

Silent Letters





Aim

- To investigate, spell and read words with silent letters.



What Are Silent Letters?

Some letters in words do not make a sound, they are silent.

Silent letters are **letters** that you can't hear when you say the word, but that are there when you write the word.

There are silent letters in some English words because over hundreds of years, we have changed how we pronounce these words, but have kept the spelling.

The spelling tells us how the word used to be pronounced.

For example: knock. In the past, people used to say the word with the k sounded out at the beginning! That would sound very strange to us today!



How Can We Remember How to Spell Words with Silent Letters?

Sometimes we can forget to include letters when they can't be heard in words or if they are difficult to hear.

One way to remember the spelling of words with silent letters is to stress the silent letter when you say the word to yourself.

Break the word up and decide how you say it to yourself, to help you remember the spelling.

For example: Wednesday has a silent d.
You could remember how to spell it by saying Wed-nes-day.

Task: Choose some words with silent letters and try breaking them up in this way, to help you remember how to spell the word correctly with the silent letter.



Can You Find the Silent Letters in These Words?

knife

wrapper

wrong

write

gnome

wreck

crumb

lamb

knuckle

know

A silent **b** occurs after **m**, before **t**.



lamb



thumb



debt



bomb

What other words do you know with a silent **b**?

subliminal

A silent **k** and a silent **g**
are found before **n**.



gnome



gnat



knee



knife

What other words do you know with a silent **k** or **g**?

change
knight
gnome
knee
knife

A silent **l** follows
vowels **a**, **o** and **u**.



calf



salmon

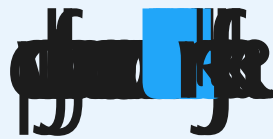


chalk



yolk

What other words do you know with a silent **l**?



A silent **w** often goes before **r**.



wrapper



wrestle



wrist



wreck

What other words do you know with a silent **w**?

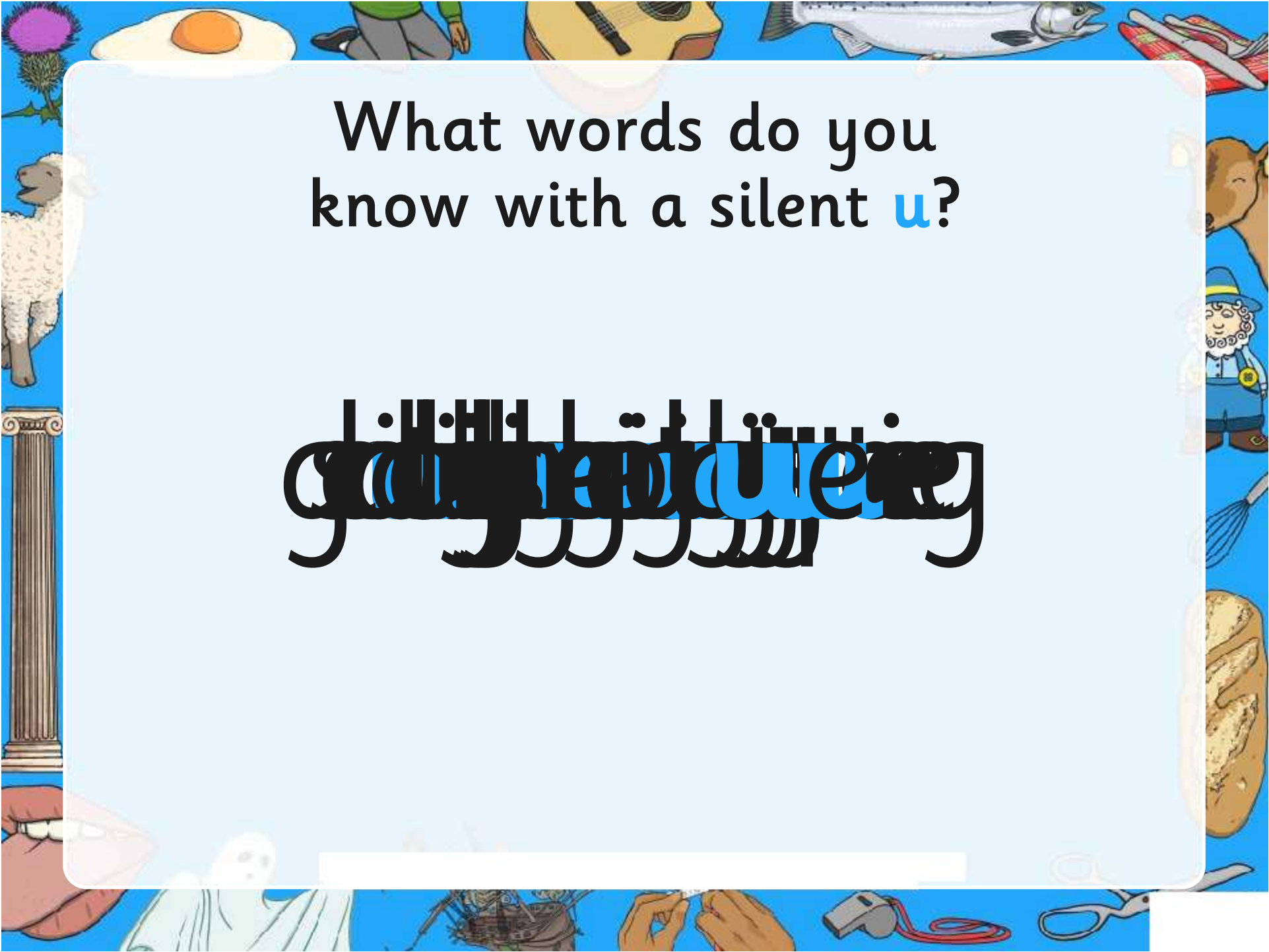
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What words do you know with a silent **h**?

