

*Our Queer Language*  
Lord Cromer (1841-1917)

Unlike French, English often (and frustratingly for foreign speakers) does not show a logical relationship between **sound (pronunciation) and meaning**, as the following poem demonstrates:

When the English tongue we speak,  
Why is "break" not rhymed with "freak"?  
Will you tell me why it's true  
We say "sew" but likewise "few";  
And the maker of a verse  
Cannot cap his "horse" with "worse"?  
"Beard" sounds not the same as "heard";  
"Cord" is different from "word";  
Cow is "cow," but low is "low";  
"Shoe" is never rhymed with "foe."  
Think of "hose" and "dose" and "lose";  
"Doll" and "roll" and "home" and "some."  
And since "pay" is rhymed with "say,"  
Why not "paid" with "said," I pray?  
We have "blood" and "food" and "good";  
"Mould" is not pronounced as "could."  
Wherefore "done" but "gone" and "lone"?  
Is there any reason known?  
And, in short, it seems to me,  
Sounds and letters disagree.