

 

Spelling Bee Study Guide

About this Study Guide

Spelling Bee Study Guide focuses on about 1150 words, divided into sections by language of origin. Studying 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!

Each of the sections in this guide contain 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 the last page.

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 ¹
alliteration
refugee
amicable
lucid ²
percolate
meticulous
fastidious
trajectory
animosity
implement
ambiguity
curriculum
omnivorous
bellicose

electoral
crescent ³
obsequious
transect
precipice
susceptible
condolences ⁴
benefactor
candidate
bugle
formidable
canary
subterfuge
abdicate
lunatic
carnivore ⁵
gregarious
ostentatious
prosaic ⁶
herbivore
prodigal
magnanimous
benevolent
mercurial

simile
jovial
ridiculous
innate
obstinate
discern
mediocre
insidious
rupture
precipitate
erudite
colloquial
intractable
exuberant ⁷
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
femininity
confidence
triumvirate
popularity
diary
humble
vivisection
strict
prosecute
contiguous
ductile
gradient
current
perfidy
fidelity
incorruptible

CHALLENGE WORDS

soliloquy
accommodate
pernicious ⁸
efficacy
visceral
exacerbate
indigenous
belligerent
vernacular
infinitesimal
recalcitrant
innocuous
precocious
ameliorate
commensurate
facetious
prerogative
ubiquitous
egregious
aggregate
tertiary
corpuscule
perennial

Spelling Tips for WORDS FROM LATIN

- 1 One of the hardest things to remember about words from Latin is whether an internal consonant (like *rr* in *interrupt*) is doubled. To reinforce your memory of the correct spelling, try to remember related words all together (like *interrupt* along with *interruption* or *necessary* along with *necessity*).
- 2 The *\u* sound (as in *ooze*) is nearly always spelled with a *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*).
- 3 Beware of words like *crescent* in which the *\s* sound is spelled with *sc* in words from Latin. Other examples include *visceral*, *discern*, *discipline*, *susceptible* and *corpuscle*.
- 4 A related tip: When you hear within a word from Latin the *\s* sound followed by any of the sounds of *e* (long, short, or schwa), there's a possibility that the *\s* sound is spelled with *c* as in *exacerbate*, *access*, *adjacent*, *condolences*, *facetious* and *necessary*.
- 5 The letter *i* is a vowel often used to connect two Latin word elements. If the connecting vowel sound is a schwa (*\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*.
- 6 The letter *k* rarely appears in words from Latin, and its sound is nearly always represented by *c* as in *canary*, *prosaic*, *canine*, *mediocre*, *Capricorn*, *cognition*, *ductile*, *incorruptible*, *vernacular*, *innocuous* and many other words on the list.
- 7 The letter *x* often gets the pronunciation *\gz* in words from Latin (as in *exacerbate* and *exuberant*).
- 8 The combination *ious* ends many adjectives of Latin origin. When the consonant that precedes *ious* is *c* or *t*, the sound of the final syllable is *\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!

1. *Curriculum* is another word from Latin like *necessary* and *interrupt* that has an internal double consonant. Can you think of an adjective related to *curriculum* that also has double *r*?
2. Some of the Latin study-list words end with the sound *\shəs*, and the consonant that begins the last syllable is *c* or *t* (see tip 8, left). Can you think of two words in English that end with this sound and are spelled with *xious*?
3. The rarely used plural of *consensus* is *consensuses*, but some words from Latin that end in *us* have a plural that ends in a long *i* sound (*\i*) and is spelled with *i*. Can you think of three such words?
4. Three words on the study list come from the Latin verb that means “throw.” These words are *conjecture*, *dejected* and *trajectory*. See if you can unscramble these letters to find four other common English words that have the same root:
justce **t**recje **r**ptcjeo **c**otbej
5. The consonants *gn* often occur in words from Latin. When they divide two syllables of a word, both of them are pronounced. Some words from Latin, however, have the consonants *gn* in a single syllable. In this case, the *g* is silent, as in *design*. Can you think of three other words from Latin in which this happens?

