

Spelling the 44 Sounds of the English Language

Vowel Sounds (Phonemes)		Possible Spellings (Phonograms) (Shaded ones are more uncommon)	
Long Vowels (They say their own name.)	Long /ā/	a	as in baby (at the end of a syllable or word)
		a-e	a-e as in cake
		ai	as in rain (at the beginning or middle of a syllable or word)
		ay	as in day (at the end of a syllable or word)
		ea	as in break, great, steak (only 3 words use this spelling)
		ei	as in vein
		eigh	as in eight
		ey	as in they
	Long /ē/	e	as in me
		ea	as in eat
		ee	as in feet
		y	as in candy (at the end of a word with two or more syllables)
		e-e	as in these
		ei	as in ceiling
		ey	as in key
		ie	as in chief
	Long /ī/	i	as in cry
		i-e	as in pine
		igh	as in light
		y	as in cry
		ie	as in pie
		y-e	as in type
	Long /ō/	o	as in go
		oa	as in boat (beginning or middle of syllable or word)
		o-e	as in home
		ow	as in snow
		oe	as in doe, foe, hoe, Joe, Poe, roe, toe, woe (only 8 words)
		ough	as in dough
Long /ū/	u	as in music	
	u-e	as in cube	
	ew	as in few	
	eu	as in feud	
	ue	as in rescue	

44 Sounds of the English Language (cont.)

Short Vowels	short /ă/	a	as in bat	
	short /ĕ/	e	as in net	
		ea	as in bread	
	short /ĭ/	i	as in kit	
		y	as in gym	
	short /ŏ/	o	as in hot	
		ou(gh)	as in cough	
	short /ŭ/	u	as in cut	
		o	as in other	
		ə	unaccented vowel as in above, synthesis, decimal, harmony, medium, syringe (See note at bottom of this list)	
ou(gh)		as in rough		
R-controlled Vowels	/or/	or	as in ford	
		ar	as in war (after a w)	
	/ar/	ar	as in car	
	/er/	er	as in her	
		ir	as in bird	
		ur	as in burn	
		ar	as in collar (unaccented syllable)	
		ear	as in learn	
		or	as in doctor (unaccented syllable)	
		or	as in worm (after a w)	
	/air/	air	as in fair	
		are	as in care	
		ear	as in bear	
		err	as in merry	
	Diphthongs	/au/	a	as in ball (and after a w as in water)
			au	as in haul
aw			as in draw (usually at the end of the syllable or word)	
/ou/		ou	as in out	
		ow	as in cow	
		ough	as in bough	
/oi/		oi	as in oil (beginning or middle of a word)	
		oy	as in boy (end of a word except for royal and oyster)	

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/oo/	Long /oo/	oo	as in moon
		ew	as in grew
		ou	as in soup
		ough	as in slough
		u	as in tulip
		ue	as in true
		u-e	as in rule
	Short /oo/	oo	as in book
		u	as in put

* ə This is the symbol of the schwa sound. Any vowel may say /ǘ/ when in an unaccented syllable of a multisyllabic word. Any R-controlled vowel can say /er/ in an unaccented syllable.

Consonant Sounds	Possible Spellings	
/b/	b	as in bed
/d/	d	as in dig
/f/	f	as in fan
	ph	as in phone
	gh	as in laugh and cough
/g/	g	as in good
/h/	h	as in him
/j/	j	as in jam
	g	as in gem (when g is followed by e, i, or y)
	dge	as in judge (1-syllable word directly after 1 short vowel)
/k/	k	as in kit
	c	as in cat
	ck	as in luck (1-syllable word directly after 1 short vowel)
/l/	l	as in lamp
/m/	m	as in map
/n/	n	as in no
	gn	as in gnat and sign
	kn	as in knock
/p/	p	as in pig
/r/	r	as in rug

44 Sounds of the English Language (cont.)

	wr	as in wren
/s/	s	as in sun
	c	as in cent (when c is followed by e, i, or y)
/t/	t	as in top
/v/	v	as in van
/w/	w	as in wet
/y/	y	as in yes
/z/	z	as in zoo
	s	as in has and nose
/ch/	ch	as in chin
	tch	as in match (1-syllable word directly after 1 short vowel)
/sh/	sh	as in ship
/zh/	s	as in treasure and vision
/th/	th	as in these (th is voiced)
/th/	th	as in thistle (th is unvoiced)
/hw/	wh	as in whale
/ng/	ng	as in ring

These letters are not represented because they don't have their own unique sound.

c	borrow the sounds of /k/ and /s/
q	is the combination of /kw/
x	is the combination of /ks/ (box) or /gz/ (exist)