

Letter Patterns 2

Many words are spelt and pronounced in a logical way, and letter patterns can often help you with this.

- The letter **h** often occurs with another consonant in combinations such as **ch** (*chick*), **tch** (*watch*), **sh** (*fashion*), **sch** (*school*), **th** (*myth*), **wh** (*white*), **gh** (*sigh* and *ghost*) and **ght** (*daughter*). Learn the letter patterns **tch**, **sch** and **ght** and do not put the **h** in the wrong place. Beware of the **phth** combination, found in words like *ophthalmic* and *diphtheria*, and do not miss out an **h**.
- **CC** is sometimes pronounced like **x** in the middle of a word – remember that you need two **c**'s, one for the 'k' sound and one for the 's' sound: *accent*, *accept*, *eccentric*, *succeed*, *succinct*, *vaccine*. Can you think of any other 'cc' words?
- The part of speech may give you a clue to the spelling of a word. For example, the 'us' sound is usually spelt **us** at the end of a noun (*status*, *crocus*, *chorus*, *hippopotamus*) and **ous** at the end of an adjective (*frivolous*, *curious*, *hideous*, *generous*).
- When a short 'o' sound follows **w** or **qu** it is usually spelt with an **a**: *wash*, *wasp*, *swan*, *swat*, *quash*, *squat*. (Exceptions include *wok* and *wobble*.) Similarly, the 'or' sound is usually spelt **ar** after **w** or **qu**: *warm*, *warn*, *swarm*, *dwarf*, *towards*.

BLINDFOLD

Here are some words. Look at each one carefully, then cover over the left-hand column and write each word out yourself. Take especial care with difficult letter patterns. Don't cheat! Then check your answers.



school
squabble
draughty
quarter
continuous
hotchpotch
accelerator
ophthalmic

Over to you

The answers to the following clues are groups of words containing the same letter patterns, which may or may not have the same sound in each word. The first one has been done – can you solve the rest?

not heavy / battle / scare / ugly

-ight: light / fight / frighten / unsightly

seat / animal's den / place where milk is processed / list of questions

sixty minutes / bitter / sightseer / grieve

go in front / top part of the body / constant / bullfighter

Make a note of common patterns, like **-our-**, **-ight-**, **-ous** and **-ial** in your Spelling Journal. Make lists under each heading of words which have this pattern as you come across them.

SPOT THE LETTER PATTERNS

Letter patterns might be found at the beginning, middle or end of a word. Can you spot the repeated letter pattern in these sets of words, and circle them in each one? Then write the letter pattern in the space at the end.

awoke sword two wobble _____

amethyst athlete thirteen tooth _____

fuss goodness missile passion _____

Some letter patterns do not occur at the beginning or end of a word. For example, the letter pattern **qu** is never found at the end of a word. Can you think of any words that begin with the letter pattern **ss-**?

-GRY

You may have come across this old riddle about the letter pattern **-gry**:

‘Several words in English end in **-gry**. ‘Angry’ and ‘hungry’ are two such words. What is the third word in the English language?’

Many people have pondered on this riddle for a long time! However, if you look at it closely it actually asks ‘What is the third word in *the English language*’. The third word in that phrase is *language*. It is a trick question!

Although this is designed to catch you out, there are some very rare words which end in **-gry** in the biggest dictionaries, although they are extremely unusual so most people have never heard of them. They are *aggy* (applied to ancient West African glass beads), *ahungry* (a very old word meaning oppressed with hunger), and *higry-pigry* (an alternative spelling of a drug called *hiera-picra*). You will probably never see these words except in a dictionary!

So you can see that **-gry** is a very uncommon letter pattern!