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 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 ¹
tarragon
adobe
mohair
borax
talc
arsenal
lemon
tuna
admiral
hazard
apricot
carmine
monsoon

average
gazelle ²
crimson
orange
sequin
macrame
algebra
guitar
nabob
giraffe
mattress
elixir
saffron
cotton
albatross ³
zero
safari ⁴
magazine

zenith
alfalfa
imam
mosque
alcohol
tariff
lilac
alcove
massage
henna ⁵
alchemy
sugar
taj
mahal
khan
ghoul

CHALLENGE WORDS

muslin
camphor
algorithm
minaret
serdab
tamarind
carafe
julep
marzipan
nenuphar
alcazar
tahini
Qatari
alkali
serendipity
nadir
douane
fennec

hafiz
azimuth
bezoar
halal
alim
Swahili
mihrab
salaam
mukhtar
khor
foggara
diffa
coffle

Spelling Tips for

WORDS FROM ARABIC

1. Double consonants are often seen in words from Arabic. More often than not, they occur in the middle of a word as in *mummy*, *cotton*, *henna*, *foggara*, *coffle*, *tarragon* and several other words on the list. Their appearance at the end of a word (as in *albatross* and *tariff*) is usually because of the spelling conventions of English or some other language that the word passed through to get here.
2. A typical word in Arabic has three consonant sounds, with or without vowels between them. *Gazelle*, *safari*, *talc*, *carafe*, *mahal*, *tahini*, *alkali*, *hafiz* and *salaam* are typical examples.
3. Note how many words on this list begin with *al*: This spelling can be traced to the definite article *al* (“the”) in Arabic, which sometimes gets borrowed along with a word. Most of the time the spelling is *al* in English, but note *el* in *elixir*.
4. A long *e* sound (ɛ) at the end of a word from Arabic is often spelled with *i* as in *safari* and several other words on the list but may also be spelled with *y* as in *mummy* and *alchemy*.
5. The schwa sound (ə) at the end of a word from Arabic is usually spelled with *a* as in *henna*, *tuna*, *algebra*, *alfalfa*, *foggara* and *diffa*.

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.

Folk Etymology

Is it just coincidence that *mohair* describes the hair of a goat? Not exactly. *Mohair*—like dozens of other words in this guide—is the result of a process called “folk etymology.” Folk etymology sometimes occurs when a word travels from one language to another. Speakers of the new language (ordinary “folks”) often change the word in a way that makes it more like words in their language. To help them remember just what 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 Arabic words 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, left). 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?

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

Eponyms

Eponyms 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
bander-
snatch
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?

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, 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 ¹
pacifism
manicure
altruism
bureaucracy
mascot
parfait
mystique
layette ²
boutique
dressage
croquet
gorgeous
denture
mirage
denim
cachet ³
neologism
beige
diplomat
motif

suave
foyer ⁴
clementine
ambulance
rehearse
leotard
prairie ⁵
diorama
entourage
fuselage
boudoir
collage ⁶
amenable
expertise
matinee
plateau
sortie
croquette
physique ⁷
elite
deluxe
nougat
rouge ⁸

escargot
crochet
regime
doctrinaire
tutu
bevel
menu
egalitarian
quiche ⁹
fatigue
garage
morgue
stethoscope
vogue
musicale
palette
flamboyant
baton
souvenir
impasse
finesse
maladroit

CHALLENGE WORDS

gauche
rapport
camouflage
genre
virgule
debacle
fusillade ¹⁰
saboteur
renaissance
chauvinism
recidivist
chassis
détente
raconteur
mayonnaise ¹¹
surveillance
repertoire
dossier
taupe
poignant
garçon
croissant
ecru
lieutenant
protégé
mélange
blasé
fête
ingénue
rendezvous

Spelling Tips for Words FROM FRENCH

- 1 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.
- 2 A word from French ending with a stressed \et\ is usually spelled with *ette* as in *croquette* and *layette*.
- 3 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*.
- 4 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*.
- 5 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 below for another spelling of the long *e* ending.)

