

Words and Spelling Tips from 2012 Spell It!

Words from Latin: Study Words

inane	benefactor	ingenious	reptile
relevant	candidate	retrospective	providence
impetuous	bugle	ominous	message
ambivalent	formidable	vulnerable	foliate
dejected	canary	omnipotent	nasal
postmortem	subterfuge	consensus	opera
incriminate	abdicate	discipline	renovate
access	lunatic	alleviate	credentials
plausible	carnivore [5]	spectrum	temporal
interrupt [1]	gregarious	prescription	canine
alliteration	ostentatious	capitulation	measure
refugee	prosaic [6]	incredulous	credible
amicable	herbivore	affinity	femininity
lucid [2]	prodigal	necessary	confidence
percolate	magnanimous	adjacent	triumvirate
meticulous	benevolent	dissect	popularity
fastidious	mercurial	conjecture	diary
trajectory	simile	imperative	humble
animosity	jovial	predicate	vivisection
implement	ridiculous	corporal	strict
ambiguity	innate	patina	prosecute
curriculum	obstinate	Capricorn	contiguous
omnivorous	discern	participant	ductile
bellicose	mediocre	library	gradient
electoral	insidious	cognition	current
crescent [3]	rupture	primal	perfidy
obsequious	precipitate	filament	fidelity
transect	erudite	unity	incorruptible
precipice	colloquial	ventilate	
susceptible	intractable	aquatic	
condolences [4]	exuberant [7]	igneous	

Words from Latin: Challenge Words

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

Words from Latin: Spelling Tips

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 *\ü* sound (as in *ooze*) is nearly always spelled with *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. 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 *facetious*, *ostentatious*, *pernicious*, and *precocious*. 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*.
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Words from Arabic: Study Words

azure	orange	lilac	tahini
Islamic	sequin	alcove	Qatari
sultan	macrame	massage	alkali
artichoke	algebra	henna [5]	serendipity
mummy [1]	guitar	alchemy	nadir
tarragon	nabob	sugar	douane
adobe	giraffe	taj	fennec
mohair	mattress	mahal	hafiz
borax	elixir	khan	azimuth
talc	saffron	ghoul	bezoar
arsenal	cotton	Challenge Words	halal
lemon	albatross [3]	muslin	alim
tuna	zero	camphor	Swahili
admiral	safari [4]	algorithm	serdab
hazard	magazine	minaret	mihrab
apricot	zenith	tamarind	salaam
carmine	alfalfa	carafe	mukhtar
monsoon	imam	julep	khore
average	mosque	marzipan	foggara
gazelle [2]	alcohol	nenuphar	diffa
crimson	tariff	alcazar	coffle

Words from Arabic: Spelling Tips

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 from 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 (ɛ̄) 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*.

Words from Asian Languages: Study Words

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

Words from Asian Languages: Challenge Words

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

Words from French: Study Words

peloton	denim	collage [6]	bevel
barrage	cachet [3]	amenable	menu
chagrin [1]	neologism	expertise	egalitarian
pacifism	beige	matinee	quiche [9]
manicure	diplomat	plateau	fatigue
altruism	motif	sortie	garage
bureaucracy	suave	croquette	morgue
mascot	foyer [4]	physique [7]	stethoscope
parfait	clementine	elite	vogue
mystique	ambulance	deluxe	musicale
layette [2]	rehearse	nougat	palette
boutique	leotard	rouge [8]	flamboyant
dressage	prairie [5]	escargot	baton
croquet	diorama	crochet	souvenir
gorgeous	entourage	regime	impasse
denture	fuselage	doctrinaire	finesse
mirage	boudoir	tutu	maladroit

Words from French: Challenge Words

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

Words from French: Spelling Tips

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 *layette* and *croquette*.
 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*, *croquet*, and *crochet*.
 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*.
 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 *physique*, *mystique*, and *boutique*.
 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 \āz\.
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Eponyms: Study Words

praline	greengage	quixote	Fletcherism
magnolia	angstrom	jeremiad	yahoo
boysenberry	gardenia	hector	diesel
hosta	melba	Geronimo	bandersnatch
poinsettia	tantalize	shrapnel	Crusoe
macadamia	zinnia	vulcanize	mentor
salmonella	quisling	Frankenstein	Dracula
newton	begonia	Boswell	
saxophone	samaritan	ampere	
tortoni	Panglossian	cupid	

Eponyms: Challenge Words

forsythia	Fahrenheit	philippic	gnathonic
madeleine	narcissistic	guillotine	pasteurize
bromeliad	dahlia	Bobadil	Croesus
mercerize	Baedeker	mesmerize	braggadocio