deaf
hill
chicken
happy


What words do you
know with a silent **t**?

t



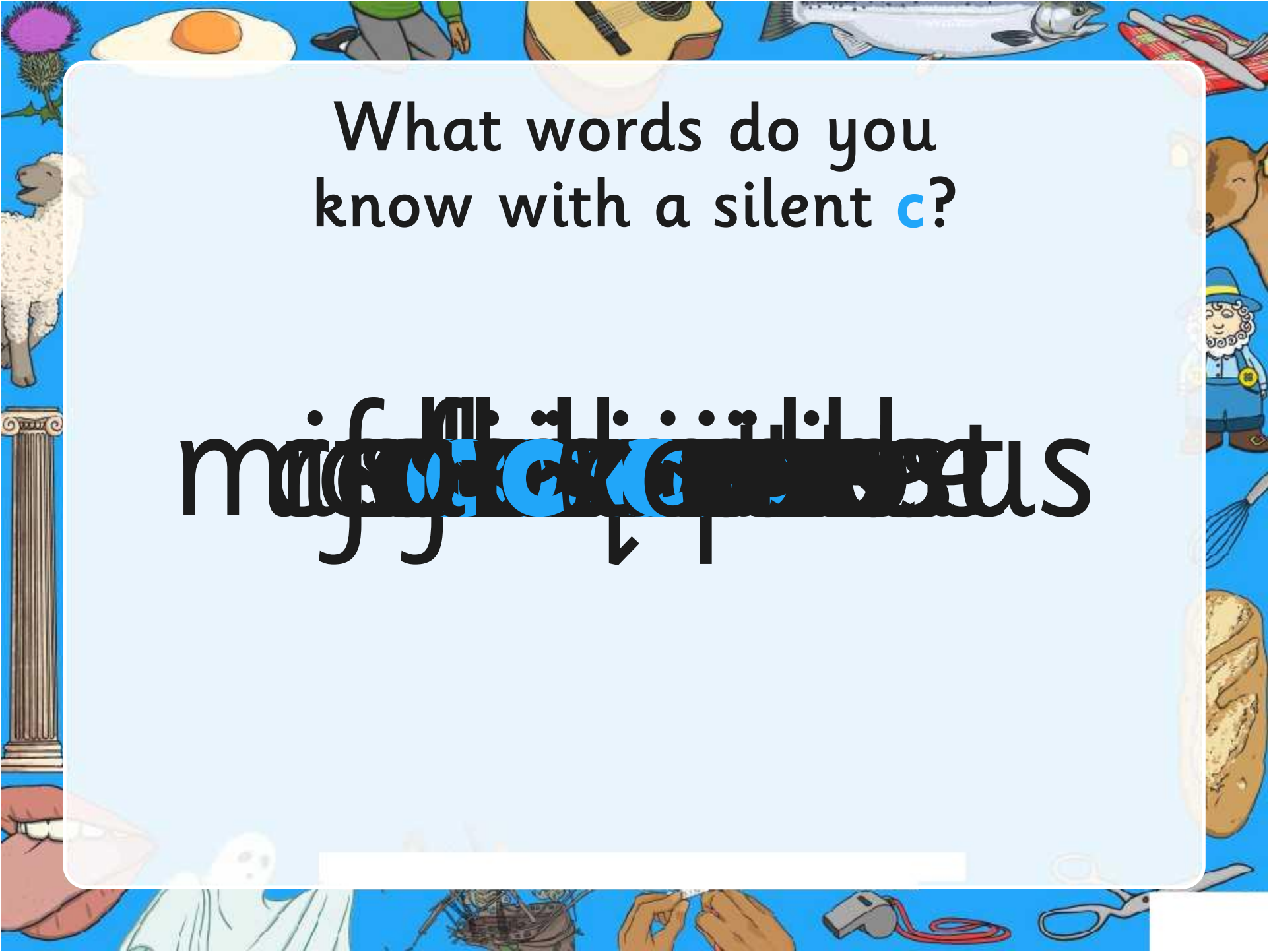
What words do you know with a silent **u**?

