

SILENT LETTERS – INTRODUCTION

Many English words have silent letters, for instance, in the word ‘design’ the ‘G’ is silent, in ‘Christmas’ the ‘T’ is silent. In the first table below, in the first column the silent letter in each word is ‘K’, in the second column, it’s ‘W’, in the third it’s ‘B’ and in the fourth it’s ‘T’.

SILENT K	‘knife’	SILENT W	‘write’	SILENT B	‘comb’	SILENT T	‘castle’
knack	knapsack	wrap	wreck	bomb	climb	fasten	glisten
knee	knead	wrestle	wretch	crumb	debt	listen	moisten
knew	knickers	wriggle	wrinkle	doubt	dumb	whistle	mortgage
knight	knot	wring		lamb	limb		

What do the words in the table mean?

EXERCISE ONE What are the silent letters in the words below?

Knee ____ wrist ____ climb ____ debt ____ listen ____ answer ____ knuckle ____ thumb ____
sword ____ fasten ____ mortgage ____ know ____

SILENT L	‘palm’	SILENT N	‘autumn’	SILENT H	‘rhino’	SILENT G	‘sign’
calm	half	column	hymn	hour	honest	resign	align
walk	talk	damn	condemn	heir	ghost	benign	foreign
folk	yolk		solemn	gherkin	ghastly	campaign	sovereign

What do the words in the table mean?

EXERCISE TWO What’s the missing silent letter in each sentence below, e.g. ‘Chris_mas’ Answer: **T**

Did I hear a _nock at the door? The tiny kitten sat in the pa_m of my hand.

Can a _sythic person tell the future? Many people visit the ancient tom_s of Egypt.

The prisoner was g_arded by four men. The judge will condem_ him to death.

Does ‘talk’ r_yme with ‘walk’? You can see the ship_reck from the shore.

EXERCISE THREE There are **TWO MISSING LETTERS** in the gapped words below, one is **SILENT** and one is **not**. Write the two missing letters in each sentence.

He comes from a forei__ land. Rap music has a strong __ythm. Don’t panic, stay ca__.

In the USA autu__ is called ‘fall’. Mix the egg yo__ with the sugar. I resi__ed from my job last week.

A __erkin is a pickled cucumber. To da__ someone is to curse them. Can this ve__cle carry heavy loads?