- 6 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*.
- 7 A \k\ sound at the end of a word from French is often spelled *que* as in *mystique*, *boutique* and *physique*.
- 8 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*.
- 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 \ād\ sound are common in French. This sound is spelled *ade* as in *fusillade*.
- 11 French speakers have a number of vowels that English speakers modify in pronunciation. Our way of pronouncing the French *aïse* (pronounced \ez\ in French) is usually \āzh\.

French (cont.)

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 (ɑ̃) can be spelled at the end of a word from French: \ka-ʼfɑ̃\ \mā-ɹlɑ̃.
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 (ɑ̃). Others, like *levee*, have a long *e* (ɛ̃). 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 in the Eponyms category because they are based on the name of a person or character. Which three words are these?

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	synonym	chronology
android	orthodox	eulogy
chronic	aristocracy	didactic
biopsy	calypso	cosmetic
irony	patriarch	Spartan
automaton	hierarchy	geothermal
enthusiasm	character	2
synopsis	isobar	3
homogeneous	asterisk	homonym
odyssey	eclectic	cryptic
megalopolis	melancholy	hypothesis
acme	1	stoic
		academy
		pentathlon

antibiotic
diatribe
etymology
hydraulic
4
trauma
hygiene
semantics
thesaurus
phenomenon
5
cosmos
protagonist
acronym
paradox
synchronous
misanthropy
sarcasm
ephemeral
polygon
nemesis
syntax
eureka
topography
panic
apostrophe
geranium
metaphor
spherical
xylophone
6
dynamic
myriad
epiphany
apathy
synergy
amnesia
philanthropy
democracy
strategy
7

diagnosis
topical
matriarch
endemic
analysis
8
rhetoric
eponym
agnostic
dogma
idiom
thermal
dyslexia
Olympian
allegory
pragmatic
adamant
protocol
tragic
hydrology
polymer
notochord
biblical
ergonomic
mathematics
tachometer
protein
rhinoceros
hyphen
autopsy
pyre
herpetology
angelic
tritium
androcentric
demotic
geode

hedonism
periscope
geoponics
asthmogenic
monotonous
amphibious
symbiosis
macron
periphery

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

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, apostrophe, 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 anachronism, arachnid, character, chronic, chronology, dichotomy, hierarchy, matriarch, melancholy, patriarch, synchronous, notochord, tachometer, and gynarchy.
3. 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, synchronous, synergy, synonym, synopsis, syntax, symbiosis and polymer.
4. A long i sound (i\ in a word that comes from Greek is sometimes represented by y, especially after h, as in hydraulic, hydrology, hygiene, hyperbole, hyphen, hypothesis, dynamic, cynosure, gynarchy, xylophone and pyre.
5. In ancient Greek, the letter phi (pronounced (f\ 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.
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, notochord, orthodox, ergonomic,

geoponics, 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.

7. 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!
8. A schwa in words from Greek is occasionally spelled with y: See analysis, etymology, misogynist, odyssey, and zephyr.

Now You Try!

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

1. **analysis** *n* separation of something into its parts. The lysis part of this word means "loosening" or "breaking up" in Greek.
2. **android** *n* a robot that looks like a human. The andr part of this word comes from the Greek word that means "man."
3. **diatribe** *n* bitter or abusive writing or speech. The dia part of this word means "through," "across," or "apart" in Greek words.
4. **isobar** *n* a line on a map connecting places that have the same barometer reading. The iso part of this word means "equal" in Greek words.
5. **pentathlon** *n* an athletic competition consisting of five events. The pent/penta part of this word comes from the Greek word that means "five."
6. **olygon** *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** *adj* related to, caused by, or involving heat. The therm part of this word appears in other words from Greek involving heat.

Example

apathy *n* lack of feeling. The path part of this word comes from the Greek word for "feeling."

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 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!

