

PROPOSED SPELLING SCHEME: NOTES

1 General

These notes may help with filling the Proposed Spelling Scheme form.

Do not send these notes to Congress.

Some example entries are given in the form, highlighted in yellow. These do not form any part of your scheme.

Read notes 2–6 for general information that applies to the whole form.

2 Form handling

The form you have downloaded is *fillable*, which means you can enter data into the fields. You should save a fillable backup copy of the form as you go. This means you don't have to complete the form in a single session, and if you save a fillable copy of what you send to Congress, you will be able to revise it and resubmit if necessary.

However, the version you send to Congress should be *read-only*, not fillable, to protect it from accidental modification.

Congress will assign your proposal a unique scheme ID, watermark your proposal with your participant ID and the scheme ID, and email this to you as a receipt.

You may propose more than one spelling scheme.

All this means you may have several versions of this form, which can easily become confusing. So, without wishing to teach you how to suck eggs, we suggest you name your files as follows:

- **IESC PSS (fillable)(empty).pdf**
— this is the copy of the form downloaded from the IESC web site. As you can easily obtain another copy at any time, you may choose not to save this.
- **IESC PSS (fillable)(my scheme A).pdf**
— this is the copy of the form you are in the process of completing, or have completed, for your spelling scheme called **my scheme A**.
- **IESC PSS (readonly)(my scheme A).pdf**
— this is the copy of the form you are in the process of sending, or have sent, to Congress, for your spelling scheme called **my scheme A**.
- **IESC PSS (watermark)(my scheme A).pdf**
— this is the copy of the form watermarked with your PID and SID, returned to you as a receipt, for your spelling scheme called **my scheme A**.

- **IESC PSS (fillable)(my scheme A)(2).pdf**
— this is revision 2 of **IESC PSS (fillable)(my scheme A).pdf**. You can add revision numbers to any of the above file names as required.

You will need suitable software to process the form.

- On a modern Macintosh system, the Preview application enables you to enter data in a fillable form.
 - **Save** or **Save as...** saves a fillable version.
 - **Export as PDF...** saves a read-only version.
- On a modern Windows system, ???
- You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader DC free of charge from

<https://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/>

- **Save** or **Save as...** saves a fillable version.
- To save a read-only version, you have to digitally sign it:
 - Select the **Digitally Sign** tool (it's in **Certificates**, and not to be confused with **Fill & Sign**).
 - Acrobat Reader asks where to put the signature. There is a space at the foot of page 1. Note that the Congress does not use or require digital signatures, so you can just accept all the default settings, except for ...
 - ... check the **Lock document after signing** box.

3 Glossary

accent (1)	A diacritic (qv).
accent (2)	A distinctive way of pronouncing a language, especially one associated with a particular country, area, or social class. Contrast with dialect.
diacritic	A sign used to change the sound of a letter. Not common in English but used in other languages.
dialect	A particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group. Contrast with accent (2).
digraph	A combination of two letters representing one phoneme, eg <de <u>er</u> >, <fe <u>rn</u> >.
diphthong	A combination of two vowels within the same syllable, representing one phoneme eg <co <u>in</u> >, <me <u>et</u> >.
GenAm	A pronunciation accent claimed to be the most prevalent in the USA.
grapheme	A letter or combination of letters used to denote a phoneme, eg <a>, , <sh>.
homophone	Two words pronounced the same but with different meanings. Often spelled differently, eg "nun" and "none".

IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet. A system for representing phonemes and phones and other language features.
non-standard letter	A letter not found in the current 26 letter alphabet of English language.
phoneme	A distinguishable class of sounds in a word (eg “ban” has three phonemes, /b/, /a/, and /n/).
rhotic	Refers to pronouncing the /r/ in words such as “hard”, “heather”, “shore”. Different dialects are rhotic or non-rhotic.
RP	Received Pronunciation — a British accent, typically associated with BBC announcers.
SAMPA	Speech Assessment Methods Phonetic Alphabet. A representation of IPA using only 7-bit ASCII symbols, which are easier to type on a conventional keyboard.
schwa	The indeterminate sound found in many non-stressed syllables (<appeal>, <pencil>, or the phoneme representing it. Some spelling schemes use a single grapheme for this sound, some use a variety of graphemes; others retain the graphemes used in TS.
signword	A commonly used word which is not spelled according to the rules of the spelling scheme in question. Some schemes retain signwords in TS to avoid unnecessary change.
stress	In words of more than one syllable the emphasis that is given to some of the syllables, eg “apple,” “de <u>fer</u> ,” “ <u>com</u> forter.”
TS	Traditional Spelling, mostly as set down by Samuel Johnson or Noah Webster.

4 Sampa

This form uses Sampa instead of IPA, as Sampa is easier than IPA to type on a conventional keyboard. A table showing the correspondence between Sampa and IPA for English is available here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech_Assessment_Methods_Phonetic_Alphabet_chart_for_English

5 Notation

Use brackets to set off inline symbols as follows:

- /_/ Slashes enclose one or more phonemes. Example: /a/, /ei/.
- [] Square brackets enclose one or more phones. Example: [O:], ju:].
- <_> Angle brackets enclose one or more graphemes. Example: <face>.
- “_” Quotation marks emphasize Traditional Spelling. Example: “cough.”

Note: when using quotation marks for TS, you may enclose punctuation as well.

Use underline to mark parts within a word. For example:

- In TS, /ei/ may be represented in many ways, such as <rain>, <face>, <hay>.

Use underscore to represent anonymous variables within a word. For example:

- An adverb in TS usually ends with <_ly>.

The magic E in TS is a split digraph: /feis/ is represented as <face>.

6 Form sections

The form has sections A – I. Which sections you need to complete depends on the details of your proposed scheme. As you work through the form, earlier entries affect which parts you need to fill in. This may motivate you to go back and change the earlier entries.

7 Section A: Graphemes

Section A must be completed for all schemes.

Use section A to show which graphemes your scheme uses to represent each of the principal phonemes of spoken English. Table A1 deals with vowels and diphthongs. Table A2 deals with consonants. There are empty rows at the foot of each table, which you may use to add any phonemes you think should be included.

The column headed **//#** numbers the phonemes for reference.

The column headed **/_/_** shows one or more phonemes. Where alternative pronunciations are shown, the one to the right is usually the one used in dialects where rhotic pronunciation is the norm (eg GenAm, Scottish). Phonemes /Q/, /A:/ and /@U/, /oU/ represent the pronunciations in RP and GenAm respectively.

The column headed **TS** shows a typical word (in TS) where the phoneme occurs, with the relevant letters underlined.

Use as many of the eight grapheme columns headed **<>1**, **<>2**, etc as necessary to show the grapheme(s) your scheme uses to represent the phoneme in that row. Use lower case only, unless case is significant in your scheme.

If eight grapheme columns are not sufficient, check the box in the column headed **+....**

Row 0 in Table A1 is an example associating the phoneme /ei/ with three graphemes.

After completing section A, go to section B.

8 Section B: Rules

Whether you need to complete section B depends on your scheme. One of the following paragraphs should apply:

1. If section A associates each phoneme with just one grapheme, and each grapheme with just one phoneme, then there is no choice about how to spell or read a word. Table A has graphemes in column <1 only, and they are all different. The scheme has no signwords. **If this fits your scheme, do not complete section B. Go to section C.**
2. If section A associates even one phoneme with more than one grapheme, or even one grapheme with more than one phoneme, then there is some choice about how to spell or read some words. Most likely your scheme has some rules to determine which graphemes or phonemes to use in most or all cases. Your scheme may or may not also have signwords. **If this fits your scheme, complete section B.**
3. It is possible, but not considered likely, that a scheme might consist of nothing but signwords, with no rules at all. **If this fits your scheme, do not complete section B. Go to section C.**

If none, or more than one, of the above paragraphs applies, contact the Society.

