



### Ask Wordsworth ... Why do some people write Xmas instead of Christmas?

There are people who get very agitated about the use of the word Xmas. Some even believe it's anti-Christian and that non-believers have crossed Christ out of Christmas. But there's actually nothing blasphemous about the use of Xmas in fact it's derived from Greek, the language in which the New Testament was originally written. In Greek the letter *chi* - the first letter of Christ's name - is written X, hence the word Xmas.

### Wordsworth's words of the month ...

#### Reign/Rein

A king or queen *reign*, but you rein in a horse.

#### Toward/Towards

Both words are interchangeable but *toward* is more commonly used in the US and *towards* in the UK.

### Wordsworth's word to avoid ... Math

Using the word *math*, instead of *maths* as an abbreviation of *mathematics* is, in Wordsworth's opinion, a piece of North American nonsense. Mathematics is a plural word: it is not possible to have a singular mathematic. You can have a mathematic equation, but it's the equation that's singular not the mathematics you've used to work out the answer.

Dictionaries might say that using *math* is not technically wrong, but it is silly and irritating to many readers and listeners in the UK. Please don't use it.



### Wordsworth's quote of the month

"If all economists were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion."

**George Bernard Shaw**

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