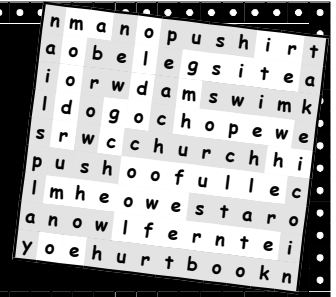


O

ō = /o<sup>w</sup>/

# Spellings of All Vowel Sounds



Because *dialects* or *accents* vary, various English speakers may pronounce some of the *vowel sounds* (a little) differently. To speak clearly, however, *everyone* needs to differentiate the pronunciation of the distinct *phonemes*—*Vowel Sounds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15*—from *one another*. (Some people pronounce *Sounds 4, 7, and 7r* about the same; some say *Sounds 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14* differently before *-r* than before other consonants.) And to *read aloud* accurately, everyone must learn to *recognize* the distinct sounds produced by the 25 or so most common *vowel spellings*.

The dictionary sound-symbols for the five most frequent *simple vowels* are *ă ě ĩ ō ũ*; other *single vowel sounds* often spelled by *one vowel letter* *a, e, i, o, u* are *oo, ô* or *a:(r), û(r)*. The seven *complex vowels* or *diphthongs* usually spelled by *two or more letters* are *ā ē ī ō ū ou oi*. In the following vowel summary charts, gray boxes show *letter spellings*. In black boxes are *dictionary = /IPA/ phonetic symbols* for the corresponding *Vowel Sounds*, numbered 1-15 for reference. *Word examples* with underlined vowels follow:

-a-	-e-	-i-	-o-	-u-	-u-	-a- -o- -au- -aw-	-a(r)-
1. ă	2. ě	3. ĩ	4. ǒ	5. ũ	6. oo	7. ô	7r. a:(r)
= /æ/	= /ɛ/	= /ɪ/	= /ɑ/	= /ʌ/	= /u/	= /ɔ/	= /ä/(r)
man	leg	swim	chop	bug	look, put	tall, log, haul*, dawn*	star

-e-	-ai-	-ea-	-ie-	-oa-	-oo-	-ou-	-oi-
-i- -o-	-ay	-ee-	-ie	-ow	-oo	-ow-	-oy
-u- (r)	-a-e	-e-e	-i-e	-o-e	-u-e	-ow	
8r. û(r) = /ɜ/(r)	9. ā = /eɪ/ or /eɪ/	10. ē = /i/ or /i/	11. ī = /aɪ/ or /aɪ/	12. ō = /oo/ or /o <sup>w</sup> /	13. ū = /u/ or /u <sup>w</sup> /	14. ou = /ɑ <sup>w</sup> / or /ɑo/	15. oi = /ɔ <sup>y</sup> / or /ɔɪ/
clerk, skirt work, fur	train play scare	teach tree Steve	cried tie wine	toast slow snore	spoon zoo June	flour cow crown	boil toy foyer

As shown above, except for *Sounds 6, 7, and 8*, *simple vowels* typically have the same one-letter spellings. *Complex sounds* may have one spelling in the *middle* of one-syllable words and another at the end. *Sounds 9-13* may end in final silent *-e*.

## Slow Down or Speed Up? Multi-Level Pointers



Especially for *vowel sounds* and *letters*, students of *phonics*, *spelling*, and *word-level reading* should know that there are:

[1] basic, common, regular sound-spelling correlations, such as those in *cat* (= ă), *bed* (= ě), *fish* (= ĩ), *pot* (= ǒ), *rug* (= ũ); *rain* (= ā), *see* (= ē), *pie* (= ī), *road* (= ô), and *room* (= ū).

[2] variable but still regular sound-spelling relationships, as in *book*, *push* (= oo); *salt*, *boss*, *hawk*, *haunt* (= o); *verb*, *bird*, *word*, *burn* (= u); *say*, *rain*, *bake* (= a); *feed*, *bead*, *these* (= e); *tied*, *time*, *mind* (= i); *boat*, *home*, *cold* (= o); *food*, *cube* (= (y)u); *loud*, *town* (= ou); *boy*, *oil* (= oi).



