

Dictionary of simplified

SOUNDSPEL

An alternative spelling for English

WRITTEN AS IT SOUNDS
PRONOUNCED AS IT'S WRITTEN

The former American Language Academy is now the...

American Literacy Council

784 45th St., Los Alamos, NM 87544

The original scholar's edition of the American Spelling Dictionary called for suggestions to clarify the rules & improve compatibility with traditional spelling. The greatest of these changes (all of which appear in a new PC version of ASD) is: Final-s replaces final-z in plurals (five **rooms**), possessives (the **room's** coolness), & 3rd person present tense singulars (he **rooms** with a frog).

SCHOLAR'S EDITION

The American Literacy Council

A Close Look at the Illogic and Disorder of English Spelling

TRADITIONAL

SOUNDSPEL

had (a)	had
plaid (ai)	plad
have (a-e)	hav
half (al)	haf
meringue (i-ue)	merang
guarantee (ua)	garrantee
laugh (au)	laf
dahlia (ah)	dalia
harangue (a-ue)	harang
ingenue (i)	anzhenoo

a

TRADITIONAL

SOUNDSPEL

barn (ar)	barn
heart (ear)	hart
guardian (uar)	gardian
bazaar (aar)	bazar
are (are)	ar
sergeant (er)	sarjent
starve (ar-e)	starv
catarrh (arrh)	catar
bizarre (are)	bizar
memoir (ir)	memwar

ar

TRADITIONAL

SOUNDSPEL

maelstrom (ae)	maelstrom
made (a-e)	maed
steak (ea)	staek
rainy (ai)	raeny
playing (ay)	plaeing
sleigh (eigh)	slae
straight (aigh)	straet
gauge (au-e)	gaej
making (a)	maeking
gaol (ao)	jael
veiled (ei)	vael
they (ey)	thae
raise (ai-e)	raez
plagueing (a-ue)	plaeing
ballet (et)	balae
seine (ei-e)	saen
matinee (ee)	matinae
dossier (er)	dosyae
bouquet (uet)	boekae

ae

TRADITIONAL

SOUNDSPEL

chair (air)	chaer
their (eir)	thaer
swearing (ear)	swaering
where (ere)	whaer
cared (are)	caerd
prayer (ayer)	praer
square (uare)	sqaer
heir (heir)	aer
wary (ar)	waery
doctrinaire (aire)	doctrinaer

aer

TRADITIONAL

SOUNDSPEL

father (a)	faather
calm (al)	caam
palm (al)	paam
lingerie (i)	laanzheree
eclat (at)	eclaa
pas (as)	paa
genre (e)	zhaanra
hurrah (ah)	hooraa
ah (ah)	aa
haha (ah)	haahaa
pa (a)	paa
baa (aa)	baa
mama (a)	maama
fa la la (a)	faa laa laa

aa

TRADITIONAL

SOUNDSPEL

met (e)	met
many (a)	meny
burial (u)	berrial
said (ai)	sed
aesthetic (ae)	esthetik
says (ay)	sez
head (ea)	hed
heifer (ei)	hefer
friend (ie)	frend
jeopardy (eo)	jeperdy
foetid (oe)	fetid
guest (ue)	gest
damage (a-e)	damej
cleanse (ea-e)	clenz
belle (e-e)	bel

e

TRADITIONAL		SOUNDSPEL
-------------	--	-----------

seen (ee)	seen
key (ey)	.kee
deceit (ei)	.deseet
field (ie)	.feeld
people (eo)	.peepl
amoeba (oe)	.ameeba
team (ea)	.teem
aeon (ae)	.eeon
leave (ea-e)	.leev
ravine (i-e)	.raveen
these (e-e)	.thees
league (ea-ue)	.leeg
cheese (ee-e)	.cheez
deceive (ei-e)	.deseev
believe (ie-e)	.beleev
antique (i-ue)	.anteek
mosquito (ui)	.moskeeto
ski (i)	.skee
squeak (uea)	.speek
receipt (eip)	.reseet
debris (is)	.debree
esprit (it)	.espree

ee

TRADITIONAL		SOUNDSPEL
-------------	--	-----------

trustee (ee)	.trustee
trusty (y)	.trusty
happy (y)	.hapy
happiest (i)	.hapyest
happiness (i)	.hapynes
happily (i-y)	.hapily
archaeology (ae)	.arkiolojy

y

TRADITIONAL		SOUNDSPEL
-------------	--	-----------

pin (i)	.pin
women (o)	.wimen
busy (u)	.bizy
pretty (e)	.prity
lynch (y)	.linch
been (ee)	.bin
sieve (ie-e)	.siv
guild (ui)	.gild
anaesthesia (ae)	.anistheezha
exhibit (hi)	.exibit
give (i-e)	.giv
minute (u-e)	.minit
counterfeit (ei)	.counterfit
bisque (i-ue)	.bisk
apocalypse (y-e)	.apocalps
mischief (ie)	.mischif

i

TRADITIONAL		SOUNDSPEL
-------------	--	-----------

buy (uy)	.bie
high (igh)	.hie
dye (ye)	.die
lie (ie)	.lie
tried (ie)	.tried
trying (y)	.trieing
find (i)	.fiend
like (i-e)	.liek
buys (uy)	.bies
height (eigh)	.hiet
highest (igh)	.hieest
rhyme (hy-e)	.riem
stein (ei)	.stien
island (is)	.ieland
aisle (ais-e)	.iel
maestro (ae)	.miestro
diamond (ia)	.diemond
fiery (ie)	.fiery
fire (i-e)	.fier
eying (ey)	.ieing
guide (ui-e)	.gied
type (y-e)	.tiep
coyote (oy)	.kieoet
eye (eye)	.ie
aye (aye)	.ie
bayou (ay)	.bieoo

ie

TRADITIONAL		SOUNDSPEL
-------------	--	-----------

I (i)	.I
by (y)	.bi
my (y)	.mi
why (y)	.whi
try (y)	.tri
sly (y)	.sli
spy (y)	.spi
pi (i)	.pi
alibi (i)	.alibi
simplify (y)	.simplifi
amplify (y)	.amplifi
dignify (y)	.dignifi
terrify (y)	.terrifi

i

TRADITIONAL		SOUNDSPEL
-------------	--	-----------

hot (o)	.hot
swamp (a)	.swomp
yacht (ach)	.yot
knowledge (ow)	.nolej
honest (ho)	.onest
demijohn (oh)	.demijon
bureaucracy (eau)	.buerocrasy

o

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
embargoed (oe)	embargoed
radios (o)	raedioes
glowing (ow)	gloeing
sewing (ew)	soeing
soul (ou)	soel
bone (o-e)	boen
road (oa)	roed
yolk (ol)	yoek
brooch (oo)	broech
beaus (eau)	boes
depots (ot)	deepoes
hoe (oe)	hoe
owe (owe)	oe
sew (ew)	soe
sow (ow)	soe
beau (eau)	boe
below (ow)	beloe
yeoman (eo)	yoeman
doughnuts (ough)	doenuts
chauffeur (au)	shoefer
hautboy (aut)	hoeboy
mauve (au-e)	moev
rogue (o-ue)	roeg
cantaloupe (ou-e)	cantaloep
cologne (og-e)	coloen
apropos (os)	apropoe

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
go (o)	go
no (o)	no
so (o)	so
slow (ow)	slo
typo (o)	tiepo
silo (o)	sielo
glow (ow)	glo
though (ough)	tho
oh (oh)	o
bellow (ow)	belo
depot (ot)	deepo

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
fort (or)	fort
store (ore)	stor
floor (oor)	flor
pour (our)	por
drawer (awer)	dror
reservoir (oir)	rezervor
quorum (our)	qorum
swarm (ar)	sworm
roar (oar)	ror
rapport (ort)	rapor
dinosaur (aur)	dienosor
torque (or-ue)	tork

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
point (oi)	point
noise (oi-e)	noiz
gargoyle (oy-e)	gargoil
turquoise (uoi-e)	turkoiz
rejoice (oi-e)	rejois
going (oi)	going
Freudian (eu)	Froidian

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
boy (oy)	boy
buoy (uoy)	boy
enjoy (oy)	enjoy
enjoying (oy)	enjoying
enjoyment (oy)	enjoyment
enjoyable (oy)	enjoyabl

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
moon (oo)	moon
group (ou)	groop
fruit (ui)	froot
glue (ue)	gloo
drew (ew)	droo
two (wo)	too
flu (u)	floo
canoe (oe)	canoo
through (ough)	thru
threw (ew)	throo
rule (u-e)	rool
lieu (ieu)	loo
loose (oo-e)	looss
lose (o-e)	looz
pooh (ooh)	poo
coup (oup)	coo
bruise (ui-e)	brooz
jiujitsu (iu)	joojitsoo
silhouette (hou)	silooet
buoy (uo)	booy
deuce (eu-e)	dooss
manoeuvre (oeu)	manooover
sleuth (eu)	slooth
rendezvous (ous)	rondevoo
mousse (ou-e)	mooss

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
cut (u)	cut
love (o-e)	luv
young (ou)	yung
blood (oo)	blud
does (oe)	duz
judge (u-e)	juj
tongue (o-ue)	tung
brusque (u-ue)	brusk
courageous (eou)	keraejus

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
hue (ue)	.hue
feud (eu)	.fued
few (ew)	.fue
view (iew)	.vue
queue (ueue)	.cue
fuse (u-e)	.fuez
ewe (ewe)	.ue
beauty (eau)	.buety
fugue (u-ue)	.fueg
coupon (ou)	.cuepon
nuisance (ui)	.nuesanss
vacuum (uu)	.vacuem
adieu (ieu)	.adue
yule (yu-e)	.uel
unit (u)	.uenit
debut (ut)	.debue
impugnity (ug)	.impuenity
yew (yew)	.ue

ue

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
pull (u)	.puul
wolf (o)	.wuulf
could (oul)	.cuud
book (oo)	.buuk
sure (u-e)	.shuur
tour (ou)	.tuur
pleurisy (eu)	.pluurisy
bouillon (oui)	.buulyon

uu

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
furnish (ur)	.furnish
burr (urr)	.bur
blurred (urre)	.blurd
curve (ur-e)	.curv
bird (ir)	.burd
stirring (irr)	.sturing
stirred (irre)	.sturd
yearn (ear)	.yurn
learned (ear-e)	.lurnd
terminal (er)	.turminal
err (err)	.ur
erred (erre)	.urd
worm (or)	.wurm
wormed (or-e)	.wurmd
serve (er-e)	.surv
journey (our)	.jurny
scourged (our-e)	.scurjd
squirm (uir)	.squirm
myrtle (yr)	.murtl
myrrh (yrrh)	.mur
murmur (ur ur)	.murmer
murderer (ur er)	.murderer
girder (ir er)	.gurder
learner (ear er)	.lurner
herder (er) er.	.hurder

ur

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
chattering (er)	.chatering
freer (r)	.freer
liar (ar)	.lieer
augur (ur)	.auger
elixir (ir)	.elixser
haemorrhage (orrh)	.hemerej
nature (ure)	.naecher
ogre (re)	.oeger
martyr (yr)	.marter
chauffeur (eur)	.shoefer
pursue (ur)	.persoo

er

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
auto (au)	.auto
awkward (aw)	.aukward
fault (au)	.fault
exhaust (hau)	.exhaust
salt (a)	.sault
bought (ough)	.baut
taught (augh)	.taut
balk (al)	.bauk
broad (oa)	.braud
false (a-e)	.faulss
squall (ua)	.squaul
awesome (awe)	.ausum
sauce (au-e)	.saus

au

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
law (aw)	.law
lawless (aw)	.lawles
lawyer (aw)	.lawyer
jaw (aw)	.jaw
jawbone (aw)	.jawboen

aw

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
cloud (ou)	.cloud
house (ou-e)	.hous
hour (hou)	.our
flour (ou)	.flour
out (ou)	.out

ou

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
how (ow)	.how
bough (ough)	.bow
pow (ow)	.pow
power (ow)	.power
landau (au)	.landow

ow

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

feed (f)	feed
muffin (ff)	mufin
tough (gh)	tuf
calf (lf)	caf
graphic (ph)	grafik
sapphire (pph)	safier

f

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

get (g)	get
dagger (gg)	dager
ghetto (gh)	geto
guarded (gu)	garded
vaguely (gue)	vaegly

g

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

just (j)	just
judgment (dg)	jujment
bridge (dge)	brij
soldier (di)	soeljer
magic (g)	majik
exaggerate (gg)	exajeraet
region (gi)	reejon
grandeur (de)	granjer
gorgeous (geo)	gorjus
adjust (dj)	ajust
modulate (d)	mojulaet
large (ge)	larj

