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The Author

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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.

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REGSPEL
(2014)

Regspel is a revised English spelling system that follows the phonemic principle. It uses no accents or special characters. Generally it allocates a unique grapheme to each phoneme of spoken English; nearly all such graphemes correspond to an equivalent in Traditional Spelling (TS).

A few simple rules are designed to ensure consistent transcription from TS. The schwa is represented in a manner that reflects the subtlety of unaccented vowel sounds in spoken English.

There is hardly any non-phonemic retention from TS. But Regspel employs a few short cuts; together these reduce the number of characters required by some 7% compared with TS.

Provision is made for the treatment of imported foreign words and for cases where there is a significant divergence between the Received Pronunciation of British English (RP) and the General American pronunciation of American English (GenAm).

Some questions for discussion are outlined.

The 2014 edition seeks to be more acceptable to those familiar with TS while retaining its high degree of phonemicity.

Contents

A. Preface to the 2014 Edition

The author devised Regspel on his own over many years without consciously copying from other alternative spelling systems. The finished product bears some resemblance to New Spelling and Soundspel, but there are also significant differences. Regspel sets out to be as phonemic as possible within the constraints of no: (i) diacritics or unconventional letters; (ii) unusual use of existing characters. It is thus somewhat more phonemic than either New Spelling or SoundSpel. Differences include:

Greater distinction between phonemes[1] – Unlike New Spelling, Regspel distinguishes the sounds /u:/ and /U/, /D/ and /T/

Very few non-phonemic retentions from TS[2]. But a few short cuts are adopted in the interests of reducing the number of characters required. Some of these also permit retentions from TS.

Minimum Change Principle. While Regspel seeks to be as phonemic as possible, it also avoids unnecessary changes to TS conventions. Thus nearly all the graphemes it employs can be used for the phoneme in question in TS; a few alternative graphemes for the same phoneme are allowed in carefully defined cases, where this would permit the retention of TS spellings (eg sound, royal). Only three graphemes in Regspel are absent from TS. These are aa, for the sound in f<u>a</u>ther; uu (or w) for the sound in p<u>u</u>dding, c<u>ou</u>ld, w<u>oo</u>d etc. and zh for the sound in lei<u>s</u>ure etc. tt(h) is used for the sound /T/ as in thing.

Representation of unstressed vowels (schwa). Regspel tries to identify the underlying sound, based on slow and distinct rather than rapid speech. So generally the TS vowels are retained except where the spoken word is quite different. The author believes that these rules, although essentially phonemic, are simpler than those of New Spelling or SoundSpel.

Principal Changes since the original edition

Most of these changes are designed to reduce unnecessary changes from TS, thus making Regspel less of a challenge to TS adepts. They include:

(i) aa for non-rhotic /a:/ (as in father)

(ii) ay as well as ae for / eɪ / (laed, laid, layer)
(iiii) y (as well as ie) for /aɪ / (iesicl (icicle), try)
(iv) air for /e@r/ - instead of ear
(v) uu (w) instead of ou for /U/
(vi) ou as well as ow for /aU/ (loud, power)

(vii) oi as well as oy for /Oɪ/ (coil, boy)
(viii) ue as well as ew for /ju/; (ues (use), few)
(ix) k for /k/ instead of c.
(x) x for /gz/ as well as for /kz/ - (as in TS) – rules show which pronunciation applies
(xi) tt(h) and th instead of th and dh for /T/ and /D/
(xii) More optional shortcuts (eg omitting e from o(e) at end of words.

While in some cases this results in more than one way of representing the same phoneme, the rules are applied consistently so that pronunciation can always be predicted from the written word & usually vv. The system remains essentially two-way phonemic for anyone who understands the rules.

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[1] In this edition the phoneme is represented by the SAMPA symbol. The IPA equivalent is shown in the tables.

[2] SoundSpel lists over a dozen such examples plus their compounds. Regspel has very few, the rest being optional shortcuts rather than retentions.

B. Answers to Specific Questions

1. Is this a new original idea or is it adapted from one developed by the writer or someone else? Essentially, it has been developed by the author independently.

