



Spell It Out: The Curious, Enthralling and Extraordinary Story of English Spelling

David Crystal

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The fascinating and surprising history of English spelling from David Crystal, everyone's favorite expert logophile

With *The Story of English in 100 Words*, David Crystal took us on a tour through the history of our language. Now, with *Spell It Out*, he takes on the task of answering all the questions about how we spell: "Why is English spelling so difficult?" Or "Why are good spellers so proud of their achievement that when they see a misspelling they condemn the writer as sloppy, lazy, or uneducated?" In thirty-seven short, engaging and informative chapters, Crystal takes readers on a history of English spelling, starting with the Roman missionaries' sixth century introduction of the Roman alphabet and ending with where the language might be going. He looks individually at each letter in the alphabet and its origins. He considers the question of vowels and how people developed a way to tell whether or not it was long or short. He looks at influences from other cultures, and explains how English speakers understood that the "o" in "hopping" was a short vowel, rather than the long vowel of "hoping". If you've ever asked yourself questions like "Why do the words "their", "there" and "they're" sound alike, but mean very different things?" or "How can we tell the difference between "charge" the verb and "charge" the noun?" David Crystal's *Spell It Out* will spell it all out for you.

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