j

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

khaki (kh)	caky
cook (c)	cuuk
kook (k)	cook
kopek (k)	coepok
vacant (c)	vaecant
vacation (c)	vaecaeshon
character (ch)	carrakter
mechanism (ch)	mecanizm
liquor (qu)	licor
saccharine (cch)	sacarin
kangaroo (k)	canggaroo
kazoo (k)	cazoo
Kansas (k)	Canzas
Ukraine (k)	Uecraen
America (c)	Amerrica

c

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

kit (k)	kit
kite (k)	kiet
back (ck)	bak
spoken (k)	spoeken
spooky (k)	spooky
lacquer (cqu)	laker
chukka (kk)	chuka
talk (lk)	tauk
chemistry (ch)	kemistry
biscuit (cu)	biskit
clique (que)	clik
coyote (oy)	kioet

k

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

lip (l)	lip
telling (ll)	teling
muscle (cle)	musl
people (le)	peep
kiln (ln)	kil
lisle (sl)	lie

l

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

men (m)	men
hammer (mm)	hamer
column (mn)	colum
phlegm (gm)	flem
palm (lm)	paam
lamb (mb)	lam

m

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

not (n)	not
runner (nn)	runer
knock (kn)	nok
gnat (gn)	nat
comptroller (mp)	controeler
pneumatic (pn)	noomatik
mnemonic (mn)	nemonik
handsome (nd)	hansum

n

TRADITIONAL SOUNDSPEL

sing (ng)	sing
singer (ng)	singer
singing (ng)	singing
sang (ng)	sang
sung (ng)	sung
tongs (ng)	tongs
lungs (ng)	lungs
tongue (ng)	tung

ng

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
finger (ng)	fingger
linger (ng)	lingger
hungry (ng)	hunggry
anger (ng)	angger
angry (ng)	anggry
longer (ng)	longger
single (ng)	singgl
jingle (ng)	jinggl
bangle (ng)	banggl
language (ng)	langgwej

ngg

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
quack (qu)	qak
quad (qu)	qod
quick (qu)	qik
quake (qu)	qaek
quality (qu)	qolity
qualm (qu)	qaam
quit (qu)	qit
quill (qu)	qil
quiz (qu)	qiz
quite (qu)	qiet
quiet (qu)	qieet
question (qu)	qeschon
quell (qu)	qel
choir (ch)	qier
quarter (qu)	qorter
queen (qu)	qeen
quote (qu)	qoet
quart (qu)	qort
quorum (qu)	qorum
queue (que)	cue

q

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
rat (r)	rat
rhythm (rh)	rithm
catarrh (rrh)	catarr
wrist (wr)	rist
colonel (l)	curnel
corps (rps)	cor
mortgage (rt)	morgej
quandary (ar)	qondry
velours (rs)	veluur

r

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
set (s)	set
city (c)	sity
fencing (c)	fensing
icing (c)	iesing
icy (c)	iesy
facing (c)	faesing
scene (sc)	seen
blessing (ss)	blesing
psychic (ps)	siekik
schism (sch)	sizm
house (se)	hous
worsted (rs)	wuusted
listen (st)	lisen
isthmus (sth)	ismus
sword (sw)	sord
waltz (z)	waults

s

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
is (s)	is
his (s)	his
has (s)	has
hers (s)	hers
theirs (s)	thaers
these (s)	thees
those (s)	thoes
ways (s)	waes
days (s)	daes
shoes (s)	shoos
shows (s)	shoes
eyes (s)	ies
lies (s)	lies
boys (s)	boys
girls (s)	gurls
babies (s)	baebys
cats (s)	cats
dogs (s)	dogs
Jews (s)	Joos

-s

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
ice (ce)	.iess
dice (ce)	.diess
face (ce)	.faess
fleece (ce)	.fleess
niece (ce)	.neess
police (ce)	.poeless
false (se)	.faulss
pulse (se)	.pulss
farce (ce)	.farss
sparse (se)	.sparss
hearse (se)	.hurss
tense (se)	.tenss
rinse (se)	.rinss
close (se)	.cloess
purse (se)	.purss
juice (ce)	.jooss
loose (se)	.looss
spruce (ce)	.sprooss
princess (ess)	.prinssess
duchess (ess)	.duchesss
largesse (esse)	.larjesss
convalesce (sce)	.convalesss
caress (ess)	.caresss

-ss

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
hit (t)	.hit
little (tt)	.litl
indict (ct)	.indiet
asked (ed)	.askt
hoped (d)	.hoept
debt (bt)	.det
yacht (cht)	.yot
veldt (dt)	.velt
receipt (pt)	.reseet
thyme (th)	.tiem
two (tw)	.too
bought (ght)	.baut

t

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
zip (z)	.zip
puzzle (zz)	.puzl
fairs (s)	.faers
scissor (ss)	.sizor
business (si)	.biznes
scores (es)	.scors
raspberry (sp)	.razberry
raise (se)	.raez
asthma (sth)	.azma
czar (cz)	.zar
xanthic (x)	.zanthik
xenophobia (x)	.zeenofobia
anxiety (x)	.angzieity
sneeze (ze)	.sneez

z

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
chip (ch)	.chip
niche (che)	.nich
cello (e)	.chelo
match (tch)	.mach
righteous (ght)	.rieechus
question (ti)	.queschon
structure (t)	.strukcher

ch

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
shop (sh)	.shop
machine (ch)	.masheen
ocean (ce)	.oeshan
special (ci)	.speshal
sure (s)	.shuur
fuchsia (chsi)	.fuesha
crescendo (sc)	.creshendo
conscience (sci)	.conshenss
schist (sch)	.shist
nauseous (seo)	.naushus
pension (si)	.pension
issue (ss)	.ishoo
nation (ti)	.naeshon
negotiate (t)	.negoeshiaet
mission (ssi)	.mishon
luxury (x)	.luxshery
anxious (xio)	.ankshus
appreciate (c)	.apreeshiaet
mustache (che)	.mustash

sh

TRADITIONAL	SOUNDSPEL
azure (z)	.azher
Zhivago (zh)	.Zhivaago
pleasure (s)	.plezher
vision (si)	.vizhon
rescission (ssi)	.resizhon
brazier (zi)	.braezher
equation (ti)	.eqaezhon
jabot (j)	.zhabo
garage (ge)	.garaazh
regime (g)	.rezheem

zh

This proposal for an alternative orthography for English that goes by the name *SoundSpel* is offered in response to the widely held conviction that English spelling is more complex than it needs to be. Tens of millions share this view. Illiteracy's connection with our massive social problems makes it imperative that we now re-examine our contorted orthography in light of emerging changes in pedagogy and the very important contribution that computers can make in accelerating and easing the adjustment to reform.

This updated online version of the text is based on an original document bearing the name *Dictionary of simplified AMERICAN SPELLING: An alternative spelling for English*, published in 1986 by Edward Rondthaler and Edward J. Lias.

It was intended primarily as a *scholar's edition* and was not considered a *fait accompli* at the time. The original reformed spellings were determined on the basis of a careful consideration of the data in the original appendix combined with and guided by the contributions of respected authorities as reflected in the original bibliography.

R. J. McGehee made some changes to the original system, and it has since been renamed SOUNDSPEL. Most of the changes are relatively minor, but a great many *facts on the ground* have changed since the publication of the earlier work. SoundSpel has been standardized to the point where a great many documents are now being written in it. It is no longer possible to change the essential principles of this system of reformed orthography, but a few minor details still need to be worked out, particularly in respect to the differences in pronunciation between American and British English, since of this writing there is no standard for *British SoundSpel*. Frequency analysis and AI might serve as a basis to *tweak* some minor spelling issues, but SoundSpel is clearly as well thought out as the orthographies of other modern languages such as Dutch or Indonesian, so there is no need for further reform at this point, only implementation. Naturally, questions and comments relevant to this system are still welcome from all – phoneticians, linguists, educators, publishers, those with a special interest in the subject and, very importantly, the public at large. The newly expanded and updated appendix is designed to encourage such participation. A major push at this time is to translate this document into a many different languages as possible. A second edition benefiting from comments received should go a long way toward supplying an authentic and much needed tool for the repair of a chronic flaw in our culture.

Dictionary of
SOUNDSPEL

A SIMPLIFIED ALTERNATIVE SPELLING
FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Written as it Sounds
Pronounced as it's Written

EDWARD RONDTHALER AND EDWARD J. LIAS
ORIGINAL EDITORS

R. J. MCGEHEE CURRENT EDITOR

SCHOLAR'S EDITION
THE AMERICAN LITERACY COUNCIL

784 45TH ST., LOS ALAMOS, NM 87544

ONLY THOSE WHO CAN READ & WRITE
HAVE ENOUGH INFLUENCE
TO BRING ABOUT SPELLING REFORM
BUT –

DO THEY HAVE THE HUMANITY,
or THE COMPATION,
or THE GENEROSITY,
or THE VISION,
or THE WISDOM,
or THE COURAGE?

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST ADDITION

The authors of much of the background for this book do not appear on the title page. They are the phoneticians, linguists, and spelling reformers, many listed in the bibliography, who for over a hundred years and in a variety of ways have sought to improve our notation for recording speech. Special recognition is accorded the British lexicographer Walter Ripman, the American scholar and linguist Godfrey Dewey, and the too often anonymous pronunciation specialists of our great dictionaries. The writings of these dedicated persons have had a broad impact on the present research. Their wisdom and experience has helped steer a steady course through stormy phonetic seas.

In retrospect it is clear that the direction of the present work was set while visiting Dr. Dewey in Lake Placid during the fall of 1973. After a couple of days in heady discussion, the lifelong champion of spelling reform said, in essence, "Before you leave I want you to know why I invited you here. Unlike most of my colleagues, I believe that printers have much to contribute to spelling reform. Historically they are partly to blame for our confused spelling; yet they are uniquely positioned to help repair it. Without their support I doubt if the battle will ever be won. Let me illustrate my point: An airline's board of directors may order its pilots to land their planes safely and smoothly. In theory that should be enough; that should bring the planes down safely and comfortably. In reality that is not enough. The man in the cockpit – the man whose hand rests on the controls – has the last word. Not only has he the last word, but he can likely tell the board a thing or two they've never known about landing a plane; he is master of the nitty-gritty. As to your industry, it is rightly proud of Benjamin Franklin, printer. It boasts of his statesmanship and quotes his pithy maxims, but it has forgotten the great challenge he passed along to future generations of printers: the reform of our spelling. What I have seen of your work gives me hope that the visually sensitive skills and day-to-day expertise of typographers can be linked up with the academic expertise of our phoneticians and linguists. Such an alliance is our best hope."

Using new techniques and building on the wisdom of the past, this volume moves towards meeting that challenge. Generous help has come from a number of sources:

The large computer facility at Ocean County College in New Jersey forwarded the project in the late '70s when it enabled its brilliant director, Dr. Edward Lias, to pursue his interest in laying the foundation for a computer translating program – a program that promises to play a crucial role in the practical application of spelling reform by relieving the stress that changeover would otherwise cause at the keyboard.

Among those in the academic community who have been helpful are Professors Harvie Barnard, Helen Bonnema Biscard, Stanley Hess, Harry Lindgren, John Henry Martin, Olivia Parmore, Ann TenEyck, Newell Tune, Ben Wood, Valerie Yule, and the staffs of libraries in New York, London, Edinburgh, Croton-on-Hudson, White Plains and Columbia University.

Above all has been the generous support of Photo-Lettering Inc., New York's distinguished typographic house, guardian of the world's largest collection of alphabet designs, and a pioneer in the legibility and the esthetics of print. The organizations unique tools, helpful personnel, and seasoned expertise have undergird the research with a strength manifesting true corporate commitment to social responsibility and firm resolve to make a significant contribution to the welfare of society – a fitting response to the challenge voiced by Ben Franklin, statesman and printer.

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND ADDITION

It has been 40 years since Edward Rondthaler and Edward J. Lias first published their groundbreaking dictionary unveiling a modernized orthography of the English language. In one respect, there is nothing unusual about this; most of the better known modern languages have had periodic reforms of their orthography, ranging from the relatively moderate *Portuguese-Language Orthographic Agreement of 1990*, which unified the spellings of different varieties of Portuguese, to the considerably more dramatic "*Norwegian language conflict*," which resulted in two different orthographic standards being adopted in one small country, namely *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*, not to mention the extremely radical *Turkish language reform*, which not only replaced the traditional Arabic script with a modified Latin alphabet, but which also purged the Turkish language of Arabic and Persian-derived words and grammatical structures, thus reforming the entire language!

