

# TRADITIONAL SPELLING REVISED<sup>1</sup>

## COMPLETE GUIDANCE

Traditional Spelling Revised (TSR) is a revised English spelling scheme devised as an alternative to the highly irregular traditional English Spelling system (TR). TSR is a relatively conservative scheme. It seeks to identify the underlying rules of TS but to apply them more consistently, thereby reducing the number of irregularities that have to be memorised. It makes it possible to predict pronunciation from spelling, if not always the reverse. Words are only respelled when they cannot be brought within the rules.

TSR was adopted by the International English Spelling Congress (IESC) in March 2021 as the preferred alternative to TS. The English Spelling Society, which sponsored the Congress, is affording TSR a degree of support and publicity while not closing down the debate on other alternatives. This document is a comprehensive guide to the rules and conventions of TSR. During the current review period (5 years), it is unlikely that any major changes will be made to the scheme. However, on the basis of comments received so far, some minor modification have been made to the previous Guidance issued in June 2022. These are summarised at Annex D.

## SUMMARY

### What TSR retains

- Most of the letters and letter combinations (graphemes) found in TS are used to indicate the same sounds (phonemes) as before<sup>2</sup>.
- No new accents or special letters are introduced – the existing apostrophe, and hyphen / diaeresis are occasionally used to assist in predicting the pronunciation of some vowel combinations or to distinguish different meaning in the case of homonyms.
- TS's rules for indicating vowel length are largely retained – the so-called Magic E and Doubling Rules.
- Where in TS a letter or letters can represent more than one sound, the TS rules for predicting pronunciation are generally retained and codified.
- No respelling is required of Proper Names – at least not during the review period.
- Other than the above, a small number of common irregularly spelled words are left unchanged.
- Also retained from TS are some suffixes and other sub-groups – familiar word combinations not totally compliant with the main rules of TSR, but which can usually be relied on to predict particular sounds.

### What TSR changes

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<sup>2</sup> The symbol < > is used to indicate graphemes, the symbol / / to represent phonemes.

Words are respelled when TS misapplies the underlying rules or contains ambiguity. Main categories below:

- Misapplication of the Doubling Rule.
- Misapplication of the rules for determining how the letter <s> is pronounced.
- Certain ambiguous letter combinations which in TS can represent more than one sound – TSR introduces consistency.
- Removal of redundant letters (with some exceptions).
- Two new letter combinations are introduced: <aa> and <uu>.

## THE DETAIL

### A. VOWEL SOUNDS

Phoneme SAMPA <sup>3</sup>	Phoneme IPA	Graphemes < >	Remarks
{	æ	pan	
e	e	pen	
I	I	p <u>i</u> n	
Q A:	ɒ a:	pot	But see G below.
V	ʌ	p <u>u</u> n	
eI	eI	face, la <u>i</u> d, stay, ne <u>i</u> gh, the <u>y</u>	
i:	i:	scene, fe <u>e</u> d, le <u>a</u> d	In TSR <ie> never represents this sound; <believe> is respelled <beleev>.
aI	aI	side, die, why, dye, buy, sigh	
@U	əʊ	bone, banjo, floe, moan	In TSR <ow> is never used for this sound; e.g. <low> is respelled <lo>.
ju:	ju:	t <u>u</u> ne, d <u>u</u> e, u <u>n</u> it, f <u>e</u> w, E <u>u</u> rope	<eu> for words of Greek origin only.
U	ʊ	stu <u>u</u> d, pu <u>u</u> ding	As there is no distinctive grapheme in TS for this phoneme, TSR introduces a new one - <uu>.
OI	ɔI	bo <u>i</u> l, bo <u>y</u> , dep <u>o</u> siting	<oi> is default; <oy> usually at end of words or before a vowel.
u:	u:	fo <u>o</u> d	
aU	aʊ	pr <u>o</u> ud, n <u>o</u> w, g <u>o</u> wn, bo <u>u</u> gh	<ou> is default; <ow> at end of words, before vowel or before <n>; <ough> is rare and only represents /aU/; <cough> is respelled <coff>.
e@ or e <sup>r</sup>	eə or e <sup>r</sup>	stair, bare	In TSR <ear> no longer represents this phoneme; <bear> is respelled <bair>.
A: or A <sup>r</sup> :	a: or a <sup>r</sup>	star, far	Double the <r> to open the vowel: <harry>.
A: (non-rhotic)	a:	fa <u>a</u> ther, palm	<aa> is a new grapheme but used rarely.
O <sup>r</sup>	ɔ: <sup>r</sup>	for	Double the <r> to open the vowel: <horrid>.
O: (non-rhotic)	ɔ:	fra <u>u</u> d, la <u>w</u> , law <u>y</u> er, call, al <u>u</u> ways, da <u>u</u> ghter, ou <u>g</u> ht	<au> is default; <aw> usually at end of word, before vowel or -<yer> ' <al> only at beginning of words and where implying totality; exceptions: words of Arabic origin: <algebra>.
3: or 3 <sup>r</sup> :	3: or 3 <sup>r</sup> :	her, fir, fur	Double the <r> to open the vowel: <herring>, <stirrup>, <hurry>.
i	i	fairy, fairies`	<-y> becomes <ies> for plurals.
@	ə	afraid, defence, invisible, unsound	Schwa <sup>4</sup>

Where two symbols are shown in the first two columns, the one on the left represents British and the one on the right American / Canadian pronunciation.

