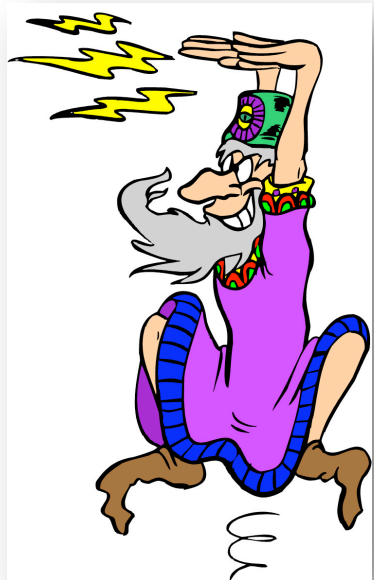


Task Three: How to Use Your Spell Book

It's time to tell you about your Spell Book, I suppose. Every young apprentice has a Spell Book, although if it was up to me they wouldn't be given out willynilly like this. I'd wait till you at least got your Word Weaver Wings before giving you a Spell Book. But the Magicians Union never listens to me. Mind you, they don't have to clear up the word messes I have to clear up....

Anyway before I tell you what your Spell Book is you have to tell me what a spell is. Go on! Have a go. What's a spell? Here's a box. You write down your ideas. Try and surprise me!

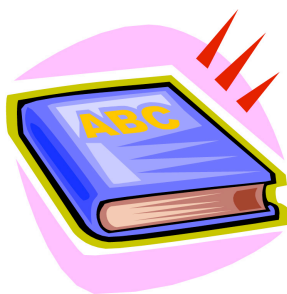


Well, I don't know what you put. I'm not psychic! But you might have guessed that SPELL has two meanings (clever young whippersnapper, that you are, eh?). First of all SPELL means something magic, doesn't it? But it also means to put the letters in a word in the right order. So we could say the two meanings of SPELL are:



1)

TO SPELL means to put words into a particular order to make something magic happen AND...



2)

TO SPELL means to put letters into a particular order to make something sensible happen.

When you put it like that, the two meanings are very similar aren't they? Do you know why? It's because 1000 years ago (a few years before I was born, in other words), the word SPELL actually meant TO SPEAK. You don't believe me do you? None of the apprentices do. Would you believe that if you travelled back in a time machine 1000 years you wouldn't have a clue what anyone was talking about? I better explain, I suppose....

A Short History of the English Language.

(Or: Why you shouldn't feel bad if you find spelling difficult!)

2000 years ago no one spoke English. In fact, English hadn't been invented. People on this island spoke languages like Celtic and Cornish. Even the Isle of Man had its own language, which was called Manx. Did you know that Cornwall had its own language? Hardly anything was written down in old Cornish. Here's a bit of Cornish spoken by an old Cornish fellow.



My a wrug dyski
Kernewek y'n termyn
ha my a veu maw.
*(Translation: When I
was a boy I went
fishing with my father!)*

Anyway, in 50 A.D. the Romans arrived. How jolly was that! Everyone got plumbing and ate grapes. Well, not quite. Quite a few people got killed in rather unpleasant ways, but Britain got straight roads, peas, aquaducts and Latin.

Te audire no possum.
Musa sapientum fixa est
in aure. (*Trans: I can't
hear you. I have a
banana in my ear!*)



The Romans stayed for ages and ages. Well, a few hundred years anyway, but when the Roman Empire began to shrink (the Emperor put it on a very hot wash), all the Romans left, leaving behind their straight roads, a big pea harvest, and lots and lots of Latin words. We've still got lots of Latin words. For example, wherever the Romans set up a military base, they called it a *castra*, and some English town names have kept this word in a rather distorted way (Chester and Bicester for example). Anyway, after the Romans left, the Britons might have gone back to speaking Cornish and Celtic and eating mushy peas, but then all of a sudden in about 450 A.D. another invasion arrived. This time it was the Vikings!



**Haidzruno
runu! (I,
master of
the runes!)**



The Vikings were a rum bunch. Very war-like, as you probably know. They spoke different languages, depending on where they came from, but one of the Viking languages was called Old Norse. Maybe it was called New Norse when they first started speaking it, but it was called Old Norse pretty soon. Vikings didn't use the letters we use, but wrote in runes, which were straight-sided letters (easy to carve with an axe, in other words!). Here's a picture of a rock with some runes carved on it! Anyway in spite of writing with an axe, (which must have been very difficult to fit into a pencil case), they also gave us some words.