Compared to the last-mentioned reform, that proposed by the two "Eds" is relatively modest, and results in text that is quite legible for adults instructed in the *legacy system* that has not been significantly updated since the time of the publication of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755, and yet which is now as easy for children to learn as the orthographies of Spanish, Dutch, or Indonesian. For some odd reason, however, on both sides of the English Channel social and political resistance to spelling reform has historically been considerable, with the result that, out of virtually all languages employing an "alphabetic" system of writing, ranging from Hausa to Vietnamese, *English* and *French* both have quaintly *fossilized* orthographies that have not seen any significant reform in nearly 300 years! (One wonders, it is something in the water 😊?)

To be fair, of course, one of the major obstacles hindering any significant reform of English spelling up to now has been the vexatious problem of "retraining" people to learn to read and write *all over again*, seeing that older sectors of the population might prove unable or unwilling to do so. It is at this point where the genius of Rondthaler and Lias came in, particularly thanks to the latter's computer programming expertise, since Dr. Lias designed software that automatically converted text from traditional orthography (TO) to simplified orthography (SO), with the result that a typist could continue to type in conventional orthography using a standard Qwerty keyboard while the output of the typesetting device would come out in the completely modernized orthography. It was this key difference that gave this latest spelling reform campaign a significant advantage over precursors to SoundSpel such as Godfrey Dewey's *World English Spelling* (WES) and the *Nue Speling* of Walter Ripman and William Archer. In the forty years since the original program was developed, we now have a comprehensive database that will soon enable the conversion of one million words from TO to SO, while an ongoing project is that of teaching AI to learn how to carry out SoundSpel conversions on its own, so that the size of the dictionary corpus will no longer be a limiting factor on the variety of texts that can be converted from TO to SO.

Another aspect of this innovation is that since people now have an app that automatically converts from one spelling system to another, it is no longer strictly necessary to seek out government support or intervention, since the English spelling reform movement has become an international grass roots phenomenon that knows no national boundaries. This gives us humans some say in the process, since otherwise AI would eventually create its own simplified spelling for English, particularly since English is fast becoming a universal language or *lingua franca* in its own right, seeing that it has the greatest number of second language speakers by far, and is more widely studied than any other language (even if some languages, such as Chinese, can claim a greater number of native speakers). In this respect, the number of texts that are being converted from TO to SoundSpel increases from day to day, and this now includes many of the classics of English literature.

About the current editor: My name is Robert Judson McGehee, and I frequently go by the initials R. J. McGehee (My last name is pronounced “Magee” and would be spelled that way in SS!). I was born in Evanston, Illinois in 1960, but spent most of my childhood years in Flagstaff, Arizona. As of the year 2000 I have been living and working in the Czech Republic, where I have been employed as a language teacher and translator, in addition to my work for the ALC. I am fluent in six languages at the C2 level, which means I can communicate with virtually anyone in Europe, and I can read in an additional 50 languages. I have studied spelling reform movements in countless countries and regions over the centuries, and when I was in Africa with the Peace Corps I helped with the reform of the orthography of the local languages of the Comoros Islands, where they speak a variety of Bantu languages similar to Swahili.

As far as this project is concerned, I am totally fluent in reading, writing, and typing in SoundSpel, so I have no need to avail myself of the automatic spelling conversion program when I write my own articles, news items, or stories, and those who follow me on FB (Faess Buuk) and on other types of social media are already familiar with the appearance of SoundSpel. Most of my friends and associates, however, still use the conversion software.

My personal take on this matter is that I am essentially mowing *yesterday's grass*. This spelling reform should have taken place at least three centuries ago, or at least around the time of the American Revolution! The tangled weeds of false etymologies, coupled with the fronds of at least four different original tongues, Old English, Old French, Latin, and Greek, have created such a confusion of spelling rules and traditions that, while it may be fascinating to analyze them from a historical perspective, in an age of computers and artificial intelligence the educational challenges that children face simply provide no room for the rote memorization of essentially *incorrect* spellings. As an indication of just how disadvantaged children are in English-speaking countries, when I compare the reading levels of *children's readers* in the Czech Republic with those of the United States, for every physical grade level the Czech students are at least *one whole grade level* ahead in terms of what they are reading! Kindergarten readers introduce simple nursery rhymes and couplets, while those in the first grade are already presenting entire folktales! In other words, *first grade* readers in the Czech Republic resemble *second grade* or even *third grade* readers in the United States. Now, just think about that for a minute: If you have at least 500 million school children worldwide learning to read and write English (including both native speakers of English and children who would qualify as “balanced bilinguals” in English and some other language), if they are taking an entire year longer to attain a certain basic reading level, that means that if you *do the math* that comes to a half-billion *reading years* that are being *lost* each year. Think about that 😞 !

Now, granted, the whole issue of the reform of English orthography might become entirely moot if within the space of a few centuries AI establishes a global universal language for the entire human species using principles of linguistics and cognitive neuroscience to create an *ideal* system of verbal communication far superior to present-day conlangs such as Esperanto, or we might ultimately end up with some type of *artificial telepathy* or *mind melding* where we would simply exchange thoughts without needing any specific “spoken language” at all, but such speculations are far too ahead of us!

ABOUT THE FORMER AMERICAN LANGUAGE ACADEMY

The American Language Academy, the predecessor to the American Literacy Council, was chartered in 1985 by the state of Delaware, but it was merely a continuation of what is now a 150-year-old organization which has worked to mitigate the damage done by our disastrous spelling. Its earliest American ancestor was the Spelling Reform Association, founded in 1876. In 1946 the SRA merged with the Simplified Spelling Board (founded 1906) to form the Simpler Spelling Association, grandparent of the subsequent American Language Academy, and great-grandparent of today's American Literacy Council, thus preserving organizational continuity.

The genius of alphabet, the one-to-one sound-to-letter correspondence, is largely obscured in our writing. English is by far the most erratically spelled of modern languages. The forty-odd sounds we speak are spelled in well over four hundred different ways. For those literate in English it is an inefficient and expensive absurdity. For those learning to write and read it is a disaster – a dragon at the gate – encountered by children almost on their first day in school. It is indeed a major factor in creating our mass of English-speaking functional illiterates, minimally estimated at 10 percent of the population.

The central concern of what developed into a spelling reform movement was first expressed by John Hart in England in 1554 and by Benjamin Franklin in America in 1768, followed on both sides of the Atlantic by eminent personages among whom were Noah Webster, Mark Twain, Theodore Roosevelt, Melvil and Godfrey Dewey, John Dewey, Robert McCormick, Andrew Carnegie, Isaac Funk, Nicholas Murry Butler, Frank Laubach, Isaac and James Pitman, George Bernard Shaw, and many others including for former HRH Prince Phillip.

At the time of its inception, the American Language Academy was sponsoring two parallel projects to achieve the goal of a simplified phonetic spelling for general use.

The first project used phonetic spelling to teach traditional spelling. It began by teaching children the basic concepts of letters: a reliable one-to-one relationship between letter and sound. Thus the discouragement of early failure was avoided. Once a child became skilled in converting sound to sight phonetically, then a gradual changeover to the irregularities of traditional spelling was undertaken. This computer-assisted instructional system was known as the "Writing to Read" program. It was developed by John Henry Martin (then the vice-president of the ALA) and was made available through IBM. At the time more than 150,000 children in schools coast to coast were being introduced to writing and reading by this innovative method.

The second project of the American Language Academy was just getting underway at the time. Its goal was to expand the phonetic "Writing to Read" notation along a broad front into a regularized, optional, alternative, 26-letter "American" spelling for general use (as SoundSpel was known at the time). Certain adjustments were made in the notation to render it sufficiently compatible with traditional spelling so that the two could be used interchangeably. The project foresaw a time when this new orthography would largely replace traditional spelling in print and for general use. The project's principal tools – a large dictionary corpus and a transliteration program for typesetting – were the brainchild of Edward Rondthaler (a trustee of the ALA) and Edward Lias (a specialist in computer technology) using the research facilities of the Typographic Council for Spelling Reform based at Photo-Lettering Inc.

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-

How Widespread is Illiteracy?

How many English-speaking adults in the U.S. are totally illiterate? Nobody knows. But there are millions who cannot read, write, and comprehend on familiar subjects, and do not understand the signs and written instructions they encounter every day. These are the semi-illiterates – a fast-growing population with reading and writing problems so serious that they cannot function smoothly in modern society. They number between 25 and 55 million: one in seven of us; perhaps one in four. From the very limited statistics available it is estimated that more than 40 nations have a higher percentage of literates than the United States.

Such figures are staggering: a shocking disgrace to the nation whose education system, moneywise, is the best in the world.

Jonathan Kozol's book "*Illiterate America*" tells about a commercial artist, skilled in his work, who keeps himself informed through news broadcasts, but cleverly hides his illiteracy by conspicuously carrying a copy of the New York Times – unread.

The story arouses a searching question: Why could the young man master the tools of his art, but not the tools of literacy?

Good tools are good teachers. Poor tools make poor pupils. No art instructor would give his students blunted pencils, whiskered brushes, rusty pens or crooked T-squares. English spelling – the basic tool of writing and reading – is whiskered, blunted, crooked, and rusted. It is the only branch of learning that has undergone no serious update or repair since the last 16th Century. Other disciplines receive continuous updating. But not spelling.

The text in front of you directly addresses our tortured orthography. It sees new light coming from too directions. The very latest methods of teaching children to write before they read, and the use of computers in typesetting – neither of which were developed with spelling reform in mind – are precisely what is needed to achieve reform. How these two developments can work together to solve our illiteracy problem is discussed on the following pages.

Hearty guffaws are sure to greet this effort. They reflect the traditional blindness behind our failure to come to grips with this vitally important but sadly fossilized tool of our culture.

The Case for Spelling Reform

This ENGLISH-SOUNDSPEL DICTIONARY focuses directly on the prospect of expanding the phonetic “teaching spellings”, used more and more widely in primary education, into a fully accredited alternative spelling for general use. The key word is *alternative*.

Several factors point to the timeliness of this endeavor:

1. Increased use of typewriters, computers, and phonetic spelling in the teaching of writing. Convincing evidence that when writing is taught before reading, the ability to read comes naturally, as a by-product: A child learning to write is also learning to read.
2. The fact that many of our children, even some of the brightest, find their sense of logic unable to cope with the illogic and disorderliness of traditional English orthography. Acknowledgement that remedial efforts for adults reach scarcely five percent of those in need.
3. Astonishment of most literate English-speaking adults upon learning that only in English-speaking schools is it necessary to teach spelling. As explained by a Spanish student: “In Spain the teacher tells us the sounds of the letters and then we can read or write anything we say.”
4. Surprise at finding that pronunciation guides always found in English dictionaries are generally omitted from foreign language dictionaries – omitted because foreign spellings adequately represent pronunciation.
5. The pressing demand for a much higher level of literacy in the United States as we move from a manufacturing economy into a sophisticated high-tech economy of services and communication.
6. Growing awareness of the connection between illiteracy and our mounting social problems: dropout, crime-in-the-streets, hard core unemployment, and poverty. It is not by chance that half of our prison inmates are illiterate.
7. The largely overlooked but very serious fact that illiteracy is a real threat to democracy. Those voters who depend on the spoken word alone – who live, as it were, in a perpetual twilight – are easily deluded and manipulated.
8. Widespread acceptance of English as the emerging lingua franca of international communication. Whatever helps immigrants and foreigners to write and speak our language without needless frustration works for the good of all. A reduction in language barriers can open diplomatic, commercial, civic, and societal doors that are now scarcely ajar. It may well broaden the avenues toward peace.
9. Recognition of the fact that traditional spelling tends to promote the mispronunciation of English, and that a regularized spelling would tend to do the opposite. A better fit between sight and sound should not only reduce illiteracy but lead to greater stability of pronunciation, to less misunderstanding, and to more reliable communication overall.

10. An awareness that we have already accepted various alternative spellings: ax/axe, taboo/tabu, hijack/highjack, forgo/forego, dript/dripped, and many others. Applying to more words a principle that has proved fully successful with some is not breaking new ground; it is sensibly expanding what already works.
11. The prospect that a new spelling mixed with the old (even in the same sentence) need not be disruptive if it is introduced as an optional alternative for use by those, and only by those, who prefer it. Respectability for the new spelling can be anticipated by labeling it "SoundSpel" in the U.S., "British SoundSpel" (with minor changes) in the U.K., and "Australian SoundSpel" in Australia.
12. The present availability of "SoundSpel" – a no new letter system designed to be compatible with traditional spelling. This system is supported by a computer translating program currently being perfected for typesetting machines, word processors, desktop publishing, personal computers, and computerized typewriters. It is an extension of the spellcheck programs often used today. It will automatically translate traditionally spelled input into simplified "SoundSpel" output, thus answering the concern of authors, reporters, editors, copywriters, keyboard operators and others who, understandably, would resist a change that threatened to alter their customary writing habits.