<sup>3</sup> SAMPA (Speech Assessment Methods Phonetic Alphabet) is a machine-readable phonetic alphabet, which can represent all the English sounds of the IPA but on an ordinary keyboard. SAMPA rather than IPA characters are used for the most part in this guide.

<sup>4</sup> The indeterminate sound in many unaccented syllables. TSR usually retains the graphemes used in TS for these phonemes.

## B. CONSONANT SOUNDS

Phoneme SAMPA	Phoneme IPA	Graphemes < >	Remarks
b	b	<u>b</u> un	as in TS
d	d	<u>d</u> og	“
g	g	<u>g</u> un	“
h	h	<u>h</u> at	“
l	l	<u>l</u> ink	“
m	m	<u>m</u> an	“
n	n	<u>n</u> ot	“
p	p	<u>p</u> en	“
r	r	<u>r</u> un	“
t	t	<u>t</u> ip	“
v	v	<u>v</u> an	“
w	w	<u>w</u> ine	“
k	k	<u>k</u> id, <u>c</u> ream, <u>f</u> lick, <u>ch</u> emistry	/k/ is default; <c> represents /k/ other than before /e/, /ɪ/, /i:/, /a/ where it represents /s/ :- <cent>, <city>, <cede>, <cyber> etc. <ch> in words of Greek origin only.
f	f	<u>f</u> rog, <u>ph</u> one	<ph> in words of Greek origin only.
dʒ	dʒ	<u>j</u> am, <u>g</u> in	<j> is default; <g> when before /e/, /ɪ/, /i:/, /a/; where this rule is broken, TSR usually adds a <u>: <guide>.
See C4.	tʃ	<u>ch</u> urch, <u>sw</u> itch	<tch> mainly at end of words.
s	s	<u>s</u> un, <u>hiss</u> , <u>c</u> ity	<s> represents /s/ at beginning of words, before or after /k/, /f/, /p/, /t/: <cliffs>, <crisp>; otherwise <s> usually represents /z/. See below C3 below.
T	θ	<u>th</u> ing	<th> is default for /T/ - for /D/ see C4 below.
D	ð	<u>bathe</u> , <u>othe</u> r, <u>this</u>	<th> represents /D/ when stressed and before <e>; also in certain common sign words - See C4 below.
S	ʃ	<u>sh</u> ed	See also D3 below.
z	z	<u>z</u> ebra, <u>jazz</u> , <u>lens</u>	For when <s> represents /z/ see C3 below
j	j	<u>y</u> et, <u>bast</u> ion	See also Annex B
kw	kw	<u>q</u> ueen	<qu> is the usual way of representing this sound.
ks	ks	<u>x</u> terminate	But <x> = /gz/ when followed by a stressed vowel – e.g. exam.
Z	ʒ	<u>pleas</u> ure, <u>les</u> ion	See D3 below.

## C. THE PRINCIPAL RULES OF TSR

### 1. The Magic E and Doubling Rules - Summary

- *Magic e* – adding the silent letter <e> after the consonant in single syllable words lengthens the preceding vowel: pan / pane, set / scene, snip / snipe, rot / rote, fun / fume.
- *Doubling Rule* – in words of more than one syllable, and where there is a **stressed** vowel followed by a single consonant + another vowel, the preceding vowel is usually lengthened: sad / sadist, set / scenic, bit / biter, cut / cuticle.

To reverse this rule, double the consonant: fat / fate / fatter, pet / Pete / petting, bit / bite / bitter, rot / rote / rotten.

### 2. The Magic E and Doubling Rules - Variations

#### (a) The letter <i>

The main variation on the Doubling Rule is that the letter <i> behaves differently from other vowels. In the combination: **stressed <i> + consonant + unstressed <i>** the stressed vowel is usually NOT lengthened. Thus <lipid>, <licit>, <limit>. **BUT** where the second <i> is part of the suffix <ing>, the first <i> is usually long as in <pinning>, <wining>. In these cases, double the consonant to retain the first vowel short: <winning>, <pinning>.

#### (b) The letter combinations <er>, <ir> and <ur> (short or long)

- <ar> - an added final <e> usually turns the sound from /A<sup>r</sup>/ as in <bar> to the sound /e@<sup>r</sup>/, as in <bare, stare, care> etc.; doubling the <r> followed by <e> or <ing> gives /A<sup>r</sup>/ thus <barring> (the way) but <baring> (one's teeth);
- <er> generally obeys the Magic E Rule: <mere>, <here>, <serious>; but <errant>;
- <ir> generally obeys the Magic E Rule: <dire>, <ire>, <mire>, <tire>, <firing>, <wiry>; but <mirth>, <irritant>;
- <or> - addition of other syllables generally does not lengthen the <o> as in <boring>;
- <ur> - generally obeys the Magic E rule: <cure>, <endure>, <lure>, <during> etc.

