ENGLISH • SPELLING • SOCIETY

Personal View

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The Mentur Spelling System

The self-expression medium for Society members.

The views expressed here are the author's and not shared by the Society, or a majority of its members

The English Spelling Society

The object of the Society is to raise awareness of the problems caused by the irregularity of English spelling; and to promote remedies to improve literacy, including spelling reform.

The Author

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The Mentur Spelling System.

Mentur has borrowed from several spelling systems to come up with a blend that hopefully will appeal to the reading public. Mentur is mainly supported by the alphabetic principle to make it easy to read and spell, but there are some features that stray from the alphabetic principle, such as; a list of "sight words", homophones, and some vowel combinations, that are still easy to decode.

Mentur only uses the conventional letters.

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1 - Introduction.

Mentur is a spelling system for English that makes learning to read and spell much easier than the traditional system.

Mentur holds closely to the alphabetic principle but does take a side trip now and then for what seems practical reasons. Rules supplement the alphabetic principle to clarify most instances where a symbol is not alphabetic without a rule.

No new letters are used but v, w and y, are spelled for both vowel and consonant; sun/svn, wood/wwd, yes, penny/peny. There are rules that explain this but just knowing v is either /v/ or /V/ is enough to help you read or spell the word.

V used to be used interchangeably with u in English text, depending on position in the word.

W is spelled for both vowel and consonant in Welsh.

Y is commonly spelled for both vowel and consonant in English text.

Mentur words with these letters are easily decoded.

Present readers can quickly become fluent in reading Mentur. New readers will need help getting started, as with any spelling system.

The SAMPA pronunciation symbols used here are American SAMPA. TS = traditional spelling.

2 - Vowels.

SAMPA --- } E I A V U @ MENTUR - a e i o v w u*

TS ----- bat bed bit spot cup book about MENTUR - bat bed bit spot kvp bwk ubout

*Schwa.

2.1 - Schwa and u.

The pronunciation of schwa is as the; a in alone/uloen, e in silent/sielunt, i in cabin/kabun, o in ribbon/ribun, u in circus/svrkus, ou in famous/faemus, ai in mountain/mountun, etc.

U is also spelled for semi-stressed /V/; hvmdrum /'hVm ,dr@m/. U will be spelled for /V/ when preceded or followed by /v/. A consonant will be doubled to mark the u as /V/; version/vurrzhun, govern/guvvurn. U is also spelled for /V/ in single syllable words when vv would occur; shove/shuv, of/uv, verse/vurs—the consonant is not doubled.

SAMPA --- e i* ju 0 OI aU al 0 u MENTUR – ae ie oe ue/yoo** ou ee/y 00 au oi

TS ------ lake seed/penny pie toe cube/youth moon cause coin house MENTUR – laek seed/peny pie toe kueb/yooth moon kauz koin hous

*Unstressed and semi-stressed /i/ are spelled y; penny/peny, teepee/teepy.

**Ue = yoo. 'Yoo' is only spelled in the few words where TS spells it; you, youth, you're, etc.

2.2 - R-colored vowels.

/Ar/ -- ar -- as in bark
/{r/ -- arr - as in marry
/Or/ -- or -- as in fork
/3` / -- vr -- as in burn/bvrn
/@` / - ur -- as in letter/letur

2.3 - Vowel combinations.

Ae, ee, ie, oe and ue, will drop the e when they are the first element of the vowel combination; kaos, diugram. This will cause some conflict with some other vowels; poetik/toe, reentur/feet, pout /'po @t/ or /paUt/, houevur. –oue is always /aU E/. The words are still easy to decode.

Word end vowels will not be compressed; plaeing, plaer, bitrael.

E will be spelled for both stressed and unstressed /i/ when in the first element; reuliez, reakt.

2.4 - Syllabic Consonants.

Only I, n and r, are syllabic consonants in the Mentur spelling accent.

Syllabic I and r are compressed following vowels; feel, oil, loil, bitrael, plaer, flier. Exception; they are not compressed following word end vowel y; beryul, karryur.

Syllabic consonants are uncompressed following consonants; wvruld, bvtun, hidun, medul, metul.