It is fortunate that as the social and economic needs for a more logical spelling increase, our new technologies overcome the blocks that have historically thwarted reform. The attainment of this worthy goal, however, depends on the foresight, sensitivity, and compassion of the literate – not on the desperation of the illiterate, whose lack of literacy robs them of any voice in the matter.

“SOUNDSPEL” and the Writing to Read Program

Children want to write before they want to read. When they come to school for the first time almost all children think they can write. They’ve scribbled their names at home, or made a few letters with crayons. That’s “writing”. Very few, however, think they can read. For this valuable observation we’re indebted to Dr. Donald Graves’ book *“Let Them Write”*, initially published by the Ford foundation and confirmed by the exhaustive research of Dr. John Henry Martin, the original author of IBM’s “Writing to Read” program. The current website for the *Writing to Read* program is here:

[Bright Blue Software Home Page –](#)

(Dr. John Henry Martin had been one of the founding members of the American Language Academy, a precursor to the present American Literacy Council, and served as vice president of that earlier organization. The American Literacy Council does not maintain any direct institutional relationship with the Bright Blue Software corporation, but the two organizations are historically interconnected, and they both follow the philosophy of tolerating “*imperfect spelling*” in the lower grades.)

More and more schools are making the most of this important truth. Their 5- and 6-year-olds become, with a little encouragement, avid writers. In many cases this is done with the aid of computers. Much of the spelling is not what we’d call “correct”; but it makes sense to a beginner. It’s an elementary phonetic spelling partly invented by the children themselves. Teachers or parents explain the sounds of various consonants and do the best they can to explain our wayward vowels. Then each child goes ahead and writes according to his or her understanding of the link between letters and sounds, unhampered by the irregularities of ‘correct’ English spelling.

An invitation to a bicycle ride might read like this:

“If yu kum to see mee yu kan rid mi bik”

Another child might write it this way:

“Ef yoo kum to se me yoo kan ryd my byk”

This wide dissimilarity of spelling is more illustrative than typical. A lenient but reasonable uniformity is encouraged in the pre-school and elementary classroom, particularly where computers do part of the teaching. What is all important, however, is that the children are grasping the fundamental principles of phonetics, are building confidence in their ability to convert sound to sight, and are expressing their thoughts in writing. That’s progress. That’s youthful logic in action – fertile soil for education. But

there's a catch. All the good thinking is only a first step on the rough road to literacy in English. Trouble lies ahead. Big trouble for some. To be literate in English the child must scuttle much of his early spelling logic and memorize thousands of illogical unphonetic spellings. The marvel is that over 90 percent of the youngsters can do it. The tragedy is that a very significant number *can not* – and may end up in the ranks of our 25 million functional illiterates with their high incidence of dropout, juvenile delinquency, crime in the streets, hard core unemployment and poverty.

It's not easy to defend English spelling. Try to explain to a rational child why sane adults spell cum “come”, or dum “dumb”, or tuf “tough”, or sed “said”. Where's the logic? Other means of communication do not scramble words. Neither TV, nor radio, nor tape recorders, nor the telephone give us sounds that must be unscrambled to be understood. Why should writing? Writing was not meant to be that way. Why do we insist on pushing millions of our children into lives of functional illiteracy? The answer is shocking: Because we are stubbornly determined to perpetuate phonetically obsolete spellings used in England during the 16th century! Absurd.

If the number of our readers and writers continues to decline the visual word is destined to become the province of an elite group of literates, say 50 million, whose literacy will give them control of government, education, business, and everything else. The illiterate masses will learn from TV, from radio, and loudspeakers whatever the literate elite wish them to know. Farewell democracy. Goodbye. Illiterates soon become docile sheep. The proper functioning of majority rule depends largely on the ability of all to get and give information freely and independently by sound and by sight. In a society over-run with audible electronic communication the task of making it easy to read and write and understand our visual speech – our “speech that stands still” – deserves no less than top priority.

A thoughtful solution is waiting in the wings. We could offer an alternative to those who cannot memorize haphazard English spelling. We could offer them a well-structured systematic spelling that is not distorted, that does not play havoc with their senses of logic and reason, but builds on it, encourages it – and looks enough like present writing so the rest of us could read it on sight or after a few minutes practice. (We'd find it as compatible with our present reading patterns as a strong regional dialect is compatible with our hearing.) Systematic spelling takes full advantage of a well-documented educational principle: logic stimulates thinking, thinking encourages learning, learning is facilitated when what is being learned “makes sense”. A spelling that makes sense would open the door to more literacy for more people, young and old, than all our remedial reading efforts put together. It would go a long way toward rescuing those who if not rescued will greatly magnify our social problems and undermine our democratic structure.

The idea of a simplified, reformed, systematic spelling is not new. It is no Johnny-come-lately. It is the product of a hundred and fifty years of careful research and meticulous

refinement by some of the best scholars in our language. Not surprisingly it is called “SoundSpel”.

The proposal, then, is that temporarily we have too spellings: traditional orthography and SoundSpel. Strong medicine? Perhaps, but our malady is great. The 42 sounds of spoken English are not spelled in 42 simple ways, but in a mix-up of at least 400 different and conflicting ways! Most other languages have no such nonsense. Their written words are reliable pictures of spoken words. Written English, accordingly, is enormously perplexing to foreigners, and tragically baffling to millions of our own children. The illiteracy spawned by English spelling doggedly feeds our mounting social problems, weakens our economy, hampers our international communication, and dims our future way of life. The sickness is severe. It calls for potent medicine. Now. Tiny Switzerland cheers us on. Its people flourish in the scramble of four different languages at once! Surely we can accept the temporary inconvenience of living with too fully compatible spellings until the less functional one retires. A small price for such great benefits.

Our strong attachment to illogical spellings is probably a holdover from long ago when routine memorizing played a major role in elementary education. Memory skills were a mark of scholarship. Good spellers won high praise; poor ones were frowned upon. Spelling bees and the Old Blue Back Speller gave teachers in one-room schoolhouses abundant material for memory drill – an easier task than developing the skills of logical thinking so important as high-tech replaces the pick-and-shovel. Today we should be stressing different values. Writing and reading are essential to well-being. They are ‘round-the-clock utilitarian functions, not matters of special privilege. Spelling – the basic tool of writing and reading – must be brought within reach of those whose native sense of logic is frustrated by our spelling’s illogic. Our generation can perform a lasting service to society by supporting a simplified, regularized spelling for all. Every survey tells us that writing and reading are in crisis. Every school is affected. The tragic ramifications multiply. No longer can we afford the luxury of limping on with unsuccessful half-way measures, telling ourselves that we are solving the literacy problem when in truth we are not.

It is important to recognize that we are already attuned to the daily use of alternative spellings. Our scholarly dictionaries list more than a hundred of them: catalog/catalogue, align/aline, plow/plough, draft/draught, programme/program, etc. (see appendix) Interchangeable (interchangeable) spellings are not new. SoundSpel, of course, will greatly increase that number, and in so doing achieve an orderly fit between sight and sound. *What is significant is that we have already taken the first step toward accepting alternative spellings.* We need only to adopt a tidy phonetic notation and let the computers help us move faster.

KEY TO READING SOUNDSPEL

KEY TO READING SOUNDSPEL

Pronounce the long vowels — the pairs ending in ‘e’ (ae ee ie oe ue) — like the first letter of each pair of sounds when reciting the alphabet:

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

Old spelling.....	date	wait	
SoundSpel.....	daet	waet	(ae)

Old spelling.....	heat	feet	
SoundSpel.....	heet	feet	(ee)

Old spelling.....	bite	right	
SoundSpel	biet	riet	(ie)

Old spelling.....	note	boat	
SoundSpel	noet	boet	(oe)

Old spelling.....	cute	beaty	
SoundSpel.....	cuet	buety	(ue)

The vowel sound in ‘good, should’ etc. is written ‘uu’ — guud, shuud.

There is no change in ‘oo’ for the sound in ‘moon, food’, etc. The ‘ah’ sound, the one the dentist asks you to make, and which one hears in such words as ‘calm, palm, baa, aha,’ and so on, is written ‘aa’ — caam, paam, faather. The /zh/ sound, as heard in the word ‘Dr. Zhivago,’ is written ‘zh’ — plezher [pleasure], mezher [measure], trezher [treasure]. Most other changes in spelling are phonetically self-evident.

T.O.The urgent, pressing task of SOUNDSPEL is to reform our spelling enough
SOUNDSPEL..... Th urjent, presing task of SOUNDSPEL is to reform our speling enuf

to be mastered by the more than 10 percent — both children and adults —
to be masterd bi the mor than 10 percent – boeth children and adults –

who find that the unpredictable illogic of English spelling blocks their
hoo fiend that th unprediktabl ilojik of Inglish speling bloks thaer

path to literacy. SOUNDSPEL attacks the root of "Why Johnny Can't Read".
path to literasy. SOUNDSPEL ataks th root of "Whi Jony Can't Reed."

It tries to keep close enough to our present spelling so that current
It tries to keep cloess enuf to our prezent speling so that curent

readers will not be excessively puzzled nor needlessly annoyed.
reeders wil not be exsesivly puzld nor needlessly anoyd.

The orthography in this volume is a carefully selected and updated
Th orthograpy in this voluem is a caerfully selekted and updaeted

composite of a century of research and refinement carried on by highly
compozit of a senchery of resurch and refienment carryd on bi hiely

dedicated scholars. It merits thorough study, serious consideration and
dedicaeted scolars. It merrits thuro study, seerius consideraeshon and

revision, as needed, to develop a logical, practical and serviceable spelling.
revizhon, as needed to develop a lojikal, praktikal and survisabl speling.

T.O. A healthy heart suddenly starts beating out of its normal rhythm.
SOUNDSPEL..... A helthy hart sudenly starts beeting out of its normal rithm.

The sunny skies predicted for the weekend turn thunderous and gray
Th suny skies predikted for th weekend turn thunderus and grae.

A smoothly rising column of cigarette smoke begins twisting and
A smoothly riezing colum of sigaret smoek begins twisting and

churning a few inches above the smoldering tip. It used to be that when
churning a fue inches abuv th smoeldering tip. It uest to be that when

scientists tried – and fiailed – to fathom such unpredictable events they
sieentists tried – and faeld – to fathom such unprediktabl events thae

helplessly ascribed them to randomness. But now, in a quantum leap
helplesly ascriebd them to randomnes. But now, in a qontum leap

for physics, it has become recognized that such events represent “chaos”,
for fiziks, it has becum recogniezd that such events reprezent “caeos”,

formerly an unknown side of nature radically different from randomness.
formerly an unnoen sied of naecher radikaly diferent from randomnes.

The theory of chaos holds that it is not necessary to know what
Th theeory of caeos hoelds that it is not nesesaery to noe whot

every molecule in the cigarette smoke is doing in order to understand
every molecuel in th sigaret smoek is dooing in order to understand

how the rising column becomes turbulent. Rather, there are simple
how th riezing colum becums turbuelent. Rather, thaer ar simpl

equations to describe what is happening — the equations of chaos —
eqaezhons to descrieb whot is happening — th eqaezhons of caeos —

that reflect the inner workings of the smoke itself.
that reflekt th iner wurkings of th smoek itself.

The study of chaos was born out of a simple question: who do
Th study of caeos wuz born out of a simpl qeschon: whi do

weathermen get it wrong so often? Weather prediction and reality
wethermen get it rong so ofen? Wether predikshon and reality

diverge, as a rule, in about ten days, not because meteorologists do not
divurj, as a rool, in about ten daes, not becauz meetiorolojists do not

know their cirrus from their cumulus but because weather is inherently
noe thaer sirus from thaer cuemulus but becauz wether is inherrently

chaotic. In particular, it is extremely dependent on starting conditions.
caeotik. In particueelar, it is extreemly dependent on starting condishons.

If the forecasters’ measurement of temperature and placement of an air
If th forcasters’ mezherment of temperacher and plaesment of an aer

mass is slightly off, next week’s weather prediction will be way off.
mas is slietly off, next week’s wether predikshon wil be wae off.