good news **u** evening



What words do you know with a silent **n**?

celebration

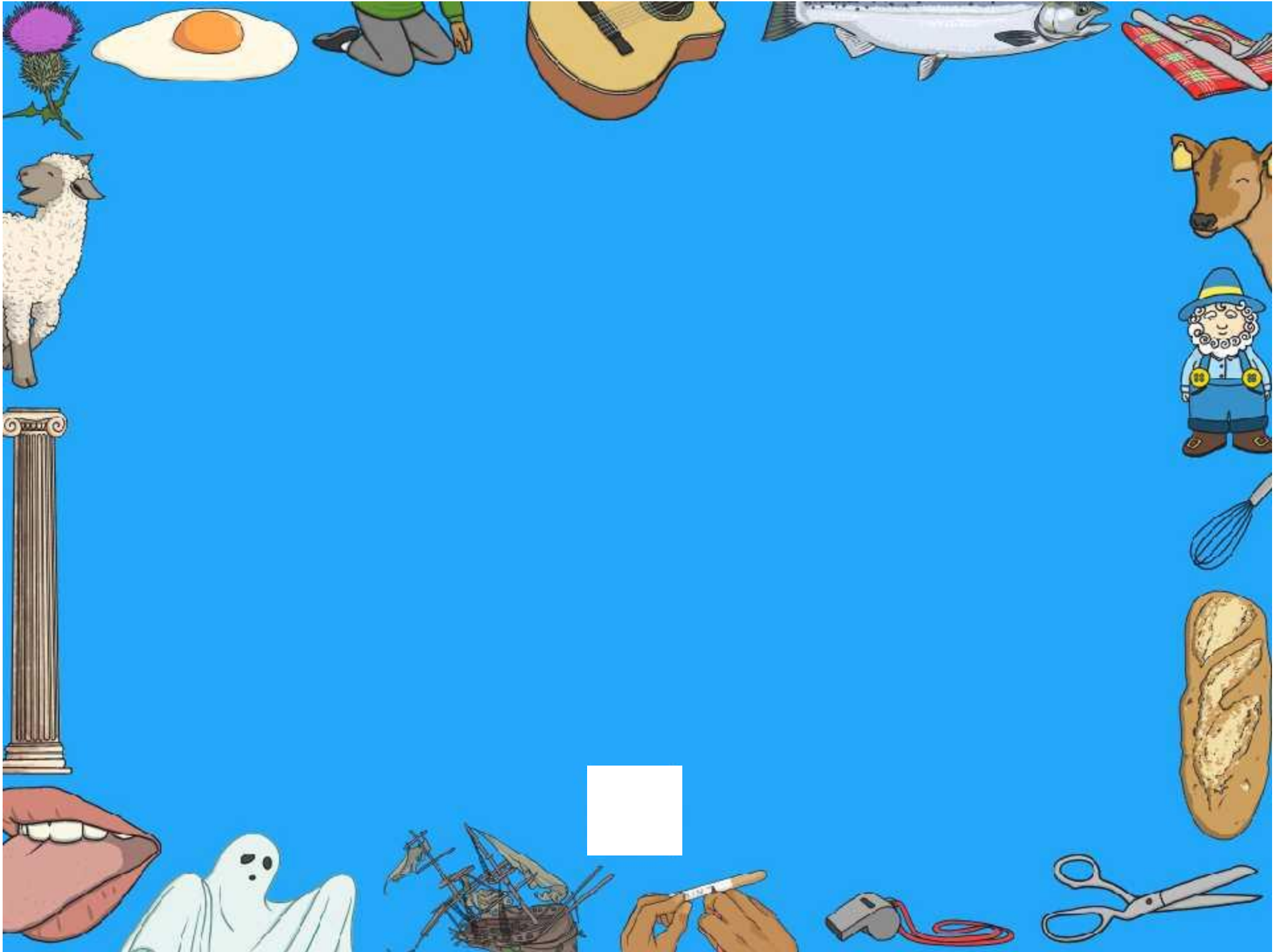


What words do you
know with a silent **c**?

