

Course N-03

3. Silent Letters

3.1. Definition:

In English, there are letters that we write but we do not pronounce in some words. Most of these letters are consonants which may appear at the beginning, the middle and at the end of the word. So, a silent letter is a letter that is usually left unpronounced, such as the *b* in *subtle*, the *c* in *scissors*, the *g* in *design*, and the *t* in *listen*. According to Ursula Dubosarsky, roughly 60 percent of words in English have a silent letter in them. (*The Word Snoop*, 2009).

3.2. Rules and Examples:

*The following letters are silent letters: **B, C, D, G, H, K, L, N, P, R, T, and W.**

The Silent Letter	The Rule	Examples
1 – B	- After “m” - Before “t”	- Lamb b , Tomb b , Climb b - Doub t , Debt, Sub t le
2 – C	- After “s” - Before “k”, “h”	- Sci en ce, Sc en e, - Back g round, Yack
3 – D	- Before “n”	- Wednesday
4 – G	- Before “n”	- Design, sign, foreign (Except: ignorance, signature)
	- Before “h”	- Night, Right, Bought, Caught.
	- Final “g”	- Song, Sing, Along, Ring
	- “ing” form	- Reading, Working
5 – H	- After “r”	- Rhythm
	- With “Wh” before a, e, I, y.	- What, While, Why, Whisper, Whale. (Except: Who, How)
	- “h” is a silent letter in the following words:	- Heir, Honesty, Honor, Hour

6 – K	- Before “n”	- K nee, K nock, K now, K nife.
7 – L	- Between “a” and “f”, “k”, “m” - After “ou”	- H alf, C halk, C alm - S hould, C ould, W ould
8 – N	- After “m”	- A utum n , C olum n
9 – P	- Initial followed by “s”, “n” - In the following words:	- P sychology, P neumonia - C orps, C upboard
10 – R	- Final “r”	- B rother, W eather
	- Before all consonants	- F irm
	- Between a vowel and a consonant	- C orner, P art
11 – T	- In the words ending in : “stle/ stent/ stm”	- C astle, W histle, L isten, C hristmas, O ften
12 – W	- Initial “w” followed by “h”	- W ho, W hose, W hom
	- Initial “wr”	- W rite, W rong, W rote
	- In the following words:	- T wo, A nswer

3.3. Exercise: Read each word and choose which letter is

silent. Gnome: silent letter is

Wrap: silent letter is

Spaghetti: silent letter is

Talk: silent letter is

Raspberry: silent letter is

Ballet: silent letter is

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