**The Author submits the manuscript
in traditional English spelling**

**The keyboard Operator types
in English spelling as usual,**

**and the finished typesetting
is in SoundSpel.**

**The phototypesetting machine or word processor is programed to convert the spelling
into simplified SoundSpel automatically as the type is set.**

Q. Will books, magazines and newspapers be printed in SoundSpel?

A. Not at first. Some individuals are writing in SS on an informal basis, but as yet no official government agency in any English-speaking country is involved. On the other hand, though, a typesetting computer program is being perfected that will enable typesetting keyboarded in traditional English spelling to be translated automatically into SoundSpel without re-keyboarding. (See illustration at left.) This program – an extension of spelling correction programs currently in use – will allow operators of typesetting machines and word processors to spell in traditional English just as always. The computer then takes over and automatically translates into SoundSpel, so the typesetting or typewriting becomes SoundSpel – or even a selected blend of SoundSpel and traditional orthography. This breakthrough permits authors, copywriters, typesetters and others to continue to write and keyboard in our present English spelling even though the output is to be in SoundSpel.

Q. What will SoundSpel spellers do when they encounter books in traditional orthography?

A. SoundSpel has been carefully designed to facilitate backwards compatibility with traditional orthography, so children who wish to read older books should be able to get accustomed to reading them within a few months. One should bear in mind, however, that handheld apps will permit instant conversion between the two orthographies. One should also not forget that children taught to read and write in SoundSpel will typically be reading on at least one whole grade level above the level at which children are currently reading, so this significant *windfall* will in effect provide young people with an entire *year* to get acclimated to reading texts in traditional spelling. All told, about 50 percent of the words on a page are the same in both spellings. Another 30 percent or more change only one or two letters. So the reader who knows only SoundSpel may

hesitate with some words, but will get along considerably better than if he had no reading fluency at all!

Q. Will we suffer a cultural loss by “SoundSpelizing” foreign spellings?

A. Other languages do not seem to have suffered culturally by adapting foreign words to their spelling systems. Has the ‘f’ in *telefon* made the German language any less cultured? Such regularity of spelling has certainly contributed to German literacy – hence to a more cultured population.

Q. Won’t the switch to SoundSpel be much like our effort to use Metric?

A. [This was a question posed in the original text. The United States has still not converted to the international Metric system, so this question is still relevant.] No, there is no easy way to switch to Metric on a “piecemeal” basis. Everything is different. Meters are not compatible with feet, nor liters with quarts. The two measurement systems are totally different and cannot be used together. Traditional spelling and SoundSpel, on the other hand, have much in common and can be used together even in the same sentence, though it is much more likely, for example, that a scientific paper will include an *abstract* written in traditional orthography, with the main body of the text in SoundSpel.

Q. How will other nations respond to the news that the English-speaking world is finally modernizing the spelling of English?

A. They should be quite supportive. Millions of people around the world are required to develop a reading knowledge of English even if they rarely need to speak or write in it. In spite of radio and TV broadcasts and the internet, foreigners who can read our language hesitate to pronounce English words out loud for fear that they will mispronounce them. English is on the way to becoming a *lingua franca*, but a much-needed overhaul of our fossilized orthography will serve as an even greater stimulus to make English a truly *international* language. Finally, we do not want to wait until AI or a cartel of human experts from China or India end up reforming our orthography for us, which is almost certain to happen if we native speakers of English do not “clean up our act” first!

Q. Would words like ‘hear’ and ‘here’ have only one spelling in SoundSpel?

A. Yes. Context will clarify the meaning – just as it does in our speech. For example:
“Come here to hear the music.”

There’s nothing new in using context to clarify the meaning. We do it all the time:

“That gold mine is mine.”

“Bank at the bank on the bank”

Context is stronger than spelling. If I write
“Come hear to here the music”,
You know exactly what I mean. Thousands of words with just one spelling have numerous definitions. The word ‘point’ has 86; ‘set’ has 115!

Q. Will proper names be respelled?

A. Proper nouns that are extremely common will generally be respelled, but uncommon scientific or medical words whose present spellings have terminological significance will not be, pending institutional agreements by governing bodies responsible for such terminology. No laws are foreseen that will require people to respell their surnames, though individuals who wish to spell their names according to the new SoundSpel norms should be assisted in every way possible. These exceptions will provide the “memory training” so dear to the hearts of traditionalists.

Q. How about regional dialects?

A. TV, radio, and travel have made regional dialects less distinctive than fifty years ago. Even so, many regional remnants persist. A word like “car” has one spelling, but several regional pronunciations. This means that in different sections of the country the letters represent slightly different sounds to the local reader’s ear. Yet one spelling can suffice because all of us, in speaking, use the same number of spoken sounds no matter where we live. If this were not true, every dictionary publisher would be printing a separate edition with a different pronunciation scheme for each section of the country! Other languages have regional dialects too – with one spelling.

[See R. J. McGehee’s article on “*Dialect policy*” in the notes at the end of this document.]

Q. Is SoundSpel 100 percent regular? Is there perfect fit between spelling and pronunciation in all cases?

A. No. No language has 100 percent fit. But with a single page for its alphabet key, no new letters, no diacritical marks, and only a few dozen rules, SoundSpel achieves a remarkably good match. Its visual compatibility with traditional orthography should do much to speed adoption. Two diacritical marks may be helpful in the first stage of teaching children and foreign students: An indication of the unstressed schwa, and perhaps a dot over the ‘half-ee,’ but continued use of these cues should not be necessary.

Q. How will the ball get rolling?

A. The spadework for phonetic spelling was well on its way in Dr. J. H. Martin's "Writing to Read" project sponsored by IBM back in 1984, and the current software can be found here: [Bright Blue Software Home Page –](#), and it also started with Dr. Donald Grave's "writing first" program for primary grades. (see pg. 18). Leadership could, of course, come from the White House, but the main thrust is more likely to come from desperation elsewhere: from parents, teachers, principals, or school boards who can see the value of a simplified spelling, from the armed services where functional illiteracy is a major problem; from leaders of minority groups; from prisons where half the inmates are illiterate; from comic strip artists who often use phonetic spelling for emphasis; from dictionary publishers who see it as relevant to their subject matter; from Avant garde publications, repair manuals, Bibles, or a special edition of the Readers Digest; from printers who will have the program in their computers; from teachers of "English as a second language"; quite likely from those engaged in technical or international communication. Artificial intelligence will certainly play a role in this changeover as well. The need is great, the time is right. Just as Arabic numerals replaced Roman numerals, so simplified spelling is destined to replace traditional spelling. Those who need it most – the illiterates themselves – can never bring it to pass. Their illiteracy robs them of initiative.

Q. Will etymologists object?

A. Not if they're as knowledgeable as the eminent Dr. Mario Pei who has pointed out that since words must be traced back through several changes to teach their origin, reformed spelling will add just one more step of retracing. (In all fairness, though, many of the "*etymological* spellings" in traditional orthography are based on completely *false* etymologies! Even when this is not the case, spellings based on supposed "*etymological principles*" use these "principles" in such an inconsistent manner that they are historically inaccurate: If one looks at the spellings that Shakespeare and his contemporaries actually used one will see that SoundSpel is just as likely to *restore* an earlier spelling as it is to change it!)

Q. Could words in SoundSpel be misread as meaning something else in conventional spelling?

A. While SoundSpel has been carefully designed in view of maintaining as much *backward compatibility* with traditional orthography as possible, there are a number of well-known cases where words written in SoundSpel come out being similar or identical to *completely different* words in conventional spelling. Among the most notorious examples, there is the so-called "worm wurm" problem that affects the spelling of *or*

and *ur* after *w*, since it appears that no words in English have the sound of *ar* (as in *star*) after the *w* sound. Therefore a ‘warm worm’ in TO is a “worm wurm” in SS! Also, the fact that SS does not double consonants to indicate *short vowels* means that the word ‘latter’ ends up being spelled “later” while the original word ‘later’ with a *long a* is in turn respelled “laeter.” Likewise, ‘backer’ becomes “baker” and ‘tacking’ becomes “taking”!

People who have studied this matter in depth have concluded that it generally will not be possible to avoid such problems without fundamentally changing the rules of SoundSpel. This only goes to show just how bad our present system of orthography truly is, and why it so desperately needs to be reformed!

In general, while whole documents written in SS provide plenty of context to avoid confusion, when making out *laundry lists*, *shopping lists*, or any other type of *itemized list* that is totally *devoid* of context care should be taken to indicate whether a particular *memo* is written in *traditional* or *modern* spelling.

[For an article that goes into greater depth on this subject, and for a complete listing of all foreseeable words of this type, consult the appendix that is currently under construction.]

Q. Who will be the greatest opponents?

A. Those who have not thoughtfully considered the full significance of “SoundSpel” or have not yet awakened to the fact that spelling is the open subject in which our schools use text books that have not been significantly updated since the 16th century!

The complete SoundSpel alphabet is shown on the opposite page. Children, adults and foreign students who learn this 1-page system will be able to write, in SoundSpel, anything they can say in English. The phonetic principle used in this notation is, for English, an equivalent of the phonetic spelling used daily by all who write in Spanish, Italian, German, Russian, Dutch, Finnish, Hungarian, Polish, Czech, Serbo-Croatian, Portuguese, Turkish, Korean, Vietnamese, Swahili, and scores of other languages. SoundSpel is a total system running close enough to established reading patterns to achieve a good phonetic fit and at the same time retain visual compatibility with traditional spelling. A logical set of rules enable our 26 letters to represent the 42 sounds of English. These rules lean slightly in favor of tradition – sometimes at the expense of maximum simplification; yet their virtue, unlike the countless rules of English spelling, lies in keeping them logical and within manageable limits. A by-product of modernized orthography is that more than occasionally it provides a cue to the placement of stress in multi-syllable words.

Those citing regional pronunciations as a potential stumbling block to spelling reform fail to realize that different regions will routinely assign local pronunciations to SoundSpel respellings. This is as it should be. For example, many New Englanders will give an “aahr” pronunciation to stress ‘are’ (as in car), while pronunciations in other regions will tend to be harder, or more nasal, or approaching ‘awr’. The International Phonetic Alphabet differentiates between such dialects, but SoundSpel and dictionary notations self-adjust, as explained in “How about regional dialects?” on page 13.

A Forecast of the Effectiveness Of SoundSpel

Based on the well documented experience of i.t.a.

Probably the best way to predict the effectiveness of SoundSpel is to examine the rise and the fall of its predecessor, Sir James Pitman's "initial teaching alphabet".

SoundSpel and i.t.a. have much in common, but the difference – a product of sixty year's hindsight – bids fair to be the difference between past failure and future success.

At the time of its introduction in the early 1960s, i.t.a. had great promise. This totally phonetic system and its 18 new letters provided a one-to-one fit with English sounds. A first grader using i.t.a. could write with confidence any of the several thousand words in his vocabulary – precisely as children do in other languages. It worked. He could write words; and his classmates could read what he had written. No endless drill with sterile sentences like "The boy has a bat. The girl has a cat. The man has a hat." Instead of such tiresome and unimaginative drivel the i.t.a. child busied herself writing short essays on lively and timely subjects: how a neighbor rescued her cat from a tree; how a broken pipe flooded the basement; who got clobbered at the bike race yesterday; or how mother bought a rocking chair and two lawn mowers at the auction:

mi muther went to an aukshon and she got a roking chaer and too
launmoeers and she is going to anuther aukshon on Saterdae and I am going
to join the boy's club and I noe it luuks liek in thaer thae have a televizhon
and pool taebls and U can bie peetsa. the end. — Bobby, age 6, first grade, Long Island

The i.t.a. alphabet with its auxiliary letters was intended as no more than a "starter" alphabet. It was to be used until the child could be weaned away into traditional spelling. Weaning away was thought necessary because back in the early '60s the concept of a widely used alternative spelling – an optional alternative spelling – had not yet surfaced. No one foresaw the role that computer translation could play in making an alternative spelling feasible. It was not yet understood that computers could bear the brunt of translation for print, and thus pull teeth from the strongest argument against reform.

Most children were able to master the transfer from i.t.a. to traditional English. By and large they succeeded in memorizing the vagaries of "book spelling". Miraculously, the many words that needed changing did not present an insurmountable

obstacle. Among these were children who would have been totally discouraged by early-on failure. They were saved from wreckage. This tended to lull some observers into the assumption that the answer to illiteracy had at last been found. In reality, however, a significant number of children failed to make the successful transfer from an orderly spelling into the morass of a disorderly and illogical one. These unfortunates were left with a 44-letter alphabet that had no practical use. The outside world saw the peculiar letters and spellings as freakish. This is where i.t.a. met its Waterloo. It was planned as salvation for those who otherwise could not have learned to spell. In practice, it left too many stranded.

SoundSpel focuses squarely on this problem – and gets its motivation and direction from hindsight. It uses the same phonetic pairs as i.t.a. but its notation and spelling are for the long term: it is intended as an orthography for all purposes. SoundSpel is written in our familiar 26 letters arranged in orderly and fixed pairs. No letters are bizarre. It has the potential of serving as a contemporary, efficient, and comfortable spelling for children, for adults, for foreign students, for immigrants, for international communication and for all other purposes. The following comparison of notations speaks for itself:

i.t.a.....