2. Is it an initial scheme for learning literacy, as a step to TS, or is it for permanent adult use? It is intended to replace TS entirely and is for permanent adult use.

3. Are there any supplementary rules? If so, please detail. As well as allocating specific graphemes to specific phonemes, Regspel has comprehensive rules which are set out at Section E below.

4. Does your system cater for schwa and stress? The system caters for schwa in its various forms. Stressed syllables are not indicated, but this issue is left open for discussion.

5. If this is a phonemic system, which accent of English is it based on? Would you cater for other accents of English? How? The author has generally used Longman's[3] as the basis for the pronunciation followed – this shows RP and GenAm pronunciations, where different. The author believes that it should be possible for a single orthography to cater for most regional pronunciations of spoken English, and Regspel seeks to do so wherever possible. But provision is made for different spellings in a very few cases where RP diverges significantly from GenAm.

6. Is the scheme based on an assumed knowledge of English / TS or is it independent, that is could people who had learned the spelling rules pronounce a text correctly even though they had no knowledge of English? Regspel does not presume prior knowledge of English or of TS. Non-English speakers could pronounce a Regspel text reasonably well, although at first less fluently than native English speakers, mainly due to having to learn irregular stress patterns.

7. How does the running text in the scheme compare in length with TS? Using all the permitted retentions and short cuts, Regspel requires about 7% fewer characters than TS. Some words require more characters than TS, principally for indicating long vowel sounds, but this is more than offset by the elimination of most of the doublings and redundant letters found in TS. Of the 500 most common English words, 62% have to be respelled in Regspel, Based on a sample of average text, the percentage falls to between 50 & 60%, fewer if one does not abbreviate the definite article. This is a considerably smaller percentage than in many other phonemic schemes.

 8. Would you suggest that all publications be produced in your system? What are your suggestions for dealing with material previously published? Regspel is just one contribution to various efforts to develop a simpler and more phonemic English orthography, one that can be accepted by those familiar with TS and learnt easily by all. I hope that from the many systems invented (including Regspel) reformers can agree on   a single (no doubt compromise) scheme, which if it gained general acceptance, would run in parallel with TS and eventually supersede it. Important material previously published would eventually be transcribed into Regspel or whatever other system was adopted.

9. Do you envisage your system and TS co-existing until agreement is reached on dropping TS (as with conversion to metric measures?) Regspel and TS would co-exist side by side for a transitional period. If accepted, Regspel would appear initially in various publications. It would then spread to official communications. The final step would come when it was accepted as the principal method of teaching English spelling to children and students of English as a Second Language.

10. Do you regard homophones as a problem and does your system indicate them in any way? I do not regard homophones as a serious problem, essentially because they are no obstacle to oral communication. Except in one or two cases (eg I(e) - 1st person singular, y -

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[3] The Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (editor J C Wells, © Longman Group 2000). Where a pronunciation not listed by Longman's is used, this is noted in the text.

eye), Regspel does not use special devices to distinguish them. However, given the fact that some TS words are spelt the same but pronounced differently (eg wind - noun, wind - verb), Respel sometimes produces different spellings where TS has one only. The matter is discussed further in Section G.

11. Could your system be used easily on most computers and word processors? Regspel can be typed on a standard QWERTY keyboard and is ASCII compliant. Modern software would make it relatively simple to translate TS into Regspel.

12. Is the system used in everyday life by yourself or anyone else? At present it is used only by the author and some friends, but he has plans to put it on a dedicated web site for wider dissemination and further comment.

C. Table of Vowel Sounds

The following tables sets out the character(s) used by Regspel for each phoneme of the English language. The first column shows the Regspel character(s); the second shows the appropriate SAMPA symbol; the third shows the IPA equivalent, and the final two columns show a TS word using the phoneme in question together with its Regspel transcription. The relevant vowel is underlined. Where two alternate symbols are shown in the SAMPA or IPA columns, the former indicates RP and the latter GenAm pronunciation.