2.5 - <u>Stress.</u>

Identification of primary stress is aided by the qualities of several symbols; ee, v, vr, ur, -ing, y, u, u followed by a doubled consonant.

In single syllable words, the spelling will regularly be as if the word was stressed.

A preliminary check of text in a short story, indicates about 90% of primary stress is identified, without extra stress marking.

3 - Sight words.

Words that are non-alphabetic—mostly to give more of a TS appearance, but also to avoid tripping over a present TS word. A, ass, off, hiss, he, me, ye, she, go, ok, dhv.

Non-alphabetic homophones could be considered sight words but they will be dealt with elsewhere.

4 - Homophones.

Words pronounced the same but spelled differently.

Mentur uses some homophones because it seems like a practical thing to do. Compare; to/too/two, to too/too/too, and for/faur/foer, to for/for/for, and in/inn, to in/in. We don't do this in speech, but text is not speech. A visual experience is involved.

In order to allow some homophones, some spellings have to be non-alphabetic; I/ie, to/too/two, for/faur/foer, aet/eit, no/knoe, noo/knoo/gnoo, riet/wriet. Sometimes a symbol is pronounced more than one way; do/go, eit/dheir/heir. 'Dheir' could be spelled 'dherr' but 'dheir' seems a better choice.

Some ways non-alphabetic homophones are spelled:

Double consonants at word; an/Ann, in/inn.

Use a TS vowel that is not a regular Mentur vowel; oar/oer/or, for/faur/foer/foerwurd, dher/dheir, I/ie, roam/Roem, by/buy/bie, bord/board/boarding.

Use a TS consonant that is not a regular Mentur consonant for the word; sik/sic, riet/wriet, noo/knoo/gnoo, er/err/heir.

The full list is fairly large but many present homophones are not included because they do not fit well with Mentur.

Recommended homophone list for Mentur.

TS	Mentur	TS	Mentur
ad, add	ad, add	lam, lamb	lam, lamm
adds, ads, adze	addz, adz, adz	lay, lei	lae, lei
air, ere, heir,	er, er, heir,	load, lode,	load, loed, loed
err	err	lowed	
		lowed	•
an, Ann	an, Ann	Ioan, Ione	Ioan, Ioen
arc, ark	arc, ark	me, mi	me, mi
ate, eight	aet, eit	moat, mote	moat, moet
aural, oral	aurul, orul	nay, neigh	nae, nei
away, aweigh	uwae, uwei	oar, or, ore	oar, or, oer
aye, eye, I	ie, ie, I	oh, owe	oh, oe
be, bee	be, bee	pores, pours	poerz, porz
boar, bore	boar, bor	pores, pours pi, pie	poerz, porz pi, pie
board, bored	board, bord	rain, reign, rein	raen, rein, rein
boarder, border	boardur, bordur	•	
but, butt	bvt, bvtt	rap, wrap read, red	rap, wrap redd, red
-	-	•	reek, wreek
buy, by, bye buyer, byre	buy, by, bie	reek, wreak	
J	buyur, bier	rest, wrest	rest, wrest
coal, cole	koal, koel	retch, wretch	rech, wrech
coarse, course	koars, kors	road, rode,	road, roed,
dam, damn	dam, damm	rowed	roed
Dane, deign	Daen, dein	Recent Democ	Ream Deam
dew, do	doo, do	roam, Rome	roam, Roem
ewe, yew, you	ue, yoo, yoo	right, rite,	riet, riet, wriet,
faint, feint	faent, feint	wright, write	wriet
for, fore, four	for, foer, faur	• 	•
foreword,	foerwurd,	ring, wring	ring, wring
forward	foerwurd	rote, wrote	roet, wroet
		rung, wrung	rvng, wrvng
forth, fourth	forth, faurth	rye, wry	rie, wrie
gneiss, nice	gnies, nies	sane, seign	saen, sein
hi, high	hi, hie	soar, sore	soar, sor
him, hymn	him, himm	sew, so, sow	soe, so, soe
hoard, horde	hoard, hord	shake, sheikh	shaek, sheik
hoarse, horse	hoars, hors	sic, sick	sic, sik
hour, our	hour, our	there, their	dher, dheir
in, inn	in, inn	tic, tick	tic, tik
knave, nave	knaev, naev	to, too, two	to, too, two
knead, need	kneed, need	toad, towed	toad, toed
knew, new	knoo, noo	vain, vane,	vaen, vaen,
knight, night	kniet, niet	vein	vein
knit, nit	knit, nit	•	•
knob, nob	knob, nob	vale, veil	vael, veil
knock, nock	knok, nok	wait, weight	waet, weit
knot, not	knot, not	way, weigh	wae, wei
know, no	knoe, no	we, wee	we, wee
knows, nose	knoez, noez	yore, your	yoer, yor