SoundSpel.....ae au ou oi ee ie ue oe ng wh ch th th -sh zh uu oo z

SoundSpel, of course, will serve our children as a “starter” alphabet – as in the “Writing to Read” and “Writing First” systems. As with i.t.a., teachers will stress phonetic spelling rather than memory spelling. Adult illiterates will be taught similarly. All will be encouraged to write essays using any word in their vocabulary. The big difference between SoundSpel and i.t.a. then emerges: those who do not or cannot switch to traditional English spelling will not be left with a writing notation that has no practical use. They will have learned and will continue to use an accredited alternative spelling reasonably compatible with traditional English spelling and perhaps destined to replace it.

Thus the fully demonstrated and documented success of i.t.a.’s *initial phase* — before the required transfer to traditional spelling — forecasts the effectiveness of SoundSpel. The success of that initial phase tells us why SoundSpel, with its much more lenient requirements, can be trusted to deal a telling blow to illiteracy.

Implementing Spelling Reform

THE TOOLS ARE ALREADY IN PLACE*

It is generally assumed that the introduction of spelling reform will require wide agreement among educators, and perhaps legislation by Congress. Just a few decades ago that would have been true. But not today. The outlook today is very different. To understand why it is different we need only examine the change that started taking place quietly in one school after another out in the grass roots, from coast to coast, as far back as 1984. With modern software, such as is available at [Bright Blue Software Home Page](#) – this difference is even more pronounced. The discovery that children want to write before they want to read is dramatically changing the instruction received by 5- and 6-year-olds. This instruction begins with a form of simplified phonetic spelling. Highlights from a preceding page in the original dictionary tell the story and bear repeating here:

When they come to school for the first time almost all children think they can write. They've scribbled their names at home, or made a few letters with crayons. That's "writing". Very few, however, think they can read. For this valuable observation we're indebted to Dr. Donald Grave's book "Let Them Write", published by the Ford Foundation, and confirmed by the research of Dr. John Henry Martin, author IBM's "Writing to Read" program. More and more schools are making the most of this important truth. Their 5- and 6-year olds become, with a little encouragement, avid writers. Much of the spelling is not what we'd call "correct"; but it makes sense to a beginner. It's an elementary phonetic spelling partly invented by the children themselves. Teachers or parents explain the sounds of various consonants and do the best they can to explain our wayward vowels. Then each child goes ahead and writes according to his or her understanding of the link between letters and sounds, unhampered by the irregularities of "correct" English spelling.

An invitation to a bicycle ride might read like this:

"If yuk um to see mee yu kan rid mi bik."

Another child might write it this way:

"Ef yoo kum too se me yoo kan ryd my byk."

These children are grasping the fundamental principles of phonetics. They are gaining confidence in their ability to convert sound to sight. They are expressing their thoughts in writing. That's progress. That's youthful logic in action – fertile soil for education.

Let us now suppose that one of the children embarks on an essay requiring the words "fire engine". He tentatively writes "fer injun"; then seeks guidance from his teacher. The time has not come to introduce the young writer to the misfits of English "book spelling", so the teacher is faced with making a choice: she can let "fer injun" stand as is – trusting that the boy will ultimately learn "fire engine". Or, as a precaution against the possibility that he may not

make a smooth transfer to English spelling, she can help him piece together a spelling that is (1) is consistent and makes sense to his understanding letters and sounds, (2) is sufficiently compatible with English spelling so his parents can read it, (3) is true to authentic dictionary pronunciation so that his writing is not phonetically substandard, and (4) follows a system of notation that does not lead into a blind alley but can be used in adult-hood if he fails to make a successful transfer to traditional spelling. These are desirable objectives, but fulfilling them on the spur of the moment may be difficult for the teacher. Much of English pronunciation has become so casual that a teacher may not be sure that her own pronunciation is “middle-of-the-road”. A spelling source book (such as this) using our familiar 26 letters and based on dictionary pronunciation fills all four requirements and gives her the needed guidance — *fier enjin*.

Similar incidents repeated again and again by more and more teachers nationwide will quietly but surely usher in spelling reform — at first as a logical and respected alternative; later, as a full-fledged orthography where letters are seen as trustworthy guides to pronunciation. Different regions, of course, will give local pronunciations to certain graphemes, but a spelling that reliably represents speech will be a powerful influence for better diction in all regions and all levels of society.

The rising generation, by and large, will feel at home with both ‘fire engine’ and ‘fier enjin’. In their circles SoundSpel will not be uncommon. At some point an important dictionary will replace its pronunciation notation with reformed spelling. Printers will make the translation program available. We need not wait for Congress to act. The new spellings, while subject to further perfecting, are sufficiently in place to begin to be used in selected classrooms and, with careful discretion, perhaps elsewhere.

The first edition of *American spelling*, now going under the name of *SoundSpel*, was not offered as a *fait accompli*. The material had been diligently researched and was at the point where advice on additional fine tuning was sought out on the part of phoneticians, linguists, educators, publishers, those with a special interest in the subject, and the public at large. The original appendix was compiled to stimulate such comments. This second edition, which has benefited from the material received after the publication of the first edition, should serve as an even more comprehensive source book for the schools and homes of children being taught to write before they read.

SoundSpel and the Bilingual Issue

Recently, the question of whether English should be considered the “official language” of America has been in the news. On March 1, 2025, President Donald Trump issued [an executive order](#) declaring English to be the official language of the United States, and there is also an organization, “ProEnglish,” that appears to be relatively active at this time: [proenglish Home Page - proenglish](#). When Edward Rondthaler and Edward Lias compiled the original version of this dictionary back in 1986, they mentioned two other organizations that were campaigning against “bilingualism” – “U.S. English” and “English First,” but the latter two now appear to be either defunct or inactive. On the other hand, many other groups and organizations are opposed to making English the sole official language, such as LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), and are instead promoting the concept of “English Plus,” where American citizens would not only be encouraged to master English, but one or two foreign languages as well.

It is not the responsibility of the ALC to adjudicate in such matters, but it should be pointed out that merely declaring English to be the *official language* of the U.S. will not automatically help immigrants from other countries to learn English. One problem is that resources for second language instruction are limited, and every year tens of thousands of individuals who desire to enroll in such classes are turned away simply because there are not enough ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers available. The other problem is the reason we here at the ALC are promoting SoundSpel. As Rondthaler and Lias stated decades ago, “legislation alone will not reduce the formidable barrier immigrants face when attempting to become literate in English. It is a barrier not encountered in other languages, and little understood by our own citizens.”

To grasp the importance of this matter, imagine that you are visiting Mexico and have learned the sounds of Spanish letters – a skill that can be easily acquired before your plane lands. Having learned the simple relationship between Spanish letters and sounds you can pronounce any word encountered in the course of your visit – any word you see on a sign, in a newspaper, a book, or elsewhere. You can pronounce these words with confidence because Spanish letters reliably match spoken Spanish sounds. When, for example, you see the word “teléfono” you can pronounce it correctly, and you have made a small beginning toward learning the language. If the next word that meets your eye is “policía” you can pronounce that too, and add it to your vocabulary. This gives you a feeling of accomplishment. It is a positive language-learning experience.

Now look at what the Mexican immigrant faces when he comes into the United States. He may have a strong desire to learn English, but his road to literacy is full of obstacles. He cannot learn a simple letter-to-sound relationship because our sounds, particularly the vowels, have many different spellings.

Each of our letters represent not one but many sounds, as illustrated by the English spellings on pages i-iv of the introduction. When the Mexican sees our word “telephone” he has no means of knowing which pronunciation out of a dozen or more is the correct one. His task is frustrating.

Written Spanish helps one learn Spanish.

Written English only confuses the learner.

To make the point even clearer, consider this: No farmer employing immigrants to harvest a crop would be so foolish as to give them dull tools. Dull tools would slow down production to a dribble. Yet this is precisely what we do linguistically. We give our immigrants dull tools and wonder why they find it so hard to become literate in English — why, in so many cases, discouragement sets in so soon.

Our literacy tools must be sharpened. Legislation aimed at disqualifying those who cannot fathom our graphic potpourri does not really solve the problem. It does not develop competent and productive citizens. To make the legislation truly effective — to enable it to build a nation bound together by a single language — it should be backed up with the option of an alternative spelling that is as logical and learnable as the spelling of the immigrant’s native tongue.

When the SoundSpel notation is firmly set it should, if possible, be presented to the public as a replacement for pronunciation notations in a respected dictionary. This would immediately give status to the orthography. Lacking such a favorable introduction, it is likely that the spellings will be labeled by some as inferior or second class. Four safeguards against such downgrading have been developed. All who are sympathetic to reform should keep them firmly in mind:

- (1) The reformed spelling has the appeal of being called “SoundSpel.”
- (2) It is offered purely as an optional alternative for those who *prefer* to use it — strictly a matter of choice.
- (3) It is fully compatible with traditional spelling and can be mixed with it in any proportion desired.
- (4) It is supported by a program prepared for typesetting and personal computers which converts traditionally keyboarded copy into reformed spelling, thus making it unnecessary to retrain adults who may have occasion to write in SoundSpel.

For this edition, the editor would like to add a few more comments: It isn’t merely immigrants who experience frustration with our antiquated spelling. As a longtime ESL instructor myself, I have often noted that in a typical one-hour class, after subtracting ten minutes for classroom management, that typically leaves me with 50 *contact hours* per lesson. Even then, I have to spend an additional *ten minutes* either correcting student pronunciations or explaining pronunciation. While those ten minutes per class may not seem like much, at the end of a course year they definitely add up! With a well-publicized spelling reform in the works, if students knew that they had the *option* of using materials written in *SoundSpel*, it would significantly add to the prestige of English as an international language.

Another frequent but unnoticed casualty of traditional orthography is Spanish speaking individuals who live in the United States and who learned English in school, but who cannot read in the language they speak at home because the convoluted spelling of English does not permit the creation of a straightforward “conversion chart” that would compare and contrast the rules for the pronunciation of English with the rules for the pronunciation of Spanish. Back when I was in high school, I had a friend who complained that whenever he saw the Spanish word *hijo* he immediately heard in his “mind’s ear” the English words *hi Joe*, and so he could not even recognize this common Spanish word!

(Needless to say, to be honest, thanks to the *great vowel shift* that occurred sometime during the transition between Middle English and Modern English, the pronunciation of the *long vowels* in SoundSpel does not match up very well to the pronunciation of the *five vowels* in Spanish, but at the very least with SoundSpel one can *spell out* the key differences between the representations of the vowels in the two systems in the course of an hour, and this does not even begin to take into account the enormous *windfall* that would accrue to children who would not have to be spending the equivalent of an *extra year* just learning how to spell words in English! The time saved could more profitably be spent in the study of a foreign language, and in fact when one looks at the enormous amount of time that some American children devote to memorizing the absurd spellings of extremely rare words just so that they can compete in the *National Spelling Bee* in the United States, this author acquired the ability to read Wikipedia articles in *Modern Demotic Greek* by a roughly similar expenditure of time and effort!)

Vocabulary Sources and Frequencies

The words and frequencies in the first edition of the dictionary printed in 1986 were taken from a number of sources, chiefly from a study made by Drs. Henry Kucera and W.N. Francis at Brown University in the 1960s. Their research covered a million-word sampling of contemporary running text, proportionally balanced, selected from a wide variety of subjects, news, editorials, science, religion, the arts, hobbies, skills, biography, fiction, humor, romance, mystery, mathematics, humanities, annual reports, government documents, etc.; a total of about 42,000 different words. Removing all proper names and unusual scientific and medical terms reduced the number to 31,000.

This was then augmented by words from a then current Merriam-Webster list of most used words, by a similar McGraw-Hill list, the WES [Godfrey Dewey's *World English Spelling*] dictionary, and several lists of newer words, bringing the total vocabulary up to almost 45,000. Except for words very recently added to the language, a frequency of 1 was assigned to all entries not included in the original Brown University corpus, on the assumption that words missing from the largest collection were of very low frequency.

Inasmuch as the Brown University frequencies applied only to printed text it was appropriate, for research in spelling reform, to make adjustments for frequencies in other personal and business correspondence tabulated by L. P. Ayres of the Russel Sage Foundation. These frequencies were given a weight of 20 percent; it being felt that a ratio of 20 to 80 was a realistic balance between correspondence and printed matter. The resulting frequencies were then re-proportioned to a total of one million — a convenient measure of reference.

