

Every Word In The Dictionary

Instructions: Watch a short video about a genius "pronouncer".

A. Before You Watch: Complete the sentences. Compare.

1. The hardest word to spell is _____.
2. The hardest word to pronounce is _____.
3. Can you pronounce these words? Spell them (not looking)? Do you know what each word means?



Luxembourg gala syringe elucubrate gyro gif
Roquefort pyroclastic sherbet onomasia schwa

B. While You Watch: Finish the sentences.

1. Jacques is the official pronouncer of the National _____.
2. The schwa is a speller's _____.
3. Jacques takes a rather _____ approach on correct pronunciation.
4. Dictionary people go out and listen to _____ speakers.

C. After You Watch:

 **Answer & Discuss:**




Schwa

1. What's your opinion about spelling bees? Every been in one? Fun or boring?
2. Why are English words so hard to pronounce and spell? Would you change anything?
3. Is the dictionary always correct about pronunciation? How should we decide what is the correct way to pronounce a word? tomatO or tomAto?

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Luxembourg country	gala event	syringe medical tube	elucubrate study hard	gyro Greek food	gif type of image
Roquefort cheese - region	pyroclastic pieces of volcanic rock	sherbet type of dessert	onomasia similar words	schwa vowel sound	

B. While You Watch: Finish the sentences.

1. Jacques is the official pronouncer of the National Spelling Bee.
2. The schwa is a speller's nightmare.
3. Jacques takes a rather agnostic (indifferent) approach on correct pronunciation.
4. Dictionary people go out and listen to native speakers.

C. After You Watch:



Answer & Discuss:



1. What's your opinion about spelling bees? Every been in one? Fun or boring?
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- [Narrator] Pardon me, professor. Maybe you can help me out here, is this word pronounced cache or cache?
- Cache. - Appreciate it, doc. You see, when Jacques Bailly pronounces a word, he pronounces it right, he can pronounce this thing.
- Smaradine.
- [Narrator] He can pronounce this thing.
- Scherenschnitte.
- [Narrator] He even pronounces words that don't make a lick of sense.
- Albumen.
- [Narrator] And when you're that damn good with words, sooner or later, someone's gonna pay you to say 'em.

- Hi, Dr. Bailly.
- [Narrator] This is Jacques Bailly, the official pronouncer of the National Spelling Bee.
- Luxembourg.
- [Boy] L-U-X-E. - Gala. Sherbet. Gyro. G-I-F.
- [Narrator] Before Jacques' days as the world's foremost pronouncer of persnickety words, he began a spelling career on the other side of the microphone. Jacques was a competitive speller and in 1980, he found himself in the finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. His word, elucubrate, so he said.
- E-L-U-C-U-B-R-A-T-E and it means to burn the midnight oil, to study all night.

[Narrator] And with those 10 letters, Jacques became a champion. Twenty-three years later, Jacques had elucubrated all the way to the big show.

- Propiophenone. Roquefort. Pyroclastic. Can I please have the definition?
- [Narrator] But sometimes even Jacques' meticulous pronunciations don't tell the whole story. English words are not always spelled as they sound. One thing that makes English words really hard to spell is the schwa, the schwa is that uh, like in butter or unutterable.

- [Narrator] The Y in syringe, the A in balloon, the O in freedom, they all sound the same spoken out loud, a speller's nightmare. The longer and weirder a word is, the easier it is to spell, take the state fish of Hawaii, the humuhumunuku, ah, the humuhumunukunukuapua'a, that's an easy word to spell, it's just long, it's a weird word and weird things stand out and are easier to remember.
- O-N-O-M-A-S-I-A, paronomasia. - Correct.

- Let's go!

- [Narrator] For a man with perhaps the most legitimate claim as the authority on pronunciation, Jacques takes a rather agnostic approach to the right and wrong ways to say things. A lot of people are kind of amazed that I know how to pronounce all these words, but I don't, I read them from the dictionary.

Well, how does the dictionary know how to pronounce a word? Because they go out there and listen to native speakers. If there are a whole bunch of people, who pronounce a word a certain way, that makes it a correct pronunciation.

People have very strong opinions, that there's an incorrect way to pronounce a word, but it's like saying that dog barked wrong, that's not a bark. Well, the dog gets to decide.

- [Narrator] Thanks Jacques, I reckon you got more wisdom than all the books in the library.

English Ain't Easy



I take it you already know
Of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Others may stumble but not you
On hiccough, thorough, slough and through.
Well done! And now you wish perhaps,
To learn of less familiar traps?

Beware of heard, a dreadful word
That looks like beard and sounds like bird.
And dead, it's said like bed, not bead-
for goodness' sake don't call it 'deed'!
Watch out for meat and great and threat
(they rhyme with suite and straight and debt).

A moth is not a moth in mother,
Nor both in bother, broth, or brother,
And here is not a match for there,
Nor dear and fear for bear and pear,
And then there's doze and rose and lose-
Just look them up- and goose and choose,
And cork and work and card and ward
And font and front and word and sword,
And do and go and thwart and cart-
Come, I've hardly made a start!
A dreadful language? Man alive!
I'd learned to speak it when I was five!
And yet to write it, the more I sigh,
I'll not learn how 'til the day I die.