lac, lack lac, lak	yoke, yolk	yoek, yoelk
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5 - Consonants.

SAMPA b	tS	d	D	f	g	h	dZ	ί k	L	m	n	Ν
MENTUR - b	ch	d	dh	f	g	h	j	k	Т	m	n	ng

TS ----- bat chin dig this fish gift hat jet kit left man net sing MENTUR - bat chin dig dhis fish gift hat jet kit left man net sing

SAMPA p	r	S	S	t	Т	v	w	W	j	z	Z
MENTUR – p	r	S	sh	t	th	v	w	wh	У	z	zh

TS ------ pet rat sun ship top thin vest wet which yes zoo treasure MENTUR – pet rat svn ship top thin vest wet which yes zoo trezhur

C is only spelled in homophones and traditionally spelled words; sik/sic, Carl.

Q is only spelled in traditionally spelled words; Quincy.

X is only spelled in traditionally spelled words; Rex.

6 - Contractions.

Contractions generally follow the TS forms; kan't, he'l, she'd. But; doent and woent.

7 - Selected Prefixes.

The <anti-> prefix will be spelled *anti-*. *Anti-* will represent; /{ntl/, /{nti-/, /{nt@-/ or /{ntal-/. *Antifryz*, *antibiotic*, *anti-Umerikun*; <antechamber> *antichaembur*.

The <semi-> prefix will be spelled *semi-*, and will represent; /sEmI-/, /sEmi-/ or /sEmaI-/; *semiretierd*. The <semi> vehicle will be /sEmaI/ *semie*.

The <trans-> prefix will be spelled *trans-*; for /tr{n*t*s-/ or / tr{n*t*z-/. *Transishun*, *transport*.

Pre- (pre-1400).

8 - Spelling Accent.

Mentur mostly conforms to the alphabetic principle (spelling indicates pronunciation). In such systems, a spelling accent is apparent. The reader and writer will need to learn where this accent differs from their own speaking accent.

A few rules are necessary to aid the reader and writer to know how to read and spell Mentur words. You can pronounce them however you want. The rules will still not be able to predict spellings where two or more optional pronunciations exist, so Mentur's choice will sometimes be arbitrary. A spelling standard will help when available.

A General American accent will be favored.

The American vowel distribution of /{/ will be spelled; ask/ask.

The orr words like 'sorry and tomorrow' are pronounced with either /Ar/ or /Or/ in America. The spelling accent will be /Or/ for these words; sory, tumoroe, boroe, etc.

Traditional spelling will influence some spellings as if it represented a spelling accent; 'usual' can be pronounced several ways, but the Mentur spelling will be 'uezuul' /'juz ju @l/ even though this pronunciation may not be given as an option; /'ju Z@ w@l/, -Z@l, 'juZ-w@l/. This choice is for appearance.

Some of these choices will be arbitrary and a spelling standard will be necessary to set a 'standard'. In the meantime, the Mentur rules and a dictionary do well enough for now. We can tolerate some variable spellings in the beginning; guroj, gurozh, garrozh, garrij.

All dictionaries do not agree on the placement of <u>schwa.</u> <Severe> /sl vlr/-/s@ 'vlr/; suvir. Favoring the u spelling aids in the identification of primary stress. This rule is sometimes in conflict with favoring a TS appearance.

U is spelled instead of i (except before k) when /@/ is an optional pronunciation; <u>unless</u> unstressed /i/ is also an option; in which case i will be spelled. Adud, mustaek, kabun, rabut, suvir; bileev, dimand, privent, rimoov, komprihend. Since all dictionaries don't always show when /i/ is a possible pronunciation, this rule is somewhat fuzzy, but the writer should be able to predict when /i/ is an option. Attempt to avoid y midword by spelling i if it is not too much of a stretch. There are many words where y will be necessary, and the appearance will suffer a bit more; 'rysel'. Keep y when it is a word end vowel; hapy/hapynus, handy/handykap.