TS can cause confusion when it comes to doubling the above letter combinations at the beginning of a word. The general TS rule is to double only in cases when the relevant vowel sound is short and stressed: <arrogant>, <errant>, but not where unstressed: <around>, <erect>, <orate>, <irascible> However, there are plenty of TS exceptions: <arrest>, <erroneous>, <irreverent>. TSRs solution is to require doubling of the consonant only when the syllable comes at the beginning of a word, and is both short and stressed. This requires some respellings: <arest>, <eroneous>, <irevverent>. Doubling is however still appropriate in words of more than two syllables where the first syllable bears a secondary stress : <irritation>.

#### (c) The letter <u>

The letter <u> generally obeys the Magic E rule but additionally:

- i. it is almost invariably long, representing /ju:/, at the beginning of a word :<unite>: exceptions: words beginning in <un> with a negative meaning:<uninspiring> or in <up>:<upend>, or when preceding two consonants: <ugly>;
- ii. it is usually long when stressed and preceding another vowel: <fuel>, <dual>;
- iii. it is usually long when unstressed following a vowel and consonant(s): <monument>, <natural>.

#### **(d) The letter <x>**

For the purposes of Magic E and doubling, TSR treats <x> as if it were two letters <k> and <s>. So preceding vowels are always short, eg <boxing>, <sexual>.

### **3. Other Rules**

#### **(a) The combination <al(l)>**

This item represents one of the most difficult areas in which to attempt codification of the underlying rules of TS. However, the following rules are reasonably watertight.

For the most part, <al> and <all> represent the sounds /{l/ as in <algebra> and <allergy>. However, in TS they can also represent the sound /O:l/. Usually this sound is represented by <au> or <aw> as in <laud> or <pawl>, but the sound can also be represented by <al> as in <always> or <all> as in <small>. Such cases occur:

- In a few common words beginning with <al> where there is generally a meaning of totality; here the sound /O:l/ is represented. The main examples are <also>, <albeit>, <almighty>, <almost>, <altogether>, <always>, <although>. This TS spelling is retained in TSR..
- Where <all> is stressed at the end of a word, the sound /O:l/ is also represented, eg <call>, <ball>, <small>l, <fall> etc; also combinations of the above such as <called>, <falling> etc.
- See D.4 Sub-rules for <ald> and <alt>.

These examples should be regarded as exceptions to the general rule that <al> or <all> usually represent the sound /{l/.

#### **(b) The letter <g>**

<g> usually represents the sound /g/ as in <gun>. It represents the sound /dZ/ when coming before /aI/, /e/, /I/, /i:/ <gyro>, <gem>, <gin>, <gene>. Exceptions to this rule are often marked in TS by inserting a <u> as in <guide> and TSR follows this practice.

<gg> always represents the sound /g/ in TSR. It can therefore be used instead of <u> to preserve that sound against succeeding vowels that would otherwise turn it to /dZ/ (eg , <linger>, <longger>). It is particularly relevant for exceptions to the <ange> sub-group where the sound is short rather than long (eg <bangger>, <hangger>). See D4 below.

In cases where the sound is /dʒ/ but it is still necessary to keep the preceding vowel short, TSR inserts a <d> before the <g> as in <badger>, <lodger>, <fudge> etc.

Where <gu> represents /gw/ it is respelled - <langwage>.

### (c) The combination <ow>

This sound in TS can represent two sounds /@U/ as in <crow> and /aU/ as in <gown>.

To avoid confusion, TSR does not use <ow> for the sound /@U/. Where such cases arise in TS, in single syllable words or at the end of words, TSR usually substitutes <o>; thus <flo> (flow), <slo> (slow), or <oe> in case of plurals or past tense, <floes>, <sloed>. In other cases, <oa> is used where the sound is /@U/ and the word has to be respelled for other reasons: <soal> (<soul> in TS).

### (d) The Letter <s>

In TS the letter <s> represents the sound /s/ as in <sound>; but also /z/ as in <please>. (The letter <z> represents /z/ exclusively.)

The following rules concerning <s> are based on TS formulae. <s> represents /s/:

- at the beginning of words (snake);
- before or after the sounds /k/, /f/, /p/, /t/: <clicks, cliffs, clips, its>;
- in the prefixes <dis> and <mis>, eg: <dismay>, <misrule>;
- after the prefixes <con>: <consent> and <per>: <persistent>;
- when the word is in two halves each representing a separate word: <homesick>, <ransack>.

Where the above rules cannot be applied, <s> is often doubled in TS to retain the /s/ sound: <miss, mass, missing>. TSR does not change this.

TSR requires a few respellings where a TS spelling cannot be brought within the rule set out above, eg <dizease>, <mizzerable> (the double <zz> is required to keep the stressed vowel short.).

In TSR, some prefixes may be hyphenated to ensure predictability of the /s/sound: <re-send>, <co-signatory>.

### (e) The Combination <th> - /T/ and /D/

In TS, both sounds are represented by the combination <th>. TSR continues to use this single grapheme for both phonemes. However, the following rules help to predict of the sound represented.

- by default <th> represents the sound /T/ as in <thin>, <thanks>, <thimble>;
- <th> represents /D/ in single syllable words before the vowel <e>: <lathe>, <bathe>, <seethe>, <loathe>; also in words containing the combination <other> - <brother>  
**Exception <bother>.**
- <th> also represents /D/ in certain common irregular words, largely of single syllables, which are also demonstrative or interrogative in purpose; see D. 2 below.

