

The Silent Letter Trap: Why Knight, Wrong and Psychology Scare Everyone

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

10 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

silent letter

DEF

A written letter that is not pronounced in a particular word.

Silent describes the letter, not the whole word. Common combinations include a silent K, a silent W and a silent P.

The K in knight is a silent letter.

Circle every silent letter before you practise the pronunciation.

2

catch up with

DEF

To reach the same level as something that has changed or moved ahead.

Here it is figurative: spelling failed to develop as quickly as pronunciation. It can also describe reaching a person who is ahead.

The spelling never caught up with the changing pronunciation.

Teaching materials must catch up with the way people actually speak.

3

with no exceptions

DEF

In every case, without allowing any different case or special situation.

This emphatic phrase follows a rule or claim. Without exception is a slightly more formal alternative.

The K is silent, always, with no exceptions.

Every applicant must complete the form, with no exceptions.

4

get lost

DEF

To become unable to find the correct way or know where you are.

Get lost can describe losing your way, but as an imperative it can also be a rude way to tell someone to leave. Context determines the meaning.

I got lost twice in one afternoon.

We got lost because the street signs were difficult to read.

5

bring something up

DEF

To introduce a subject into a conversation, often one that may be memorable or uncomfortable.

The object can go between bring and up: bring it up. With a noun, both bring up the story and bring the story up are possible.

She still brings it up at every family dinner.

I did not want to bring up the mistake during the meeting.



6

be meant for someone

DEF

To be intended, designed or addressed for a particular person.

Meant is the past participle of mean. The pattern be meant for + person identifies the intended recipient or user.

I sent a message to my sister meant for someone else entirely.

This beginner course is meant for learners who need extra listening support.

7

have a knack for

DEF

To have a natural ability to do or understand something particularly well.

Knack is normally used in the pattern have a knack for + noun or -ing form. It is positive and conversational.

She has a real knack for languages.

He has a knack for explaining difficult ideas clearly.

8

rely on context

DEF

To depend on the surrounding words or situation in order to understand meaning.

Rely takes on, not in. Context may refer to the sentence, the conversation or the wider situation.

Native speakers rely on context to tell the words apart.

When a word has several meanings, rely on context before choosing a translation.

9

mix something up

DEF

To confuse two or more people, things or words with one another.

The object may separate the phrasal verb: mix them up. Do not confuse it with mix up something in the sense of physically combining ingredients.

I mixed these words up in front of a whole classroom.

Learners often mix up quiet and quite.

10

out loud

DEF

Using your voice so that the words can be heard, rather than saying or reading them silently.

Out loud and aloud have the same core meaning, but out loud is more common in everyday conversation.

Say the word out loud exactly as you heard it.

Reading the dialogue out loud helps you notice its rhythm.