Spell -ik whenever /-Ik/ is an optional pronunciation. Persecute/pvrsikuet, stomach/stvmik.

When t is midword, as in 'butter', it is commonly pronounced as /d/, in the US accent. This makes 'medal' and 'metal' have the same pronunciation. The Mentur spelling accent will keep the UK spelling accent for this, so the spellings will be; 'medul' and 'metul'.

'The' - spelled 'dhe' before vowel sounds, except /i/. Spelled 'dhv' before consonant sounds and before /i/. Dhe apul, dhv dog, dhv eegul.

The personal pronoun 'I' will be spelled 'I', I'l.

The indefinite article 'a', /e/ or /@/, will be spelled 'a'. "Hav a sandwich."

9 - Sample Text.

I wvz taeking a waulk—for mie helth—when I sau a dir ubout twenty yardz in frvnt uv me. I oenly sau him bikauz he sau me fvrst and moovd deepur into a hejroe and stopd. He wvz waching me. I jenuruly wach dhv ground for snaeks, dhoe it haz bin yirz sins I sau a snaek nir wher I taek mie waulks. Enywae, I stopd, not wvnting to maek him rvn uwae. We sterd at eech vdhur for a fue sekundz, dhen he nodud hiz hed. I nodud mien. He nodud hiz. I nodud mien. He nodud hiz. I nodud mien—and waulkd uwae.

I had reesuntly wachd a moovy wher wield horsuz wvr a topik, and it wvz sed dhat dhv leed mer wwd svmtiemz ban a hors frvm dhv hvrd by hvr body langgwij. I had dhis in miend when I tvrnd and waulkd uwae. I probubly got it rong. It haz bin a long tiem nou sins I sau a dir nir dher.

10 - Response To Spelling Society Questions.

Mentur is not exactly new. It has much in common with New Spelling.

Mentur has taken ideas mostly already found in TS and in other spelling system proposals, though some of the ideas are rather unconventional—considered radical by some—yet no more radical than other ideas that seem to find little resistance among spelling reformers.

It is intended that Mentur be independent of TS.

Hopefully, Mentur will find usefulness mostly outside the classroom. But Mentur may be used as a learning aid in teaching TS. Mentur can enable a considerable amount of self-help for new TS readers if Mentur is used instead of TS in teaching materials. A, TS : Mentur, parallel text reader could be used much like bilingual publications—books, magazines, newspapers or web pages. Instead of teaching a new language, they would be teaching English reading and spelling.

An more detailed version of these rules can presently (Oct, 2017) be found at: <u>https://paulstought.wordpress.com/</u>

A suggested Standard Mentur Spelling Accent list can presently (Oct, 2017) be found at: <u>https://1drv.ms/f/s!Ah4m-10MmzM7wV2F0pZNTRxk5TrB</u>.

<u>Stress.</u> Vowels; v, ee, y and u, go a long way towards identifying primary stress. A preliminary check indicates about 90% of Mentur words have identifiable primary stress. Schwa is consistently spelled u, though semi-stressed \v\ is also spelled u. Doubled consonants are used to mark u as stressed when otherwise vv would occur. Ubuvv, vullchur, vurrzhun.

<u>Mentur will have its own spelling accent</u> that will be influenced by UK and US pronunciations, and TS. It is expected various regions will demand to put their mark on the accent in some cases.

This should be resisted in order to preserve standardization. The Mentur spelling accent should be viewed as if it was the speaking accent of a single imaginary individual. The resulting "pronunciations" will not necessarily conform to any speaking accent in use; 'usual' /'juz ju @l/ uezuul.

Except for a few ambiguous vowel combinations and "sight words" and homophones, <u>Mentur can be read just by sounding out the sound-signs</u>, if the reader has learned the rules; especially relative to, v, w and y.

In the classic story "Rip Van Winkle", <u>Mentur is about 97% the size of TS.</u> In some texts, Mentur may be slightly longer than TS.

