



LINGUAQUEST

Say It & Keep It: A World-Language Print Kit

*Read a hard word out loud without ever hearing it, and
lock a whole line into memory*

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How this kit works

This kit does two things a screen usually does with sound — but here it's all on paper, so it works on a bus, at Grandma's, or with the tablet dead. Part 1, **Sound Secrets**, teaches you to **SAY** a word you've only ever **SEEN**, using a respelling code (no audio needed). Part 2, the **Memory Lab**, teaches you to **KEEP** a whole line — a poem, a proverb, a chant — by heart. The same tricks work for a French verse, a Swahili proverb, or your times-tables.

1. Read **Sound Secrets** first — it's the key that unlocks every Say-It card.
2. Do the **Say-It cards** out loud. Whisper if you must, but move your mouth — reading a respelling silently teaches your eyes, not your tongue.
3. In the **Memory Lab**, cover the text with your hand and rebuild it. Getting it a little wrong, then peeking, then fixing it, is *exactly* how memory gets strong — the wobble is the workout.
4. Nothing here is graded and nothing is timed. Go at the pace of your own curiosity.

Meet your guides

Guide	Their move	What they show you
Drift	Sound Secrets	Sounds change and travel — so letters don't always match the noise. Drift shows you the rules.
Swoop	The loud beat	One syllable is said with more push. Swoop marks it in BIG letters so your mouth knows where to lean.
Glyph	Letters vs. sounds	Writing captures speech — imperfectly. A respelling is a bridge from the spelling to the saying.
Bridge	Words that travelled	Words hop between languages. Every Say-It card is a real traveller that landed in English.
Weft	Word order	Languages arrange words differently. Weft's cut-up strips let you rebuild a line and feel its order.
Bough	Families & ladders	Related words cluster like a family tree. Bough's memory ladder grows one branch at a time.
Lex	Gift words	Some words have no one-breath English twin. Lex collects them as gifts, never gaps.
Nook	Keep it safe	Some languages are fading — not the speakers' fault. Nook says: to learn a word is to help keep it alive.

How this kit works

Part 1 — Sound Secrets

Part 2 — Say-It Cards: words that travelled

Part 3 — Memory Lab: keep a whole line by heart

For the grown-up

Your certificate

Part 1 — Sound Secrets



Drift leads · how to SAY a word you have only ever SEEN

A respelling is a word written the way it SOUNDS instead of the way it's spelled. Here is the whole code. Once you know it, you can say almost any strange-looking word on the page — no audio, no grown-up, no guessing.

The respelling key

You see	Example	It means
big-caps	sa-FAR-ee	The BIG-letter chunk is the loud beat — lean on it. (Swoop's beat.)
dots or dashes	sa · far · ee	Each chunk is one syllable — one push of your voice. Clap them.
uh	uh	The lazy vowel (the sound in the 'a' of <i>sofa</i>). Half of English hides one.
plain letters	ee, oo, ay, oh	Say them like the English word they spell: <i>ee</i> as in <i>see</i> , <i>oo</i> as in <i>moon</i> , <i>ay</i> as in <i>day</i> , <i>oh</i> as in <i>go</i> .



The loud beat rule (Swoop)

Every word longer than one syllable has ONE syllable said louder and a touch longer. Put it in CAPS and the whole word falls into place.

Example: **tsunami** → soo-NAH-mee (lean on NAH).



Letters lie a little (Glyph)

The letters you SEE were often borrowed from another language's spelling. Trust the respelling for the SOUND, the spelling for the look.

Example: **ballet** looks like it ends in *-let*, but it's said bal-AY — the *t* is silent (it came from French).

Sounds drift (Drift)

The same letter can make different sounds in different languages. A *j* is 'juh' in English, 'huh' in Spanish, 'zh' in French. The respelling tells you which one landed in English.

Example: fjord → fee-ORD (the Norwegian *j* is a 'y'-glide here).