~~magic~~
mice
mischief
moustache
music
mystery
mystical
mystic
mystical
mystic
mystical
mystic
mystical
mystic

What words do you know with a silent **l**?

SLIPPERY
SLEWY
SLIPSTICK
SLIPPERY



Silent Letters Sorting

To spell words with silent letters.

Put each of these words into the right column, according to the silent letter.
Remember that silent letters have no sound in a word.

knight	knock	scissors	climb	knife
lamb	what	whale	muscle	wreck
numb	write	wrap	wrong	knee
knit	wriggle	knot	wrist	right
comb	ghost	gnome	crumb	sword
bomb	wren	honest	hour	doubt

Silent k	Silent w	Silent b	Silent h	Silent g	Silent c

Silent Letters Story

To spell words with silent letters.

Read through this story. The words underlined with a number next to them have silent letters but some have been missed out. On the numbered list on the next page, write the correct spellings. The first one has been done for you.

Ben's Eventful Day

Ben woke up, stretched out his arms and nocked (1) his clock off the bedside table. He sighed loudly and leant out of his bed to pick up the clock. As he fumbled for the clock, he hit his nuckle (2) on his toy night (3), which he had been playing with last night. Finally, he found the clock and returned it to the top of the unit.

Ben got up and tried to remember which day of the week it was. He looked at his calendar and saw that it was Wensday (4). He looked at his smart blue scool (5) uniform and remembered that it was half term and his mum had put his uniform on his chair ready for him to put away in his wardrobe.

"Are you dressed yet?" wispered (6) his dad, as he came into the room. "Your breakfast is ready!"

Ben ran downstairs and sat at the kitchen table. "Good morning, Ben!" said his mum cheerily. She gave him a bowl of porridge and continued preparing the picnic that Ben and his dad were going to take with them on their day trip.

"Where are we going?" asked Ben in between mouthfuls of porridge.

"It's a surprise!" replied his mum.

"What shall I put in the picnic bag?" she enquired.

"Oh, do you have some of those ancor (7) shaped biscits (8) that we made yesterday?"

"Yes, I do. I'll put some in." Mum smiled.

"Let's go!" shouted his dad from the front door.

Dad was taking him to Essex Casle (9) and farm. As Ben stepped out of the front door, he saw Bob, the chipped garden nome (10), who had got broken last week. Mum had glued him back together and he was now back in his usual place. Mum's rubarb (11) plants were growing well and he new (12) that his mum would soon be cooking them. Ben climed (13) into his car seat and waved to mum, who was standing at the window.

Ben learned that the casle (14) was bilt (15) a long time ago. The sin (16) on the wall said that there was a gost (17) who roamed the ilding (18). It said that if you lisened (19) carefully and hummed, you could hear your eco (20) vibrating around the room.

Wen (21) it was time for lunch, Dad opened the picnic bag and shared the contents with Ben. It tasted very good.

“Can I play on the adventure playground, please?” Ben asked.

“Yes, but be careful!” Dad replied.

Suddenly, Dad heard Ben crying. He had tripped over and grazed his nee (22). Dad took him to the first aid post and Ben was given a plaster.

He had enjoyed the visit, particularly going to the farm. He saw lots of animals. In the pets section he saw hamsters nawing (23) their food. There were some newborn lams (24) in the fields nearby and a large brown goat was pulling thisles (25) out of the ground and eating them.

Dad and Ben walked back to the car. As they got closer, Dad noticed that a weel (26) at the front of the car looked rong (27). The tyre was flat and so Dad had to change it. As he was putting the flat tyre back into the boot, Dad trapped his thum (28) and it began to bleed. When he had freed his thumb, he got the first aid kit and rapped (29) a plaster over it. “I don’t think I’ll be playing my gitar (30) tonight,” thought Dad.

As his dad drove home, Ben thought about all the things he had to tell his mum when he got home.

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