Spelling Tips for Words FROM ITALIAN

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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).
- 4 The \sh\ sound has various spellings in words from Italian; a spelling it usually doesn't have is *sh*! It can be spelled *sc* as in *crescendo* and *prosciutto* or *ch* as in *charlatan* and *pistachio*. The spelling of the \sh\ sound in *capricious* is also seen in words that come from Latin—the ancestral language of Italian.
- 5 The \k\ sound can be spelled *cc* when it comes before long *o* (\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 spelled *ini* (as in *zucchini* and *fantoccini*).
- 8 The double consonant *zz* is typically pronounced \ts\ in words from Italian, as in *paparazzo*, *mozzarella*, *pizzicato* and one pronunciation of *piazza*.

staccato	belladonna	virtuosa
ballot	gondola	spaghetti
confetti ¹	rotunda	piccolo
semolina	cauliflower	ravioli
influenza	galleria	vibrato
cavalry	regatta	pesto
piazza	crescendo ⁴	aria
cadenza	balcony	bambino
pistachio	portfolio	salami
spinet	antipasto	Parmesan
cantata	libretto	oratorio
incognito ²	virtuoso	finale
vendetta	harmonica	scenario
contraband	maestro	contrapuntal
mascara	bravura	illuminati
graffiti	fresco	concerto
credenza	stucco ⁵	macaroni
parapet	inferno	palmetto
falsetto	ballerina	bandit
ditto	malaria	fiasco
provolone ³	grotto	cameo
extravaganza	harpichord	sonata
scampi	allegro	coloratura

CHALLENGE WORDS scherzo⁶
adagio
segue
zucchini⁷
capricious
archipelago
charlatan
maraschino
paparazzo⁸
fantoccini
mozzarella
garibaldi
ocarina
prosciutto
trattoria
vivace
cappelletti
pizzicato
intangio

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 in 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?

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 ¹
barrow
dearth
bower
paddock
blithe
keen
mongrel
reckless
alderman
whirlpool
belay ²
cleanser
dreary ³
bequeath
sallow ⁴
dross
lithe
gristle
earwig

fickle
nestle ⁵
fennel
nostril
abide
behest
slaughter ⁶
gospel
furlong
linseed
nether
fathom
nightingale
farthing
threshold
kith
wanton
loam ⁷
yield
mattock
hawthorn
tithe
behoove

forlorn
quiver
hustings
aspen
mermaid
anvil
barley
linden
hassock
orchard
hearth ⁸
watery
fiend
goatee
earthenware
windily
dealership
bookkeeping
fiery
learned
nosiest
creepy
errand

daily
gnat
broadleaf
stringy
dairy
workmanship
newfangled
timely
dogged
mootable
womanly
manhandle
folksiness
worrisome
roughhewn
knavery
hurdle
kipper
hundredth
icicle
pinafore
yieldable
hue

Spelling Tips for Words from OLD ENGLISH

- 1 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*.
- 2 A long *a* sound (ʌ̃) at the end of words from Old English is nearly always spelled *ay* as in *belay*.
- 3 Long *e* (ē) at the end of an adjective or adverb from Old English *s* nearly always spelled with *y*. Examples include *dreary*, *watery*, *windily*, *fiery*, *creepy*, *daily*, *stringy*, *timely*, *womanly* and *chary*.
- 4 Long *o* (ō) at the end 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*.
- 5 When the syllable ʰəɪ ends words from Old English, it is nearly always spelled *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* (not on the study list) and *nightingale*, and it signals that the vowel is pronounced ʌ̃.
- 7 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*.
- 8 Silent *e* on the end or not? For words from Old English that end in either hard *th* (ʰθ) or soft *th* (ʰθ̃), 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.

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.

Old English (cont.)

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.

CHALLENGE WORDS

heifer
mistletoe
salve
kirtle
Wiccan
shrieval
chary

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: sallow

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: _____

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.

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").

cockatoo
keelhaul
harpoon
furlough
bowery
easel
holster
freebooter
waffle
trawl
uproar
beleaguer
cruller
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
clapboard
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
waterzooi
flense
muishond
witloof
springbok
maelstrom
bobbejaan
keeshond
voortrekker
uitlander
hollandaise
galjoen
schipperke
apartheid
hartebeest
keest
wainscot
roodebok

Now You Try!

