Dhe Olimpic Fonetic Alfabet and Speling Sistem
Az üzd in dhe novelet *Haafway Dhär!*

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Sampel text

Fyerwurks explöded intu dhe haaf-lyt, sprinkling sparkling shauers ov red, göld and green brilians över dhe upturnd fäses, tuching of ansering reflecshons in dhe voulted seeling fortie mëters övehed, dhe glass-frunted shops and ofises, dhe täperd latis sculptjur at wun end ov dhe scwär, dhe ghyant video screen at dhe udher. A frenzie ov cheering, claping, woops ov jhoy. Abuv dhair heds bläzd aut twu wurds in leters ov fyer: *HAAFWAY DHÄR!*

Dhe problems which a fonetic wryting sistem needs tu adres

Regularising the chaotic spelling of the Modern English Spelling System (MESS) in accordance with the alphabetic principle of writing is not a task with a single right or wrong answer. A number of arbitrary choices must be made among possible alternatives.

The major idiosyncratic features of MESS which invite attention are as follows.

(1) *An arbitrary spelling convention is to use a double consonant to indicate a preceding short vowel.* Thus (mile/mill), (grace/grass), (bake/back) (all words quoted in brackets are in MESS spelling). But this convention is only used on an ad hoc basis: compare (bat/battle, but/butt, kiss/this, mass/gas, metal/mettle), and so on.

(2) *Very many words have a silent -e at the end.* In one-syllable words of Germanic origin this has the function of making the preceding vowel a long one, thus (rose, name). Again

there are inconsistencies, as in (bridge), where the silent -e fails to lengthen the vowel (it is actually functioning to soften the dg), or (literate), where again the final vowel is a short one, or (live), which may be pronounced with a long vowel or a short one according to context.

Both of these are ad hoc spelling conventions which in any properly alphabetic system should be retired: each vowel sound should stand by itself without needing support from the surrounding consonants or from a disconnected silent -e.

(3) *Whether to cover all consonants with existing consonant letters, using two-letter combinations to make up the shortfall as in MESS, or introduce accented letters or special phonetic characters.* This affects nine consonants: th (unvoiced), th (voiced), sh, zh (normally written s as in pleasure), ch (as in church), j/g/dg (as in judge), ch (as in loch, Bach), ng, ll (in Welsh words only).

Consonants in general are not a serious problem, as most have a well defined primary function, and secondary uses such as gh/ph for f (tough, phone) or ti/ch/si for sh (nation, machine, tension) are easy to spot and correct. Obvious convenient digraphs exist for sounds not covered by the basic English alphabet, including zh for the sound of s in (pleasure) and kh for the sound of ch in (loch). Logically, the voiced equivalent of th in (thin) is written dh: dhis (this).

Resolving a number of other issues depends more upon personal style or influences from other languages than strict logic.

(4) *Whether to cover all vowels with existing vowel letters, using two-letter combinations for long vowels and diphthongs, or introduce accented letters or special phonetic characters.* This is a more serious problem than for consonants, since English has around 20 distinct vowel sounds for which only six vowel letters exist in the alphabet. It is also a legacy of the facts that English is a fusion of Romance and Germanic languages with different spelling conventions, and that the great vowel shift in early modern English was not matched by a parallel spelling shift.

(5) *Whether to assign the letter y as a vowel or a consonant, or keep it with both functions.* At present it may be a consonant (yes), a short vowel (myth), a related long vowel (my), another related long vowel (funny), or a diphthong-maker (day, boy).

(6) *Whether to preserve the illogical pronunciation of certain two-letter vowels or use the combinations in a more logical way.* This affects au/aw, ou/ow and ai/ay.

The most common sound of the MESS au/aw combination matches the o sound in (port), while the ou/ow combination is usually sounded as a diphthong with an ah-component followed by an -oo component (sound, now); the first is thus logically associated with the letter o, while the second is associated with the letter a, and is actually written au in German. The two spellings are therefore the wrong way round, from a rational point of view. One has to decide whether to preserve the idiosyncratic MESS spellings or to swap them around. The situation is complicated by occasional words which already use the

vowels the other way round, such as (four, ought, bought, sought, thought), while (naught / nought) can be written either way with the same pronunciation. Meanwhile a number of words (low, know) use the ow spelling for a completely different vowel, while others (group, double, cough, would) use the ou spelling for other, quite different vowels.

The ai digraph is used by the International Phonetic Alphabet in a logical fashion to represent the vowel sound of (nice). In MESS it is almost never used for this purpose (except in the word aisle), but rather for the sound which in the IPA is represented [ei], thus (gain). In MESS the digraph ei is rarely and inconsistently used (ceiling, either, leisure, their, seize, weight). Thus one has to choose whether to take the logical route of the IPA or preserve the idiosyncratic MESS use of ai and the related ay.

(7) *Whether to introduce a character to explicitly spell the shewa (IPA [ə]).* George Bernard Shaw thought that it was crazy that the commonest sound in English should not have its own letter. The MESS system itself lets the stress pattern dictate whether a vowel is pronounced clearly or reduces to the shewa. Since the stress is not indicated in writing, this places a greater burden on the reader's ability to recognise the word – particularly in words like (content, contrary, pervert, produce, progress, prospect, protest, refuse, suspect), which have two different stress patterns according to what part of speech they represent.

(8) *Whether to reflect changes in pronunciation of a given word or syllable in different settings.* Thus the definite article (the) sounds differently according to whether the noun it precedes begins with a vowel or a consonant (the apple, the pear); consider also a word like (explain / explanation), which in MESS changes its spelling, or words like (heal / health, photo / photography / photographic) which do not.