Regspel Character(s)	SAMPA symbol	IPA equivalent	Typical TS example	Regspel Rendering
a	{	æ	p<u>a</u>t	p<u>a</u>t
e	e	e	p<u>e</u>t	p<u>e</u>t
i	ɪ	ɪ	p<u>i</u>t	p<u>i</u>t
o	Q or A:	ɒ or a:	p<u>o</u>t	p<u>o</u>t
u	V	ʌ	p<u>u</u>n	p<u>u</u>n
ae, ay	eɪ	eɪ	m<u>ai</u>d, st<u>ay</u>	m<u>ae</u>d st<u>ay</u>
ee	i:	i:	f<u>ee</u>d, l<u>ea</u>d	f<u>ee</u>d, l<u>ee</u>d
ie, y	aɪ	aɪ	<u>i</u>sland, m<u>y</u>	<u>ie</u>land, m<u>y</u>
o(e)	@U or oU	əʊ or oʊ	f<u>oe</u>, fl<u>ow</u>, banj<u>o</u>	f<u>o(e)</u>, fl<u>o(e)</u>, banj<u>o(e)</u>
ue, ew, eu	ju:	ju:	<u>u</u>nion, st<u>ew</u> <u>Eu</u>rope	<u>ue</u>nion, st<u>ew</u>, <u>Eu</u>rop
ar	A:(r)	a: (r)	h<u>ar</u>d	h<u>ar</u>d
aa	A:	a:	father	f<u>aa</u>ther
er	3: or 3`	ɜ: or ɝ	h<u>er</u>d, sl<u>ur</u>, f<u>ir</u>	h<u>er</u>d, sl<u>er</u>, f<u>er</u>
or	O: (r)	ɔ:(r)	<u>or</u>der	<u>or</u>der
aw, all	O:	ɔ:	fr<u>au</u>d, l<u>aw</u>, <u>all</u>	fr<u>aw</u>d, l<u>aw</u>, <u>all</u>
air	e@ or e@(r)	eə or eᵊ(r)	h<u>air</u>, b<u>ear</u>, M<u>ary</u>	h<u>air</u>, b<u>air</u>, M<u>air</u>y
eer	ɪ@ or ɪ@r	ɪə or ɪ ᵊr	n<u>ear</u>, sp<u>ear</u>	n<u>eer</u>, sp<u>eer</u>
uu (w)	U	ʊ	c<u>ou</u>ld, p<u>u</u>dding, st<u>oo</u>d	c<u>uu</u>d, (cwd), p<u>uu</u>ding, (pwding) st<u>uu</u>d (stwd)
oo	U:	u:	f<u>oo</u>d	f<u>oo</u>d
ou, ow	aU	aʊ	f<u>ou</u>l, n<u>ow</u>	f<u>ou</u>l, n<u>ow</u>
oi, oy	OI	ɔɪ	c<u>oi</u>l, b<u>oy</u>	c<u>oi</u>l, b<u>oy</u>
-y	i	i	simpl<u>y</u>	simpl<u>y</u>
u	@	ə	camp<u>u</u>s	camp<u>u</u>s[4]

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[4] u is the default Regspel grapheme for schwa, but generally the relevant TS letter is used.

D. Table of Consonant Sounds

The following table is based on the same format as Table 1 in respect of consonants and consonant combinations.

Regspel Character(s)	SAMPA Symbol	IPA equivalent	Typical TS example	Regspel equivalent
b	b	b	bat	bat
ch	tS	tʃ	chart	chart
d	d	d	dog	dog
f	f	f	frog	frog
g	g	g	go	go
h	h	h	hard	hard
j	dZ	dʒ	jam	jam
k	k	k	cat, kettle	kat, ket(u)l
l	l	l	lamb	lam
m	m	m	man	man
n	n	n	nap	nap
ng	N	ŋ	ring	ring
p	p	p	pun	pun
qu	qu	kw	queen	queen
r	r	r	run	run
s	s	s	sun	sun
sh	S	ʃ	sheep	sheep
t	t	t	tap	tap
th	D	ð	that	that
tt(h)	T	Θ	thin	tt(h)in
v	v	v	vast	vast
w	w	w	win	win[5]
x	ks gz	ks, gz	exit, exactly	exit, exactly
y[6]	j	j	yes	yes
z	z	z	zoo, his	zoo, hiz
zh	Z	ʒ	pleasure	plezher

E. Regspel's Principles and Rules

1. VOWELS

(a) The short vowels
The single letters a, e, i, o, u are pronounced as in TS when followed by one consonant only.

