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## BEGINNER'S GUIDE to CUT SPELLING

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### ● CUT LETTERS AS FOLLOWS:

#### Rule 1: Cut letters irrelevant to the sound:

A in *head*>*hed*, B in *doubt*>*dout*, C in *except*>*exept*,  
D in *adjust*>*ajust*, E in *are*>*ar*, GH in *caught*>*caut*,  
H in *when*>*wen*, I in *friend*>*frend*, K in *knife*>*nife*, O-L in  
*would*>*wud*, N in *condemn*>*condem*, O in *people*>*peple*,  
P in *receipt*>*receit*, S in *island*>*iland*, T in *fetch*>*fech*,  
U in *build*>*bild*, W in *write*>*rite*, Y in *key*>*ke*,  
and in many other spelling patterns.

#### Rule 2a: Cut unstressed vowels before L,M,N,R

A as in *pedal*>*pedl*, and likewise *madm*, *womn*, *vicr*.  
E as in *camel*>*caml*, and likewise *system*, *gardn*, *singr*.  
I as in *lentil*>*lentl*, and likewise *victm*, *raisn*, *Cheshr*.  
O as in *pistol*>*pistl*, and likewise *fathm*, *reasn*, *sailr*.  
U as in *consul*>*consl*, and likewise *albm*, *murmur*.  
AI as in *mountain*>*mountn*.  
OU as in *glamour*>*glamr*.

#### Rule 2b: Cut vowels in regular endings

as -ED>-D in *washed*>*washd*.  
-ES>-S in *washes*>*washs*.  
-ING>-NG in *washing*>*washng*.  
-ABLE>-BL in *washable*>*washbl*.

#### Rule 3: Write most double consonants single

as in *ebb*>*eb*, *lock*>*lok*, *well*>*wel*, *bottle*>*botl*,  
*hopped*>*hopd*, *hopping*>*hopng*, *accommodate*>*acomodate*.

### ● SUBSTITUTE LETTERS AS FOLLOWS:

- 1 F for GH & PH: *rough*>*ruf*, *photograph*>*fotograf*
- 2 J for soft G: *ginger*>*jinjr*, *judge*>*juj*
- 3 Y for IG: *sigh*>*sy*, *sight*>*syt*, *sign*>*syn*

### ● FEWER CAPITALS & APOSTROPHES

#### Write only proper names with capitals:

*France* **but** *french*, *Paris* **but** *parisian*,  
*Augustus* **but** *august*, *Satrn* **but** *satrday*.

#### Write apostrophes only to link words:

*she'd*, *it's*, *we'l*, *let's*,

#### not to show omission or possession:

*oclok*, *hadnt*, *Freds house*, *our neibrs houses*.

## THE CUT SPELLING HANDBOOK

*a Handbook to the simplification  
of written English  
by omission of redundant letters*

prepared by Christopher Upward

42nd (revised and expanded) edition, 1998,  
Birmingham, UK: Simplified Spelling Society, 340+viii pp,  
ISBN 0 9506391 3 3

Price £10/US\$20 + airmail outside Europe £3/US\$6.

## THE BTRSPL / CUTSPL CONVERTER

For information on the automatic Cut Spelling  
converter program, see last paragraph overleaf.  
For more details, and to download the program  
free of charge:

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Details of the Society may be obtained from:

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## Simplified Spelling Society

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# introducing cut spelling

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written English  
simplified by  
cutting  
redundant letters

- handbook  
with exercises & dictionary
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Contact:

## The English spelling problem

English spelling is notoriously difficult. It is an antiquated, unpredictable system not designed for universal literacy. We all suffer from its irregularity: it takes much longer to learn than more regular systems; it inhibits free expression; it causes mispronunciation; it is handled erratically by most people, with even skilled writers prone to uncertainty and error; and it depresses educational standards (millions are functionally illiterate). Many languages with more regular spellings have modernized their writing in the past century, and several English-speaking countries modernized their currency and/or weights & measures in the 1970s. Our spelling can and should now be modernized too.

## Old and new to be recognizably similar

An ideal spelling system matches letters to speech-sounds. The sounds of words then tell us how to spell them, and the spelling tells us how they sound. English is so far from that ideal that we would need a totally new spelling system to make a perfect match. Even if such a drastic change were agreed, it would so disrupt the continuity of literacy, and the necessary worldwide re-education would be so costly, that it would be impracticable. As other languages show, new spellings must be close enough to the old for people educated in the one to read the other easily.

