

How to use  
Spellzone:  
a guide for  
ALL users

**spellzone**<sup>TM</sup>  
The online English spelling course



A complete online  
teaching course covering  
all English spelling rules!

[www.spellzone.com](http://www.spellzone.com)

## Welcome to Spellzone!

Please see below for information on how to use Spellzone.

Click on the title to jump to that section:

1. [Who is Spellzone for?](#)
2. [How is the Spellzone course set out?](#)
3. [How to use Spellzone](#)
4. [Logos to look out for](#)
5. [Word lists: using Spellzone word lists and how to add your own](#)
6. [Activities and games](#)
7. [How your progress is recorded](#)
8. [Using the dictionary and translation features](#)
9. [Accessibility: how to change the background colour, font size etc](#)
10. [A final word: Why learn to spell? We've got spell-checkers now!](#)

## 1. Who is Spellzone for?

Spellzone is a non-childish spelling course that can help many people, for example:

### Adults who want to improve their spelling

There are many adults who struggle with English spelling; perhaps they are one of the 1-in-10 who are dyslexic. They may not have received the help they needed at school and Spellzone can fill those gaps. The course is used in many Adult Education centres, including the training schemes of major companies.

[More details: Information for adult learners](#)

### Students at high school or college

Many students enter high school still needing help with spelling but they do not want to use programs for young children. Spellzone offers a fresh approach whilst covering the basic knowledge that these students need. As this is an online course, they can work at home as well as in school or college.

[More details: Information for teachers and tutors](#)

### People of all ages who are learning English

Spellzone is used in over 60 different countries by people who are learning English as a foreign language. Most English language courses do not cover spelling even though it is so difficult; they expect learners to pick it up as they go along. Spellzone explains all the English spelling rules. You can click on each word in our dictionary to hear it spoken aloud and see its meaning. Each word can be translated into 36 languages. Spellzone covers both British and American spellings. The correct version for your country will load automatically.

[More details: Spellzone as part of an English language course](#)

### Younger learners who enjoy a challenge

Although Spellzone is written in a non-childish way, many younger learners enjoy using the course. Parents who are home-schooling will welcome a well-structured, clearly set out program.

[More details: Information for parents](#)



## 2. How is the Spellzone course set out?

- Spellzone is set out in 36 sections, called 'Units'.
- Many of these are **free** to all users: you can see which Units are free by clicking the [spelling course](#) link at the top of each page.
- You can sign up to use the rest of the course.

The Units are in 3 main sections:

### Units 1 to 16 - Basic level

In this level you can:

- check your understanding of useful background knowledge such as long and short vowels, consonants, suffixes and syllables
- study the many different ways of spelling the common sounds in the English language; for example, all these words have the same sound but it is spelled differently: *herb, third, burst, earth, world*
- learn the rules for adding endings: why do some words have to change?



### Units 17 to 24 - Intermediate level

This section covers:

- tricky spellings such as words with *ough* and *augh*
- the 'i before e' rule
- silent letters
- and much more



### Units 25 to 36 - Advanced level

This section covers:

- difficult endings where the sound gives no clue, for example *-able/-ible, -ant/-ent, -cial/-tial*
- adding suffixes to longer words
- and much more

Most Units start with a teaching section. A sound is introduced and followed by examples of the different ways of spelling that sound. Often the study is split into two levels: basic level short words and higher level longer words. There are activities and games to help at each stage and course tests to check your progress.

Throughout the Spellzone course you will find extra help with **homophones** - those tricky words which sound alike but have different spellings for different meanings, for example: *meet/meat wail/whale paw/pour*.

**A computer spell-check will not help with these words.**



## Word lists and games

Each section has word lists of the most common words with that spelling pattern. To help you learn these words there are activities and games indicated by the **eye**, **ear** and **ball** icons:

- Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check
- Listen and Spell
- Against the Clock
- Word search
- Bouncing Anagrams
- Which Witch?
- Asteroids
- Rain Letters



Unit 6. Short vowels e.g. e or ea? o or u? view word lists		
Some th words		
Short a words		
Short /e/ spelled ea: Set 1		
Short /e/ spelled ea: Set 2		
Short /i/ spelled y: Set 1		
Short /i/ spelled y: Set 2		
wa words		
qua words		
Short /u/ spelled o		
Short /u/ spelled ou		

You can also add your own word lists and play all these games with your own words. For more information on activities and games see [Activities and Games](#).

