

Spelling

If you want to improve your spelling it is very important to have a good dictionary. If you doubt about the spelling of a word, use a dictionary. Besides telling you how to spell a word, a dictionary tells you: 1. *what a word means* 2. *how to use it* 3. *where it comes from* 4. *how to say it*

All this information has to be squashed into the dictionary. To do this the people who write dictionaries use abbreviations, signs, symbols and different kinds of type which helps to make things clearer. Different dictionaries use slightly different symbols and abbreviations.

To look a word up in the dictionary it is very important to know what letter it starts with. Some words are tricky because the first letter is not pronounced. Other words are difficult because a letter is not pronounced. These are called silent letters.

gnaw
honest
wrong
know
psalm

lamb
bomb
debt
subtle
thumb

weigh
hour
gnome
gnat
half

island
solemn
autumn
castle
listen

- If you can't find a word in the dictionary, try:
 1. Checking the consonant sound for alternative spellings. "s" as in snake can be spelt: "ce" as in mice - "sc" as in scent - "ss" as in hiss.
 2. Checking the vowel sounds for alternative spellings. Vowels are: a e i o u and sometimes the letter "y" is used as a vowel depending on its position in a word. When placed at the beginning of a word (yoyo) it acts as a consonant. When placed at the end of a word (valley) it acts as a vowel.
 3. Checking for silent letters. See examples given above.