

## English Pronunciation: Silent Letters

When practicing your English pronunciation, one of the tricky areas are those of silent letters. While the rules governing which sounds remain unpronounced can feel arbitrary, the English language actually follows strict guidelines when it comes to silent letters. Use this list as a guide whenever you're practicing your vocabulary skills, either in front of a [language learning software](#) or just by yourself.

- The letter B is silent when it's at the end of the word and is immediately preceded by the letter M (e.g. dumb, comb).
- The letter C is silent only in words ending in "scl" (e.g. muscle).
- The letter D is silent in only three words of the language, namely sandwich, Wednesday and handkerchief.
- The letter E is silent when used at the end of words and is immediately preceded by a consonant (e.g. mine, drive).
- The letter G is silent when followed by N (e.g. foreign, sign).
- The letters G and H are silent when used together and are followed by T (e.g. daughter, right).
- The letter H is silent when used after W (e.g. whether, why) and, sometimes, when used in the beginning of words, followed by a vowel (not always, though, so it's tricky).
- The letter K is silent when followed by the letter N at the start of a word (e.g. knife, knowledge).
- The letter L is silent when used before the following letters: D, F, K, L and M (e.g. talk, calm).
- The letter N is silent when followed by M at the end of a word (e.g. hymn).
- The letter P is not pronounced at the beginning of words when it is followed by N or S (e.g. psychiatrist, pneumatic).
- The letter S is not pronounced only in the following words: island, isle.
- The letter U is not pronounced when used after G and before the following vowels: I, E (e.g. guitar, guest).
- The letter W is not pronounced when used at the start of a word and followed by the letter R (e.g. wrangler, wrong). It also isn't pronounced when used in the following pronouns: who, whose, whom.