(b) The sound /ei/
This sound is represented by the combination **ae** generally but by **ay** at the end of a word, or before a vowel (eg faed (fade), faeded (faded), Addition of z or d does not require y to change to ae (eg stayz, stayd.

(c) The sound /iː/
This sound is represented by the combination ee as in TS, e.g. see, seeing.

(d) The sound /aɪ /

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[5] W is also a vowel as a shortcut for uu.
[6] Also a Regspel vowel.

This sound is represented by the combination **ie** at the beginning of a word but by **y** elsewhere when stressed (eg iesik(u)l (icicle), try, myt (might), defy, lying.

(e) The sounds /@U/ and /oU/
This sound is represented by the combination **oe**. The **e** may be omitted at the end of a word and before a vowel (eg **banjo, going) – see Shortcuts.**

(f) The sound / ju: /
This sound is represented by the combination **ue** but by **ew** at the end of the word or before a vowel (uenion, few, jewel); **eu** may be used at the beginning of a word in the few expressions of Greek origin (Europ).

(**g) The sounds /e@r/ and e@(r)**
This sound is represented by the letters –**air** (bair, stair, wair fair)

(h) The sounds /A:(r)/ and /A:/
To accommodate rhotic dialects (eg Scottish, GenAm), Regpsel uses **"ar"** where there is an **r** in TS. In the other (relatively small number of cases) where there is no "r", Regspel uses the combination **aa** (eg faather (father), paam (palm) etc).
(i) The sounds /O:(r)/ and /O:/
As with the sounds **/A:(r)/** and **/A:/**, Regpsel distinguishes **/O:(r)/** and **/O:/** - **"or"** where there is an **r** in TS, in other cases **"aw".** Thus: snor, law, raw. The combination **al(l)** is used where an /l/ sound follows (small, tall, always[7] etc).

(j) The sound /U/
This sound is not represented by any distinctive phoneme in TS, apart from the -**ould** combination in **could, etc**. Regspel uses the combination **uu**[8] for this sound.

(k) The sound /aU/
This sound is represented by the combination **ou** generally but by **ow** at the end of a word or before a vowel (eg foul, cow, flower). To reduce changes from TS the combination **ow** is also permitted before the letter n (eg town, gown) but not when followed by n and another consonant (eg found).

(l) The sound /U:/
The sound is represented by the combination **oo** as in TS.

(m) The sound / Oɪ/
This sound is represented by the combination **oi** generally, but by **oy** at the end of a word and before a vowel (eg coil, boy, royal). Added final letters do not change the oy back to oi (eg toyz, toying).

(n) Unstressed vowels - "schwa" / @/
English speakers reduce many unstressed vowels to an indistinct sound, especially in quick conversation. Pronunciation dictionaries tend to represent these sounds with /@/ regardless of the original TS vowel. However, especially when pronounced slowly, the sounds show marked differences, and in the author's view it would be misleading, and too much of a break with TS, to use a single symbol for all of them. Regspel's general rule therefore is to retain the letter used in TS (eg muther, defens, orijinal). See however Short Cuts below for words which in TS end in –tion, -sion, -ssion -cious, or which have a schwa sound preceding final l.

(o) Rules for pronouncing diphthongs
Generally the pronunciation is clear. Where two consecutive vowels represent a Regspel grapheme, they are pronounced as a single phoneme; where they are not a Regspel grapheme, they are pronounced separately (eg faed (fade) BUT bastion). The main exception

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[7] The double ll may be contracted to a single l in the first syllable only in words which indicate totality (always, also, already etc). They represent the sound **/{l/** in other words (eg aljebra).
[8] See below for shortcuts.

is a combination of **ie** which at the beginning of a word represents the sound **/ aɪ /.** However, when occurring in the last syllable of a word and unstressed, the letters represent two separate graphemes (eg prit**ie**r (prettier), karr**ie**r). The combination –oer at the end of a word is pronounced oe-er (/**@U3:ʳ**/) eg roer, sloer etc.