The pronunciation authorities initially consulted in determining the transliterations are cited at various points in the original appendix, and listed fully in the bibliography for the first edition. Personal preference played no part in arriving at the re-spellings. Where pronunciation authorities disagreed and a choice had to be made, it was on the basis of general consensus except in a few cases where, in the interest of visual compatibility, a slightly less preferred pronunciation was chosen.

The original corpus was therefore tailored to serve as a dependable source for research. It represented an endeavor of some twenty thousand hours and was initially held on a computer disk at the Typographic Council for Spelling Reform, programmed for searches of various kinds in both traditional English orthography and the precursor of SoundSpel [Rondthaler's *American Spelling*] used at the time.

The present online dictionary corpus was extensively expanded with R. J. McGehee's personal word list, which he had compiled over a period of several decades. Mark Petersen, the current president of the ALC, introduced Dr. McGehee to the **COCA word frequency list**, and the latter was used to plug any "holes" in the dictionary. The **Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)** word frequency list ranks English

words according to their relative frequency in contemporary American English, covering up to 1.1 billion entries across multiple genres, including spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper, academic, and web texts.

It can be reached here:  english-corpora.org.

The number of different websites that furnish information about the correct pronunciation of English words is way too large to mention here, but McGehee frequently consulted a site that allows one to compare American and British pronunciations, and which can be found at forvo.com [English pronunciation dictionary](http://forvo.com/English-pronunciation-dictionary).

Note that the *preferred spellings* represented in SoundSpel tend to reflect pronunciations that would be considered *conservative* and indicative of “cultivated platform speech spoken clearly and very slowly.” To avoid the unnecessary respelling of words the *dialect bias* of traditional orthography is taken into account, meaning that those dialects of educated speakers that result in spellings closer to the traditional spelling tend to be given greater *weight*, even if that occasionally means that only a minority of American speakers actually use that pronunciation. Also, when representing the spellings of weak, unaccented short vowels that typically have a *schwa* pronunciation, some “common sense” etymological knowledge may be considered when deciding which of the five vowel letters should be used.

Dialect policy for SoundSpel: the philosophy behind SoundSpel is that spelling is supposed to be *reasonably phonetic*, which means that the reader is *not* expected to *blatantly disregard* what is written in a given text in favor of a local dialectal pronunciation. That being said, however, SS does allow writers to represent dialectal pronunciations in *dialogs*. During the initial phase of the spelling reform campaign it is essential to present a *unified front* so as to counter the charge that “simplified spelling” would lead to *orthographic anarchy*, which is what could happen if everyone were encouraged to spell words *exactly* according to how they *sound*. SoundSpel, therefore, does have *nitpicky spelling rules* that must be adhered to when using and promoting the system, which is true of all modern languages.

One way in which SoundSpel avoids dialect issues is by respecting the *dialect bias* of traditional orthography. What this means is that when TO spells certain sounds in certain words *differently*, even when these sounds have been completely *merged* in many dialects of American English, SS sides with those speakers who have TO “on their side,” so to speak. For example, while many speakers merge the /w/ and /wh/ sounds and do not distinguish between the pronunciations of ‘whale’ and ‘wail,’ SS sides with the latter group, if only because the present orthography “backs them up,” and would spell those two words “whael” and “wael” accordingly.

Likewise, when it comes to the “Three Marys,” *Mary*, *merry*, and *marry*, SoundSpel does not merge any of these respective vowel + r combinations, even though many dialects of American English merge at least two of the three, and some all three*.

[*Note that McGehee, Rondthaler, Dewey and all other predecessors consistently make the distinction between /err/ and /arr/ and largely conserve traditional spellings with those respective sounds, as in “merry” and “marry.” On the other hand, everyone *except* Rondthaler respells the “long ae + r” trigraph as “aer,” thereby undoing the *leapfrogging* found in such TO spellings as ‘hare, mare, rare, pare, bare, dare, care, share’ and rendering them as “haer, maer, raer, paer, baer, daer, caer, shaer” respectively. Rondthaler, on the other hand, advised breaking with tradition and using the *air trigraph instead. McGehee was not convinced by the latter’s reasoning and reinstated the use of the “aer” trigraph. Therefore, though SoundSpel does not automatically respell proper nouns, note that the name ‘Mary’ would be respelled “Maery” by most scholars working in the SoundSpel tradition, though Rondthaler would have advocated using *Mairy.]

This policy of *indirectly* siding with dialects whose pronunciations are more aligned with the visual appearance of traditional spellings not only helps to maintain “backward compatibility” between SoundSpel and conventional orthography but effectively sidesteps the continual *bickering over dialectal variations in pronunciation* that so often *plagues* the current spelling reform movement.

Yet another factor that sidesteps the problem of regional pronunciations is the choice to *confront* the “spelling bee mentality” altogether: Let’s say a child comes from a home

environment that completely *merges* the /w/ and the /wh/. Now, what if she cannot tell whether the *marine mammal* is spelled with the initial letters “wh” or “w” and writes “wael” instead of “whael”? Should the teacher *mark her down* for “misspelling” the word “whael”? I would say that in the lower grades the teacher should not bother to comment on it. Now, by the time the girl gets to high school the teacher would quite likely point out that the *preferred* spelling for “Moby Dick” is with a “wh.” Naturally, I do not have a crystal ball and cannot foresee all future classroom interactions following the advent of SoundSpel, but I strongly suspect that most teachers would be relatively lenient in this respect, particularly since even a “poor” speller of SoundSpel who spells entirely *by ear* cannot possibly “misspell” words to the extent that they would be unreadable!

Here is a partial article that should provide an overview of all the categories of words whose spellings *cross* in going from TO to SS:

1. The removal of doubled letters from words in traditional orthography can bring about numerous clashes with other extent words in TO. Perhaps the most notorious example involves the pairs of words ‘former and latter’ versus ‘earlier and later.’ TO ‘latter’ becomes “later” in SS, while TO ‘later’ becomes “laeter”! The context does *not* automatically help here: A sentence fragment such as “this later event...” means something distinctly *different* if read as SoundSpel text rather than as traditional spelling! The sentence “All shoes can be seen now...” means one thing at a “shoo stor” and quite another thing at a “theem park,” or is that always the case!?

Dictionary of TRADITIONAL SPELLING / SOUNDSPEL

(Adapted from the short explanatory passage ahead of the dictionary section of the original work; a complete listing of the current dictionary file should eventually be displayed here. Note that it may not necessarily be possible to implement all of Rondthaler's original suggestions.)

The traditional English spellings in this listing are preceded by an asterisk and paired with the SoundSpel immediately below. The format tends to highlight the points at which our traditional spelling disagrees with pronunciation, and shows the change required to achieve better fit. A brief perusal of the pages soon gives one a feeling for the SoundSpel notation: an 'e' following any vowel indicates that that vowel is pronounced *long*. The major characteristics of SoundSpel are shown at the base of each recto page. Certain spellings seeming to require explanation are cross-referenced to the introduction or appendix. A hyphen follows spellings that are identical in traditional orthography and SoundSpel. Frequency of occurrence in a million words appears with each entry. Edward Rondthaler created a specific typeface expressly for this listing. It stresses clarity, and purposely simulates both typesetting and typewriting. The design of the letter 'q' follows the suggestion advanced on page 298 of the original printed dictionary.

LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Forscor and sever yeers ago our faathers braut forth on this continent a nue naeshon, conseevd in liberty, and dedicaeted to the propozishon that all men ar creaeted eeql.

Now we ar engaejd in a graet sivil wor, testing whether that naeshon, or eny naeshon so conseevd and so dedicaeted, can long enduur. We ar met on a graet batlfeeld of that wor. We have cum to dedicaet a porshon of that feeld as a fienal resting-plaess for thoes who heer gaev thaer lievs that that naeshon miet liv. It is aultogether fiting and proper that we shuud do this.

But in a larjer senss we cannot dedicaet – we cannot consecraet – we cannot halo – this ground. The braev men, living and ded, who strugld heer, hav consecraeted it far beyond our puur power to ad or detrakt. The wurd wil litl noet nor long remember whot we sae heer, but it can never forget whot thae did heer, but it can never forget whot that did heer. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicaeted heer to the unfinisht wurk which thae who faut heer hav thus far so noebly advanst. It is rather for us to be heer dedicaeted to the graet task remaening before us – that from thees onord ded we taek increest devoeshon to that cauz for which thae gaev the last fuul mezher of devoeshon, that we heer hiely rezolv that thees ded shal not have died in vaen, that this naeshon, under God, shal hav a nur burth of freedom, and that that guvernement of th peepl, bi th peepl, for th peepl, shal not perrish from th urth.

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HISTORY OF THE SOFTWARE USED FOR SOUNDSPEL

In the original hardcopy edition of the dictionary dating from 1986, Rondthaler described the software that was being used at the time. He stated:

“In the long range interest of maintaining orderliness and sustained progress for spelling reform, the database and software used for the material in this volume is not being released until it has been upgraded by whatever comments are received in response to this “scholar’s edition.” It will then be made available to individuals and institutions as an aid for promoting literacy.”

One individual who did get in touch with Dr. Rondthaler was a much younger man who had just come back from a stint with the U.S. Peace Corps in the Comoros Islands around the year 1996. R. J. McGehee had majored in Spanish in college and he had studied numerous other languages. During his time in the Comoros Islands he mastered the local Bantu language spoken in the Island of Grand Comore (a dialect similar to Swahili) and became involved in some of the spelling reform and literacy issues connected with that language. Back in the United States he had worked out his own form of simplified spelling, but once he realized that there was already a full-fledged organization in existence that promoted a well-researched spelling reform proposal he dropped the system he was exploring and mastered all aspects of what was called *American Spelling* at the time. Ultimately he made some suggestions for changes and improvements to the system that Rondthaler had developed, and Rondthaler in turn granted Dr. McGehee the authority to take over the project before he passed away at the age of 104.

The original software created in 1986 had been designed for use on an IBM-compatible personal computer with 256K memory, and required a hard disk drive since the base consumed 1.4 meg of disk space. The transliteration program not only converted English text into what was known as “American” at the time, but allowed for the addition of new vocabulary items and permitted searches for frequencies of letter combinations in both systems, as well as other features. It was housed in the computer facilities of the Typographic Council for Spelling Reform (research facility of the ALA [American Language Academy]) and was available to visiting researchers.

Today, there are a variety of different types of software used in the programs connected with the current version of SoundSpel, and these should be detailed in an appendix to be completed at a later date. The *Interactive Translator* found under the Tools tab is the only service available to the public at this time. It enables the user to convert texts of any length from traditional orthography to SoundSpel. The output uses a color coding scheme to indicate whether a given word needed to be respelled, and also whether a word was not changed because it does not appear in the database.

The dictionary file used to power the *Interactive Translator* was significantly expanded a few years ago, and with the use of AI considerably more expansion is foreseen. Ultimately, it should have more than a million glosses. Except for questions dealing with the spellings of particular words, absolutely *no* changes are to be made to the rules of SoundSpel for the foreseeable future, and this includes minor stylistic issues. Future projects will focus on machine translation from other languages directly to SoundSpel and on the production of pedagogical materials. Plans for the release of a generic *SoundSpel* app have not been finalized at this time.

Dr. Godfrey Dewey, th laet mentor of speling reform, is th author of a story that baers repeeting heer: "Glas bloeers ofen refur to a shaep noen as a Prinss Roopert Drop. It is th tieny glas beed that forms at th top of a bloen objekt when it separaets from th craftsman's blo-piep. If this beed is clipt off th hoel glas shatters, signifieing that th liens of stres ar all tied together at that seemingly insignificant point. This", sed *Dr. Dewey*, "ilustraets the daenjer that speling reformers ofen encounter. A smaul speling chaenj that apeers to solv wun foneemik problem mae have qiet advurss and far-reeching efekts on uther parts of th orthografy. Speling reformers eeger to ariev at qik and eezy solooshons ar proen to maek il conseevd chaenjjes that wil fenss them into corners from which thae cannot rescue themselvs. U cannot be shuur that yuur sistem wil wurk or that it wil cuver every foneemik sichuaeshon until U aplie it, with paenztaeking caer and acuerasy, to meny thouzands of wurd. Thaer is no shortcut. U mae luuk for wun, but U woen't fiend it."

The purpose of this appendix is to aid the serious student in evaluating spelling reform in general, and SoundSpel in particular. It is hoped that it will give rise to constructive discussion.

Previous reform systems have laid most of the foundation on which the present work is built. SoundSpel's contribution comes from improved statistical data which, thanks to computer technology, provides a broader and more accurate overall view of the subject than before, and from the items discussed on page 2 of the introduction. Both factors have influenced the contents.