Words from German: Study Words

angst [1]	kohlrabi	feldspar	cringle
pretzel	sitzmark	poltergeist	fife
waltz	langlauf	noodle	glitz
haversack	autobahn	spareribs	homburg
nosh	Backstein	Meistersinger [3]	kuchen
sauerbraten	inselberg	pumpernickel	pitchblende
hinterland	gestalt	Bildungsroman	spritz [5]
verboten	einkorn	strudel	prattle
liverwurst	kitsch [2]	bagel	zwinger
streusel	gestapo	hamster	spitz
umlaut	schloss	cobalt	realschule
wanderlust	rucksack	nachtmusik	panzer
eiderdown	echt	vorlage [4]	stollen
schnauzer	bratwurst	graupe	dachshund
lederhosen	knapsack	Wagnerian	seltzer

Words from German: Challenge Words

schadenfreude [6]	blitzkrieg [7]	rottweiler	zeitgeber
dreidel	gesundheit	schottische	pickelhaube
weimaraner	pfeffernuss	anschluss	schnecke
ersatz	edelweiss [8]	wedel	Weissnichtwo
fräulein	glockenspiel	springerle	

Words from German: Spelling Tips

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 (\i\̄) 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 *volkslied* and *herrenvolk*.
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 \z\ 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 or syllable. In *schottische*, you get it in both places!
7. A long *e* sound (\e\̄) 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 Americans, for example, say "bratwurst," not "bratvurst."

Words from Slavic Languages: Study Words

gulag	Permian	knish	baba
parka	kishke	cravat	cossack
Slav	glasnost	babushka	nelma
robot	paprika	Soviet	kovsh
samovar	sable	Borzoi	lokshen
kremlin	kasha	gopak	feldsher
troika	nebbish	cheka	barabara
slave	polka	sevruga	aul
mammoth	Bolshevik	trepak	
Siberian	vampire	babka	
tundra	sputnik	purga	

Words from Slavic Languages: Challenge Words

balalaika	barukhzy	commissar	taiga
kielbasa	perestroika	tokamak	Beetewk
tchotchke	apparatchik	pogrom	

Words from Dutch: Study Words

cockatoo	howitzer	scrabble	ticket
keelhaul	crimp	clapboard	buckwagon
harpoon	bluff	gruff	hock
furlough	stipple	isinglass	boodle
bowery	floss	excise	guy
easel	cruiser	blister	daffodil
holster	hustle	rabbit	loiter
freebooter	klompen	package	potash
waffle	polder	muddle	scow
trawl	bundle	handsome	wintergreen
uproar	catkin	foist	trigger
beleaguer	splice	staple	stripe
cruller	Flemish	gulden	bruin
yacht	grabble	mart	skipper
wiseacre	huckster	screen	waywiser
brackish	frolic	guilder	spoor
decoy	ravel	etch	mizzle
caboose	tattle	Netherlander	school
buckwheat	scum	dune	pickle
walrus	trek	croon	snuff

Words from Dutch: Challenge Words

mynheer	springbok	uitlander	hartebeest
waterzooi	maelstrom	hollandaise	keest
flense	bobbejaan	galjoen	wainscot
muishond	keeshond	schipperke	roodebok
witloof	voortrekker	apartheid	

Words from Old English: Study Words

quell [1]	nostril	aspen	stringy
barrow	abide	mermaid	dairy
dearth	behest	anvil	workmanship
bower	slaughter [6]	barley	newfangled
paddock	gospel	linden	timely
blithe	furlong	hassock	dogged
keen	linseed	orchard	mootable
mongrel	nether	hearth [8]	womanly
reckless	fathom	watery	manhandle
alderman	nightingale	fiend	folksiness
whirlpool	farthing	goatee	worrisome
belay [2]	threshold	earthenware	roughhewn
cleanser	kith	windily	knavery
dreary [3]	wanton	dealership	hurdle
bequeath	loam [7]	bookkeeping	kipper
sallow [4]	yield	fiery	hundredth
dross	mattock	learned	icicle
lithe	hawthorn	nosiest	pinafore
gristle	tithe	creepy	yieldable
earwig	behoove	errand	hue
fickle	forlorn	daily	
nestle [5]	quiver	gnat	
fennel	hustings	broadleaf	

Words from Old English: Challenge Words

heifer	salve	Wiccan	chary
mistletoe	kirtle	shrieval	

Words from Old English: Spelling Tips

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 (ʌ̄) at the end of words from Old English is nearly always spelled *ay* as in *belay*.
3. Long *e* (ē̄) at the end of an adjective or adverb from Old English is nearly always spelled with *y*. Examples include *dreary*, *watery*, *windily*, *fiery*, *creepy*, *daily*, *stringy*, *timely*, *womanly*, and *chary*.
4. Long *o* (ō̄) at the end of 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 \səl\ 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 ɪ̄.

Words from Old English: Study Tips, continued

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* (ʰ) or soft *th* (ʰ), 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*, *lithe*, and *tithe*. Interestingly, the word *blithe* can be pronounced both ways.

