

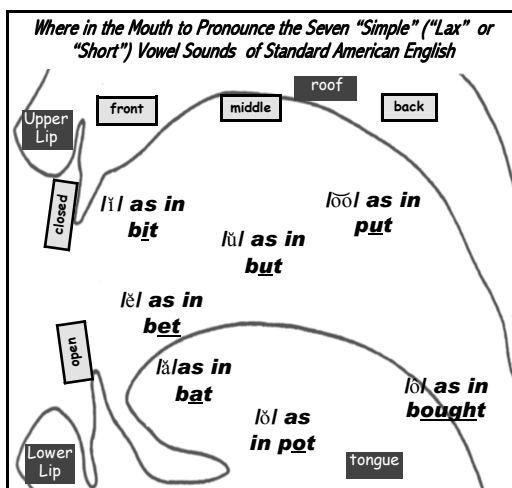
A Summary of Beginning-Level Phonics (Sound/Spelling) Patterns

What patterns and principles should language-learners master at the Beginning Level?

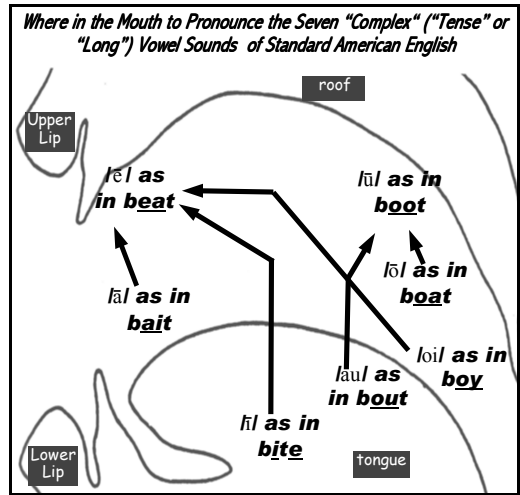
According to the conventional wisdom of language teaching and learning, beginners should learn to recognize, pronounce, spell, and use common vocabulary items beyond the basic survival level. In organized lessons, the most productive of these items are likely to be those that illustrate regular phonics patterns. After learning to *recognize or distinguish* the pronunciation of 14 to 16 different vowel sounds and 24 distinct consonant sounds of American English, learners need to be able to connect those sounds to the printed letters that produce them in words. While developing this ability, they learn to read words aloud—not only the familiar items they have memorized but also new items with recognizable sound/symbol patterns. They also learn to *spell* new words from the sounds they hear.

- ◆ **THE VOWEL SOUNDS OF THE LANGUAGE.** Vowel sounds are produced without any parts of the mouth (the tongue, teeth, palates, etc.) touching. The sounds differ from one another in *where* they are pronounced in the mouth. For the “front vowels” *ɪ*, *e*, and *æ*, the lips are flat or spread. “Middle vowels” like *o* and *u* are pronounced with a more or less open mouth, while “back vowels” are formed with rounded lips—more or less closed or open.

The chart on the right shows where the “simple” vowel sounds are said.



For pronunciation of the "complex" vowel sounds, the mouth parts are kept tense. Pronunciation can begin in the front, middle, or back of the mouth. While saying many of the sounds, the tongue moves from one mouth position to another, and the lips may change shape. In the chart at the right, arrows show these tongue and lip movements.



◆ **THE LETTERS FOR "SIMPLE" VOWEL SOUNDS.** One-syllable words with "simple" vowel sounds are most commonly spelled with one vowel letter (*a, e, i, o, or u*) before one or more final consonant letters. The simple vowel sound in the words *good* and *book* is an exception. Also, in some dialects of American English, the *ô* sound doesn't exist. It is replaced by the *ö* sound, so that words like *doll* and *hall* or *jog* and *dog* seem to rhyme.

The following chart illustrates these simple-vowel sound/symbol patterns. In the first horizontal row are the most common American dictionary symbols representing the sounds. The second row displays the most common spellings (vowel letters) for those sounds in words, and the third row shows some examples of the pattern. The letters that produce the vowel sounds are underlined.

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Simple Vowel Sounds & Spellings							
Dictionary Sound-Symbol	ă	ĕ	ĭ	ŏ	ŭ	oo, u	ô
Most Common Spelling (Letters)	<i>a</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>oo, u</i>	<i>a, o</i>
Word Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	<u>a</u> ct ba <u>a</u> cha <u>a</u> pack	be <u>e</u> le <u>e</u> ft pe <u>e</u> re <u>e</u> d	bi <u>i</u> fi <u>i</u> mi <u>i</u> ss pi <u>i</u> n	co <u>o</u> co <u>o</u> t lo <u>o</u> k po <u>o</u> nd	cu <u>u</u> t gu <u>u</u> ll gu <u>u</u> m lu <u>u</u> ck	loo <u>o</u> k goo <u>o</u> d bu <u>u</u> ll pu <u>u</u> sh	fa <u>o</u> ll ma <u>o</u> ll lo <u>o</u> st so <u>o</u> ft

- ◆ **THE LETTERS FOR “COMPLEX” VOWEL SOUNDS.** One-syllable words with “complex” vowel sounds, also called “tense” or “long” vowels or diphthongs, are most commonly spelled with one vowel letter (*a, e, i, o, or u*) before one or more consonant letters followed by a final silent *e*. The second most common spelling for “complex” sounds is a combination of two vowel letters together in the middle of the word, such as *ai, ea, ee, or oa*. Usually, these spellings are pronounced like the *name* of the first letter—*ā, ē, ī, or ō*.