## (f) The Letter <y>

In TS the letter <y> can represent three sounds. These are the fairly reliable and TSR rules are based on them:

- i. the sound /j/ at the beginning of words: <yet>; between vowels: <beyond>; before <-yer> as in <lawyer>;
- ii. the sound /aI/ - other than at the beginning of a word and stressed: <why>, <dying>;
- iii. the sound /i/ at the end of a word unstressed: <fairy>, <pretty>. NB plurals of such nouns are respelled <ies> as in <fairies>;

Where <y> represents /I/ in TS, TSR respells it as <i> to avoid ambiguity with the sound /aI/ eg <distopic>, <mistery>, <mith>.

## (g) Miscellaneous

- i Doubling a consonant at the end of a word is normal in TS with words ending in <f>, and <l>: <stuff>, <fill>, although this does not in any way affect the pronunciation. TSR does not change this.
- ii <-ed>, as in TS, is normally added at the end of a word to indicate passive mood or past tense: <sifted>, <gifted>.
- iii <-es>, as in TS, is normally added at the end of a word to indicate plural or third person singular of a (eg <fishes>, <finishes>, BUT there is no added <e> where in pronunciation there is no schwa between the penultimate letter and <s> thus: <flips>, <sits>, <kicks>.
- iv Some vowel combinations in TS can represent one sound or alternatively two separate sounds, such as <ea>, <ie>; **see Annex A** for guidance on how TSR distinguishes pronunciation in these cases;
- v <sc> follows the rules for the pronunciation of <c>: <scam, scene, scythe> etc. ;
- vi <sch> normally represents /sk/ as in <school>; in some words, largely of German origin, the combination represents /S/ as in *schmaltz*, but these can be treated as loan words and *italicised*;
- vii schwa - TSR generally retains the TS spelling for unaccented syllables, except where the TS combination is itself irregular; thus: <about>, <ensnare>, <intelligent>, <common>, <upon> . BUT <forren> instead of <foreign>; the key to decisions here is to pronounce the word slowly at dictation speed; if the sound of the unaccented syllable is not what the letters predict, then respelling may be necessary.
- viii Double <cc> represents the sound /ks/ as in <accept>, <access>, <occident>. Where in TS a double <cc> represents the sound /k/, (eg <occupy>) TSR substitutes <ck> for <cc> to avoid ambiguity of pronunciation. Thus: <ockupy>.
- ix <-our> (as a suffix) adopts American conventions i.e. <or> as in <labor>, <savior> etc.
- x <queue> becomes <kue> as the TS spelling is totally irregular.



## D. IRREGULAR SPELLINGS RETAINED FROM TS

### 1. Proper Nouns (eg John, London, Canada)

No changes are required during the review period. But it is open for people and authorities to respell their own and organisations' names now if they wish, e.g. <Jon>, <Lundon>, <Cannada> etc.

### 2. Other Common Irregular words

The following very common words<sup>5</sup> also retain their original spelling:

- i personal pronouns and adjectives: <I>, <you><sup>6</sup>, <he>, <she>, <we>, <me>, <us>, <your>, <their(s)>, <them>.
- ii parts of the verbs to be and to have: <are>, <was>, <were>, <have>, <having>
- iii numbers: <(n)one>, <(once)>, <two>, <four>, <seven>, <eleven>, <twelve>, <fourteen>, <seventeen>;
- iv days of the week: <Monday>, <Wednesday>, <Saturday>;
- v months of the year: <January>, <February>, <April>, <July>;
- vi seasons: <Autumn>;
- vii demonstrative pronouns / adjectives / adverbs – single syllable words beginning with <th>: <than>, <that>, <then>, <thence>, <there>, <these>, <this>, <those>, <thus> (also <with>);
- viii interrogative pronouns / adjectives beginning with <w>: <what>, <where>, <who>, <whose>;
- ix miscellaneous: 3 most common: <the>, <of>, <to(day)>, plus 12 others: <any(one)>, <(e)very>, <eye>, <(n)either>, <nothing>, <some>, <super>, <very>, <with>, <woman>, <women>, <yes>.

*NB in vii the irregularity is principally due to <th> representing /D/ rather than /T/ and in two cases to the fact that the final <s> represents /s/ rather than /z/: <this> and <thus>.*

### 3. Common Suffixes

A number of common word endings do not comply fully with the normal rules of TS but can usually be relied on to represent particular sounds; these are retained in their original spelling.

*Those involving the /S/ sound*

- -tion- (nation, depletion, ignition, lotion, solution)
- -ssion (passion, confession, mission)
- -cial (facial, special, official)
- -cious (spacious, specious, meretricious, atrocious).
- -cean (ocean)
- -cian (musician)

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<sup>5</sup> About 50 other than Proper Nouns.

<sup>6</sup> The second person singular or plural may also be represented in TSR by a capital <U> - 'If U please.'

### *Those involving the /Z/ sound*

-sion (invasion, adhesion, elision, explosion, confusion)  
-sure (embrasure, pleasure, composure)

The Magic E and Doubling Rules apply generally to the above suffixes. Thus <ignition> unlike the other examples does not lengthen the first <i>.

