

ENGLISH IS TOUGH STUFF

Multinational personnel at North Atlantic Treaty Organization Headquarters near Paris found English an easy language until they tried to pronounce it. To help them discard an array of accents, the verses below were devised. After trying them, a Frenchman said he'd prefer six months' hard labor to reading six lines aloud.
Try them yourself.

Dearest creature in Creation,
Study English pronunciation,
I will teach you in my verse:
Sounds like corpse, corps, horse and worse.
I will keep you, Suzy, busy,
Make your head with heat grow dizzy;
Tear in eye, your dress will tear,
So shall I!! Oh, hear my prayer,
Just compare heart, beard and heard,
Dies and diet, lord and word,
Sword and sward, retain and Britain,
(Mind the latter, how it's written).
Now I surely will not plague you,
With such words as vague and ague,
But be careful how you speak, -
Say break, steak, but bleak and streak,
Cloven, oven; how and low
Script, receipt; shoe, poem, toe,
Hear me say, devoid of trickery,
Daughter, laughter and Terpsichore,
Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,
Exiles, similes, reviles;
Scholar, vicar, and cigar,
Solar, mica, war and far;
One, anemone; Balm oral,
Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel;
Gertrude, German, wind and mind;
Scene, Melpomene, Mankind,
Billet does not sound like ballet,
Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet,
Blood and flood are not like food,
Nor is mould like should and would.

Viscous, viscount; load and broad,
Toward, to forward, to reward,
And Your pronunciation's O.K.,
When you correctly say croquet.
Rounded, wounded; grieve and sleeve,
Friend and fiend; alive and live;
Liberty, library; heave and heaven,
Rachel, ache; mustache, eleven,
We say hallowed but allowed,
People, leopard; towed and vowed.
Mark the difference moreover,
Between mover, plover, Dover;
Leeches, breeches; wise, precise,
Chalice, but police and lice;
Camel, constable, unstable,
Principle, disciple, label;
Petal, penal, and canal,
Wait, surprise, plait, promise, pal;
Worm and storm; chaise, chaos, char,
Senator, spectator, mayor;
Ivy, privy; famous, clamor;
And enamor rhyme with "hammer";
River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,
Doll and roll and some and home;
Stranger does not rhyme with anger,
Neither does devour with clangour;
Soul but foul, and gaunt but aunt,
Font, Front, Wont; Want, grand and grant,
Shoes, goes, does; now first say finger,
And then, singer, ginger, linger;
Real, zeal, mauve, gauze and gauge,
Marriage, foliage, mirage, age.

Query does not rhyme with very,
Nor does fury sound like bury;
Dost, lost, post and doth, cloth, loth,
Job, job, bosom, oath;

Though the difference seems little,
We say actual but victual;
Refer does not rhyme with “deaferr”,
Foefferr does, and zephyr, heifer;
Dull, bull; senate and sedate.
Scenic, Arabic, pacific,
Science, conscience, scientific;
Tour but our and succour, four,
Gas and alas and Arkansas!
Sea, idea, guinea, area,
Psalm, Maria but malaria;
Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean,
Doctrine, turpentine, marine;
Compare alien with Italian
Dandelion and battalion;
Sally with ally; yea, ye,
Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, key, quay!
Say aver, but ever, fever,
Neither, leisure, skein, deceiver;
Heron, granary, canary.
Crevice and device and eyrie;
Face but preface, but efface
Phlegm, phlegmatic; ass, glass, bass;
Large, but target, gin, give, verging,
Ought, out, joust and scour, but scouring.
Ear but earn and wear and tears,
Do not rhyme with “here” but “ere”;
Seven is right but so is even,
Hyphen, roughen, nephew, Stephen;
Monkey, donkey, clerk and jerk,
Asp, grasp, wasp; and work and work;

Pronunciation – think of psyche!

Is a paling stout and spikey?
Won't it make you lose your wits,
Writing “groats” and saying grits;
It's a dark abyss or tunnel,

Strewn with stones, like rowlock, gunwale;
 Islington, and Isle of Wight,
 Housewife, verdict and indict.
 Finally, which rhymes with “enough”
Though through, plough, cough or tough?
 Hiccough has the sound of “cup”
 My advice is – give it up!