Words from New World Languages: Study Words

condor	persimmon	cacao	tomato
iguana	quinine	kona	maraca
hurricane [1]	powwow	malihini	petunia
kahuna	bayou	wikiwiki	jaguar
hogan	coyote [3]	Tuckahoe	buccaneer
jerky	tamale	pecan	llama
muskrat	poi	chipotle	succotash
hominy	cashew	skunk	caucus
wigwam	luau	woodchuck [4]	wampum
pampas	totem	chocolate	mole
caribou [2]	mahimahi	muumuu	toucan
toboggan	hickory	puma	

Words from New World Languages: Challenge Words

opossum	hoomalimali	ipecac
terrapin	coati	menhaden
ocelot	jacamar	sachem

Words from New World Languages: Spelling Tips

1. 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.

2. 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 gives us the current spelling because French usually spells this sound *ou*.

3. *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*.

4. 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.

Words from Japanese: Study Words

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

Words from Japanese: Challenge Words

karaoke	sansei	kibei
nisei	issei	

Words from Japanese: Spelling Tips

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. In some Japanese words, long e is spelled simply with *e* (not *i*) as in *karate* and *karaoke*.
 3. An ũ 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."
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Words from Greek: Study Words

lethargy	cynical [3]	geranium	tragic
android	homonym	metaphor	hydrology
chronic	cryptic	spherical	polymer
biopsy	hypothesis	xylophone [6]	notochord
irony	academy	dynamic	biblical
automaton	pentathlon	myriad	ergonomic
enthusiasm	antibiotic	epiphany	mathematics
synopsis	diatribe	apathy	tachometer
homogeneous	etymology	synergy	protein
odyssey	hydraulic [4]	amnesia	rhinoceros
megalopolis	trauma	philanthropy	hyphen
acme [1]	hygiene	democracy	autopsy
synonym	semantics	strategy [7]	pyre
orthodox	thesaurus	diagnosis	herpetology
aristocracy	phenomenon [5]	topical	angelic
calypso	cosmos	matriarch	tritium
patriarch	protagonist	endemic	androcentric
hierarchy	acronym	analysis [8]	demotic
character [2]	paradox	rhetoric	geode
isobar	synchronous	eponym	hedonism
asterisk	misanthropy	agnostic	periscope
eclectic	sarcasm	dogma	geponics
melancholy	ephemeral	idiom	asthmogenic
stoic	polygon	thermal	monotonous
chronology	nemesis	dyslexia	amphibious
eulogy	syntax	Olympian	symbiosis
didactic	eureka	allegory	macron
cosmetic	topography	pragmatic	periphery
Spartan	panic	adamant	
geothermal	apostrophe	protocol	

Words from Greek: Challenge Words

dichotomy	zephyr	arachnid	cynosure
misogynist	hippopotamus	paradigm	philhellenism
hypocrisy	euphemism	Eocene	euthanasia
diphthong	anachronism	gynarchy	philately
mnemonic	metamorphosis	pneumatic	cacophony
anomaly	hyperbole	Hemerocallis	

Words from Greek: Spelling Tips

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*.

Words from Greek: Spelling Tips, continued

4. A long *i* sound (ɪ) 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 ɸ) 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 ɸ sound but memorialized the original sound of *phi* by using *ph* to spell it. As a result, the English ɸ 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*, *geonics*, 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 ɹ sound is always spelled with *g* in words from Greek. Why? When the ɹ 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*.
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Words from Italian: Study Words

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

Words from Italian: Challenge Words

scherzo [6]	archipelago	mozzarella	vivace
adagio	charlatan	garibaldi	cappelletti
segue	maraschino	ocarina	pizzicato
zucchini [7]	paparazzo [8]	prosciutto	intaglio
capricious	fantoccini	trattoria	

Words from Italian: Spelling Tips

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*, *stucco*, *virtuoso*, *concerto*, *prosciutto*, *pizzicato*, *vibrato* 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*.
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*.

Words from Spanish: Study Words

burrito	quesadilla [3]	mesa [5]	cedilla
embargo [1]	flotilla	ramada	Argentine
chimichanga	tornado	junco	bolivar
gazpacho	flamenco [4]	cafeteria	amarillo
mariachi [2]	vigilante	bongo	cordovan
sombrero	adios	castanets	desperado
alligator	cabana	mantilla [6]	empanada
canasta	gordita	oregano	tomatillo
bonanza	peccadillo	lariat	diablo
chinchilla	filibuster	chalupa	pochismo
machismo	tortilla	buffalo [7]	sierra
enchilada	vanilla	renegade	olio
pueblo	cilantro	langosta	bolero
hacienda	fiesta	alamo	junta
fandango	anchovy	barrio	duenna

Words from Spanish: Challenge Words

sassafras	comandante	novillero	rasgado
punctilio	embarcadero	picaresque	vaquero
sarsaparilla	rejoneador	conquistador	caballero

Words from Spanish: Spelling Tips

1. A long *o* sound (\d\o) 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 on this list.
2. A long *e* sound (\d\e) 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* (\d\aa), long *e* (\d\ee), or short *i* (\d\ii). *Quesadilla* and *conquistador* (in its pronunciations with and without the \s\ 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 \e\ as in *canasta* and *embarcadero*; short *a* (\d\aa) as in *castanets* and *caballero*; or long *o* (\d\oo) as in *flamenco* and *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 on 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\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\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.