## Special markings for words and letters

Sometimes letters or words are in colour to make them stand out.

For example:

man**age** vill**age** host**age**

These symbols are used to help with the understanding of sound:

- Obliques are used to signify the sound letters make rather than the name: **/er/**.
- Short vowels are shown by a breve: **ă ě ĭ ŏ ŭ**.
- Long vowels are shown by a macron: **ā ē ī ō ū**.

The glossary at the end of the '[Help](#)' section has more information on these symbols.

### 3. How to use Spellzone

You can go to the [spelling course](#) and work through the complete course or just 'dip-in' to any part you need to study. When working through a course unit you could follow this path:

1. If there is a 'Hear the sound' example, click on it and read the teaching text.
2. Read the word lists for all the different ways of spelling that sound. Use the dictionary box on the sidebar to check meanings and hear words read aloud. You can also get to the dictionary by clicking the word list links on the sidebar.
3. Click on the word list links **on the sidebar** to find the activities and games for that page:

#### Activities

**Look, Say, Cover, Write Check** - practice to help in learning words

**Listen and Spell** - this will test you on the words

#### Games

**Word Search** - choose from easy or hard

**Bouncing Balls Anagram** - click the balls in the correct order

**Which Witch** - our version of 'Hangman'

**Against the Clock** - Listen and Spell

**Asteroids** - click the letters in the right order

**Rain Letters** - catch the letters in the bucket to spell the words

For more information on the see [Activities and Games](#).

4. Return to your course unit - you will find a link to this **on your side menu**.  
Click the link at the bottom of the page to go to the course test.  
Complete this test and check your score.
5. You can repeat any games and tests as often as you wish; if you have your own login all your scores will be recorded so you can check your progress. For more details see [How your progress is recorded](#).
6. Sometimes you will find work split into two different levels:
  - basic level short words
  - and higher level longer words.



The long /oo/ sound as in **boot**

food	spoon
mood	soon
roof	droop
proof	scoop
cool	hoot
tool	scoot
boom	moor
gloom	poor



If you wish, you can leave the longer words and return to them later. You can go back and forwards through the pages as often as you like. If you want to repeat some work, that's fine.

- Most units end with some work on homophones, those tricky words which sound the same but have different spellings. The meaning of each word is given and you can see it in a sentence. Throughout the course there are extra practice tests on these words.

### Some tips

- When you start Spellzone, it's a good idea to read Unit 1: 'The Basic Building Bricks'. This will make sure you know about topics such as long and short vowels, prefixes and suffixes, etc.
- Many people like to have a quick look at each page of the course, to see if there are any words they need to study. You can skip any pages that are too easy but you may spot something you would like to work at. For example, Unit 3 'Consonant Sounds, part 2' and Unit 5 'Consonant Digraphs, part 2' contain some quite difficult work such as: *-que* as in *antique*, *ph* as in *photograph*, and *ch* saying /k/ as in *technical*.
- To find a particular spelling rule, click on 'spelling course' on the top menu. You can also type a word into the dictionary box on the side bar. For example, type 'station' and the dictionary page will tell you where in the course you can find 'station' and other words with the spelling pattern '-tion'.
- On the **spelling course** page click on the '+' at the end of the unit titles to reveal more details.

July	parachute
prune	
lute*	
brute	
chute*	
flute	
jute	

NOTE: Words marked \* are homophones. Please see page 11.



22H. A 'Beat the spellchecker!' test for words from Unit 22 - +
23. Prefixes: when letters need changing - +
Advanced level
24. The weak 'schwa' sound: stress in words - + Unit started
25. Word endings: -er, -ar, -or, -our, re, a and -ery, -ary - +
2 sounds for er ar or . Rules for word endings. Words ending in -er -ar -or . Learning tips Spelling test: -er -ar -or endings. British & American differences: -our/-or -rei/-er Spelling test - British spelling: -our -re Spelling test - American spelling: -or -er Words ending in -ery -ary -ory . Spelling test: -ery -ary -ory . Words ending in -a . Homophones

## 4. Logos to look out for

### Hear the Sound

Click on the ear to hear the sound for that Unit.  
If you cannot hear anything click here for help.