Similarly, the suffix <-ssion> does not lengthen the preceding vowel because of the doubling of <s>. TSR uses <ssion> instead of -tion when the preceding vowel is stressed, but needs to be kept short; thus: <nation> but <nassional>

The combinations <-cial> and <-sure> are mainly compliant, but the letter <e> in these combinations (like <i>) usually has to be treated as an exception in not lengthening the preceding vowel: <special> <plesure>, <plesure>.

The combination <-cious> observes the Magic E and Doubling Rules (eg <spacious>, <specious>, <meretricious>, <atrocious> etc) but an exception is <precious>. NB <ous> without the <i> is also pronounced /Vs/ (eg <famous>).

### *The combination <-le>, pronounced /@l/*

The combination: vowel + consonant + <le> at the end of a word produces the sound /@l/ as in <-able>, <ible>, <ple> and many more. The Magic E and doubling rules normally apply as if the preceding consonant and <l> were a single letter. Thus: <apple> (vowel short); <table> (vowel long); also <ible>; thus <risible> but <Bible>; <noble> but <nobble>.

## **4. Sub-groups**

There are a number of other letter combinations which do not strictly follow the rules of TSR but can usually be relied on to represent particular sounds.

i	The <ald> combination in words such as <alderman>.
ii	The <-alk> combination at the end of words such as <balk>, <calk>, <stalk>, <talk>, <walk>.
iii	The <alt> combination in words such as <altar>, <alter>, <alternative>, <alto>, <b>Exception: &lt;aluminium&gt;.</b> See also C3(a) above.
iv	The <ange> combination in words such as <danger>, <angel>, <ranger> etc. There are however exceptions to this sub-rule in TS such as <banger>, <hanger>. These are respelled with a double <gg> thus <angger> which turns the <g> into /g/ rather than /dZ/ and indicates a short <a> rather than a long one. <flange> respelled <flandge>.
v	The <-aste> combination at the end of words such as <baste, haste, paste, taste, waste>.
vi	The <-ign> combination at the end of words and stressed as in <sign>, <assign>, <malign> – but not at the beginning of words: igneous, signet.
vii	The <-ind> combination in single syllable words such as <bind>, <find>, <kind>, <mind>, <rind>, <wind> (verb)>. (TS <wind> (noun) respelled <winnd>.
viii	The <-ive> suffix in words such as <give>, <forgive>, <respective>, <contemplative>; <live> vb. int. is respelled <livv> to distinguish it from <live> adj.

ix	The <old> combination at the end of words such as <old>, <bold>, <cold>, <fold>, <sold>, <told>, <wold> - plus combinations such as <folder>.
x	The <-olk> combination in <folk> and <yolk>.
xi	The <ore> combination as a suffix or at end of words such as <therefore>, <shore>. <more> etc; also <fore> as a prefix when it means 'near' as in <foreshore>.
xii	The <-ould> combination in <could>, <should>, & <would>. The sound /U/ in all other words is represented by <uu>: st <u>u</u> ud -TS stood.
xiii	The <-other> group in words such as other, brother, mother, another, smother. Stress is on the <o> and must be followed by <-ther>. <b>Exception: &lt;bother&gt;.</b>
xiv	The <war->combination at the beginning of words such as <war>, <ward>, <warn>, <warp>, <warble>, <warden>, <wart>.
xv	The <wor-> combination at the beginning of words: <word>, <work>, <worship>, exception: <worn>.

## 5. Loan Words

Foreign words whose pronunciation and original spelling are retained in TS are italicised in TSR to indicate that different spelling conventions apply. Examples: *chaise longue*, *chef*, *Lieder*, *junta*, *scherzo*.

## E. SPELLINGS THAT TSR CHANGES

The general rule is to consider whether the TS spelling could leave any doubt as to the pronunciation. If it could not, then the spelling is not normally changed. Subject to that overriding principle:

- TS combinations that are ambiguous are reformed. Thus, in TSR <ie> can only represent the sounds in <die> and <fairies> and not in <believe>; <ow> can only represent the sound in <town> and not in <tow>. Such TS instances are respelled.
- TSR removes letters that are redundant.: <wrong>, <gnash>, <h'our>, <'write>. But See Homonyms at F. below.
- Final <e> is generally omitted when the preceding vowel is short: <dove> becomes <duv>. But not with <-fore> and <ive>. See D.4. (viii) & (xi).
- TSR corrects instances where the doubling rule has been misapplied by TS – <committee>, <aceommodate>.
- TSR respells words such as <dystopia> as <distopia> to avoid confusion of pronunciation.

The largest single category of respellings arise from TS's inconsistent application of the Magic E and Doubling Rule.

## F. HOMONYMS

As some common sign words (with irregular spelling) are retained and as TSR allows some phonemes to be represented by more than one grapheme, this usually permits homonyms with different spellings but the same sound to be retained from TS. (e.g. stare / stair, sight / site, none / nun). Where respellings which involve the removal of a redundant letter might result in confusion of meaning, certain distinguishing devices are sometimes used by TSR. Thus, one may insert an apostrophe to indicate the letter omitted e.g. 'our (hour) - our (possessive adjective). Doubling or additional letters may also be used, eg <sun> (celestial object) <sunn> (male child); <bloo> (colour), <bloow> (past tense of <blow>).