(9) *Whether to represent plurals, possessives, 3rd person singular of all verbs and past tense endings of weak verbs symbolically as in MESS (-s / -es; -ed) or phonetically (-s / -z / -iz; -t / -d / -id).*

(10) *Whether to allow multiple spellings of the same vowel sound in order to disambiguate homophones in writing.* For example (peace / piece, I / eye / aye, I'll / isle / aisle, wood / would, rain / rein / reign, sun / son, one / won, lead (the metal) / led, where / wear / ware).

(11) *Whether to allow silent consonants to survive for the same purpose.* For example (not / knot, rein / reign, rite / write / right, sign / sine, no / know, to / two).

(12) *Which pronunciation of English to take as standard.*

The present author is guided by a generally central and northern European linguistic sense – no surprise, given his Anglo-Saxon surname.

In general, the project of regularising the spelling system is a question of finding a happy mean between excessive phonetic purism on the one hand and excessive adherence to tradition on the other. The system must be sufficiently similar to the current one to be easily readable to an English speaker with no specialised training, and at the same time sufficiently consistent to be easily learnable to someone encountering the English language for the first time. It must be logical, but at the same time practical.

Gheneral points abaut a writen langgwigh

The two most fundamental issues with representing speech in writing are how accurately sounds should be represented, and whether to augment the commonly available character set with new letters.

A practical written language for everyday use does not need to be a precise sound transcript that can be mechanically read aloud by someone who has no knowledge of the language. Rather it is a tool for people who already speak that language, and therefore it presumes prior knowledge of the words and sentence patterns. It expects its readers to recognise each word as they encounter it.

In Russian the standard written language omits any stress information (except in occasional cases of ambiguity). Russian words are strongly stressed, and therefore texts for beginners have stress marks, but mature readers do not need them. Hebrew goes even further by omitting vowels altogether, and a system of adding small diacritics above and below the consonant letters to specify those vowels was later invented, but again in everyday use the vowel points are not used because fluent readers do not require them.

Following these examples, a well-designed written language should have two forms:

(1) A form for everyday use by normally literate people, in which full written guidance on pronunciation is superfluous.

(2) A form which gives fuller information on pronunciation. This fuller form is needed by learners and should appear in dictionaries and elementary readers. It is also required whenever a writer invents a new word or needs to discuss variations in the pronunciation of existing words, or to clarify an unusual proper name.

The written language needs to be a tool that is easy to learn, hence consistent, but it does not need to be one that contains information that the reader should already know.

Regarding the typographical issue, again there are two alternatives.

(1) The first is to use only the standard character set available to present-day English users, thus the 26 letters of the alphabet, with the option of supplementing it with common vowel accents available in other major latin-script European languages. The result is ease of typography and familiarity: exotic characters, such as those of the Shavian Alphabet or the International Phonetic Alphabet, may look pretty but they are not familiar to non-specialists and are likely to put potential users off.

(2) The alternative is to apply a strict phonetic principle of one letter to one phoneme, thus adding accented letters or special phonetic characters to the 26-letter alphabet. This, however, is not appropriate to English with its large number of homophones: pairs or triplets of words sounded the same but with different meanings: chews/choose, moat/mote, our/hour, pain/pane, peer/pier, pore/pour, sea/see, stair/stare, tern/turn. The advantage

of using two or three letters taken together to represent a single sound is that there is a sufficient number of variations that these homophones can be written differently, using different letter combinations for the same sound. This is a useful feature of modern written English which it is desirable to preserve.

The strict phonetic principle would also require some indication of the stress pattern on words, which again requires either a new character for the shewa, or a new accent or typographical feature to show stress.

The strictest phonetic rigour is, however, unworkable, unless a single pronunciation of English is privileged over the others. The diversity of accents within the British Isles, let alone further afield, demands a writing system with a certain flexibility. For example, do you begin the word evolution with a long or a short e? Do you say conTROVersy, or CONtroVERsy? Bath or baath?

Dhe Olimpic sistem: bäsic prinsipels

The Olimpic alphabet and spelling system is designed to make the English language more accessible to non-English speakers, thus easier for them to learn. It is to internationalise the language, as is appropriate for an extraterrestrial colony such as a Mars colony which attracts settlers from a variety of terrestrial backgrounds.

As discussed in the previous section, we do not need a fully phonetic transcript of the language. What we do need is a compromise between two principles: to remove inconsistencies in spelling, but at the same time to preserve as much continuity as possible with the existing MESS spelling, thus maximising accessibility to both learners of English and existing English speakers.

This means on the one hand retaining existing spellings as far as possible, but on the other correcting the many and glaring vowel inconsistencies for which English is notorious: are/care, bone/one, bounce/soul, broad/road, build/guise/suit, bus/busy, call/calm, cough/plough/though/through, do/go, ear/earth, eat/great, four/our, gaudy/gauge, hall/shall, hat/what, have/shave, here/there/were, key/they, know/now, lost/post, match/watch, mouth/youth, move/shove/stove, my/myth, on/son, row/row, sword/word, their/weir, trust/truth, wind/wind, wound/wound. It also means removing double, silent and junk consonants when they serve no purpose in distinguishing homophones, especially the silent gh: borough, night, though, through.

The Olimpic system adopts the following major principles.

(1) It uses only the 26 letters of the existing English alphabet, augmented only by accents commonly used in modern French and German.

(2) In order to disambiguate homophones it allows alternative spellings of the same vowel sound, using a selection of MESS legacy spellings, but avoiding silent -e. It allows some legacy silent consonants, if they are useful for the same purpose.

(3) It maintains consistency with MESS in that:

- It uses the digraphs ai/ay for the sound in (made, maid);
- It uses the letter y as both a consonant and a vowel;
- It avoids the use of any special character for the shewa or to show the stress;
- It usually (not always) avoids a change of spelling as a word changes stress by acquiring or losing prefixes/suffixes, relegating information about stress and ghosting of vowels to the dictionary;
- It is based on educated southern British English pronunciation;
- It retains symbolic noun and verb inflexion endings -s and -d: cats/dogs/foxes, missed/loved/granted – these are so all-pervasive that changing some of them to -z and -t as actually pronounced would have a seriously jarring effect, and it is found that logical consistency can be achieved in this case without phonetic purism.