More advanced students will realize that there are also:

[3] alternative possible spellings for *certain sounds*, as in *bread* (= ě); *gym* (= ĩ); *papa* (= ǒ); *ton*, *some*, *touch* (= ũ).

There are *many* such alternative possibilities of this kind in *complex vowels*, as in *baby*, *eight*, *they*, or *veil* (= ā); *she*, *chief*, *receive*, or *suite* (= ē); *sky*, *style*, *sign*, or *night* (= ī); *own*, *toes*, *dough*, or *soul* (= ô); *truth*, *new*, *sleuth*, *blue*, *soup*, *who*, *move*, or *suit* (= ū).

Few people will ever memorize or “master” *all* possible vowel sound-spelling correlations perfectly, but “working the system” will increase learners’ *intuition* about possible ways to spell or pronounce words—so they can make “educated guesses” and/or use dictionaries or reference lists to maximum advantage. For various levels of proficiency, here are a few suggestions for ways to associate, contrast, and practice the sound-letter correlations of the 15 or more vowels, their most frequent vs. alternative spellings, and, eventually, “exceptions to the rules” to learn by sight.

1. **Match vowel sounds to spellings—and vice versa.** There are many activities that involve *matching* sounds (phonetic symbols) and letters. In the *Word Search Puzzle* on the next page, for instance, learners can copy the words they circled in the appropriate boxes of a *Vowel-Spelling & Sound Chart*, thereby listing *examples* of relevant letter spellings that produce certain sounds. For more letter-sound classifying practice, they can make copies of the grid and chart on page 86, create their own word-search puzzles, and reinforce their grasp of common, alternative (and exceptional) vowel-sound spellings by doing and checking them.

*Matching* is also the objective of most *Bingo/Lotto*-type activities. On *Phonetic-Symbol Vowel-Sound Grids* like those on page 87, players can mark or cover boxes with letters or words that produce or contain the vowel sounds represented by the symbols.

When (enlarged and) separated, *Letter-Spelling Boxes* like those on page 88 can be placed on top of *Grid* boxes, *phonicspelling Word/Picture Cards* like those on pages 67-68 and 75-76, vocab items in worksheets, etc. They might even be arranged horizontally (from left to right) with initial and final consonant letter squares (pages 21, 31, 98, 100) to form one-syllable words.

2. **Fill in (all?) possible spellings for given vowel sounds.** From a list of phonetic vowel-sound symbols—such as those on page 89, students can make use of, improve, and assess their ability to recall and supply some or all of their useful/possible spellings. Depending on their proficiency levels and “feel” for the system, they may work with only the most frequent patterns—or may challenge themselves to supply less common letter combinations. A few may also choose to memorize useful exceptions.
3. **Read (all?) words with given vowel spellings.** Working “in reverse” on pages 90-91, *from spellings to sounds*, learners fill in the given letters. Then they pronounce the words, distinguishing among the sounds represented by each common, alternative, exceptional vowel (combination) spelling. They can use the *All-Vowel-Spelling Reference Lists* on pages 92-94 for many (other) purposes.

### Slow Down or Speed Up? Multi-Level Pointers



At the highest levels of phonics or spelling instruction, students will learn about:

[4] *exceptional simple-vowel spellings* that occur in only one or a few words, such as *plaid* or *laugh* (= ä); *many*, *says*, *said*, *friend*, *leopard* (= ë); *been*, *guilt*, *sieve*, *busy*, *pretty*, *women* (= ĩ); *done*, *what*, *does*, *flood* (= ü); *wolf* or *could* (= ɔ̄); *broad*, *caught*, *bought*, *cough*, *gone* (= ô); *heart* (= a:); and *earth* (= û).