Subjects covered are largely those that have generated disagreement in the past. It is assumed, however, that by now the more fanciful orthographic schemes have fallen by the wayside and, in general, widespread accord prevails on the following points:

1. A reformed spelling should add no new letters to our alphabet.
2. Fit between sound and sight should be achieved with as little departure as possible from our present spelling.
3. Rules and exceptions should be kept to a minimum.
4. The pronunciation standard should strike a balance between "cultivated colloquial" and "platform speech," the latter being defined as a pronunciation sure to be understood by all listeners.
5. Instead of straining to achieve a single international English orthography, the few major differences between British, Australian, and American pronunciations should, for the present, be given different spellings.
6. The final test of a reformed spelling should be its ability to replace pronunciation notations in English language dictionaries (as shown in the introduction).

Dr. Godfrey Dewey, the late mentor of spelling reform, is the author of a story that bears repeating here: "Glass blowers often refer to a shape known as a Prince Rupert Drop. It is the tiny glass bead that forms at the top of a blown object when it separates from the craftsman's blowpipe. If this bead is clipped off the whole glass shatters, signifying that the lines of stress are all tied together at that seemingly insignificant point. This," said Dr. Dewey, "illustrates the danger that spelling reformers often encounter. A small spelling change that appears to solve one phonemic problem may have quite adverse and far-reaching effects on other parts of the orthography. Spelling reformers eager to arrive at quick and easy solutions are prone to make ill-conceived changes that will fence them into corners from which they cannot rescue themselves. You cannot be sure that your system will work or that it will cover every phonemic situation until you apply it, with painstaking care and accuracy, to many thousands of words. There is no shortcut. You may look for one, but you won't find it."

Summary of changes from
Rondthaler's *American to*
SoundSpel

[This list will not go into too much detail, as the items are covered in depth in their individual sections.]

- 1) The letter *s* is no longer changed to *z* if it has a “grammatical” function, even if it has the /z/ sound. This rule applies to *plurals*, *possessives*, and *the marker of the third person verb form*, hence SS “lies, dies, ties” instead of *liez, diez, tiez.
- 2) High frequency grammatical function words ending in *s* retain that spelling even if they have the /z/ sound. Examples are *is*, *as*, *his*, *has*, *hers*, *ours*, *thaer's* [*their's*], *thees* [*these*], *hoos* [*whose*].
- 3) To prevent a word ending in a single *s* (with a true /s/ sound) being mistaken for a word where the *s* has a “grammatical” function, the *s* may be doubled, as in *liess* [*lice*], *diess* [*dice*] *iess* [*ice*], *spiess* [*spice*], *hiss*, *purss* [*purse*].
- 4) A “three-letter rule” has been instituted to determine when a short high-frequency *grammatical function* word (or *interjection*) may drop a word-final long vowel marker, i.e. the “silent e.” *Lexical* words that already consist of three or fewer letters may *not* drop a terminal e. This rule creates visual distinctions between *no* and *noe* [*know*], *lo* and *loe* [*low*], *hi* and *hie* [*high*], *ho* and *hoe*, *so* and *soe* [*sew* or *sow*], *pi* and *pie*, *bi* [*by*] and *bie* [*bye* or *buy*], *to* and *toe*, *do* and *doe*, *be* and *bee*, *we* and *wee*, and so on. Rondthaler's spellings of *I*, *U* [*you*], *mi* [*my*], *me*, *he*, *she*, *go* and *ago* are unchanged.
- 5) Words stressed on the very *last* syllable may *not* drop a terminal e, e.g. *beloe* [*below*], *belie*, *denie* [*deny*], *agree*, *trustee*. Cf. SS *belo* [*bellow*], *trusty*.
- 6) The list of WordSigns, high frequency words in SS that retain their traditional spellings in whole or in part, has not changed significantly. The list includes *I*, *U* [*you*], *do*, *to*, *no*, *so*, *go*, *ago*, *of*, *off*, *all*, *mi* [*my*], *bi* [*by*], *thi* [*thy*], *be*, *me*, *we*, *he*, *she*, *as*, *has*, *is*, *his*, *her*, *hers*, *ours*, *wer* [*were*], *thees* [*these*], *thoes* [*those*], *thaers* [*theirs*], *hoos* [*whose*]. Both ‘does’ and ‘was’ are now spelled *phonetically* as *duz* and *wuz* respectively.
- 7) The ‘air’ trigraph has been replaced with “aer.” Hence *aer*, *haer*, *maer*, *baer*, *staer* for TO *air*, *hair* or *hare*, *mare*, *bear* or *bare*, *stair* or *stare*.

- 8) Where Rondthaler had recommended that the endings ‘ary’ and ‘arily’ in such words as ‘*temporary*’ and ‘*temporarily*’ should be respelled *erry and *errily respectively, resulting in such uncharacteristic spellings as *temporerry and *temporerrily, McGehee has restored the spellings used by Ripman and Dewey, hence “temporaery” and “temporaerily.”
- 9) The use of the “stressed ur” has been restored, so that one can now spell *murderer* and *church* in the conventional manner, while *purvert* is the “noun” and *pervurt* is the “verb.”
- 10) The *only* one-syllable words in SS that are allowed to have an *unstressed er* are *her*, *hers*, *wer* [‘were’], *weren’t* [‘weren’t’], *per*, “er”, and dialectical “fer.”
- 11) The rare ‘uur’ trigraph has been restored in such words as *puur* [poor], *tuurist* [tourist], *shuur* [sure], *machuur* [mature].
- 12) The word-final *oy* has been added, so that one can have *toys*, *toying*, *enjoying*, *enjoyment*, *enjoyably* in addition to *oil*, *boil*, *boiling*, *foild* [‘foiled’], *hoisted*, and so on.
- 13) SoundSpel continues to treat the two letters *c* and *k* as “different forms of the same letter,” but with the difference that TO usage no longer determines when SS employs *c* and *k*; there are now independent rules that specify the distribution of these letters. These rules result in spellings that largely mimic the appearance of TO texts, but a user of SoundSpel need have no previous knowledge of TO.
The rules are essentially that *c* begins a word and *k* ends a word, which means that *c* begins a new syllable and *k* ends a closed syllable, particularly if that syllable is *meaningful*. To maintain backwards compatibility with TO, however, the letter *k* must be used before the vowels *e*, *i*, and *y*.
- 14) Restoration of the *-shon* ending: Rondthaler re-spelled such words as ‘nation,’ ‘fusion,’ and ‘question’ with a word-final *un*, giving such spellings as *naeshun, fuezhun, and qeschun. McGehee restored the spellings to *naeshon*, *fuezhon*, and *geschon*.
- 15) The spellings of the WordSigns *all* and *off* are no longer “persisted” throughout the dictionary corpus! The traditional spellings of *all* and *off* are **only** to be employed in those compound words where “all” and “off” have the *exact same* meaning as they have when they are by themselves. Such spellings as *allter [‘alter] and *offend are truly “offensive” to any student of simplified spelling!!!

The correct SS spellings of the former are *alter* and *ofend* respectively, while *oever-alls* and *stand-off* are perfectly permissible.

- 16) The words ‘finger’ and ‘singer’ do *not* rhyme, and Rondthaler’s dictionary got that distinction correct in every case by using such spellings as *fingger*, *longger*, *angger*, *hungger*, *janggl*, *junggl*, *bunggl*, and so on. The only complaint that might be lodged here is that no explicit mention of this difference in pronunciation is made in the work itself, even though it would further stress the importance of a logical spelling reform. The updated version of the dictionary specifically brings up this phonetic issue.

Minor issues

- 17) Rondthaler had called for the use of a *double-nn* or a *double-ll* in anticipation of problems with *syllabification* where a hyphen would be inadvisable, and his examples were **enngulf* [‘engulf’], *enngaej* [‘engage’], *enngraev* [‘engrave’], *millyon* [‘million’], *compannyon* [‘companion’]. Rondthaler’s recommendation was without precedent and the phonetic issues are barely noticeable, so McGehee rescinded them and reestablished the earlier spellings “*engulf*, *engaej*, *engraev*, *milyon*, *companyon*.”
- 18) McGehee exceptionally employs an apostrophe to separate syllables in those cases where a hyphen would look out of place and no other solution seems practical. Note that Dewey occasionally employed a period for the same purpose. Examples: *saeli’ent* [‘salient’], *leeni’ent* [‘lenient’], *fachu’us* [‘fatuous’], *arju’us* [‘arduous’].
- 19) Though SoundSpel makes a point of not using diacritics as a means of effectively creating “new letters,” this leaves open the question of the occasional use of diacritics as a means of disambiguating words with unusual stress patterns, particularly in *pedagogical texts* and in *pronouncing dictionaries*. While TO has many examples of this such as ‘*record*, *rebel*, *pervert*, *invalid*, *object*,’ SS brings some additional cases of its own, such as ‘*moral*’ vs. ‘*morale*,’ which SS must spell as “*moral*” in both cases.
- McGehee brings up the possibility of using an acute accent such as is used in Spanish, e.g. “*morál*,” while Rondthaler suggests the use of the next smaller font size to indicate schwa syllables in pronouncing dictionaries. The question is left open at this time.

- 20) While McGehee almost always follows Rondthaler's choice for which letter to use when representing the schwa sound, he does away with the practice of replacing the letter a with e in a final unstressed syllable. Thus, we have "delicat" ['delicate'] in place of *deliket, "grajuat" ['graduate'] in place of *grajooet, "dooplicat" ['duplicate'] in place of *doopliket.
- 21) An s is inserted after the letter x to indicate that it is *not* voiced after a vowel (e.g. *exist* vs. *exsit* ['exit'], *exotic* ['exotic'] vs. *exsodus* ['exodus']), but no extra s is inserted when a word ending in x is inflected, hence *taxes*, *taxing*, *taxabl* ['taxable'] instead of **taxses*, **taxsing*, **taxsabl*!
- 22) For those individuals who do not merge the pronunciations of TO 'horse' and 'hoarse', SS could in theory institute the use of a separate "oer" trigraph to make this distinction, thus giving us "horss" vs. "hoerss," but as of this date no users of the dictionary have requested it. Nevertheless, "foer" is often used as an *ad hoc* spelling for 'four' to separate it from "for."
- 23) The trigraph "aur" is only used in SoundSpel to distinguish between the word *aural* as opposed to *oral*, and to designate the astrological name 'Taurus' (as opposed to a donut-shaped "torus")! Otherwise, the aur is not supported in other positions, hence *restoraant* ['restaurant'] and *dienosor* ['dinosaur'].
- 24) Normally, words in TO such as 'hurry, furry, and scurry' are spelled with only a single r in SS as "hury, fury, and scury," [TO 'fury' is respelled "fuery"], but for those individuals who do not rhyme 'hurry' and 'furry' but pronounce the former more along the lines of "huh-ry," SS can in principle use the "urr" digraph, which will cause the spellings to be "hurry" and "fury" respectively.
- 25) When it comes to the spellings of the schwi or "half-ee" in Rondthaler's dictionary, McGehee takes the same approach, but with some slight differences. The original rules were:
 e in the first syllable; (printed é when used in dictionary pronunciations as on p. 22-23 [of the red dictionary])
 i when followed by a schwa in the combinations ia io iu,
 y terminally; or medially when not followed by schwa a, o, u.
 McGehee is more sparing with the use of y in medial positions, and only uses them when a word ending in terminal y is inflected (e.g. *prity*, *prityer*, *prityest*), when a compound noun contains a word originally ending in y (as in *handyman*), or when the medial y has some "hint" of a consonantal pronunciation (as in *canyon* or *conveenyent* ['convenient']). Occasionally he uses an apostrophe to separate syllables (e.g. *audi'enss* ['audience']). Compare Rondthaler's **raedyo*,

**negoeshyaet, *cueryosity with McGehee's "raedio ['radio'], negoeshiaet ['negotiate'], cueriosity ['curiosity']."*

- 26) Rondthaler had an odd rule that a word with a short 'o' needed to be followed by a doubled-ff or doubled-ss (as in *offer or *cross) in order to indicate that the short 'o' did *not* have the sound of *pot*, but was pronounced 'aw' (like 'o' in 'for, nor, mor' ['more']). This quaint rule led to implausible spellings such as *sofft and *losst!

McGehee was unable to confirm this pronunciation distinction in his own dialect and found no precedent in the writings of Ripman and Dewey, so he had all such spellings expunged from the dictionary corpus.

- 27) A few odd spellings in the original work such as *daug and *daugmatic were restored to more familiar spellings such as *dog* and *dogmatik* ['dogmatic'], as well as a small number of obvious typos and other errors which evidently reflected Rondthaler's inaccurate pronunciation of those words.