8.1 Rules

Rules, for the purposes of this proposal, are statements that specify which graphemes or phonemes to use when there is a choice. Rules may be conditional, but the conditions may only be expressed in terms of the context of surrounding graphemes or phonemes. Specifically, conditions may not be expressed in terms of signwords.

The following explanation deals with a phoneme having more than one grapheme; the converse — a grapheme having more than one phoneme — is essentially the same.

For example, consider row 0 in table A1: phoneme /ei/ is represented by one of the three graphemes <a_e>, <ay> and <eigh>. Here are two possible rules to say when to use each grapheme (the rules don't actually represent a real scheme):

1. If the word ends /eit/ use <eigh>. Else, if the phoneme /ei/ is at the end of a word, use <ay>. In all other cases use <a_e>.
2. If the word ends /eit/ use <eigh>. In all other cases use <ay> except for <date>, <hate>, and <face>.

Both rules are conditional, but rule #2 is not acceptable, because the conditions are couched in terms of signwords.

The way to express rule #2 correctly is to give the general rule in table B, and the exceptions in table C. We could write rule #2 as:

3. If the word ends /eit/ use <eigh>. In all other cases use <ay>.

The exceptions, <date>, <hate>, and <face> no longer appear in the rule and are instead put in table C.

8.2 Table B1: One phoneme represented by many graphemes

Use table B1 to state how a phoneme from table A is represented when it has a choice of graphemes, ie how to spell a given word. Only make entries in table B for phonemes in table A that have more than one possible grapheme.

The columns headed *//#* and */_/* are copied from table A.

The columns headed *<>#* and *<_>* correspond to the grapheme columns in table A.

The column headed **Code** contains, optionally, a pattern in terms of phonemes (or graphemes in table B2) describing the condition under which to select the grapheme under *<_>* to represent the phoneme under */_/*. **Code** is not essential but you may find it helpful.

The column headed **Explanation** contains a verbal explanation of the condition.

The yellow rows in table B1 are sample data which matches the yellow row in table A, and rule #1 above.

In this example, it is possible to express the conditions very succinctly as codes. It would be somewhat improved if the three graphemes were in the order <eigh>, <ay>, <a_e> because that corresponds to the written rule, which avoids a possible confusion between /-ei-/ and /-eit/. An explanation that begins "In all other cases ..." is a bit puzzling. It will help your scheme to be understandable if you take care to avoid this sort of thing.

8.3 Table B2: One grapheme represented by many phonemes

Table B2 is essentially the same as table B1, but it deals with reading, ie choosing a phoneme given a grapheme.

9 Section C: Signwords

Use section C to list signwords, ie exceptions to the rules given in tables A and B.

You may choose to keep signwords with their TS spelling, or change their spelling to a more regular form, or a mix of the two.

After completing section C, go to section D.

9.1 Table C1: Proper nouns, common words

Often it is left to the owners of proper nouns to decide whether to adopt a new spelling scheme. Indicate whether:

- **None:** Your scheme would not change any proper nouns.
- **All:** Your scheme would change all proper nouns that did not conform.
- **Owners:** Your scheme would leave the decision to the owners.

You are required to list signwords in table C2. If the table is too small, estimate the percentage of common words which your scheme will treat as signwords. Use the list of 1000 common words at

https://simple.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Most_frequent_1000_words_in_English

9.2 Table C2: Retained or changed

Use table C2 to list a selection of up to 75 signwords and how your scheme treats them. Enter each signword in a TS column. If your scheme does not change the TS spelling, put = in the adjacent Proposed field; otherwise put the proposed spelling.

9.3 Table C3: Other changes

Use table C3 to list any other changes to signwords.

10 Section D: Stress

Use section D to describe any special indications to mark stress in words.

The default stress lies on the penultimate syllable as in “nation,” “presumption,” “deferment.”

Examples of exceptions: “defer,” “misplace,” “prorogue,” “necessary,” “multitude.”

After completing section D, go to section E.

11 Section E: Homophones

12 Section F: Accents

13 Section G: Implementation

14 Section H: Transcriptions

15 Section I: Additional

TO DO

Write 1000 most common words in table C2?

F2: this is not part of a scheme.

DRAFT