## G. STRESS

TSR does not mark stress systematically. However, some aspects of the system make it easier to predict where the stress lies. Thus doubling (other than of <g> or <s>) will usually indicate that the preceding vowel is stressed: <comittee>, <different> etc.

## H. INTERPRETATION OF TSR IN DIFFERENT DIALECTS

TSR seeks to provide common graphemes for all the main phonemes of spoken English in a manner that will permit speakers of different dialects to interpret the graphemes according to their own traditions.

Many words are pronounced differently in different dialects, in particular as between American/ Canadian and British / other Commonwealth. However, most of these differences are relatively slight and insufficient to warrant separate spellings. This is because at the moment the speakers of different dialects can usually interpret common TS graphemes according to their own traditions.

TSR contains a detailed strategy for trying to ensure that its spellings can be understood and interpreted **by those speaking the main dialects of English throughout the world. This strategy set out in full at [Annex B](#).**

## I. CONCLUSION

TSR is an attempt at conservative reform. As such, it requires more rules to be learned than in some more radical reform schemes. However, the student who has memorised the various rules will generally be able to predict the pronunciation from the spelling if not always vice versa. And the task presented by TS of memorising an array of irregular words is greatly reduced. Change is kept to a minimum in the interests of overcoming the instinctive opposition throughout the world's languages to any alteration to existing spelling. TSR does not look very different in print from TS, but the changes that it makes are all designed to create greater predictability.

TSR respells about a quarter of the 3,000 most common words. However, the proportion falls to below 15% in some sample texts.

Inevitably the current version of TSR may attract further comments and suggestions. This guide is not set in tablets of stone.

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## INTERPRETATION OF CERTAIN DIGRAPHS

A few letter combinations represent a single sound in TSR but can also represent two separate sounds. The following list shows how such different pronunciation can be predicted.

<ea> – a grapheme in TSR normally representing the sound /i:/ as in <bead>. When there are two separate sounds, a hyphen or diæresis is inserted <cre-ate>, <hercule-an>.

<ei(gh)> - normally represents the sound /eI/ as in <vein>, <eight>. TSR treats <being> as a sign word along with other parts of the verb to be.

<eo> always represents two separate sounds. Thus <theory>, <leonine>. No need for hyphen.

<ia> always represents two separate sounds. But to assist with prediction of pronunciation, words such as <liar> are respelled <lyar>. Otherwise, <ia> represents the sound in <defoliate.>

<ie> - a grapheme in TSR normally representing the sound /aI/ as in <die> or /i/ as in fairies (plurals only). It no longer represents the sound in <believe>. When <ie> represents two separate sounds, insert a hyphen or diæresis : <leni-ent>. Words such as <science> are respelled <scyence>.

<io> always represents two separate sounds. But to assist prediction of pronunciation, words such as <lion> are respelled <lyon>. Otherwise, <i> represents the /j/ sound in <bastion>

<iu> always represents two separate sounds. But to assist prediction of pronunciation, words such as <triumph> are respelled <tryumph>. Otherwise <iu> represents the sound as in <helium>.

<oi> normally represents a single phoneme as in <join>. Where it represents two separate sounds, TSR inserts a hyphen or diæresis, <herro-in>. <oing> - is always interpreted as /@UIN/ - eg <going>. So no need for hyphen or diæresis in such cases.

<ua> is deemed to represent the sound as in <usual>. See also C.2(c).

<ui> is deemed to represent the sound in <ruin>.

## INTERPRETATION OF TSR IN DIFFERENT DIALECTS

TSR seeks to provide common graphemes for all the main phonemes of spoken English in a manner that will permit speakers of different dialects to interpret the graphemes according to their own traditions.

Many words are pronounced differently in different dialects, in particular as between American/ Canadian and British / other Commonwealth. However, most of these differences are relatively slight and insufficient to warrant separate spellings. This is because at the moment the speakers of different dialects can usually interpret common TS graphemes according to their own pronunciation traditions. As TSR does not make many changes to TS, the same considerations apply.

The following strategy is adopted.

**Proper Nouns** - For the moment, any word which starts with a capital letter (other than marking the start of a sentence) can be respelled at a later stage. The decision as to respelling is left to the individual / organisation concerned.

**Current Differences between American and British spellings** - TSR prefers American over British spelling in the following cases: <-or> over <-our> (labor), <-ize> over <-ise> (theorize) and <-yze> over <-yse>, (analyze), <-er> over <-re> (center), <-og> over <-ogue> (catalogue). BUT in some cases, both American and British spellings will be changed as a result of TSR's rules. This is particularly the case with doubling. Thus: <parralel> (parallel), <cullor> (color).

**Stress** - TSR makes no special provision for stress. Accordingly, when the only difference between American / Canadian and British or other pronunciations is in the syllable to be stressed, TSR does not mark this divergence. Generally, in such cases, TS spelling is preserved. People will pronounce the word with the stress that is familiar to them: <adult>, <thanksgiving>.