Needless to say, a lot of Viking words had to do with invasion and getting cross. The word anger is an old Norse word (Vikings got very angry) as is the word ransack (*ransakka*) and club (*clubba*). The word egg is also Viking. So if you ever get angry about an egg and hit it with a club, you will be using Viking words.

So if you add together the Manx, the Cornish, the Celtic, the Old Norse and Latin, you get a big messy mix of a language, which we call Old English. So great – at last we’ve found out how English was invented. So reckon you would understand what they were saying 1000 years ago? Well, let’s have a look....

The picture shows King Alfred who lived over 1000 years ago. He spent most of his reign trying to protect his country from the Vikings. He was so good at doing this that the people called him Alfred the Great. He was great at stopping Vikings, but rubbish at cooking. In fact one day, he was hiding from the Vikings in an old lady’s house. She hadn’t a clue he was the king, and told him to keep an eye on some cakes she was cooking on the fire, but... You’ve guessed it. King Alfred was so worried about the kingdom, he let the cakes burn. Great king, lousy cook. Here’s a picture about it.



Da se Wisdom a
this spel asæd
hæfðe

Any idea what he’s talking about? Me neither. Except when he says SPEL he means SPEAK. Perhaps he’s saying, ‘Please don’t speak to me about burning your dratted cakes. I’ve got enough on my mind at the moment!’

Alfred and these early Britons were called Anglo-Saxons and it's really hard to tell what they were talking about, even when they were telling a joke. I didn't I tell you did I? The Anglo-Saxons were very fond of riddles. I mean *really, really, really, really* long riddles. Here's a tiny part of a very long Anglo-Saxon riddle and you see if you can recognise any of the words?

Oft ic cwice baerne, unrimu cyn eorpan getenge.

(Translation: often I burn countless living creatures on middle earth)



How many words look like words we might use? *Oft* is a bit like often, and *ic* is a bit like I. *Baerne* isn't a millions miles away from burn, is it? But otherwise, I haven't a clue. Do you? (The answer to the riddle is 'the sun' by the way.)

So we would still have a big problem understanding Old English. It's a mix of Latin words, Welsh words, Viking words and Cornish words... And as if that wasn't enough, we got the biggest change of all in 1066. You remember what happened in 1066 don't you? Come on, hurry up! I haven't got all day! That's right: in 1066 we had the Norman Conquest. Do you know what the Norman Conquest was? And I don't want any funny answers, thank you very much. Not like that apprentice last week who said it was when we got defeated by an accountant called Norman.



Hello, I am Norman. My speciality is conquering. But only numbers, and only on Wednesdays. If you want me to do any conquering, you'll have to make an appointment with my secretary...

So obviously I don't mean THAT sort of a Norman. I mean THIS sort of a Norman. The sort that came from France a thousand years ago and defeated King Harold and Took Over The Country.



*Je suis le Roi,
William le Conqueror,
mais vous pouvez
appeler me, Bill. I
am the king, William
the Conqueror, but
you can call me Bill!*

This Norman was called William the Conqueror, and when he Took Over the Country he brought a whole bunch of other Normans with him. These Normans, and their descendants, ruled in this country for the best part of 300 years. The problem was that they all spoke French. So (you've guessed it)

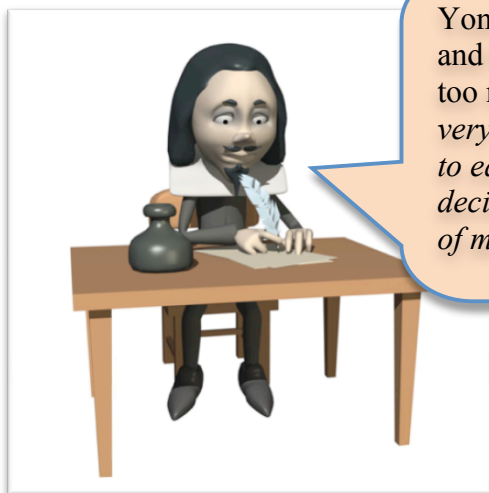
we got a whole bunch of FRENCH words added into the mix of Cornish, Welsh, Manx, Old Norse and Latin.

I haven't got nearly enough pages to tell you all the French words – you'd have fallen asleep with boredom by the time I got to 'C'. Just take it from me there are thousands of French words lurking in the English language that you wouldn't even know about if you didn't know where to look. All the words ending in *ment* are French (such as *amusement*), for example, as are words ending in *ion* (station, option, and so on).

When the Normans were around ordinary people spoke Anglo-Saxon, but the posh people who ruled the country spoke French. There were still a few Cornish speakers, selling ice cream in Penzance, and we mustn't forget the Welsh of course but can you imagine it? Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, Cornish, Celtic, Manx and French?