(4) It is different from MESS in that:

- It substitutes jh/gh for the MESS j/dge in (judge);
- It returns the letter j to its historic role as a variant of the letter i;
- It avoids double consonants, with the exception of s (a consequence of having symbolic rather than phonetic plurals, possessives and verb endings);
- It reverses the pronunciation of au/aw and ou/ow to make them phonetically consistent with use of letters a and o elsewhere.

Dhe Olimpic sistem: consonants

The 20 consonant letters are: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z.

The letter j is used differently from MESS, and the letter q is retired; otherwise the consonants are used according to their primary or common-sense MESS function.

Notes on particular consonants:

c = hard c sound as in (come, panic), as in Old English

g = hard g sound as in (good, bag)

j = y as in (yes), but an auxiliary consonant, not a main one

q is retired and replaced with cw/cy

x = ks / gz as in MESS

y = as in (yes) as in MESS

Eleven digraphs are used:

th = unvoiced th sound as in (thin, health)

dh = voiced th sound as in (this, that)

sh = as in (ship)

ch = as in (church)

jh = soft j / g / dge sound as in (just) – replaces MESS j

gh = the same, as in (gentle) – replaces MESS g / dge

zh = s sound in (fusion, pleasure)

ng = as in (singer)

kh = ch in (loch, Bach)

lh = ll in (Lloyd) (Welsh words only)

wh = w (legacy spelling of question words retained, also of whole)

If the sound of ng is followed by another g, then that is written in: fingger, langgwigh. The combinations nk, nx as in (ink, anxious) do not count as separate digraphs and there is no need to writte them as ngk, ngx: in such cases the n is pronounced by default as ng (unless it is part of a prefix: incorporated, ungracious). It will be obvious to a normal English speaker that ungräsful is un-gräsful (not ung-räsful), unkynd is un-kynd (not ungk-ynd), änghel is än-ghel (not äng-hel).

The hard c could be eliminated and replaced by k. Olimpic chooses to maintain legacy spellings with a hard c to improve visual compatibility with MESS. But soft c as in (centre) is always changed to s.

The digraph qu is changed to cw/cy: acwyer, cween, cwestjon, cwiz, cwontum, cyu, incwizishon, incwyer, stätus cwo.

The only consonant letter whose function changes is j, which adopts its northern / central / eastern European role as a y sound. This returns the letter to its historic function as a variant of i. In this role we give the letter j its German name yot.

The letter y itself remains as a legacy consonant at the beginnings of words such as yes. It's main function is as a vowel letter, as in words such as sky, and as a vowel suffix which forms the diphthongs ay, oy.

The digraph jh is allowed as a variant of gh, reflecting whether the legacy spelling is j or g/dge. In the longer term one can imagine assimilating jh to gh, and substituting j for consonantal y always.

The consonants t/d followed by j or ü have a sound which is actually intermediate between t/d and ch/jh. This occurs in words with a suffix such as aktjual, piktjur, söldjer, endür, fütür. As in MESS, this change is not recognised in the English sound system: speakers think they are saying a normal t/d/h, and the change is entirely automatic as the mouth prepares for the following j sound.

We accept the phonetic ambiguity in words such as futhöld, madhaus, threshöld (foothold, madhouse, threshold), as readers are expected to understand the English language already.

Dhe Olimpic sistem: vauels

Vowels are a problem in English because the six basic vowel letters must between them represent 18 or so vowel sounds, many of which may be pronounced in different ways according to the origin of the speaker or a change of stress when a word acquires a suffix. The following key tabulates the 18 vowels by their conventional MESS spellings, with short vowels in the left-hand column, long vowels and diphthongs in the second and third columns. The shewa is not included, as it is considered to be merely one of the other vowels whose pronunciation is ghosted.

pat	mate	part / path / palm
pot	mote	port / paw / ploy
but	mute	pert
put	moot	plough
pet	meet	pair
pit	mite	peer

These are represented in Olimpik by the six vowel letters a o u e i y, singly and in different combinations.

The traditional English vowel system associates two basic sounds with each of the five vowel letters a, e, i, o, u, as in (mat/mate, fed/feed, fin/fine, hop/hope, tub/tube), conventionally described as short or long respectively. Three of the letters have in addition a third basic pronunciation, as in (palm, paw, pert).

The Olimpic system is derived from this. All basic vowels take a grave, umlaut/diaeresis (two dots) or circumflex accent to show whether they are used in their short or long senses, and this is how they would appear in a dictionary. Thus màt, mät, mâst (mat, mate, mast), pòt, pöst, pôrt. In addition the short vowel of (book), being distinct from both ù (buck) and ü (boot), is denoted with a breve if necessary: ŭ. These accented vowels are alls shown in brackets in the table on the next page.

The grave, breve and circumflex are only for specialist use: in dictionaries and elementary readers, or to resolve ambiguity in an unfamiliar word. The umlaut/diaeresis is required for normal written text. It is intended to be handwritten as a single line (a macron), as indeed it appears in the Oxford Dictionary now. In a dedicated font it would be printed as a macron, too, but the umlaut is more accessible on conventional keyboards.

Additionally, it is found that, while not strictly necessary, it is useful to permit é (and potentially other accented letters) in words taken from French.