### New Teaching Point

Next to this logo you will see:

- The most common ways of spelling the sound you have heard
- Any rules to help you decide which spelling to use



### Homophones

Here you will find the words which the computer spellchecker will not spot: the words which sound the same but have different spelling for different meanings.



### Rule Breakers:

This logo shows you words that break the spelling rules covered earlier in the Unit.



### Learning Tips:

Next to this logo you will find tips on how to learn and remember difficult words.



### British or US spelling:

These logos draw your attention to spellings which are different in Britain and the USA. You can choose which spelling you wish to study.



### Think back

Sometimes the teaching section will refer back to a teaching point in an earlier Unit. You will also find a direct link to this earlier Unit, in case you wish to review that point.



### Off-line activities

Sometimes you are advised to get some extra practice by working off-line. This can take three forms:

- Print the page, and study the list of words; you might be asked to make up your own 'Learning Tips' for some words.
- A pile of books may mean you are asked to use a dictionary.
- Sometimes you will be asked to write some words or to make up sentences for words you are learning.



## 5. Word lists: using Spellzone word lists and how to add your own

After each new teaching point you will find lists of words that have that spelling pattern. It's a good idea to read all these words. If you are sure you can spell them you can click on the link at the end of the page. This takes you to a test of these words.

If you need more practice, look for the **word list** links on the side menu. Click on the list you want and this will take you to a page where you can:

- Click on the speaker symbol to **hear the word**.  
*Note: You will need to be logged in.*
- See the **word in a sentence**.
- Click on the word to see its meaning in the **dictionary**.
- Use the drop-down menu to **translate the words** into any one of 36 languages.  
*Note: You will need to be logged in.*
- Click on the links at the end of the page to **play games for this list**.  
For more information see [Activities and Games](#).

### The word lists home page

On the top menu there is a link to the **word lists home page**.

From this page you can access:

- The word lists for the unit you are currently working on: you can also go straight to the games for those lists.
- All the course word lists; if you are not registered with us you will be able to see the lists for the demo units.
- All our vocabulary word lists: Spellzone has a lists on a wide variety of topics e.g. animals, business, food, jobs.
- Word lists that you have created (see below)
- Word lists created by other Spellzone users.

### How to create your own word list

You can upload your own word lists and use all our activities and games to learn your words.

*Note: You will need to be logged in.*

This is useful for:

- words that cover a particular topic you are studying e.g. electricity, geology
- words you need to use often in your job, e.g. writing a report
- weekly spelling tests from school
- any other words that cause you problems

Some examples of *oi* and *oy* words:



*oi* as in *oil*

boil  
foil  
soil  
spoil  
toil

*oy* as in *boy*

joint  
point  
quoit  
void  
hoist

coy  
joy  
toy  
cloy  
play

Word lists and Games

[oi and oy words](#)

◀ **boil** Let the water **boil**

◀ **foil** Cover the meat w

translate:

gotować

folia

Learn about these words in [unit 16](#)

👁️ [Learn this spelling list with the 'Look, Say, Cover'](#)

🔊 [Test yourself using the 'Listen and Spell' spelling](#)

🎮 [Or play a game using this spelling list](#)

The word list has been used 5365 times. The average score is 79%.

Spelling Course **Word Lists** Games Conta

**Word and Vocabulary lists**

You recently studied:  
Unit 16. Spelling choices for /oi/ sound: oi, oy

[oi and oy words](#)

[Longer oi and oy words](#)

Vocabulary word list of the day  
[After s use sion](#)

User submitted word lists  
[View recently submitted word lists](#)  
[View word lists by schools, colleges and organisations](#)

Word lists you created:  
[Words ending with ll](#)  
[Words with ee](#)

Your school/college word lists:  
 [Department of Joinery](#)  
[Travel and Tourism](#)  
[Words with ee](#)

To create your lists:

Click on the **Create new word list** link on the **Word Lists** home page.  
You can then enter up to 20 words in one list.



The dictionary will only allow words that have the correct spelling - you would not want to waste your time learning the wrong spelling!