## Redundant letters the key

Isolated reforms (eg, abolishing GH) may therefore seem the only feasible approach, but their effect on the all-pervading irregularity of English spelling would be marginal. So does that mean it is impossible to improve the spelling of English significantly, without excessive disruption? An answer came in the 1970s, when Australian psychologist Valerie Yule noted the many redundant letters in English. In the next decade those letters were classified, and the effect of removing them studied. The result was the Cut Spelling (CS) system which regularizes swathes of inconsistencies in written English that confuse learners, readers and writers everywhere, regardless of accent. In 1992 the Simplified Spelling Society published a comprehensive Handbook to CS (2nd edition 1996). Interested readers around the world have since come to know CS, and a number of writers have become proficient in using it. Its principles are widely acknowledged as offering a promising new approach to the English spelling problem that is flexible enough to be adapted to public demand.

## Effect of CS on readers

Th foloing paragraphs sho CS in action. We first notice it is not hard to read, even without noing its rules, and with practis we read it as esily as traditionl spelng. Most words ar unchanged

(over 3/4 in th previus sentnce), and we hav th impresson not of a totaly new riting systm, but of norml script with letrs misng here and ther. Th basic shape of most words, by wich we recognize them, is not fundmently altrd, and nearly al those that ar mor substantialy chanjed ar quickly decoded; very few ar truly puzlng. This means that, if al printd matr sudnly apeard in CS tomoro, peples readng ability wud not be seriously afectd. Foren lernrs in particulr ar helpd by th clearr indication of pronunciation, as wen pairs like *lo/cow*, *danjer/angr*, *undrmine/determn* cese to look like ryms. With groing familiarity, users apreciate CS as a streamlined but mor acurat represntation of spoken english. Its novlty lies in th disapearnce of much of th arbitrary clutr that makes ritn english so confusing and causes most of th mistakes peple now make.

## Lernng CS

How CS is lerned depends on th lernr. Those first aquirng litracy skills can lern by norml fonic methods, wich ar mor efectiv in CS thanks to its improved regularity (eg, *hav*, *wer*, *litl*, *nyt*, *scool*, *frend*). Litrat lernrs, by contrast, mastr CS by practising deletion of redundnt leters from traditionl spelng. They may first try riting CS by foloing th Beginrs Gide overleaf, wich outlines th 3 cutng rules and 3 substi-tution rules, or they may teach themselvs systmatically thru th excrcises in th Handbook. It soon becoms aparent that CS not only removes many of th old perversitis like th unhis-toricl GH in *hauty*, but it also smooths away countless irritating variations like th unpredictbl vowl leters befor final R in *burglr*, *teachr*, *doctr*, *glamr*, *murm*, *injr*, *martr*, etc. Th difrneces between british and american spelng evaprate. For lernrs from a numbr of othr languajs CS has th furthr attraction of removing discrepncis between english and ther mothr tong (eg, singl consnnts in CS *acomodation* as in spanish *acomodación*). Once mastrd, CS is ritn mor fluently and acuratly than traditionl spelng, as numerabl uncertntis and traps that previously causd hesitation and mispelng hav been eliminated (eg, *receive/relieve* becom *receve/releve*). From 1997 it has also been posbl to produce text in CS without lernng th rules at al (se last paragraf ⊃ ).

## Econmy of efrt, time, space, mony

CS not only asists readng and riting skills, but also speeds up th production of text. Th loss of redundnt leters shortns riting by around 10%, and so saves time and efrt for evryone engaged in creating ritn text, wethr schoolchildren, novlists, printrs, jurnlists, secretris, advrtisers, grafic desynrs, editrs, or anyone else. Th gretr regularity of CS means less time spent lernng to read and rite, and less need for chekng and corectng. In education th time saved can be spent on mor useful lernng, wile in th workplace it increses productivity. Th reduced space

ocupyd by CS has typograf-icl advantajs: public syns and notices can be smalr, or ritn larjr; mor words can be fitd on video or computer screens; fewr abreviations ar necesry; and fewr words hav to be hyfnated at line-ends. Ther ar also material econmis: with 10% space-saving, books and newspapers use less paper (or else th same pajes can carry mor text), and less storaj and transport ar required. Not least, th environmnt benefits from loer consumption of raw materials and enrj, and from reduced waste. Al these gains also save mony.

## CS a flexibl concept

Som peple fear spelng reform wud mean spelng caos (as if english spelng wer not alrede caotic). Th flexibility of th CS concept minmizes that danjer. CS is not a rijid systm, but a synpost pointng to th omission of redundnt leters as th most practicl and advntajus way of modrnizing english spelng. Th CS Handbook ofrs a coherent systm, as seen here, but difrnt users (ranjing from individual riters and orgnizations to entire cuntris) cud adopt CS to varying degrees. Probbly only a few of todays litrat adlts wud chanje ther riting, tho in ther readng they wud becom acustmd to many simplr forms. Of those that do chanje, som may rite *committee* (many alrede do, tho it now counts as rong), wile othrs prefer ful CS *comitee*: th two forms can co-exist, just as *judgement/judgment* and othr alternativ ‘cut’ spelngs co-exist today. In th long run th lojic and econmy of ful CS cud be expectd to prevail. Those responsbl for deciding standrd spelngs in education, publishng, dictionris, etc, can decide th balance between cutng and keepng redundnt leters that best suits ther needs. Worldwide co-ordnation wud be desirebl, but a comn urj for simplification by shedng redundnt leters wud work against any fragmntation of ritn english as a medium of world communication.