The permitted letters and letter combinations, together with their formal representation with accents, are as follows:

a (à)	ae / ai / ay / é (ä)	ar / aa / ah (â)
o (ò)	oe / oa / o (ö)	or / our / ou / oh / oi / oy (ô)
u (ù)	ue / ew (ü)	er / ur / eu (ê / û)
u / uu (ŭ)	oo / ue / uw / u (oo)	au (au)
e (è)	ee / ea / ie / e (ë / ï)	aer / air (är)
i (ì)	y, iy (ÿ)	eer / ear / ier (ër / ïr)

For normal everyday use, short vowels always omit the grave or breve accent.

Long vowels with the circumflex are usually written either with a digraph, or with no accent. In words like fadher (father) the word follows the usage of MESS which writes both à/â as a plain letter a. In words like (class) the vowel may be pronounced long or short according to accent (clâss in southern England, clàss in the north) and does not affect meaning. In words like caam, haaf (calm, half), the long vowel is written explicitly with a digraph. The forms ô ê û are always written as digraphs (or trigraphs with a following r) in normal text.

That leaves the use of the umlaut to indicate long vowels and diphthongs.

The umlaut is typographically equivalent to a letter e; in old German books it appears printed as a superscript e, and German family names often avoid the umlaut by writing, e.g., Mueller for Müller. Thus ä = ae, etc., consistent with its use here to replace vowels like a-e in (name). In such words the umlaut can therefore be expanded with a following e, which often means reordering the letters in the MESS word and sometimes matches MESS spelling exactly: maet, hoep, trueth, meet, priest (mate, hope, truth, meet, priest).

But if this is done in longer words the length of the word increases to unwieldy proportions: staeshon, contemplaet, controel, compleet, oebay – especially if there is more than one long vowel: coeoperaet, uetoepiea, oeaesis, creeaeshon, reeaeghent. We therefore stay with the umlaut on the most important vowels for clarity and brevity: stäshon, contemplät, contröl, complët, öbay, cöoperät.

Short words too become longer when an ending is added: maeting, hoeples, truethful. Since we are using the umlaut in longer words, there is little point to sparing them in short words, so we write mäting, höples, trüthful. Only where the legacy spelling can be used unchanged do we preserve that spelling for ease of recognition for people used to the old system: meet, meat, priest.

So there are three options for umlauted letters:

(1) The umlaut is usually written in in the case of ä ö ü.

(2) The umlaut may be omitted in the following cases:

- Since there is no short equivalent to ÿ, and it is usually clear from context whether it is a vowel, a consonant or a diphthong marker, the umlaut is usually omitted: myn, fyn, daylyt, yesterday (mine, fine, daylight, yesterday). The exception is in words which begin with ÿ plus another vowel, where either the umlaut is written, or alternatively iy: ÿern/iyern (iron), ÿon/iyon (ion), ÿambic/iyambic (iambic), Ÿo/Iyo (Io); compare yern (yearn), yon, yo!.

- If a single-syllable word ends in a vowel, that is never a short vowel, so the umlaut may be omitted: du, go, me, so, thru, tu, yu (do, go, me, so, through, to, you). But if such a word takes an ending the umlaut may be restored: düing, göing, tüing and fröing (though perhaps not strictly necessary).

- In multi-syllable words, we omit the umlaut from less strongly stressed long vowels in order not to clutter up the word with too many accents. Similarly there is no need to umlaut both of two long vowels in a cluster: a vowel before another vowel must be long, so we can write: oäsis, creäshon, reäghent. The reader can be relied upon to automatically fill in the missing accents.

(3) Finally, when we already have a legacy spelling using an acceptable digraph alternative in the table above then we use that: boat, clue, complain, day, sea, see, tree.

The sound of ee in particular generally follows the legacy spelling (ignoring silent trailing letters e): ee in meet, ea in meat, ë in ëvil, sën (scene), ï in polïs, ie in priest.

Unstressed vowels may have a dictionary form in italics like *a*buv (above), or may be denoted with an accent such as a dot: ạbuv. Unstressed vowels become the shewa, but there are actually two shewa sounds in English, the other one being an unstressed i/e/ee sound which appears in prefixes and suffixes, or in the unstressed first vowel of a word like (electron).

For the first shewa, the legacy MESS vowel is used, thus abaut, upon prodüs, botel (about, upon, produce, bottle). For the second, the legacy MESS letter is always e, and this therefore continues to be used in prefixes and suffixes: becum, respect, planet, grätest, höples, hapines (become, respect, planet, greatest, hopeless, happiness).

The flexibility in the system allows us, as in MESS, to use the spelling of the definite and indefinite articles dhe/a to cover both of their actual pronunciations: the definite article may be read dhë or dh', and the indefinite as ä or as a shewa.

We proceed to discuss the vowels individually, where the usage will become clear.

(1) *Short vowels*

Pron. à   MESS usage: a in pat / ai in plait

a   (pron. à): pat, plat, man, (with following r): arid, carie

Pron. ò MESS usage: o in pot, lost / a in quantity, what, yacht / ou in cough / eau in bureaucracy / e in ennui

o (pron. ò): pot, cwontitie, whot, yot, kof, bjurocrasie, onwie

(pron. ò, but in some accents ô): lost, frost, orighin (origin)

(pron. ò with following r) forist, horid, sorie

Pron. ù/ŭ MESS usage (pron. ù in southern English): u in buck, putt, sun / o in colour, come, love, ton, tongue / oo in blood / oe in does / ou in young, tough

(pron. ŭ in southern English): u in put, full, push, pull, sugar, industry, umlaut / o in woman, wolf / oo in good, boyhood, book, look, wood / ou in delicious / oul in would, could, should