Chunk it, don't gulp it

A long word is not one scary blob — it's a train of small, easy syllables. Say each car, then couple them up faster and faster.

Example: onomatopoeia → on · uh · mat · uh · PEE · uh.

Mouth tricks — sounds you already own

- **The rolled R:** Say 'butter' fast three times — *buttER-buttER-buttER*. Feel your tongue flap behind your top teeth? That flap is the start of a rolled R. Many languages roll it longer.
- **The 'ny' sound (ñ):** It's already in your mouth: say 'canyon' or 'onion'. That middle sound is the Spanish ñ (as in mañana = ma-NYAH-nah).
- **The throat 'ch' (as in Bach, loch):** Start to say a hard 'k', but instead of stopping the air, let it hiss out over the back of your tongue — like a gentle cat's hiss.
- **The soft schwa 'uh':** Relax your mouth completely and grunt a tiny sound. That lazy 'uh' is the most common vowel on Earth — English hides it everywhere unstressed.

Part 2 — Say-It Cards: words that travelled

Each word below is a real traveller: it was born in one language and moved into English, suitcase and all. Read the **respelling**, find the **loud beat** (CAPS), and say it three times out loud. Then cover the respelling with your thumb and see if your mouth still remembers.

1 **safari** *Swahili (East Africa)*

sa-**FAR**-ee

Means: a journey — originally any trip, not just to see animals

💡 **Bridge says:** The loud beat is the MIDDLE. English kept the word almost exactly.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

2 **tsunami** *Japanese*

soo-**NAH**-mee

Means: harbour wave — a giant wave made by an earthquake

💡 **Bridge says:** The 't' at the start is barely there — glide into 'soo'. Lean on NAH.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

3 **kindergarten** *German*

KIN-der-gar-ten

Means: children's garden — the class before Year 1

💡 **Bridge says:** German loves a LOUD first beat. Say the first chunk biggest.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

4 plaza *Spanish*

PLAH-zah

Means: a public square in the middle of a town



Bridge says: Spanish 'a' is always an open 'ah', never the flat 'a' in *cat*.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

5 ballet *French*

bal-AY

Means: a story told by dancing



Bridge says: The final 't' is SILENT and the loud beat is at the END — very French.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

6 yoghurt *Turkish*

YOG-ert

Means: milk turned thick and tangy by friendly microbes



Bridge says: The Turkish original has a soft ghost-'g' English smoothed away.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

7 bungalow *Hindi (via Bengali)*

BUNG-guh-loh

Means: a low house with one floor and a wide porch

💡 **Bridge says:** The middle vowel went lazy ('uh') the moment it entered English — the schwa strikes again.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

8 gung-ho *Chinese (Mandarin: gōnghé)*

gung-**HOH**

Means: eager and full of team spirit

💡 **Bridge says:** It came in as a slogan meaning 'work together' — the meaning drifted to 'super keen'.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

9 chocolate *Nahuatl (Aztec: xocolātl)*

CHOK-luht

Means: the drink, and later the treat, made from cacao

💡 **Drift says:** It travelled Nahuatl → Spanish → English, losing a syllable each stop. Sound change in action (Drift!).

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

10 mosquito *Spanish*

muh-SKEE-toh

Means: little fly (from *mosca* = fly + *-ito* = little)



Bough says: The Spanish '-ito' means 'little' — a family ending Bough would love. Lean on SKEE.

Say it 3× out loud, then cover the respelling and try from memory: ☐ ☐ ☐

Part 3 — Memory Lab: keep a whole line by heart

1. The Memory Ladder



Bough leads · How the Memory Lab works

Read this page once; then use the trick on every text that follows.

1. **Climb one rung at a time.** Say line 1 until it's easy. Then say lines 1 *and* 2. Then 1, 2, 3. Never add a rung until the ones below are solid — that's why it's a ladder, not a leap.
2. **Say it, don't just read it.** Cover the text and say the rung out loud. Peek only when you're truly stuck, then cover again.
3. **End on a win.** Stop while you can still get the last rung right. Tomorrow, start one rung lower than where you stopped — the climb will be faster.
4. **The same ladder fits anything** — a poem, a proverb, a speech, a times-table chant (three sixes are eighteen...). Weft's cut-up strips (later) test whether you *really* know the order.