1. All of the following non-study-list words are part translations from another language. Can you guess the original language of each? Use a dictionary if you can't guess!

cranberry grosbeak alpenglow smearcase

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.

dugong	rupee	yamen
guru	mongoose	raj
cushy	shampoo	kama
seersucker	typhoon	pundit
jungle	bamboo	loot
oolong	jackal	kavya
nirvana	dungaree	jiva
bangle	bungalow	pandit
cummerbund	gunnysack	chintz
juggernaut	chutney	patel
pangolin	karma	
mahatma	jute	

CHALLENGE WORDS

gymkhana	durwan
basmati	mahout
gingham	prabhu
mandir	Buddha
bhalu	topeng
gourami	lahar
masala	jnana
raita	Holi
tanha	
asana	
batik	
charpoy	

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.

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.)

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 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	mikado ⁴	tatami
sushi ¹	hibachi	kami
tofu	origami	sukiyaki
shogun	geisha ⁵	kuruma
honcho	wasabi	Meiji
karate ²	ramen	Romaji
samurai	kudzu	odori
teriyaki	banzai	miso
sashimi	tycoon	Kabuki
tsunami	sumo	geta
haiku ³	koan	sayonara
futon	satori	

CHALLENGE WORDS

karaoke
nisei
sansei
issei
kibei

Spelling Tips for Words from Japanese

- 1 A long *e* sound (ē) is very common at the end of Japanese words and is usually spelled with *i* as in *sushi*, *teriyaki*, *wasabi*, *Meiji*, *odori* and several other words on the list.
- 2 The sound of long *e* is spelled simply with *e* in some words from Japanese. Examples include *karate* and *karaoke*.
- 3 An *ü* sound is also a common way to end Japanese words and is spelled with *u* as in *haiku*, *tofu* and *kudzu*.
- 4 Long *o* (ō) at the end of a word from Japanese is spelled with *o* as in *honcho*, *mikado*, *sumo* and *miso*.
- 5 A long *a* sound (ā) heard in *geisha* is spelled *ei* in some words from Japanese. Four of the challenge words have this spelling of the long *a* sound and contain the word element *sei*, which means "generation."

Now You Try!

1. Study the sounds that occur at the ends of words from Japanese on the study list. Based on what you see there, which of the following non-study-list words would you say is not from Japanese, and why?
kanban ginger wok soba kendo
2. From what you have learned about Japanese words in English, how many syllables do you think each of these non-study-list Japanese words has?
matsutake kamikaze netsuke wakame

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 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.

Spelling Tips for Words from NEW WORLD LANGUAGES

- 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.
- 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
- 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*.
- 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.

condor
iguana
hurricane ¹
kahuna
hogan
jerky
muskrat
hominy
wigwam
pampas
caribou ²
toboggan
persimmon
quinine
powwow
bayou
coyote ³
tamale

poi
cashew
luau
totem
mole
hickory
cacao
kona
malihini
wikiwiki
Tuckahoe
pecan
chipotle
skunk
woodchuck ⁴

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.

Now You Try!

- The two words in 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 brooklime
chickling poppy
- 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

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.

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.

Spelling Tips for Words FROM GERMAN

- 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 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*).
- 3 A long *i* sound (\iː) usually has the spelling *ei* in words from German, as in *fräulein*, *Meistersinger*, *zeitgeber* and several other words on the list.
- 4 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*.
- 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 on the list.
- 6 The \sh\ sound in words of German origin is usually spelled *sch* as in *schadenfreude*, whether at the beginning or end of a word

angst¹
pretzel
waltz
haversack

sauerbraten
hinterland
verboten
liverwurst
streusel
umlaut
wanderlust
eiderdown
schnauzer
lederhosen
kohlrabi
sitzmark
langlauf
autobahn
Backstein

inselberg
gestalt
einkorn
kitsch²
gestapo
schloss
rucksack
echt
bratwurst
knapsack
feldspar
poltergeist
noodle
spareribs
Meistersinger³
pumpnickel
Bildungsroman
strudel
bagel
hamster

cobalt
nachtmusik
vorlage⁴
graupel
Wagnerian
cringle
fife
glitz
homburg
kuchen
pitchblende
spritz⁵
prattle
zwinger
spitz
realschule
panzer
stollen
dachshund
seltzer

