododendron
Hyacinthine	Urediniospore	Caipirinha
Echeveria	Xeranthemum	Hyaenodon
Bougainvillea	Lophotrichous	Ginglymus
Benedrine	Hyawaballi	Glühwein
Grandezza	Jabberwocky	Camembert
Mitochondrion	Kentallenite	Gorblimey
Kierkegaardian	Xanthorrhoea	Giganotosaurus
Hobbledehoy	Leprechaun	Bordelaise
Hierosolymitan	Belauan	Tryparsamide
Dandizette		

