

Silent letters

Silent letters are letters that can't be heard when the word is spoken. There are silent letters in some English words because over hundreds of years we've changed how we pronounce those words but kept the old spelling. The spelling tells us how the word used to be pronounced: eg in medieval times, people used to sound out the letter **k** in the word **knock**.

Below are some examples of words with silent letters. Can you think of any others?

<p>Silent n</p> <p>Autumn</p> <p>damn</p> <p>column</p>	<p>Silent g</p> <p>sign</p> <p>resign</p> <p>foreign</p>	<p>Silent b</p> <p>thumb</p> <p>doubt</p> <p>plumber</p>
<p>Silent k</p> <p>knock</p> <p>know</p> <p>knee</p>	<p>Silent t</p> <p>listen</p> <p>mortgage</p> <p>watch</p>	<p>Silent h</p> <p>hour</p> <p>ghost</p> <p>honest</p>
<p>Silent w</p> <p>wrist</p> <p>wrote</p> <p>wrong</p>	<p>Silent l</p> <p>half</p> <p>calm</p> <p>talk</p>	<p>Silent u</p> <p>guess</p> <p>guard</p> <p>tongue</p>

Sometimes we can forget to include letters when they can't be heard in words or if they are difficult to hear when we say the word. One way to remember the spelling of words with silent letters is to stress the silent letter when you say the word to yourself. Break up the word and decide how you to say it to yourself to help you remember the spelling: eg there's a silent **d** in 'Wednesday', so you could break it up as **We-d-nes-day**.

Choose some words with silent letters and try breaking them up in this way to help you remember the silent letter.