[5] There are even more unusual *complex-vowel spellings*, such as those in *bass*, *great*, *straight*, *campaign*, *champagne*, *gauge*, *sauté*, *ballet* (= ā); *key*, *skis*, *people*, *debris* (= ē); *height*, *buy*, *isle* (= ĩ); *thorough*, *cocoa*, *bureau* (= ô); *shoes*, *lieu*, *beauty*, *debut* (= ū); and *trauma* or *sauerkraut* (=ou).

For only a few of these exceptional items are there *rhyiming words* with the same spellings—such as *blood* + *flood* or *one* + *done* (= ü); *could* + *should* + *would*, etc. (= ɔ̄); *caught* + *taught* or *bought* + *ought* + *thought*, etc. (= ô); and *buy* + *guy* (= ĩ).

Because they are true *exceptions* to predictable patterns, the pronunciation and spelling of most words listed above have to be memorized individually. It is their *usefulness* that will determine whether or not language students *choose* to spend time on them. A starring (\* \*\* \*\*\*) system that reflects the level of “difficulty” of such items in *phonicspelling* materials may help with such decisions.










# Instructions for *Spellings of All Vowel Sounds*





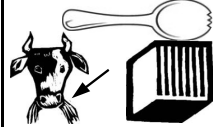

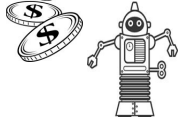
In this *Word Search Puzzle*, the words with the most common letter spellings for *Simple Vowel Sounds 1-8* are printed across—from left to right.

Words with the most common spellings for *Complex Vowel Sounds 9-15* run vertically.

Circle the words. Then copy them on the lines under their vowel spellings and phonetic sound-symbols—near their pictures. Can you pronounce and spell the words aloud?

n	m	a	n	p	s	h	i	r	t	p	c	b	o	o	k
a	b	l	e	g	c	h	o	p	b	u	g	o			
i	r	a	s	w	i	m	a	l	b	w	c				
l	d	o	g	c	k	e	e	l							
s	w	c	c	h	u	r	c	h	h	e	c	w	s	i	
p	u	s	h	f	e	t	s	a	l	t	i	d	p	n	
l	e	e	s	t	a	r	w	o	r	m	o	n	i	o	
a	w	f	e	r	n	e	a	u	y	e	e	o			
y	v	a	u	l	t	s	a	w	d	d					

-a-	-e-	-i-	-o-	-u-	-oo- -u-	-a- -o- -au- -aw-	-a(r)-	-e- -i- -o- -u- (r)
1. ă = /æ/	2. ě = /ɛ/	3. ĭ = /ɪ/	4. ȝ = /ɑ/	5. ŭ = /ʌ/	6. ȝ = /ɔ/	7. ô = /ɔ/	7r. a: = /ä/r	8r. û = /ɜ/r
 <u>man</u>								 <u>shirt</u>

-ai- -ay -a-e	-ea- -ee- -e-e	-ie- -ie -i- -i-e	-oa- -ow -o-e	-oo- -ew -u-e	-ou- -ow- -ow	-oi- -oy
9. ā = /eɪ/ or /eɪ/	10. ē = /i/ or /iː/	11. ī = /aɪ/ or /aɪ/	12. ō = /oo/ or /oʊ/	13. ū = /u/ or /uː/	14. ou = /aʊ/ or /aʊ/	15. oi = /ɔɪ/ or /ɔɪ/
						
					<u>brow</u>	

Here are the words for the 34 lines above, each representing a different very common spelling for the numbered vowel sound.  
 1. man 2. leg 3. swim 4. chop 5. bug 6. book 7. salt 8. fern 9. shirt 10. worm 11. church 9. nails, place  
 10. peach, feet, here 11. died, tie, wine 12. load, bowl, pole 13. spoon, chew, cube 14. cloud, owl, brow 15. coins, toy