(pairs of words in the two pronunciations):

      u (pron. ù): buk, luk, put, ruk, shuk, stud

      uu (pron. ŭ): buuk, luuk, puut, ruuk, shuuk, stuud, wuud

u (pron. ù only in southern English): blud, culer, cum, dus, enuf, luv, mudher, sun, tuf, tun, tung, wun, yung

u (pron. ŭ only in southern English): bul, cuk, ful, fut, gud, hud, huk, pul, push, shuger, wulf, wuman, cud, shud, wud, industrie, umlaut

u (suffixes -ful / -hood / -ius / -ium / -us / -um): jhoyful, playful, boyhud, chyldhud, knythud, ankshus, delishus, föcus, nexus, forum, hëlium, fulcrum, forum

Pron. è MESS usage: e in pet / a in any / ai in said / ea in bread, health / eo in leopard / ei in leisure / ie in friend / u in bury

e pet, enie, sed, bred, helth, lepard, lezhur, frend, berie

Pron. ì MESS usage: i in pit, wind, live / e in knowledge, women / o in women / a in private, language, village, orange, spinach / ia in carriage / ai in curtain, mountain / u in busy, business, lettuce / ui in build / y in myth

i pit, wind, liv, noligh, wimin, pryvit, oringh, spinigh, carigh, curtin, mauntin, bizie, biznes, letis, bild, mith

(suffix -age): bandigh, langwigh, viligh

(various) (unstressed ạ ọ ụ ẹ = shewa)

(letter a): abaut, ütöpia, trivia, anauns, gheneral, ritjual, bura (borough)

(letter o): protect, prodüs (as verb), introdüs, stäshon, wizdom, freedom

(letter u): forum, bönus, föcus, delishus, upon

(letter e in prefix/suffix pronounced i/e/ee): respect, refer, pretend, planet, piglet, foxes, hunted, dearest, litel, äbel, mister, culer, marter, hanger
(similarly suffix -less/-ness): höples, painles, fairnes, gudnes
(letter i): forin

Regarding the letter u: as a short vowel, this can take the southern English pronunciation of either ù or ŭ. These two vowels are both spelled with u, unless both pronunciations are present as separate words, in which case ŭ is expanded to uu in order to remove the ambiguity, thus: put/puut, buk/buuk, luk/luuk, tuk/tuuk (putt/put, buck/book, luck/look, tuck/took). The ambiguity cud (cud/could) is accepted, as cud (cud) is not a common word and is a different part of speech from cud (could). The words (would/wood) are disambiguated, despite having identical pronunciation, in the same way: wud/wuud.

Ambiguity between short ù and long ü is resolved naturally because the long vowel in the relevant pairs of words always takes the legacy spelling of oo: bun/boon, dumb/doom, glum/gloom, gun/goon, rum/room, rust/roost, sun/soon.

(2)   *Long vowels*

Pron. à/â	MESS usage: a in path, father / au in draught, laugh, aunt / ah in shah / al in calm, half, halve / ar in part / are in are / er in clerk / ear in heart
a	(pron. â in southern English, à in northern): ask, casel, draft, fadher, gras, laf, pas, path, plak
ah	(pron. â always): ah, kazbah, shah
aa	aant, haaf, haav, paam, caam, cwaam, aams
ar	(pron. â with following r) part, star, car, arms, garden
	With following r, there should be no ambiguity of vowel sound since, with a word like car, a short a is impossible; the only ambiguity I have been able to identify is tarie (tarry), where the ambiguity is present in MESS too.
Pron. ä	MESS usage: a in made, navy / au in gauge / ea in great / é(e) in fiancé(e), café / ei in rein / ai in maid, rain, wait / ay in day / ey in they, hey / eig in reign / eigh in eight, weight / eh in eh?
ä	mäd, nävie, gägh, grät, plän, bäss (base/bass)
é	(words from French): fionsé, café
ai	maid, rain, wait, plain
ael / ail	(words in -el): mael, pael, tael, wael, mail, pail, tail, wail
ay	day, dhay, rayn, (words in -er): layer, player
ei/ey	(MESS spelling ei/ey): convey, dhey, ey, eit, feint, grey, hey, öbey, weit

Pron. är	MESS usage: ar in wary / eir in heir / ear in wear, pear / are in pare, stare, ware, hare / ere in where, there / air in air, hair, pair, stair, fairy / eir in their
är	wärie, är, wär (ware), pär (pare), stär, här, whär, dhär (there)
aer	(MESS spelling in -ear): paer (pear), waer (wear)
air	air, hair, pair, stair, fairie
eir	dheir (their)
Pron. au	MESS usage: ou in house, hour / ow in how, now, power, trowel / ough in plough / au in umlaut
au	aur (our), auer (hour), haus, pauer, sauer (sour), tauel, trauel, umlaut
aw	haw, naw, plaw (plough)
Pron. ô	MESS usage: a in all, call, water / al in walk, talk / au in cause, taut, author, auxiliary, Paul / oa in broad / aw in law / augh in daughter, taught, naught / ough in nought, thought
ou	(original spelling a/al/au/oa) oul, coul, wouter, wouk, touk, couz, tout (taut), outher, ouxiliarie, Poul, broud
ouw	(original spelling aw): louw, pouw, shoul (shawl), souw
oh	(legacy silent h retained): dohter, toht (taught), noht, thoht, coht
Pron. ôr	MESS usage: or in or, port / our in four, pour / oar in board / ar in ward / aur in dinosaur
or	or, port, for, bord, hor (whore), word (ward), dynosor, storie (story, storey), wor (war, wore), worm (warm), yor (your), sorss (source), orchad
our	(MESS oar): bour, bourd, hour, our, rour, sour, (MESS our): four, pour
Pron. oi	MESS usage: oi in noise, anoint, point, oil / oy in boy / uoy in buoy
oi	noiz, anoint, point, (words in -l): oil, toil
oy	boy, jhoy, ploy, (words in -el, -er): destroyer, loyer (lawyer), royel
Pron. ö	MESS usage: o in hold, post / oe in hoe / ew in sew / au in chauffeur / eau in plateau / ou in mould, soul / oa in boat, coat, coal / ow in blow, throw, snow, sow / o in go, no, so / ough in though, dough
ö	bölt, cöld, doe, döh (dough), höp, klöz, öld, öpen, pöst
öw	blöw, cröw, flöw, glöw, gröw, löw, nöw (know), snöw, stöw, thröw
oa	(MESS oa): boast, boat, coal, coat, goat, stoat, toad, toast
	(MESS ou): moald, soal