(p) Rules for pronouncing triphthongs
Where one can make a Regspel grapheme out of one combination of the three vowels but not our of the other, then those that do form a grapheme are pronounced as such and the third is pronounced separately, eg (deevi<u>ae</u>t, uezh<u>oo</u>al, because **ae**, and **oo** are Regspel graphemes but **ia** and **oa** are not). Where one can make a Regpel grapheme out of two combinations in the triphthong, the rule is that the first two letters represent one phoneme and the other a separate sound, eg infl<u>oo</u>ens

2. CONSONANTS

(a) Unchanged letters
The letters b, d, f, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, sh, t, v, & z are pronounced as in TS.

(b) The sound /tS/
This is represented by the letters ch**, which <u>always</u> represent this sound (as in chop) and <u>never</u> that in chemistry or in chef.**

(c) The sound /g/
This is represented by the letter **g** which <u>always</u> represents the sound as in get and <u>never</u> that in gin. (J is used invariably for the latter sound eg jem, jin, jinjer.)

(d) The sound /k/
This is represented by the letter **k** which always represents the sound as in kitten, cat and never as in city. The letter c is redundant in Regpsel except where combined with h.

(e) The sounds /T∕ & /D/
These two distinct sounds are both represented by "th" in TS. Regspel differentiates them, using th for /D/ (that) and "tt(h)" for /T/ (thin). – see shortcuts.
(f) The letter x
As in TS, Regspel allows this to represent two sounds /ks/ and /gz/. The latter applies only where x follows e and where the next letter is a stressed vowel (eg exam). Sometimes Regspel adds an s to preserve this rule as in exsyt (excite).
(h) The sound /dZ/

Regspel uses a single **j** to represent this sound. Thus: juj (judge), jam (jam), ej (edge), gaej (gauge).

(i) The sounds /s/ and /z/
Regspel uses s for /s / (hiss) and z for /z/ (zoo, hiz (his) as (az) etc). But note that at the end of a word: after a letter f,k,, p, or t the sound is invariably /s/,   (thus: stufs,(stuffs), stiks (sticks), flips, hits).

(j) The sound /Z/
Another of the three Regspel combinations not found in TS. Regspel uses the letters **zh** to represent the sound in ple<u>zh</u>er (pleasure), me<u>zh</u>er (measure), tre<u>zh</u>er (treasure) etc.

(k) Consonant Doubling
Generally, Regspel sees no need to replicate the TS formula of doubling consonants to change sounds represented. The exceptions are (i) when it is necessary to close the vowel sound before the letter **r (ar /A:/, er /3:/, or /O:/)**. Thus: far / farrier, merchant / merrier, hord / horrid[9]; (ii) double **tt(h)**[10] is used to represent the sound **/T/** (tt(h)ing) as opposed to **/D/**

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[9] Generally doubling is not necessary save where the syllable is stressed, thus error, BUT eratic.
[10] The h may be omitted –see Shortcuts below.

(that). (iii) the sound in "all". Any other doubling would indicate two separate syllables. (eg misspel) .

3. THE LETTER Y
This is the only case where Regspel uses a letter to represent three different sounds. This is in the interests of 'minimum change'. But the rules are clear and regular and largely follow those of TS:

(i)   *Representing the sound /j/ (consonant) a*t the beginning of a word. Thus: yot (yacht), yelo (yellow), Where the **/j/** sound occurs other than at the beginning of a word an **i** is usually employed (eg bastion). But y is used where the **/j/** sound occurs between two vowels, thus: beyond. .

(ii)   *Representing the sound* /i/(vowel): Regspel retains the **y** of TS for this sound at the end of words and unstressed. Thus: fairy (fairy), funy (funny). The final **y** becomes **i** when followed by another letter apart from another **i**. (Thus: karrid BUT karrying).

(ii)   *Representing the sound* /aɪ/ (vowel)*,* when stressed (my, fyt etc). But at the beginning of a word, it is **ie** that represents **/ aɪ /**. This rule allows y to be used for **/j/** (consonant) at the beginning of a word and thus minimises the number of words whose place in the dictionary would otherwise have to be altered. Addition of a letter or suffix does not change use of y (eg trying, tryd, tryz etc).

