Exercise on the Difference Between Orthography and Phonetics
(or between speech sounds and letters)

A. In each group of three, circle the word with the oddball initial speech sound; e.g., for people, physics, pistol, the word with the initial sound that does not match the other two words is physics; that is, while all three words start with the letter ‘p’, only people and pistol start with a ‘p’ sound (physics, despite the spelling, starts with an ‘f’ – the same sound that begins the words feel and fit). The idea in all of these is to pay attention to the sounds, not the letters.

1. knife   kitten    gnat
2. Thailand think    trace
3. knapsack kettle    pneumonia
4. gnat    know    garage
5. pepper psychology    sister
6. hiccough Jose    jam
7. fantasy pharmacy    pill
8. juggle George    garage
9. chaotic children    kayak
10. century crank    silly

B. In each group of three, circle the word with the oddball final speech sound; e.g., if you listen carefully to the final consonant sounds in the words pace, jazz, and faces, you’ll find that both jazz and faces end with a ‘z’ sound while pace ends with an ‘s’. Again, the idea is to pay attention to the sounds, not the letters.

1. dogs   cats    gripes
2. hiccup calf    Ralph
3. canned walked    rancid
4. plow    flow    allow
5. merlot slow    cow
6. fact    mapped    mobbed
7. bough    tow    now
8. jig    thing    rang
9. rough    thorough    lithograph
10. of    stove    graph
ANSWERS

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