Eventually William the Conqueror and his descendants (who were known as the Plantagenets) all died out (what a relief!) and we got some different kings called the Tudors and then the Stuarts. Round about this time, Shakespeare started writing plays, and if you've ever tried to read any Shakespeare you will know that even then it wasn't exactly how we speak today. Plus he made up 1700 new words!



Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look! He thinks too much... *(Cassius is very thin and needs a bite to eat. I hope he doesn't decide to take a chunk out of me!)*

With so many different languages all mixed into one language, and very few people being able

to read, not many people bothered with trying to spell. Those were the days, eh? Oh, and I forgot to tell you that in the 18th Century when people in this country started getting interested in science and looking down telescopes we got a lot of Greek words too (this is because the Greeks were already interested in science so if we used their words we didn't have to bother making up any new words).



I am a telescope (from the Greek *tele* (far off) and *scope* (to look)).

If it wasn't for the Greeks I'd be called *a-pointy-tube-that-you-look-down-that-makes-things-that-are-far-away-look-nearer*.

So anyway, in the 18th century a man called Samuel Johnson thought that English words were in a right muddle with all this different spelling, and he decided to write a dictionary to sort it all out.



I am the great Samuel Johnson and I am about to unleash on the world the curse of SPELLING!!! Mwahahahaha ahahahaha!!!

Samuel Johnson's dictionary didn't affect everyone. Even up until the late 19th Century most people couldn't read or write, so spelling still didn't matter (lucky them!). But what it has meant for YOU, young apprentice, is the following facts about English and Spelling:

1. English is made up of lots of different languages with different ways of spelling the same sound.
2. There are more words in the English Language than in any other language in the world!
3. English Spelling makes NO SENSE AT ALL!!!
4. You mustn't feel bad if you find spelling hard!

Because English Spelling is so difficult, words have got the upper hand, which is why you have a Spell Book. It's to keep words under control. The Spell Book works magic over English spelling. You might think you can't spell, but I am going to show you that you can. With the aid of your Spell Book, of course...

First of all I'm going to tell you some spelling secrets which you might not have realised. These are just for apprentices, by the way. I'll get very cross if I hear you've been telling every young ne'er-do-well these secrets!

SOME VERY IMPORTANT SECRET FACTS ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE! SO LISTEN UP!

1 There are more words in the English language than in any other language IN THE WORLD. At the last count there were nearly 250,000 English words!

BUT!

2 The average person only uses 1500 words!

AND!

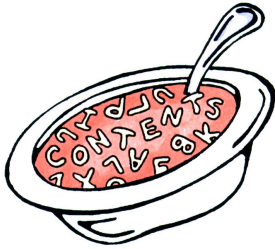
3 Most of these 1500 words are very easy to spell.

AND!

4 There are probably only around 350 words that are difficult to spell that you need to learn.

AND! *(this is the magic bit)*

5 IF YOU LEARN TO SPELL JUST ONE WORD EVERY DAY, IN A YEAR YOU WILL HAVE LEARNED TO SPELL ALL THE DIFFICULT WORDS YOU EVER NEED TO SPELL! *(Howzabout that for a magic trick? It's a 'little and often' again!)*



Now if you are anything like the other apprentices I have had dealings with, you will still be moaning a bit. I can just hear you saying, 'But some of these words are *really, really* difficult. I'd need a 100 years to be able to spell RHINOCEROUS or EXTRAORDINARY. And don't even get me started on CHRYSANTHEMUM. How do I

learn these words in a day?'

Well, here's another bit of magic you might not have realised....

*Only SOME parts
of SOME words
are difficult to spell.*

Let me explain what I mean. Let's take the word *necessary*, for example. Necessary is one of those really horrible words that I think Samuel Johnson deliberately made difficult to spell.

HOWEVER I am sure that you already knew it began with N E and you probably knew it ended with R Y. In fact when you stop to think about it, it's just the letters in the middle that are a bit confusing aren't they? In other words the letters CESSAR. So as long as we know the beginning and the ending, we only have to remember the middle bit don't we?

Well, one magic trick that Word Weaving apprentices learn very early on is that most human beings find it easy to remember pictures and not so easy to remember letters (you are a human being aren't you?). The reason why we find it easier to remember pictures rather than letters are obvious. Pictures are in colour, for one thing, and letters are in black and white and all roughly the same sort of shape. So what we have to do is to *make a picture* to help us to remember the difficult bit of the word that is difficult to spell!

So for the word necessary we need a picture to help us to remember CESSAR in other words.