	(oe+a elided to öa): cöagülät, oäsis, böa
-o	dho (though), go, no, so
	(at prefix end -e elided as in MESS): nowhär (nowhere), proaktiv (proactive), regolith, but no elision in cöoperät (cooperate)

Pron. oo	MESS usage: oo in coop, fool, moon, pool, poor, too / o in do, move, prove, tomb, to, womb / ou in coupé, group, wound, you, youth / oeu in manoeuvre
oo	boot, coop, coot, coopé, doom, fool, groop, loo, looss, looz, manoover, moon, moov, pool, proov, root, shoo, too, toom, tooth, woom, woond, yooth, zoo
	(legacy spelling preserved thru strict pronunciation, avoids ambiguity with more, pore, pour): door, floor, moor, poor

Pron. ü	MESS usage: u in compute, dune, introduce, prelude, pure, truth, use, utopia / ue in blue, due, duel, true / ueue in queue / ua in dual / ui in bruise, cruise, fruit, suit / oe in shoe / ou in route / ough in through / eu in Europe, feud, neutral / eau in beauty / ew in blew, dew, jewel, lewd, new, newt, threw, yew / iew in view
	In all of these: following l, r, s, y, sh, ch, jh/gh a j-sound is not usually heard, and the sound heard is identical with the plain oo vowel, thus lüt, loot (lute, loot) have the same pronunciation. But sometimes it is heard after s: süt (suit), but isjü (issue).
ü	(heard as ü): abüz, brüz, bütie (beauty), compüter, confüz, crüz, cür, cüt, dün, dütie, featür, früt, fürie, füzhon, hügh, introdüs, müzic, nüron, nütral, prelüd, prodüs, pür, refüt, süt, tün, üfonie, ükarist, ükelälie, üniform, ünion, ünite, Ürop (Europe), üsful, ütöpia, üz, üzhual
	(heard as oo): crüd, crüz, früt, jhün, lüt, solüshon, rül, rüt (route), süt, trüth, yül, yüth
ue, ua	(heard as ü): continue, cue, cuer, dual, duel, due, fuel, kue (queue), subdue
	(heard as oo): blue, clue, flue, glue, shue (shoe), sue, true, üzhual
ui	(ü+i): duing, fluid, ruin
-u	(heard as oo): du, hu, cyu (queue), thru, tu (to), twu (two), yu, yur (your)
-ew	(MESS spelling retained) (heard as ü): dew, ew (ewe), few, fewd (feud), hew, mew, new, njew (knew), newt, pew, stew, vew (view)
	(heard as oo): blew, brew, chew, crew, drew, flew, grew, jhew, jhewel, lewd, screw, slew, strew, threw, yew

Pron. ë   MESS usage: e in me, real, helium, complete / ee in see, meet / ea in sea, meat / ei in ceiling, seize / ie in piece, priest, niece / oe in foetus, coelacanth / eo in people, / y in happy, industry / ey in key, monkey / i in naive, phobia, police, trivia, unique

ee   feet, heel, meet, need, pee, reed, see, teem, week, feetus, seelacanth, seeling, seez, hëlium, complët, peepel, feel, weel (wheel)

            (stressed at end of words): maree (Marie), payee

ea   feat, heal, meal, conseal, meat, nead (kn-), read, real, sea, team, weak, peass

ie   piess, polies, priest, niess, nyiev (naive), üniek

            (unstressed at ends of nouns and adjectives, thus Elizabethan-style -ie replaces modern -y ending): bütie (beauty), energhie (energy), funie (funny), munie (money)

            (ie elided if a suffix follows, or if part of a common suffix): hapier, hapiest, hapines, bütiful, föbia, sërius, pödium

ïe   (ie+e without easily recognisable suffix): älïen, Jhülïet, servïet

e   (at end of short common words -ee/-ë elided to -e): be, he, me, she, we

            (ee+i elided to ëi): bëing, seeing, frëest, reincarnäshon, prëignishon

            (ee+o elided to eo): eon, embreonic, embreo, rädeo, video

            (ee+ae elided to eä): creäshon

            (ie+a elided to ia): mänia (mania), yutöpia (utopia), ghënial (genial)

Pron. ër   MESS usage: er in serious / eer in steer, peer, queer, musketeer / ere in here / ea in idea, really / ear in ear, hear, near / eor in theory / ier in pier / eir in weird / ir in menhir

eer   seerius, steer, peer, cweer, musketeer, heer

ear   ear, hear, near, thearie; (without -r): ydea, realie

ier   menhier, pier, wierd

Pron. y   MESS usage: y in sky / uy in buy / i in I, nice, climb, wind, live / ig in sign / igh in night / ai in aisle / ei in either / eye in eye / ie in lie, skies

y   py (pie, pi), sky, by, syn (sine), y (I), nyss, clym, wynd, yss (ice), yland (island), nyt (night), hy (high), dyv (dive), lyf (life), lyv (live – adj.), syan

            (words in -el, -er): dyer (dire), dyarie (diary), fyer, hyer (higher, hire), myel, tyer, wyel

iy   iy (eye), biy (buy), siyn (sign)