## Autmatic spelng converttr

Ful mastery of CS may take mor time, concentration and practis than many peple can giv to th task, yet they may stil wish to produce text in CS (eg, to print a weekly CS colum in newspapers). They can now do so, thanks to enjneer Alan Mole (Colorado, USA), aidd by Bernard Sypniewski (New Jersey, USA) and John Bryant (Cambridge, UK), ho hav created th BTRSPL program. In conjunction with th 40,000-word CUTSPL dictionry, this rapidly (at about 100 pajes per minut) converts text from traditionl orthografy to CS. Availbl fre of charj from th Intrnet, BTRSPL/CUTSPL curently suits PCs (incl. WINDOWS), but not yet th Macintosh. Th program is stil in its infncy, and furthr developmnts ar pland, for instnce to enable users to adapt th dictionry to ther own needs, adng new words or altrng those alrede listd, and so bild up a persnlized CS riting tool.

(For Beginrs Gide to CS and CS Handbook, se overleaf: ⊃ )

# introducing cut spelling

## written English simplified by cutting redundant letters

Published by Simplified Spelling Society Version VI April 1998.

- handbook with exercises & dictionary
- converter program free on Internet

### Download

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## Effect of CS on readers

The following paragraphs show CS in action. We first notice it is not hard to read, even without knowing its rules, and with practice we read it as easily as traditional spelling. Most words are unchanged (over 3/4 in the previous sentence), and we have the impression not of a totally new writing system, but of normal script with letters missing here and there. The basic shape of most words, by which we recognize them, is not fundamentally altered, and nearly all those that are more substantially changed are quickly decoded; very few are truly puzzling. This means that, if all printed matter suddenly appeared in CS tomorrow, people's reading ability would not be seriously affected. Foreign learners in particular are helped by the clear indication of pronunciation, as word pairs like *lo/cow*, *danger/anger*, *undermine/determine* cease to look like rymes. With growing familiarity, users appreciate CS as a streamlined but more accurate representation of spoken English. Its novelty lies in the disappearance of much of the arbitrary clutter that makes written English so confusing and causes most of the mistakes people now make.

## Learning CS

How CS is learned depends on the learner. Those first acquiring literacy skills can learn by normal phonetic methods, which are more effective in CS thanks to its improved regularity (eg, *hav*, *wer*, *litl*, *nyt*, *scool*, *frend*). Literate learners, by contrast, master CS by practicing deletion of redundant letters from traditional spelling. They may first try writing CS by following the Beginner's Guide overleaf, which outlines the 3 cutting rules and 3 substitution rules, or they may teach themselves systematically through the exercises in the Handbook. It soon becomes apparent that CS not only removes many of the old peculiarities like the unhistorical GH in *hauty*, but it also smooths away countless irritating variations like the unpredictable vowel letters before final R in *burglr*, *teachr*, *doctr*, *glamr*, *murm*, *injr*, *martr*, etc. The differences between British and American spelling evaporate. For learners from a number of other languages CS has the further attraction of removing discrepancies between English and their mother tongue (eg, single consonants in CS *acomodation* as in Spanish *acomodación*). Once mastered, CS is written more fluently and accurately than traditional spelling, as innumerable uncertainties and traps that previously caused hesitation and misspelling have been eliminated (eg, *receiue/relieve* become *receve/releve*). From 1997 it has also been possible to produce text in CS without learning the rules at all (see last paragraph).

## Economy of effort, time, space, money

CS not only assists reading and writing skills, but also speeds up the production of text. The loss of redundant letters shortens writing by around 10%, and so saves time and effort for everyone engaged in creating written text, whether schoolchildren, novelists, printers, journalists, secretaries, advertisers, graphic designers, editors, or anyone else. The greater regularity of CS means less time spent learning to read and write, and less need for checking and correcting. In education the time saved can be spent on more useful learning, while in the workplace it increases productivity. The reduced space occupied by CS has typographical advantages: public signs and notices can be smaller, or written larger; more words can be fitted on video or computer screens; fewer abbreviations are necessary; and fewer words have to be hyphenated at line-ends. There are also material economies: with 10% space-saving, books and newspapers use less paper (or else the same pages can carry more text), and less storage and transport are required. Not least, the environment benefits from lower consumption of raw materials and energy, and from reduced waste. All these gains also save money.

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AI as in *mountain*>*moun*.  
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### **Rule 2b: Cut vowels in regular endings**

as -ED>-D in *washed*>*washd*.  
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as in *ebb*>*eb*, *lock*>*lok*, *well*>*wel*, *bottle*>*botl*, *hopped*>*hopd*, *hopping*>*hopng*,  
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