Well there are two spells for doing this:

- 
- 1 Silly sentence spells.
 - 2 Silly picture spells.

I'll show you what I mean...We'll do them one at a time. Watch carefully. (There is nothing up my sleeve, by the way...)

1. Silly Sentence Spells

To make a Silly Sentence Spell, you first write the difficult letters in a row and then you put a word below each letter that begins with the letter you are trying to remember. I can see you a looking a bit puzzled so here's an example to show you what I mean.

C	E	S	S	A	R
Caveman eats		salami	sausage	and	radish

2. Silly Picture Spells

It's really easy to remember a sentence like this, especially if you make it a silly sentence. But if you think you might forget the sentence, then make a silly picture. I've done a silly picture which shows a caveman eating, then a salami sausage and a radish. Most Word Weaving apprentices really enjoy making these pictures and they are jolly good at it, I have to say!



AND



Caveman Eats	Salami Sausage	And	Radish		
C	E	S	S	A	R

It's easy to remember silly pictures, but it's EXTREMELY easy to remember silly pictures you've drawn yourself and this is what your SPELL BOOK is for. It's for you to create and look after your personal word spells.

Let's try another word, just to see if you've got the idea. This time we are going to master the spell for the very difficult word BECAUSE. This spell is dedicated to a very special young Word Weaving apprentice called Molly, who used to find it difficult to spell. She can spell it now, so doesn't need any magic spells, but she did so well when she was learning it I have dedicated this particular spell to her.

3. Molly's Spell for BECAUSE:

I don't know about you, but I think that the only easy bit of this word is the first letter, which is B. The rest of it is quite tricky. So we are trying to make up a Silly Sentence with these letters in it:

E C A U S E

Can you think of anything? Here is a box for you to write in your ideas. You have a go and then I'll show you what I've put.

(You write your ideas underneath the letters)

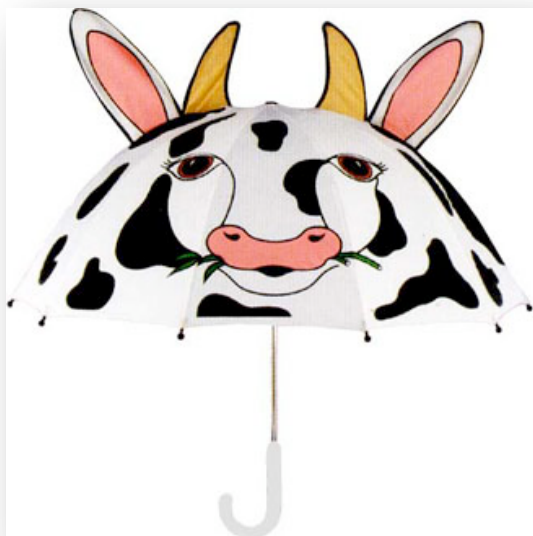
E C A U S E

I had to work quite hard, I don't mind telling you, to think of a Silly Sentence with words in this order. But after a lot of thinking I was very pleased with myself when I thought of this!!

Each Cow Ate Umbrellas Standing Elegantly



This doesn't make any sense, does it? I've never seen a cow eating an umbrella. On the next page you can see a picture of a cow umbrella, but that's not quite the same thing, is it?



But the fact that the sentence is silly, is all the better! The dafter it is the more likely you are to remember it. And if you draw a picture, it will really stick in your mind!

You can make the pictures whichever way you like. You can draw them, stick

photos in your Spell Book. But best of all you can SHARE them with other Word Weaving apprentices. If you think of a really good Word Weaving Spell, then make a copy of your spell and post it to me. If it's good I'll share it with other Word Weaving apprentices so they can put it in THEIR Spell Books, too! And there will be a prize for the best Spell of the Month!

So just to remind you about what to do with your Spell Book...

- 1 Pick one word a day that you find difficult to spell (there's a list of difficult-to-spell words in the appendix) then make up a silly sentence or a silly picture spell! Make sure it's a funny one.
- 2 If it's REALLY funny and it's a difficult word, then post it to me and I shall share it with other Word Weaving apprentices!

Well done, young apprentice. You have finished your third task and you are ready for a test to make sure you have remembered everything you have learned. Now all you have to do is complete the following assignment, to make sure I know you understand about spelling spells, then you can go on to your next task.

Assignment Two

- 1) Choose a word that is difficult to spell.
- 2) Write a Silly Sentence to help you remember it.
- 3) Choose another word that is difficult to spell
- 4) Make a Silly Picture to help you remember it.
- 5) Put the two Spells to one side to send to me!