

Lytspel: Documentation of Changes

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In response to the vibrant discussions during the IESC, I held two surveys which have led to several changes in Lytspel:

- Stress is now marked using acute accents instead of apostrophes. A new set of rules has been determined to reduce the number of words that need stress markers, without burdening writers with too much complexity. The exact rules are described in the updated version of my personal view (the 12-page summary), which I have uploaded in parallel with this document.
- The use of accents to mark stress is now optional. It is still recommended, but those who consider it unnecessary or too complicated can simply omit all accents. Keep in mind, however, that there are a few words which differ only in the presence of absence of an accent, such as «díscuss» <discus> versus «discuss» <discuss>.
- «ue» is now used both in words where everyone says /ju:/ («confues, uenit» <confuse, unit>) and in those where Americans omit the /j/ («nue, tuen» <new, tune>).
- Traditionally, the vowel in “horse” and “north” was pronounced differently from the one in “hoarse” and “force,” but many speakers no longer make this distinction, which has now also been dropped from Lytspel. Instead, «or» is now used in all such words: «horss, north, forss, ignor» <horse/hoarse, north, force, ignore>.
- On the other hand, the distinction between «wh» in words such as «whyn, which» <whine, which> and «w» in «wyn, wich» <wine, witch> which exists in traditional spelling has now also been added to Lytspel. Many people speak both these consonant sounds the same way, but not everybody does.
- The number of cases where a schwa before the last consonant of a word is omitted in writing has been reduced. It is still omitted between /b, p, k/ and word-final // («flexebl, simpl, articl» <flexible, simple, article>) as well as in words ending in /z@m/ («criticism, sarcasm»). In all other cases, however, the schwa is now written in the usual way, e.g. «pusel, hospitel, leegel, rídhem» <puzzle, hospital, legal, rhythm>.
- /al/ before another vowel is now written «iy» instead of “ai”: «diyámiter, quiet» <diameter, quiet>.

While the surveys confirmed that the two sounds traditionally written <th> should be distinguished in writing – with «dh» used for the voiced sound in words such as

«smuudh, wurdhi» «smooth, worthy» – they also led to the addition of a new rule that greatly reduces the frequency of «dh» in texts:

- While otherwise written «dh», /D/ remains «th» in the frequent words «aulthó, tho, than, the, then, thay, them, thair, thiss, that, thus» «although, though, than, the, then, they, them, their or there, this, that, thus» as well as in all words ending in /D@`/, such as «anuther, bother, muther, whether» «another, bother, mother, whether».
- This spelling is preserved in derivatives of all these words, such as «nevertheléss, nuntheléss» «nevertheless, nonetheless» from «the», «themselvs» «themselves» from «them», «thairs, thairby, thairfor» «theirs, thereby, therefore» from «thair», «thees» «these» from «thiss», «thoas» «those» from «that», «utherwys» «otherwise» from «uther» «other». The adjectives «farthest, furthest» are considered derivatives of «farther, further» and thus also written with «th».
- To distinguish them, the small number of words ending in /T@`/ is written with «thur»: «Arthur, authur, eethur, panthur» «Arthur, author, ether/aether, panther». Since no English words end in /T3:/, this spelling is unambiguous.

My thanks go to everyone who participated in the surveys and discussions!

Updated Sample: The Gétisburg Ádress (The Gettysburg Address)

Four scor and seven yeers ago our faathers braut forth upon thiss continent, a nue naition, conseevd in Liberti, and dedicaited tu the proposition that all men ar criáited eequel.

Now wi ar engaijd in a grait sivil wor, testing whether that naition, or eni naition so conseevd and so dedicaited, can long enduer. Wi ar met on a grait batel-feeld ov that wor. Wi hav cum tu dedicait a portion ov that feeld, as a fynel resting plaiss for thoas hu heer gaiv thair lyvs that that naition myt liv. It is aultogéther fiting and proper that wi shood du thiss.

But, in a larjer senss, wi can not dedicait – wi can not consicrait – wi can not halo – thiss ground. The braiv men, living and ded, hu strugeld heer, hav consicraited it, far abuv our poor power tu ad or detract. The wurd wil litel noat, nor long rimember whot wi say heer, but it can never ferget whot thay did heer. It is for uss the living, rather, tu bee dedicaited heer tu the unfinishd wurk which thay hu faut heer hav thus far so nobli advanssd. It is rather for uss tu bee heer dedicaited tu the grait task rimaining bifor uss – that from thees onerd ded wi taik increessd divoation tu that caus for which thay gaiv the last fool mezher ov divoation – that wi heer hyli resolv that thees ded shal not hav dyd in vain – that thiss naition, under God, shal hav a nue burth ov freedem – and that government ov the peepl, by the peepl, for the peepl, shal not perrish from the urth.