



KS2 Unit 3 Lesson 6 Loughborough: Spelling and its Problems

Crib Sheet

Slides 1 and 2: The first two slides introduce the aims of the lesson. We will look at the word “Loughborough” and examine why it is so difficult to spell, with two “ough” pronounced in two different ways. We will look at the different meanings of parts of the word and explore why English spelling is so tricky.

- We can see that English spelling is difficult for us and for those learning English.
- We can work out why English has such tricky spellings.
- We can see that many other languages have more simple spelling rules.

English spelling is so tricky because the language has influences from many other languages throughout its history: Germanic, Latin, Norse, Norman French, Latin (again) and Greek (through the enlightenment). (See KS2 unit 2 for lessons on this). English has a messy linguistic history which has led to messy spelling.

Many other languages, with a simpler history, or with spelling reforms to make it simpler (German for example,) are phonetic: they are spelt as they sound. They are certainly easier to learn to read and write than English.

Slide 3 is a starter slide that refers back to the previous lesson. The link is “hidden”.

Slide 4: This slide sets the scene and asks pupils to read out the “ough” words on the board. How many different ways have they pronounced that 4-letter grapheme?

Slide 5: This is an extension of the previous slide. If pupils are able, they should write down the different ways they could pronounce the three words on the board. E.g.:

Cough = coff, coh, coch, cuff, cow, coo

Slide 6: Loch and Lough are spelt differently because their origins. Loch is the Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic word for lake or sea inlet. Lough is the anglicized version of Loch. They mean the same, in this case they sound the same, but they have different spelling.

Slide 7: burgh/burg/borough means a walled town. Pupils are asked to think of place names with similar or the same endings: e.g. Norwich, Ipswich, Dunwich, Dulwich, Greenwich. Can they find out what the common link in their chosen place names means? They could use a map or the internet to help with their research.

Slide 8: Loughborough is a tricky word. The borough means “walled town” as we found out in slide 6. And the Lough means “lake”.

Slide 9: The Burghers of Calais is a very famous sculpture by Rodin, situated in Calais. It depicts 6 Burghers (from the Germanic word meaning citizens) and represents freedom an oppression.

Slide 10: This slide looks at another “burger”. This has nothing to do with citizens. The original burger was from Hamburg and was called a “Hamburger” (meaning from Hamburg). Cheeseburger and Beefburger simply used the “burger” part of Hamburger to create a new word.



Slides 11 and 12: All the words shown have silent letters (b, d and g). Can you pupils think of others?

Slide 13: In English we have just 5 vowels. In other languages there are more. French has, for example, è é ê and German has its umlauts ö ü ä. To make up for our lack of vowels, we create more vowel sounds by adding vowels together (e.g., beat, feet), by using a silent “e” to make the vowel longer (e.g., mat – mate) and by adding consonants (e.g., diner, dinner). Ask pupils to sound the words out.

Slide 14: Speed challenge: How quickly can pupils convert the words on the board into words using a silent “e”?

Slide 15: This is a discussion slide. With all the difficulties in English spelling, how is it best taught? Are other languages easier to read and write? Do they have their own example for languages they speak at home?

Slide 16: A plenary slide to consolidate knowledge and skills from this lesson. 3 things that make spelling in English tricky could be: the silent e, silent letters, the use of additional letters to change vowel sounds, the different influences on the English language bringing words and spelling rules from different language families.