Pron. êr   MESS usage: or in word / ur in urn, absurd / our in journey / yrrh in myrrh / er in fern / ere in were / ear in earth / ir in first, girl, sir / olo in colonel / (words of French origin): eu in chanteuse, jeune / oeu in hors d'oeuvres / eur in chauffeur

er   (from MESS er, ir, ear, pron. êr but in some accents är or ër): fern, lern, erth, yer, ser, ferst, wer, tern (tern), ern (earn), cernel (colonel), kernel
                (MESS ending er, ar, or) mister, outher (author), advyzer (advisor), hanger (hanger, hangar), mayer (mayor), profeser, but profesorial, mäjher (major), but majhoritie

ur   (from MESS or, ur, yr): wurd (word), wurm (worm), wurth (worth), turn, urn, furie (furry), mur (myrrh)

eu(r)   heurd (heard); (from French, especially with stress on ending -eur): euvra, or-deuvre, öteur, raconteur, saboteur, shanteuz, shöfeur, zheun (oeuvre, hors-d'oeuvres, auteur, raconteur, chanteuse, chauffeur, jeune)

Nöts on üsigh

(1) Consonants: English soft c and g are abolished, and replaced by s and jh/gh respectively: senter (centre), jhoy, ghenerus (joy, generous).

The u or h after a hard g are abolished: gest (guest), gy (guy), göst (ghost).

Final -ck becomes -k; Greek ch becomes hard c or k; French ch becomes sh: cäk (cake), bak (back), kemistrie (chemistry), mashien (machine), monark (monarch).

English qu is abolished and replaced by cw/cj. The letter q may be retained for spelling words from Middle Eastern languages.

Silent or junk consonants are removed, unless they serve the useful purpose of distinguishing homophones.

forin (foreign)	yland (island)	lam (lamb)
bura (borough)	touk (talk)	dum (dumb)
anser (answer)	det (debt)	toom (tomb)
nyf (knife)	nee (knee)	clym (climb)
lisen (listen)	ofen (often)	bäss/bäs (bass/base)

wh- becomes w- or h-, except that the legacy h- is retained in question words:

wyt (white)	weat (wheat)	whot (what)
wisker (whisker)	wisel (whistle)	when (when)
hu (who)	tu hüm (to whom)	which (which)
wyel (while)	wedher (weather)	whedher (whether)
		whär (where)

A silent consonant may be retained to preserve a written distinction between homophones. Where traditional orthography fails to make such a distinction, we do not go out of our way to do so unless it seems natural.

nyt (night)	knyt (knight)
nit	knit
ryt and left (right and left)	ryht and rong (right and wrong)
tu read and wryt (write)	ritjual and riyt (rite)
myht is ryht (might – noun)	y myt du it (might – verb)
which (which)	wich (witch)
syd (side)	syhd (sighed)
rap	wrap
discus (stress on first syllable)	discuss (stress on second syllable)

(2) The noun plural and possessive case ending, and the third-person singular verb ending, pronounced -s/-z/-iz: consistent with MESS, it is written symbolically as -s/-es: bats, dogs, foxes. (The plural ending following a voiced consonant is in fact pronounced somewhere between s and z.) The apostrophe in the possessive case is abolished.

This creates a problem: how to distinguish between the two pronunciations of the letter s as s/z in pairs of words such as (peace/peas, tense/tens). The second of the pair is a noun or verb with the -s ending. This is only a problem for single-syllable words.

Many are already distinct: bäs/bays, läs/lays, fors/fours, jhüs/jhews, grös/gröws.

Otherwise there is occasionally an ambiguity: peas (peace/peas). The rule is: if having written peas for (peace) and it reads as if it is (peas), i.e. with -z pronunciation, then double the -s to force an -s pronunciation: peass. Words needing a double -s are as follows, by main vowel:

-äs/-ays:	no words affected (e.g. pläs/plays)
-ös/-öws:	no words affected (e.g. grös/gröws)
-oos:	looss, mooss
	(ok with single -s: düs/dues, jhüs/jhews, püs/pews, üs/ews)
-ys:	lyss, spyss
	(ok with single -s: ys/iys)
-eas, -ees:	fleess, peass, seass
	(ok with single -s: pies)
-ns:	dunss, fenss, henss, manss, penss, pinss, cwinss, sinss, tra(a)nss, tenss, winss, wunss
-ls:	foulss, pulss
-rs:	corss, curss, horss, purss, herss, scärss
	(ok with single -s: forss, fierss)

-ys: dyss, lyss, spyss, yss (all other words okay with single -s)
-is   hiss (all other words okay with single -s)

In the plural, a word in -ss reverts to a single -s with -es ending: corses, fenses, spyses.

Clearly there is no problem with words whose root ends -z: clös/clöz, mäs/mäz, rys/ryz, üs/üz, etc.

(3) The past tense ending of weak verbs, pronounced -t/-d/-id: consistent with MESS this is also written symbolically as -d/-ed. But unlike MESS -ed is cut down to -d if there is no syllable there:

grant – granted   luv – luvd   wish – wishd   mis – misd
föld – földed   höp – höpd   play – playd   pas – pasd

We thus preserve the distinctions misd (missed) / mist and pasd (passed) / past.

A problem similar to that in (2) above occasionally arises when a word whose root ends in -d looks like a weak verb with the past tense ending. Again, many of these are already distinct: böld/böwld, brood/brewd, cöld/coald, toad/towd, wynd/whynd. Unlike case (2), here the pronunciation is the same both ways, so the ambiguity is already present in the spoken word, such as band (band/banned).

To resolve the ambiguity in writing, the rule is: if having written band for (banned) and it reads like the uninflected word (band), then separate the -d off with an apostrophe: ban'd. (This revives a practice of writing past tenses in 18th-century English.)

Words needing an apostrophe are: ban'd, fyn'd, höl'd, moo'd, myn'd, töl'd.