These checks mean that a few other words that are not in the dictionary may be rejected:

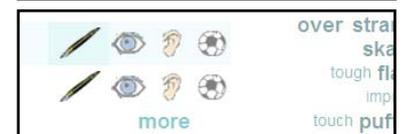
- For example, you cannot put proper nouns (names).
- The dictionary may not allow some words with suffixes e.g. *happier*, *happiest*. In these cases you could add the root word (e.g. *happy*) and, if you need to, study Units 9 and 34 to learn the suffix rules.
- Also some hyphenated words e.g. *semi-abstract* may not be in the dictionary.
- If you think a word should be in our dictionary, please [let us know](#).

If you would like to share your list with other Spellzone users, please click the 'yes' button.

When you submit your list you will be given the chance to add a sentence for your word. If we already have a sentence for this word it will appear but you can add your own sentence if you wish.

You will find a link to your own lists from the **Word Lists** home page.

You can edit your own lists at any time: just click on the pen icon at the top of your list.



## 6. Activities and Games

### Activities

#### Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check

This is a the Spellzone version of 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' which is one of the best ways to learn spellings. To get to this activity, click on the eye icon from any word list.

- Look at each word.
- Say it aloud or click the speaker to hear it.
- Study the word until you think you can spell it, then click '**cover**'
- Type the word in the box and click '**check**' or press 'enter'.
- If you are wrong you will see your attempt and the correct word will come up again. Look back and see where you went wrong. If you keep trying until you get it right your score will be 100%.



**Look, say, cover, write, check: The long /oo/ sound**

The letters **oo** are used to spell two slightly different sounds.  
These words have the long **oo** sound as in **boot**.

Look: mood

Say: 

Cover: 

Write: mood ✓

Check: mood ✓

Results: ✓ food

Next word

#### Listen and Spell

This is a testing activity so only choose it when you are sure you can spell all the words in your list!

- Make sure your sound is turned on.
- Click on the picture, listen to the word and type it.
- Click '**next**' or press '**enter**'.
- If you are correct, the word will appear in the box with a tick.
- If you are wrong you will still see the correct word but it will have no tick.



**Listen and spell test: oi and oy words**

To spell the /oi/ sound in a word of one syllable, use oi in the middle and oy on the end.

\_\_\_\_\_ means to work long and hard.

toil

Results: ✓ boil ✓ toil ✓ soil ✓ spoil

Click on the director to hear the word again.

At the end of the test you will see your score. If you have made a lot of mistakes it would be a good idea to try the 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' activity.

### Games

Playing some of the games will also help you to learn the correct spellings. Click on the ball icon to access the games.



#### Word Search

Find a word and drag across it. The word will then disappear from the list.

You can choose to play this game in a small, medium or large format. You can also choose between two levels:

- Beginner: the words go from left to right and top to bottom only
- Advanced: the words can also go diagonally and in reverse

**Spelling game: oi and oy words** Drag across the letters to select the words.

Word Search Puzzle

e s j o i s t m o i s t j  
m l s q b h s e v c o i n  
z o o c o j t o y j t h n  
n l i h i t o i o q o c  
o n l o i c e s d i j l p  
i v q l a c k m p n q s y  
s o b c o s p o i l s t f  
e i a e n s p v o i d j o  
p c l z j o i n t b o y l  
f e j o i o y p u n x b l

soil  
boy  
choice  
coin  
toil  
hoist  
join  
poist  
poist  
toin  
coin  
spoil  
toy  
woic  
voed

Find Words

### Bouncing Anagrams

Look at the bouncing letters and decide which word they spell.  
The list is there to help you.

- Click on the letters in the correct order.
- As you find each word it will disappear from the list.



### Which Witch?

This is our version of the well-known 'Hangman' game.  
To beat the witch you have to guess the word in less than 8 clicks.

- Click on the letters to see if they are in the word.
- Each time you pick a wrong letter the image of the witch gets stronger.



**Tip:** The word list is hidden in this game but, if you are stuck, you can click to see it (but you will lose one go each time you do this!)

### Against the Clock

This game is a real challenge, to be played when you are confident you can spell all the words in the list.

Be careful! The lists contain some homophones, e.g. *blue/blew*.

Read the sentence to help you choose the correct spelling.