Mentur respells about 69% of text.

<u>The marketplace will determine what, current or old, writings will be respelled into</u> <u>Mentur.</u>

Mentur is proposed to be an alternate spelling system, used at the same time as <u>TS.</u> In time, the public may decide to use Mentur more and more. This will mean more text will be written in Mentur until TS becomes obsolete.

Mentur regularly spells words as pronounced—in the spelling accent. There will be a list of 'sight words' and some selected homophones; *I*, *a*, *be*, *no*, *to/too/two*, *for/faur*, *in/inn*, *an/Ann*, etc. Vowel combinations are 'compressed'; 'kaos' instead of 'kaeos'. This causes some conflict between some vowel combinations and other vowels; 'poet/pout', pout, cooperate/koopuraet.

<u>Mentur uses the standard letters of our present alphabet</u>, but it does assign new values to some letters; book/bwk, summer/svmur, this/dhis, measure/me<u>zh</u>ur (zh is actually used in a few TS words). When considering that vowel-v, vowel-w, dh and zh, may be too radical, it should be noted that *New Spelling*—previously strongly supported by the Simplified Spelling Society—spelled digraphs in place of TS single letters, as in; lake/laek, baby/baeby, music/muezic; and sometimes uu has been spelled for the vowel in 'put', or the vowel in 'moon'. Other times the ambiguous oo has been kept as in; 'good food'. Also, vowel-v can be found in old spellings of TS, and w is used as both vowel and consonant in Welsh. Y is used as

both vowel and consonant in present text, though in a manner that is very inconsistent. Dh and zh are consistent with; ch, sh, th and wh.

<u>Mentur is fairly new; Mar, 2008</u>. I have been writing in it to see how well it works, and in my opinion it works very well.

TS	MENTUR	TS	MENTUR
pen, copy, happen	pen, kopy, hapun	north, war	north, wor
lot, odd, wash	lot, od, wosh	ship, sure,	ship, shwr,
back, bubble, job	bak, bvbul, job	station	staeshun
strut, bud, love	strvt, bvd, luv	cure, poor, jury	kywr, por, jwry
tea, tight, button	tee, tiet, bvtun	pleasure, vision	plezhur, vizhun
foot, good, put	fwt, gwd, pwt	nurse, stir	nvrs, stvr
city, better	sity, betur	hot, whole, behind	hot, hoel, bihiend
fleece, day, streak	flees, dae, streek	courage	kvrij
day, ladder, odd	dae, ladur, od	more, hammer,	mor, hamur,
price, high, try	pries, hie, trie	some	svm
key, cock, school	kee, kok, skool	happy,	hapy,
choice, boy	chois, boi	radiation,	raedeaeshun,
get, giggle, ghost	get, gigul, goest	glorious	gloreus
goose, two, blue	goos, two, bloo	nice, know, funny,	nies, knoe, fvny,
church, match,	chvrch, mach,	sun	svn
nature	naechur	about, comma,	ubout, komu,
goat, show, no,	goet, shoe, no,	common	komun
cold	koeld	ring, long, thanks,	ring, long, thanks,
judge, age, soldier	jvj, aej, soeljur	sung	svng
mouth, now	mouth, nou	influence,	infloouns,
fat, coffee, rough,	fat, kofy, rvf,	situation, annual	situaeshun, anuul
move	moov	light, valley, feel	liet, valy, feel
near, here, serious	nir, hir, sireus	intend, basic	intend, baesik
thing, author, path	thing, authur, path	yet, use,	yet, uez/ues,
square, fair,	skwer, fer,	beauty	buety
various	vereus	stimulus, educate	stimyulus, ejukaet
this, other,	dhis, vdhur,	wet, one, when,	wet, wvn, when,
smooth	smoodh	queen	kween
start, father	start, fodhur	kit, bid, hymn	kit, bid, himm
soon, cease, sister	soon, sees, sistur	dress, bed	dres, bed
thought, law	thaut, lau	trap, bad	trap, bad
zero, zone,	zeeroe, zoen,	-	
roses	roezuz		

11 - Word list suggested by The English Spelling Society.

Four standard texts spelled in Mentur.