Ambiguities in strong verbs must be resolved on an ad hoc basis. Ambiguity in both MESS and Olimpic (bit = past tense of byt, or a noun; etc.): byt/bit, bär/bor, bynd/baund, feel/felt, grynd/graund, leav/left, rend/rent, ryz/röz, shoot/shot, smel/smelt, spin/span, stäv/stöv.

No ambiguity in Olimpic: be/been/bean, blöw/blew/blue, fly/flew/flue, hear/heurd/herd, nöw/njew/new, ryd/röd/road, see/sou/souw, see/seen/sën, waer/wour/wor.

Ambiguities in Olimpic accepted: breed/bred, du/dun, lead/led, lean/lent, lend/lent, read/red, send/sent, win/wun (bred, led, lent, sent, wun can also be nouns; dun, red can also be adjectives).

(4) Special spellings.

(sum/some): both are spelled sum, the ambiguity not considered important.

(won/one): both are spelled wun, the ambiguity not considered important.

(sun/son): because both are common nouns, the distinction is worth preserving: suhn (son) (cf. German Sohn; daughter spelled dohter echoes the silent consonant).

(either, neither): we accept both ëdher, nëdher and ydher, nydher as valid alternatives, since both pronunciations are equally in use.

Suffixes -tion/-sion are respelled as -shon/-zhon: introducshon, füzhon, explozhon, tenshon. Other suffixes with -on: buton, electron, pröton, pylon, python, safron.

The final r is maintained in words such as star, mister, for, far, etc., because although it is not usually pronounced when the word is followed by a word beginning with a consonant – e.g. starship is normally pronounced staa-ship (though even in such cases with some speakers the r is heard) – it is normally pronounced in careful educated speech when the following word or a suffix begins with a vowel: e.g. star energhie, far away, starie. The same is true of other vowel combinations with r, e.g. mister/mistres, hair/hairie, dear/dearest, överouls, underachiever. But final r drops out from prefixes where it is never heard: intenashonal, övevew, süpesonic, underäted.

Some randomly chosen spellings of related words. Note how tj/dj/sj/zj can work as alternatives to ch/jh/sh/zh:

hapie hapines hapilie	fishon fisjur/fishjur	isju
explöd explözhon	confüz confüzhon	explain explanäshon
depict pictjur	grandjur söldjer	endjür manjür
apertjur sculptjur	clöz clözjur/clözhur	pöst postjur
nätjur natjural	näshon nashonal	reflect reflecshon
pleaz plezjur/plezhur	seez seezjur/seezhur	lezhur trezhur
act acshon	inspect inspecshon	colect colecshon
crux crüshal	späs späshal	serv servis
cauer cauerdis	practis practical	feel felt
heal helth	steal stelth	deal delt
relät reläshonship relativ	maintain maintenans	cwest cwestjon

Use of j: behävjer, capsjül, cwestjon, isjü, lasanja, soldjer, Sonja.

(5) The apostrophe is not required in possessives: dhe hauses windöws (the house's/ houses' windows). The exact meaning should be clear from context.

The apostrophe is used occasionally to distinguish the past tense of a verb from a word ending -d; see (3) above.

It is also used in some colloquial contractions where the second part is a single letter: he's, yu'r, y'l (I'll), y'v (I've), y'd (I'd). In longer contractions where no misunderstanding is possible the apostrophe is not required: caant (can't), dönt (don't), dusnt (doesn't), wosnt (wasn't), wudnt (wouldn't).

(6) Some common word endings follow. Note that when t/d/s/z are followed by a j-sound in an ending (especially -ion) there is a change of consonant, usually to sh/zh, which are therefore written as such: stäshon, vizhon. But if the change is to ch/gh, these are written as tj/dj because the pronunciation of the consonant is very light, not a full-on ch/gh sound: cwestjon, söldjer. With t/d and the ending (-ure) the t/d stay the same, as the j-sound is part of the following ü.

(-que): antiek, bark (barque, bark), öpäk, plak, tork, üniek

(-al): fynal, gheneral, plüral, räshal, späshal, speshal, ydeal – vowel a preserved under influence of fynalitie, gheneralitie etc. NB speshaltie (Am.), speshialitie (Br.).

(-ual): act/actüal, continue/continüal, düal, gräd/gradüal, sens/sensüal, üz/üzüal

(-sure): azhür, lezhür, pleaz/plezhür, trezhür; enclöz/enclözhür, pres/preshür

(-ure): cür, endür, fütür, imür, lür, manür, müral, pictür, pür, raptür, sensür, shür, temperatür, yür

(-ion pronounced -shon/-zhon): act/acshon, concus/concushon, confes/confeshon, creät/creäshon, discuss/discushon, disrupt/disrupshon, ecwät/ecwäzhon, explöd/explözhon, füz/füzhon, manss/manshon, mishon, näshon, pashon, penss/penshon, regres/regreshon, seshon, stät/stäshon, tenss/tenshon, vizhon

(t/d followed by -ion, ian, ier): cwest/cwestjon, dyghest/dyghestjon, Kryst/kristjan, söldjer

(-geon/-gion pronounced -ghon): blughon, contäghon, lëghon, pighin (pigeon), pijhin (pidgin), rëghon, relighon, Tröjhan

(-our): arber, culer, cwäver, arder, fläver, rancer, säver, splender

(-iour): behävjer/behävür, sävjer/sävür (alternative spellings permitted)

(-ous): calamitus, dängherus, herbäshus, horendus, mömentus, ömen/ominus, scandalus, tremendus

(-ious): bütie/bütius, contäghon/contäghus, delishus, fürie/fürius, gräs/gräshus, oudasitie/oudäshus

(-uous): continüus, insestüus, sensüus, tempestüus, vacüus

(-uum): continüum; vacüm (nobody actually pronounces the second u sound in vacuum)

(-age): blokigh, carigh, marigh, üsigh, wästigh

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