- Make sure your sound is turned on.
- Click on the picture, listen to the word and type it.
- Click 'next' or press 'enter'.
- If you are correct, the word will appear in the box with a tick.
- If you are wrong you will still see the correct word but it will have no tick.



Check your score at the end of the game.

You might like to try again to see if you can beat it.

**Tip:** to save extra seconds, use your enter key instead of pressing 'next word'.



### Asteroids

Destroy the asteroids by clicking the letters in the right order, but watch out! In this game there are extra asteroids with letters that do not spell the words.

### Rain Letters

A spelling game for a rainy day. Catch the letters in the bucket so that you can use them to spell the word and water the flowers.



**Tip:** Using the embed code you can add the Asteroids and Rain Letters spelling games to your website or virtual learning environment.

## 7. How your progress is recorded

The first page you see after login is your personal Spelling Course contents page. On the side menu you will see links to the last page you visited and the last test you did. When you have completed all the tests in one Unit its title will be 'greyed out'. However you can still return to it if you wish.

As well as showing which Units you have worked on, the course contents list also shows how well you did on the course tests. This is shown by green, yellow and red dots next to each unit title; if you hover above each dot it tells you which test you completed and gives some advice:

- You did well on this test.
- You made some mistakes and might like to do this work again.
- You made lots of mistakes and should study this section again.

Click on '**My results**' in the side menu to get more detail.

The first page you will see shows your results on the course tests.

There is also a menu to access your results of other activities and games:

**Course Tests | Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check | Listen and Spell | Games**

On the **Course tests** results page:

Each test is listed by name and shows your percentage score for that test.

If you have taken the test more than once your best result is displayed.

There are also the coloured dots to give you advice, as on the contents page:

- You did well on this test.
- You made some mistakes and might like to do this work again.
- You made lots of mistakes and should study this section again.

Click the magnifier next to the score for even more detail.

You will then see how many times you tried the test, the dates and all your scores.

Click on each score and you will see exactly what answers you put in each test.

On the **Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check** results page:

This page records all the lists you have worked on. **Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check** is a learning activity rather than a test, so you have the opportunity to try each word again until you get it right. If you do this, your scores should all be 100%. The only time your score will be lower is if you did not finish that activity.




On the **Listen and Spell** results page:

This shows all the lists attempted on the **Listen and Spell** test, with your percentage score. Click on the score and you will see exactly how you did in each test: the words you got right have a green tick. You can also see the correct spelling of the words you got wrong, so that you can make a note of these; you might like to add them to one of your own lists.



On the **Games** results page:

This page shows all the games you have tried, with the most recent at the top of the list. You can see your score and the time you took to complete the game. For more information, click on your score.



### Print a certificate

Next to each unit that you have completed you will see this picture. Click to print a certificate showing how well you have done.



### Teachers and tutors

For information on how to set up individual logins for your students and how to check their progress, please see the Spellzone [Videos](#).



## 8. Using the dictionary and translation features

Choose your **word list** from the links at the right hand side of your course page or the top menu. This takes you to a page where you can:

- Click on the speaker symbol to **hear the word**.  
*Note: You will need to be logged in.*
- See the word **in a sentence**.
- Click on the word to see its meaning in the dictionary.
- Use the drop-down menu to **translate the words** into any one of 36 languages.

*Note: You will need to be logged in use this feature.*

The dictionary page for your word will also give you:

- links to other lists containing that word
- links to Spellzone course units studying the spelling pattern of that word
- **'Other spelling dictionary functions'**: this is a link to a search facility which lets you find other words containing a particular spelling pattern, for example, the ending '*cian*'.

You can also access the dictionary at any time by typing a word into the dictionary box on the side bar.

The screenshot displays the Spellzone dictionary interface. At the top, there are two word lists: 'boil' with the sentence 'Let the water boil' and 'foil' with 'Cover the meat with foil'. Below this is the 'English spelling dictionary' section for the word 'foil', which includes a speaker icon, the word 'foil', and its classification as a 'Noun'. Five numbered definitions are provided: 1. a piece of thin and flexible sheet metal; 2. anything that serves by contrast to call attention; 3. a device consisting of a flat or curved piece of material passing through; 4. picture consisting of a positive photograph; 5. a light slender flexible sword tipped by a blade. A translation feature is shown below, with a dropdown menu set to 'Polish' and a 'Go' button, displaying the Polish translation 'gotować' and 'folia'. Further down, there are links to 'View spelling list oi and oy words' and 'User created word lists containing this word: zarmina, What Do Illustrators Do?, Module 14: Cook - and enjoy!'. The bottom part of the screenshot shows a sidebar with a 'Dictionary' search box and a 'Search' button.