**Loan words** - As set out above, where the original (foreign) spelling of a loan word is frequently retained, TSR's approach is not to change this but to italicise it showing that TSR conventions do not apply. It will remain open to English speakers to interpret these spellings in accordance with their own traditions: *chargé d'affaires*, *chaise longue* etc.

**Schwa** (unstressed syllables) - A large number of divergent pronunciations as between British and American usage actually arise from the fact that the unstressed syllable is pronounced only slightly differently, eg <surplus>, where British tend to treat the second syllable as schwa /@/ and Americans pronounce the unstressed syllable as /V/. In such cases, TSR sees no need to change the TS spelling, leaving different dialects to retain their slightly different pronunciations.

### *Predictable variance*

Common lists of English phonemes show a number of graphemes whose different interpretation as between British and American usage is fairly standard and therefore predictable. They include:

<lot>, <odd>, <wash >- American / Canadian tend to the sound: /A:/ - British / other Commonwealth: tend to retain the sound :/Q/. TSR maintains the common grapheme <o> for these sounds. The elision of the two sounds is not always complete in American / Canadian pronunciation. Also, interpretation based on one dialect only for such an important grapheme would have difficulty in gaining acceptance throughout the ESW.

<goat>, <show>, <no> British: /@U/ American: /oU/. The difference in pronunciation as between British and American is too slight to warrant different graphemes: existing formulae are used, (but <ow> no longer represents this sound in TSR, so <show> becomes <sho>.

<square>, < fair>, <various>, <nurse>, <stir>, <near>, <here>. These are examples of rhotic divergence. Some English speakers, particularly those using Received Pronunciation (RP), suppress the /r/ in words such as <farm> or <heather>; most do not (eg Scottish, West Country (UK), American). TSR keeps the <r> in the knowledge that rhotic and non-rhotic speakers will interpret the grapheme in accordance with their own traditions.

### *The 'bath' words*

This covers combinations of <a> with <-sc>, <-sp>, <-nt>, <-ft> ,<-ns>,<-st>, <th>; also sometimes <aff> and <ass>. UK 'RP' speakers pronounce the <a> in these circumstances as /A:/. Other accents, including American /Canadian and some British ones, pronounce the <a> as /{/ - thus <clasp>, <flask>, <aunt>, <daft>, <chance>, <bath>, and <staff> etc. TSR uses <a> in these instances in the knowledge that RP speakers will continue to interpret <a> as /A:/ and most others as /{/. Generally TS <a> on its own is treated by TSR as representing /{/. A useful mnemonic to identify many of such words: 'The daft rascal passed a raspberry to his aunt as he pranced in the staff bath.'

### *Unpredictable variance - 'yod' dropping*

This refers to words such as <duty>, <tune> etc. American /Canadian pronunciation of the <u> in some of these cases comes out as /u:/. Other traditions, including British, insert a /j/ before /u:/. TSR does not allocate different spellings to these words as this would greatly increase the number of variants - there are about 50 such words in frequent usage not including compounds. Equally, requiring non-Americans to adopt a spelling based on a pronunciation so distinctively different from their own might hinder acceptance of the scheme outside the USA.

TSR's solution is to insert an apostrophe after <u'> in these instances. This will alert American and Canadian speakers to pronounce the vowel as /u:/ and others to pronounce it as /ju:/. Thus <du'ty> (duty), <su'> (sue), and <tu'n> (tune) etc.

### *Unpredictable variance - Miscellaneous*

There remain some words where American and other pronunciations differ in an unpredictable manner. TSR looks at these on an individual basis. It usually adopts the most common pronunciation in the English-Speaking World. However, it also avoids changing the TS



spelling wherever possible. Example: <exit>. The pronunciation varies both sides of the Atlantic between /eksIt/ and /egzIt/. TSR keeps the TS spelling. People will carry on pronouncing it as they are accustomed.

TSR does, however, permit a few divergent spellings as between American / Canadian and other usages for a small number of words where the difference in pronunciation each side of the Atlantic is too great permit a common grapheme. TSR provides the following alternatives (American / Canadian - British / other Commonwealth): <tomato>, <tomaato>, <vase>/ <vaaz> (or *vase*), <booy> / <b'oy>. <(N)either> is a sign word and retains its original spelling: people will pronounce it differently, depending on their dialect and preference.

It is hoped that the above strategy will make it possible for common spellings to apply in most cases to words that are pronounced differently in various parts of the English-Speaking World.

## SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTIONS

### *Extracts from well-known song lyrics from the English-Speaking World*

TS In a cavern, in a canyon, excavating for a mine, lived a miner, forty-niner, and his daughter Clementine. (US)

TSR In a cavvern in a canyon, excavating for a mine, livved a miner, forty-niner and his daughter Clementine.

TS A North Country maid down to London had strayed, although with her nature it did not agree. (UK)

TSR A North Cuntry maid down to London had strayed, altho with her nature it did not agree.

TS With glowing hearts we see thee rise, the True North strong and free! (Canada)

TSR With gloing h'arts we see thee rise, the Troo North strong and free!

TS Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong under the shade of a coolibah tree. (Australia)

TSR Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong under the shade of a *coolibah* tree.