2. A short poem to keep



Weft leads · Whole-text memorization — English (public domain)

“The Eagle” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1851) — public domain. Short, vivid, and famously satisfying to say aloud.

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.



Climb the ladder

Build it two lines at a time (the poem is two three-line verses). Cover each verse and rebuild it before you add the next.



Shrinking word-bank

Cover the poem. Fill each blank from the bank below — then cross the word off. As words vanish from the bank, the poem lives more in your head and less on the page.

clasps ☐

crag ☐

crooked ☐

azure ☐

wrinkled ☐

mountain ☐

thunderbolt ☐

falls ☐

Weft's cut-up strips (scrambled!)

Weft's test: these strips are SCRAMBLED. Cut them out (or number them 1–4) so the first two lines read correctly. Word order is meaning — shuffle it and the picture breaks.

Close to the sun

in lonely lands,

he clasps the crag

with crooked hands;

Works in any language

Bough's tip: a poem in another language memorizes the SAME way — rung by rung, out loud, ending on a win. The words are strangers; the ladder is a friend.

3. Proverbs that travelled



Lex leads · Whole-text memorization — sayings

Traditional proverbs (public domain), each shown in plain English. Notice the same idea shows up in many languages — Bridge's cognate cousins for whole thoughts.

Little by little, the bird builds its nest.

Where there is a will, there is a way.

A river is made drop by drop.



Climb the ladder

Only three lines — perfect for a first solo climb. Say line 1 five times, then 1+2, then all three, hands off the page.



Shrinking word-bank

Cover the proverbs; fill the blanks from the bank; cross each off as you use it.

little ☐

bird ☐

nest ☐

will ☐

way ☐

river ☐

drop ☐



Weft's cut-up strips (scrambled!)

Scrambled again — number the strips 1–3 so the third proverb reads right.

drop

A river is made

by drop.



Works in any language

Lex says: some sayings have no exact English twin — that's a gift word, not a gap. When you meet one, keep it whole; don't force it into English shape.

For the grown-up

This kit turns two screen-only helpers — tap-to-hear pronunciation and karaoke read-along — into paper tools that work offline. Two evidence-backed moves do the heavy lifting, and neither needs you to be a linguist.

Respelling is a reading tool, not a verdict. The respellings here are honest approximations aimed at an English-speaking mouth — close enough to be understood, not a claim about a native accent. A real speaker's ear is always the final judge. If your child asks 'is that exactly right?', the true answer is: 'It's close — the best way to find out is to hear a speaker and adjust.' That humility is good linguistics.

The loud beat matters more than the sounds. Getting the STRESS right (the CAPS chunk) makes a word understandable even when the individual sounds are a bit off. If you help with one thing, help with the loud beat.

Retrieval beats re-reading. The Memory Ladder works because the child SAYS the line from memory before peeking, not because they read it many times. The little struggle — the wobble — is the part that builds the memory. Resist the urge to feed the next word too fast; a three-second pause is where the learning happens.

Register & respect (Cant and Nook). Every language and every accent here is a full, complete system — never 'broken' or 'exotic'. When a language is fading, that is from histories of harm, never the speakers' fault, and the community leads any revival. Learning even one word is a small act of keeping a language alive.

Not all language is sound (Sign). Signed languages are full natural languages — this print kit is about spoken sounds, but that is only one way humans do language, never the only 'real' one.

Your certificate



World-Word Explorer

This certifies that

read strange words out loud with no audio, and kept a whole poem
by heart — the loud beat, the ladder, and the respelling code all
mastered.

— *Drift, Swoop, Glyph, Bridge, Weft, Bough, Lex & Nook, your
LinguaQuest guides*

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