## 9. Accessibility: how to change the background colour, font size etc

Some people find that text is easier to read on a different coloured background. You can change the Spellzone background and the text colour by clicking the '**Accessibility**' button near the top right of the screen.

You can also:

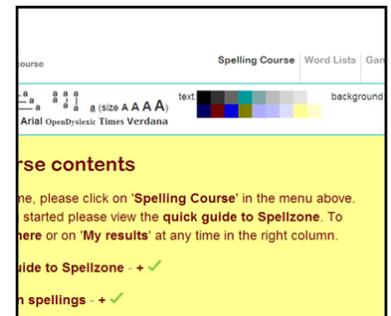
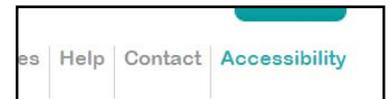
- choose a different font
- make the text larger
- increase the space between the letters
- increase the space between the lines

To hide or remove the Accessibility toolbar click '**close**'.

To go back to the default Spellzone colours, text and spacing, click '**reset**'.

You can also have the teaching text read aloud to you by using **RokTalk**.

- Click on '**SHOW TOOLBAR**' on the **RokTalk** button
- The **RokTalk toolbar** will appear at the bottom of the page
- Click the '**Information**' button at the right of this toolbar to find out how to use RokTalk
- To clear the toolbar click '**HIDE TOOLBAR**' on the **RokTalk** button at the top of the page.



## 10. A final word: Why learn to spell? We've got spell-checkers now!

Do we really need to bother with correct spelling when there are computer spell-checkers?

Sure, they will help, but what about all those times when you have to write by hand?

In schools, colleges and in work-place training many tests and exams still have to be written by hand. Good spelling will help you get good marks.

So is it only when handwriting that we need to take care with spelling? When we are using a keyboard will the spell-checker do all the work? Don't you believe it!

There are thousands of words which will fool a computer spell-check. In English there are many words which sound exactly the same but have different spellings for different meanings.

For example:

- I don't eat **meat**.
- Pleased to **meet** you.

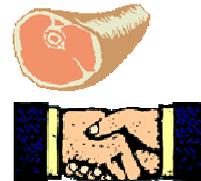
These words are called **homophones** from the Greek words:  
**homo** - the same and **phonos** - sound

Some more examples:

*site/sight deer/dear new/knew peace/piece principal/principle  
stationary/stationery*

Most Spellzone units end with some work on words the computer spell-checker would not spot:

- You will see the meaning of each word, with an example of its use.
- There are 'Learning Tips' to help you remember which spelling to use.
- The teaching pages are followed by extra practice tests, so you can check your memory.



### **A last word on spell checkers:**

The computer would not spot any of the mistakes in this poem.

How many can you spot?



(CANDIDATE FOR A PULLET SURPRISE)

*by Dr Jerrold H. Zar of Northern Illinois University*

*Reproduced by kind permission of The Journal of Irreproducible Results*

I have a spelling checker,  
It came with my PC.  
It plane lee marks four my revue  
Miss steaks aye can knot sea.  
Eye ran this poem threw it,  
Your shore reel glad two no.  
Its vary polished in it's weigh.  
My checker tolled me sew.  
... and there are 7 more verses like this.

[To read the rest of the poem, click here](#)



There are 25 mistakes in the title and the first two verses of this poem - but as they are all real words, the computer spell-checker would not spot them.

The author says his complete poem has 225 words, 127 of which are wrong but would not be picked out by a spell checker.

### **For more information please see:**

[Information for teachers and tutors](#)

[Information for administrators, e.g. how to set up students accounts](#)

[Spelling and Dyslexia](#)

[Spelling as part of an English language course](#)

[Adult training](#)

## **Enjoy using Spellzone!**