4. SPELLING OF FOREIGN WORDS ETC

Where a word within a Regspel passage is spelt in a different orthography, (eg a foreign word retaining its original pronunciation), it is underlined or italicised[11], thus:

Monsieur Dupont, Chargé d'Affaires for Panama, sat on a chaise longue lisning to sum Lieder by Schubert.

5. RETENTIONS FROM TRADITIONAL SPELLING AND SHORT CUTS

In order to reduce the number of characters required, and to ease the transition from TS, Regspel employs a few retentions and shortcuts.

(a) Retentions from TS
(i) The definite article may continue to be written as "the", as opposed to "thu" or "thee," but may also be contracted to "t", regardless of whether it comes before a noun or a consonant.
(ii) The preposition "**to**" and its compounds may continue to be written as in TS instead of "**tuu**" (tw); thus: today (today), tomorro(e) (tomorrow), tonyt (tonight), towordz (towards). But TS **two** and **too** are both spelled the same way in Regspel (i.e. too).
(iii) The hyphenated prefixes **de-, pre-, pro- and re**- represent the TS sounds; thus: de-aktivaet, pro-activ (proactive), pre-seed (precede), re-elect (re-elect). Co- in TS becomes ko- in Regspel (ko-operativ).

6. SHORT CUTS
It is always correct to write out a word in full according to the Regspel conventions, but the following short cuts are permitted in the interests of character minimisation; some of them also have the effect of permitting a TS retention without violating Regspel's rules.

(i) Definite article – as above. For convenience sake "the" may be contracted to "**t**".
(ii) Three categories of suffix where the unaccented vowel (schwa) may be omitted, viz.:

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[11] In ASCII the underlining can be replaced with a colon at each end, eg :chargé d'affaires:.

- Words with TS ending in **–tion** or **–ssion**; thus: atensh(u)n (attention), mish(u)n (mission).
- Words with TS ending –**cious; thus –**presh(u)s
- Words with TS ending in **–sion**; thus: **prisizh(u)n** (precision).
- Words with TS ending in **–le** preceded by a consonant; thus: rizib(u)l (risible), iesik(u)l (icicle), dand(u)l (dandle), fid(u)l (fiddle), tryf(u)l (trifle).

The short cut is retained where a suffix is added, eg. Thus: profeshnal, mishnz.

(iii) Permitted omission of **e** following a final **/@U/** sound, eg **banjo(e)**. To avoid confusion as to pronunciation, **e** must be added before a consonant (**banjoez**), but not before a vowel eg (**going**). The **e** may also be omitted: in personal pronouns ending in e, thus: **I(e), he(e), she(e), we(e), U(e), me(e)**, also in **be(e) and O(e);** and in the combination **–o(e)ld.**

(iv) Permitted omission of **h** in the combination **tth** for **/T/**, thus **tt(h)ing, tt(h)orn.**

(v) Permitted contraction of **uu** to **w** for the sound **/U/. W** is thus a consonant at the beginning of a word and a vowel sound in the digraphs **aw** and **ow**. It represents **/U/** only when on its own between two consonants **(kwd)**. In the few cases where two **ww's** would come together, the second must be spelled as uu (and not w), but an apostrophe may be used instead of the second w (eg w'l (wool). Would may be represented as wd with no apostrophe and wood may be written w'd.

F. Accommodating Regional Variations in Pronunciation

The author believes that generally, differences in pronunciation between RP, GenAm and other regional variants are too slight to warrant use of alternative graphemes. Regspel rather relies on conventions. In particular[12]:

- It uses the letter **o** for words such as pot, lot, stop, in the knowledge that most RP speakers will pronounce these syllables as **/Q/**, and GenAm speakers as **/A:/**.
- It uses the grapheme -**air** to represent the vowel sound in words such as bear, lair, where etc, in the knowledge that most RP speakers will pronounce this sound as **/e@/** and most GenAm speakers as **/e^@r/**.
- Words such as daft, rascal, dans (dance) are spelled with a single **a** in the knowledge that RP speakers will pronounce these words as **/A:/**[13], and GenAm speakers as **/{/**.