TS There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet, as that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet. (Ireland)

TSR There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet, as that vale in whose buusom the bright wauters meet.

### *Two memorable quips*

TS I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member. (Groucho Marks)

TSR I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member.

TS No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar. (Abraham Lincoln)

TSR No man has a guud enuff memmory to be a successful lyar.

(6% changed)

### *Gettysburg Address*

Fourscore and seven years ago our faathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in libberty and deddicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a grait civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so deddicated, can long endure. We are met on a grait battle-feeld in that war. We have cum to deddicate a portion of that feeld, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives, that that nation might livv. It is altogether fitting and propper that we should do this, but in a larger senss we cannot deddicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallo this ground. The brave men, living and ded, who struggled here, have consecrated it far abuv our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can

never forget what they did here. It is for us the livving, rather, to be deddicated to the grait task remaining before us that from these onored ded we take increassed devotion to that cause for which they gave the last fuul mesure of devotion - that we here highly resolv that these ded shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that guvernement of the peeple, by the peeple, for the peeple, shall not perrish from the erth.

(14% changed)

### *Some Common words*

#### Words changed in Green

Sign words, suffixes and sub-groups underlined

*Loan words in italics*

NB 3,000- word list to follow

TS	TSR
a	a
actually	actually
add	add
ago	ago
American	<u>American</u>
animal	animal
another	<u>another</u>
any	<u>any</u>
apply	aply
around	around
arrive	arive
artist	artist
as	as
baby	baby
bass	baiss
because	becoz
believe	beleev
better	better
bill	bill
billion	billion
blood	bluud
blue	bloo
build	bild
call	call
campaign	campain
can	can
career	career
chair	chair
change	<u>change</u>

check	check
choose	choose
church	church
claim	claim
clearly	clearly
Close (v)	close
common	common
community	comunity
company	cumpany
control	controal
cover	cuvver
create	cre-ate
current	current
deal	deal
decide	decide
describe	describe
design	design
develop	devellop
development	devellopment
difference	difference
difficult	difficult
draw	draw
education	education
else	elss
employee	employee
evening	evening
ever	ever
exactly	exactly
experience	experi-ence
explain	explain
far	far
few	few
figure	figgur
fine	fine
firm	firm
focus	focus
foot	fuut
for	for
force	force
form	form
government	guvernment
green	green
guess	guess
guy	guy
happen	happen
hard	hard
head	hed
health	helth
heart	h'art

help	help
herself	herself
high	high
his	his
home	home
Hour (time)	'our
however	however
include	inclood
individual	individdual
interest	interest
international	internashonal
into	into
involve	involv
itself	itself
kid	kid
kill	kill
large	large
lay	lay
learn	lern
letter	letter
light	light
likely	likely
line	line
little	little
look	luuk
loss	loss
low	lo
maintain	maintain
major	major
make	make
management	mannagement
matter	matter
me	me
meet	meet
meeting	meeting
minute	minit
model	moddel
moment	moment
money	munny
month	munth
more	more
music	music
nation	nation
nature	nature
necessary	nessessary
need	need
network	network
night	night
no	no

occur	ocur
off	off
ok	ok
on	on
once	<u>once</u>
only	oanly
onto	onto
operation	operation
order	order
others	others
out	out
page	page
particularly	partickularly
past	past
patient	<u>patient</u>
movie	moovy
per	per
period	period
personal	personal
place	place
point	point
police	<i>police</i>
policy	pollicy
position	position
practice	practice
prove	proov
public	public
quality	quollity
question	question
race	race
realise	re-alise
recognise	reckognise
record(n)	reccord(n)
report	report
rest	rest
return	return
right	right
same	same
school	school
seat	seat
section	section
security	security
seem	seem
send	send
sex	sex
shake	shake
shoot	shoot
should	<u>should</u>
shoulder	sholder

show	sho
side	side
similar	similar
since	since
single	single
sit	sit
site	site
situation	situation
size	size
skill	skill
source	sorce
south	south
special	special
start	start
state	state
store	store
structure	structure
student	student
study	studdy
such	such
support	suport
ten	ten
than	than
the	the
their	their
then	then
theory	the-ory
they	they
thing	thing
third	third
thought	thought
through	throo
thus	thus
to	to
together	together
tonight	tonight
too	too
top	top
toward	toward
town	town
trial	tryal
truth	trooth
tv	tv
understand	understand
unit	unit
us	us
use(n)	uess(n)
usually	usualy
very	very

wait	wait
weight	weight
west	west
whatever	<u>whatever</u>
when	when
where	<u>where</u>
while	while
within	within
work	work
worry	wurry
would	<u>would</u>
write (a letter)	'rite
your	<u>your</u>



### SUMMARY OF MAIN CHANGES SINCE EDITION OF JUNE 2022

- Minor amplifications to C2. (Variations on the Magic E and Doubling Rules).
- Addition of <eye>, and <super> to list of sign words D.3
- Addition of <ald>, <alt>, <ange>, <(f)ore>, and <ive> to the list of sub-groups D.4
- Modification of redundant <e> rule (Section E).
- Expansion of previous guidance on how certain digraphs with dual pronunciation can be differentiated. [Annex A](#).