

Weird and Wonderful Words

Long words

Here are four weird and wonderful long words that you may not have seen before:

floccinaucinihilipilification, which means ‘the action of judging something to be worthless’

antidisestablishmentarianism, which means ‘opposition to removing state recognition of an established church’

pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis, which is a lung disease caused by inhaling very fine dust

supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, a word which was featured in the film *Mary Poppins*

What are the longest words you know? Can you spell them correctly? Write them out in the space below.



STRANGE SPELLINGS

The word *ghoti* was coined to show how illogical English spelling can be. It spells ‘fish’:

gh = ‘f’ as in *enough*

o = ‘i’ as in *women*

ti = ‘sh’ as in *nation*

Similarly, *ghoughphtheightteeau* spells ‘potato’:

gh = ‘p’ as in *hiccough*

ough = ‘o’ as in *dough*

phth = ‘t’ as in the rare word *phthisis*

eigh = ‘a’ as in *neighbour*

tte = ‘t’ as in *gazette*

eau = ‘o’ as in *plateau*

Can you think up any more strange spellings? Can you spell your name in a weird and wonderful way? Write the spellings below and explain where the sounds came from.

Palindromes and anagrams

A palindrome is a word that reads the same forwards and backwards, such as *pip*, *deed*, *civic*, *radar* and *repaper*. Here are some palindromic sentences – can you make up one of your own?

Was it a car or a cat I saw?

Stella won no wallets.

Draw, O coward!

'Tis Ivan on a visit

There are also many words that can be written backwards to spell a different word. Examples are *desserts* and *stressed*, *deliver* and *reviled*, *straw* and *warts* – can you think of any more?

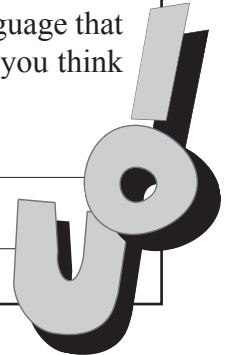
Anagram pairs, in which one word contains the letters of the other in a different order, can be a useful way of remembering spellings – as long as you rearrange the letters correctly! Here are some examples:

Mate and **meat**
Generate and **teenager**

Earth and **heart**
Orchestra and **carthorse**

OTHER CURIOSITIES

The words *facetious* and *abstemious* are the only common words in the English language that contain all five vowels only once and in alphabetical order. How many words can you think of that contain all five vowels only once but in any order?



CREATING YOUR OWN WORDS

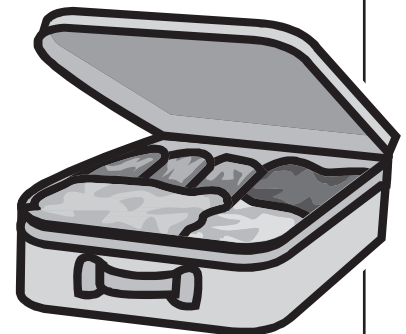
Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, loved to make up new words. He also made up the term ‘portmanteau word’ to describe a word into which are packed the sense (and sound) of two words (*portmanteau* means combining or covering two or more things of the same kind). He made up portmanteau words like *slithy*, which he used to describe something that is both *lithe* and *slimy*.

Many words which were once made-up portmanteau words are now in common use and appear in dictionaries:

- chortle** = *chuckle* and *snort*
- moped** = *motor* and *pedal*
- motel** = *motor* and *hotel*

Can you guess which words these might have been formed from?

- fantabulous** _____ and _____
- brunch** _____ and _____
- smog** _____ and _____



Can you make up some portmanteau words of your own? Write down the two words you are blending, your new creation and then write a short sentence using it.

_____ and _____ to make _____

Sentence: _____

_____ and _____ to make _____

Sentence: _____