Exceptionally, however, Regspel provides for a strictly limited number of alternative spellings where RP and GenAm diverge markedly[14]. Examples are words such as sheduel, (RP), skeduel (GenAm), stuepid (RP) stoopid (GenA), tomaato (BrE) tomaeto (GenA), vaaz (BrE) vaez (GenA). (See also below under Items for Discussion.)

G. Items for Discussion

The author has identified some areas where readers' input would be particularly welcome.

(a) Homophones with the same spelling are more frequent in Resgpel than in TS because the former generally uses only one grapheme per phoneme. This probably doesn't matter, as the context nearly always makes the meaning clear: people talking English to each other on the phone or face to face can understand distinctions in meaning between homophones without the need for distinguishing features. Regspel does allow different spellings for a few homophones, eg U(e) (2nd person singular, ew (female sheep), I (1st person singular(, y (eye).

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12 See vowel tables (para, C) for other instances of divergent regional pronunciation where Regspel uses the same grapheme.

13 One can fairly easily recognise words where RP gives "a" an **a:** *[A:]* pronunciation: best remembered in the following mnemonic: "The daft rascal pranced and laughed when I showed him my last staff pass." Generally, where GenAm pronunciation is shared with several regional British accents, Regspel tends to follow the GenAm in preference to the RP. In this instance one will find the GenAm pronunciation mirrored in Yorkshire, Lancastrian, Liverpuddlian and some others regional British accents.

14 Candidates for this treatment are generally marked with an asterisk in Longman's.

(b) Is Regspel right to differentiate between the various unaccented vowels and generally to retain the TS letter(s) to represent the schwa sound in question?

(c) Should Regspel use any devices to indicate stress? Some alternative spelling systems do so, but the author is reluctant to go down this route. It would be necessary to introduce diacritics (as in Spanish) or capitals in the middle of a word; either would be a major departure from TS. Relatively phonemic languages such as French and German do not see any need for special symbols to indicate variant stresses. Finally, although stress in English words is far from regular, there are certain rules that greatly help to identify exceptions[15]. However, the author does not have a closed mind on the subject.

(d) Are changes made (largely as a concession to TS) in the current revision acceptable? Do they represent too much of a departure from phonemicity? Examples:

·   alternative graphemes for some vowel sounds, depending on position in the word, use of x for /ks/ and /gz/.
·   Permission to retain **the** for definite article if not contracted to **t**.

(f) Apart from the few short cuts mentioned (eg **re-**), Regspel does not use hyphens or any devices to separate syllables where more than two vowels come together. The pronunciation should usually be clear from the rules; and the use of **y** instead of **ie** for the stressed vowel sound /aɪ/ has reduced cases of ambiguity further. But views on the matter would be welcome.

(g) Is Regspel is right to use common graphemes for virtually all the phonemes of spoken English and to rely on conventions to indicate divergent regional pronunciation, (e.g. for pronunciation of the letters "o" and "a")? He believes that his approach is generally consistent with phonemicity, but accepts that there is scope for debate on this subject.

Appendix 1: Sample Texts[16]

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. (556 characters)

It woz on t ferst day ov t new yeer that t anounsment woz maed, almoest simultaeniusly from ttree obzervatoriz, that t moeshn ov t planet Neptuen, t outermoest ov all t planets that weel about t sun, had bekum verry eratik. A reetardaeshn in its velosity had been suspekted in Desember. Then a faent, remoet spek ov lyt woz diskuverd in t reejun ov t perterbd planet. At ferst this did not kawz eny graet exsytment. Syentifik peepl, however, found t intelijens remarkabl enuf eeven befor it bekaem noen that t new body woz rapidly groing larjer and bryter, and that its moeshn woz quyt diferent from t orderly proegres ov t planets. (507 characters; 63% of words changed)

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[15] Of the 1,000 most common English words, roughly 10% do not follow the default stress of the penultimate syllable. But of these, more than half are words of two syllables, and the great majority of such non-default words have certain common prefixes (eg ac-, de-, re- etc) ,which usually shift the stress to the last syllable. So of these 1,000 words only about 5% are genuinely "irregular" as to stress pattern.
[16] All the TS retentions and short cuts permitted in Regspel are used in this Appendix.

