



# The American Way of Spelling: The Structure and Origins of American English Orthography

*Richard L. Venezky*

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Can ghoti really be pronounced fish? Why is "o" short in glove and love, but long in rove and cove? Why do English words carry such extra baggage as the silent "b" in doubt, the silent "k" in knee, and the silent "n" in autumn? And why do names like Phabulous Phoods and Hi-Ener-G stand out? Addressing these and many other questions about letters and the sounds they make, this engaging volume provides a comprehensive analysis of American English spelling and pronunciation. Venezky illuminates the fully functional system underlying what can at times be a bewildering array of exceptions, focusing on the basic units that serve to signal word form or pronunciation, where these units can occur within words, and how they relate to sound. Also examined are how our current spelling system has developed, efforts to reform it, and ways that spelling rules or patterns are violated in commercial usage. From one of the world's foremost orthographic authorities, the book affords new insight into the teaching of reading and the acquisition and processing of spelling sound relationships.

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