CHALLENGE WORDS
schadenfreude⁶
dreidel
weimaraner
ersatz
fräulein
blitzkrieg⁷
gesundheit
pfeffernuss
edelweiss⁸
glockenspiel
rottweiler
schottische
anschluss
wedel
springerle
zeitgeber
pickelhaube
schnecke
Weissnichtwo

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
affep _ _ 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?

or syllable. In *schottische*, you get it in both places!

- 7 A long *e* sound (\ɛː) 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 North Americans, for example, say “bratwurst,” not “bratyurst.”

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. 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 Americans share with Mexico and the large number of North Americans whose origins go back eventually to Mexico, North American English has many words that come directly from Mexican Spanish.

Spelling Tips for Words

FROM SPANISH

- 1 A long *o* sound (ɒ) 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 in this list.
- 2 A long *e* sound (ɛ) at the end of a word of Spanish origin is usually spelled with *i* as in *mariachi*.
- 3 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* (ɑ), long *e* (ɛ), or short *i* (ɪ). *Quesadilla* and *conquistador* (in its pronunciations both with and without the \w\ sound) are examples from our list.
- 4 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* (o) as in *flamenco* or *junco*.
- 5 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 in the list.
- 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*, *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!
- 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.

burrito
embargo¹
chimichanga
gazpacho
mariachi²
sombrero
alligator
canasta
bonanza
chinchilla
machismo
enchilada
pueblo
hacienda
fandango
quesadilla³
flotilla
tornado
flamenco⁴
vigilante
adios
cabana

gordita
peccadillo
filibuster
tortilla
vanilla
cilantro
fiesta
anchovy
mesa⁵
ramada
junco
cafeteria
bongo
castanets
mantilla⁶
oregano
lariat
chalupa
buffalo⁷

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

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 page.

Now You Try!

1. One of the two words beginning with *j* on our study list also begins with a \j\ sound, but the letter *j* does not always have this sound in words from Spanish. What is the initial consonant sound in these four non-study-list words, which also come from Spanish?
jalapeño jipijapa jinete jojoba
2. Why do you think English uses either *c* or *qu* but not *k* to spell the \k\ sound in words of Spanish origin?
3. You can see from the words in the list that *ch* is common in words from Spanish and that it usually has the same pronunciation as English normally uses for *ch*. In which word from the list does *ch* sometimes have a different pronunciation?
4. We have seen already that *c* often represents a \k\ sound in words from Spanish. In which three words on the list does *c* have a different pronunciation, and what sound does it have?
5. The two *l*'s in alligator are not the usual *ll* that you often see in the middle of words from Spanish. When this word was borrowed, the Spanish masculine definite article *el* ("the") was borrowed along with it. *El legarto* 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?

Key to Exercises

Words from Latin

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

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 French

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 *repatee* can be pronounced with either a long *a* (\ā\) or a long *e* (\ē\).
5. The three eponyms are *leotard*, *clementine* and *chauvinism*.

Words from Slavic Languages

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.

Eponyms

1. The six eponyms based on characters from Greek or Roman mythology are *narcissistic*, *tantalize*, *hector*, *vulcanize*, *cupid* and *mentor*.
2. Answers will vary; your teacher can help you.

Words from German

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 Italian

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 Dutch

1. *Cranberry*, *alpenglow* and *smearcase* are all part translations from German. *Grosbeak* is from French.

Words from Old English

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 Asian Languages

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 Japanese

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 New World Languages

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

Words from Greek

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*, *Pentateuch*, *Pentecost*
6. *decagon*, *hexagon*, *heptagon*, *pentagon*, *nonagon*, *octagon*, *orthogonal*
7. *hyperthermia*, *hypothermia*, *isotherm*, *thermometer*

Words from Spanish

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*.