

Phonemes in the English Language

Consonants

Sound	Examples	Primary Spelling(s)*
/b/	ball, robin, ribbit	b, bb
/d/	dog, bed, played	d, ed
/f/	fan, raffle, phone, rough	f, ff, ph, gh
/g/	goat, rugged, ghost, guess	g, gg, gh, gu
/h/	hot, foothold, who	h, wh
/j/	jam, major, gem, cage, hedge	j, g, ge, dge
/k/	kitten, cut, duck, choir, quarter	k, c, ck, ch, qu
/l/	lion, bill	l, ll
/m/	money, summer, lamb, column	m, mm, mb, mn
/n/	nut, penny, knife, gnat, pneumonia,	n, nn, kn, gn, pn
/p/	pen, happy	p, pp
/r/	rain, carry, write, rhythm	r, rr, wr, rh
/s/	soap, miss, horse, circle, lace, mistletoe, scene, psychedelic	s, ss, se, c, st, sc, ps
/t/	ten, button, Thomas, mixed	t, tt, th, ed
/v/	Valentine, river, live, of	v, f
/w/	water, what	w, wh
/y/	yarn, onion, hallelujah	y, i, j
/z/	zoo, sizzle, phase, scissors, xylophone	z, zz, s, ss, x

Digraphs

Sound	Examples	Primary Spelling(s)*
/ch/	chair, teacher, mature, question	ch, tu, ti
/sh/	shoe, action, ocean, sugar, facial, profession	sh, ti, ce, su, ci, si
/zh/	measure, azure, division	su, zu, si
/ng/	sing, length, rink	ng, n
/th/ (voiceless)	thimble, with	th
/th/ (voiced)	that, weather	th

Short Vowels

Sound	Examples	Primary Spelling(s)*
/ă/	apple, cat	a
/ĕ/	Ed, met, head, said, many	e, ea, ai, a
/ĭ/	igloo, sit, symmetry, women, busy	i, y, o, u
/ŏ/	octopus, hot, swan, law, ball, bought, taught,	o, a, aw, al, ough, augh
/ŭ/	umbrella, cut, money, trouble, blood	u, o, ou, oo

Long Vowels

Sound	Examples	Primary Spelling(s)*
/ā/	grape, rain, stay, weigh, they, ballet, vein, break	a_e, ai, ay, ey, et, ei, ea
/ē/	meet, seat, Pete, me, happy, ski, grief, receive, key	ee, ea, e_e, e, y, i, ie, ei_e, ey
/ī/	rice, my, sight, tie, aisle, height, buy, rye	i_e, y, igh, ie, ai, eigh, uy, ye
/ō/	hose, grow, go, moat, toe, though, sew	o_e, ow, o, oe, ough, ew
/ū/	glue, moon, grew, fruit, salute, shoe, through, group, who	ue, oo, ui, u_e, ew, oe, ough, ou, o
/yū/	unit, humid, argue, beauty, few, view, cute,	u, ue, u_e, eau, ew, iew

Other Vowels

Sound	Examples	Primary Spelling(s)*
/oo/	book, bush, should	oo, u, oul
/oy/	toy, coin	oy, oi
/ow/	cow, trout	ow, ou
/ə/ (schwa – unstressed vowel)	asleep, taken, pencil, ribbon, cactus	a, e, i, o, u (or unwritten as in the last syllable of <i>rhythm</i>)

R-Controlled Vowels

Sound	Examples	Primary Spelling(s)*
/air/	chair, share, pear, there	air, are, ear, ere
/ar/	car, are, heart	ar, are, ear
/or/	corn, shore, door, oar	or, ore, oor, oar
/er/	bird, her, sure, word, myrtle	ir, er, ur, or, yr
/ear/	dear, sheer, here	ear, eer, ere

* Letters in bold are the most common spelling patterns for the phoneme.

References

DSF Literacy Resources, (n.d.). *The 44 Sounds (Phonemes) of English*. Retrieved online from: <http://www.dyslexia-reading-well.com/44-phonemes-in-english.html>.
 Schwa, (n.d.). Wikipedia. Retrieved online from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schwa>.