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. (538 characters)

We may nowadayz be chairy about uezing t werd 'jeenius', but we stil hav a gwd iedia wot iz ment by it. For exampl, thair ar graet numberz ov verry gifted muezishnz hoo ar admyrd but not kalld jeeniusez. But thair ar utherz, manifestly prodijus, performing ofen at extrordinary erly aejez, a varyety ov feets so komplex that t layman kwd hardly imajin, eeven with t moest desperaet laebor, akumplishing eny ov them, wyl eeven muezishnz ar astonishd: and we then reech for t gwd, handy, vaeg Enlytenment werd and kall them jeeniusez. T list incloodz *Mozart and Mendlessohn*; and despyt all t limiting jujment, it inkloodz Benjamin *Briten*. (510 characters; 60% of words changed)

Ode to a nightingale (John Keats)

Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,	**Tiz not ttroo envy ov thy hapy lot**
But being so happy in thine happiness.	**But being so hapy in thyn hapines**
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees.	**That thow, lyt-winged Dryad ov t treez**
In some melodious plot	**In sum meloedius plot**
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,	**Ov beechen green, and shadoez numberles**
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.	**Singest ov sumer in fwl-ttroeted eez.**
(182 characters)	**(166 characters; 58% of words changed)**

Fuzzy-opaque orthographical visions
 (C Upward)

There was a poor boy couldn't spell	**Thair woz a poor boy cwdn't spel**
Half the words in our language too well.	**Haaf t werdz in our langwaej too wel.**
His teachers thought: "Brain-sick!"	**Hiz teecherz thawt: "Braen-sik!"**
Mum and Dad hoped: "Dyslexic?"	**Mum and Dad hoepd: "Dizlexik?"**
Yet the child rashly jeered:	**Yet t chyld rashly jeerd:**
"What the hell!" (143 characters)	**"Wot t hel!"**
	(127 characters; 66%of words changed)

Appendix 2: SSS phoneme word list

TS	Regspel	TS	Regspel
pen, copy, happen	pen, kopy, hapen	lot, odd, wash	lot, od, wosh
back, bubble, job	bak, bubl, job	strut, bud, love	strut, bud, luv
tea, tight, button	tee, tyt, buton	foot, good, put	fwt, gwd, pwt
city, better	sity, beter	fleece, day, streak	flees, day, streek
day, ladder, odd	day, lader, od	price, high, try	prys, hy, try
key, cock, school	kee, kok, skool	choice, boy	chois, boy
get, giggle, ghost	get, gigl, goest	goose, two, blue	goos, too, bloo
church. match, nature	cherch, mach, naecher	goat, show, no, cold	goet, sho, no, kold
judge, age, soldier	juj, aej, soldjer	mouth, now	moutt, now
fat, coffee, rough, move	fat, kofee, ruf, moov	near, here, serious	neer, heer, seerius
thing, author, path	tting, awttor, patt	square, fair, various	squair, fair, vairius
this, other, smooth	this, uther, smooth	start, father	start, faather
soon, cease sister	soon, sees, sister	thought, law	ttawt, law
zero, zone, roses	zeero, zoen, roezez	north, war	nortt, wor
ship, sure, station	ship, shor, staeshn	cure, poor, jury	kuer, poor, joory
pleasure, vision	plezher, vizhn	nurse, stir	ners, ster
hot, whole, behind	hot, hoel, behynd	courage	kuraej
more, hammer, some	mor, hamer, sum	happy, radiation, glorious	hapy, raediaeshn, glorius
nice, know, funny, sun	nys, no, funy, sun	about, comma, common	about, koma, komon
ring, long, thanks, sung	ring, long, ttanks, sung	influence, situation, annual	inflooens, sitewaeshn, anewal
light, valley, feel	lyt, valy, feel	intend, basic	intend, baesik
yet, use, beauty	yet, uez, buety	stimulus, educate	stimuelus, eduekaet
wet, one, when, queen	wet, wun, wen, queen	cit, bid, hymn	kit, bid, him
dress, bed	dres, bed	trap, bad	trap, bad
total characters TS :	**635**	Total words: 136	
total characters Regspel:	**587**	Total words changed: 107 (78%)	

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