The Star (H G Wells)

It was on the first day of the new year that the announcement was made, almost simultaneously from three observatories, that the motion of the planet Neptune, the outermost of all the planets that wheel about the sun, had become very erratic. A retardation in its velocity had been suspected in December. Then a faint, remote speck of light was discovered in the region of the perturbed planet. At first this did not cause any great excitement. Scientific people, however, found the intelligence remarkable enough even before it became known that the new body was rapidly growing larger and brighter, and that its motion was quite different from the orderly progress of the planets. (569 characters)

Dhv Star by H G Wells – in Mentur.

Names may keep traditional spelling or not, according to the writers judgement of his readers.

It wvz on dhv fvrst dae uv dhv noo yir dhat dhe unounsmunt wvz maed, aulmoest siemultaeneusly frvm three ubzvrvutoryz, dhat dhv moeshun uv dhv planut Neptoon, dhe outurmoest uv aul dhv planuts dhat wheel ubout dhv svn, had bikvm very iratik. A ritardaeshun in its vulosuty had bin suspektud in Disembur. Dhen a faent, rimoet spek uv liet wvz diskuvvurd in dhv reejun uv dhv purtvrbd planut. At fvrst dhis did not kauz eny graet eksietmunt. Siuntifik peepul, houevur, found dhe intelujuns rimarkubul invf eevun bifoer it bikaem knoen dhat dhv noo body wvz rapudly groeing larjur and brietur, and dhat its moeshun wvz kwiet difurunt frvm dhe ordurly progres uv dhv planuts. (558 characters)

Britten when young (Frank Kermode)

We may nowadays be chary about using the word 'genius', but we still have a good idea what is meant by it. For example, there are great numbers of very gifted musicians who are admired but not called geniuses. But there are others, manifestly prodigious, performing often at extraordinary ages, a variety of feats so complex that the layman could hardly imagine, even with the most desperate labour, accomplishing any of them, while even musicians are astonished: and we then reach for the good, handy, vague, Enlightenment word and call them geniuses. The list includes Mozart and Mendlessohn; and despite all the limiting judgements, it includes Benjamin Britten. (558 characters)

Britun when yvng by Frank Kermode – in Mentur.

We mae nouudaez be chery ubout uezing dhv wvrd 'jeenyus', bvt we stil hav a gwd iedeu whot iz ment by it. For egzampul, dher ar graet nvmburz uv very giftud muezishunz hoo ar udmierd bvt not kauld jeenyusuz. Bvt dher ar vdhurz, manufestly prudijus, purforming ofun at ekstrordunery aejuz, a vuriuty uv feets so kompleks dhat dhv laemun kwd hardly imajun, eevun with dhv moest despurut laebur, ukomplishing eny uv dhem, whiel eevun muezishunz ar ustonishd: and we dhen reech for dhv gwd, handy, vaeg, Enlietunmunt wvrd and kaul dhem jeenyusuz. Dhv list inkloodz Moetsart and Mendulsun; and dispiet aul dhv limiting jvjmunts, it inkloodz Benjumun Britun. (545 characters)

Ode to a nightingale (John Keats)

Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, But being so happy in thine happiness. That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees. In some melodious plot, Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, Singest of summer in full-throated ease. (191 characters)

Oed to a nietungael by John Keats - in Mentur

Tiz not throo envy uv dhie hapy lot, Bvt being so hapy in dhien hapynus. Dhat dhou, liet-wingd Driad uv dhv treez. In svm muloedeus plot, Uv beechun green, and shadoez nvmburlus, Singust uv svmur in fwl-throetud eez. (179 characters)

Fuzzy-opaque orthographical visions (C Upward)

There was a poor boy couldn't spell Half the words in our language too well. His teachers thought: "Brain-sick!" Mum and Dad hoped: "Dyslexic?" Yet the child rashly jeered: "What the hell!" (158 characters)

Fvzy-oepaek orthugrafikul vizhunz by C Upward.

Dher wvz a por boi kwdn't spel Haf dhv wvrdz in our langgwij too wel. Hiz teechurz thaut: "Braen-sik!" Mvm and Dad hoepd: "Disleksik?" Yet dhv chield rashly jird: "Whot dhv hel!" (147 characters)