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Complex Vowel Sounds & Spellings							
Dictionary Sound-Symbol	<i>ā</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>ō</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>au</i>	<i>oi</i>
Most Common Spelling (Letters)	<i>a-e, ai</i>	<i>ee, ea</i>	<i>i-e, ie</i>	<i>o-e, oa</i>	<i>u-e, oo</i>	<i>ou, ow</i>	<i>oi, oy</i>
Word Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	<u>b</u> ake <u>c</u> ane wait <u>p</u> ail <u>m</u> ain	shee <u>p</u> tree mea <u>n</u> rea <u>d</u> hea <u>r</u>	fi <u>l</u> e ri <u>d</u> e ti <u>m</u> e ti <u>e</u> pie <u>s</u>	ho <u>m</u> e co <u>n</u> e ro <u>b</u> e goa <u>t</u> soa <u>r</u>	ru <u>d</u> e tu <u>n</u> e fo <u>o</u> l mo <u>o</u> n fo <u>o</u> d	rou <u>n</u> d nou <u>n</u> cou <u>ch</u> no <u>w</u> bro <u>w</u> n	co <u>i</u> n poi <u>n</u> t oi <u>l</u> bo <u>y</u> to <u>y</u> s

- ◆ **THE CONSONANT SOUNDS OF THE LANGUAGE.** Consonant sounds are produced with two parts of the mouth touching or almost touching. For instance, the creation of the sounds /b, p/ and /m/ begins with the two lips pressed together. For the /d, t/, /n/, and /l/ sounds, the tip of the tongue touches the ridge behind the upper teeth; for /th/, it touches the teeth. Pressing the bottom lip to the back of the lower teeth produces the /v, f/ sounds. The /g, k/ sounds are created when the *back* of the tongue is pressed up toward the back of the roof of the mouth. For /z, s/ and /zh, sh/, it's the *front* of the tongue that nears the front of the roof of the mouth.

Sixteen of the consonant sounds of American English occur in “voiced/voiceless pairs.” This means that the two sounds are pronounced the same in the mouth—with the same parts touching and moving in the same way. However, the “voiced” sound includes the use of the vocal cords while the “voiceless” or “unvoiced” sound is pronounced without any vocal cord vibration. At the beginning of syllables, many of the voiceless sounds include a puff of air.

The "voiced/voiceless pairs" produced by the sudden release of air are /b/ vs. /p/, /d/ vs. /t/, and /g/ vs. /k/. The pairs created by friction are /v/ vs. /f/, /th/ vs. /th/, /z/ vs. /s/, and /zh/ vs. /sh/. The voiced /j/ begins with /d/ and ends with /dz/. The voiceless /ch/ consists of /t/ before /sh/. The other eight consonant sounds, which do not occur in voiced/voiceless pairs, are /m n ŋ r l h w y/. They are produced in various ways.

◆ **HOW INITIAL CONSONANT SOUNDS ARE SPELLED.** At the beginning of commonly-used words (before the vowel sounds), most—but not all—consonant sounds are spelled by the same one letter. These letters can also appear in "consonant blends" or "clusters," such as *bl, cr, dr, fl, str*, etc. Four sounds are represented by two-letter combinations: *ch, sh, and th*. The letters *th* can spell both a voiced and a voiceless sound. In the following charts are the beginning-level phonics patterns for initial consonant sounds and blends. In the first horizontal row are the most common American dictionary symbols representing the sounds; in the second, the most frequent spellings, and in the third, examples.

The letters that produce the consonant vowel sounds are underlined.

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Initial Consonant Sounds								
Dictionary Sound-Symbol	b	p	d	t	g	k	v	f
Most Common Spelling	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>c, k</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>f</i>
Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	<u>bag</u> <u>bake</u> <u>bell</u> <u>black</u>	<u>pen</u> <u>pile</u> <u>plate</u> <u>spot</u>	<u>dad</u> <u>dog</u> <u>down</u> <u>drink</u>	<u>tack</u> <u>ten</u> <u>train</u> <u>stop</u>	<u>gate</u> <u>girl</u> <u>green</u> <u>glad</u>	<u>can</u> <u>clock</u> <u>kit</u> <u>skin</u>	<u>vat</u> <u>vase</u> <u>vine</u> <u>vote</u>	<u>fat</u> <u>fill</u> <u>flat</u> <u>free</u>

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Initial Consonant Sounds								
Dictionary Sound-Symbol	<u>th</u>	th	z	s	zh	sh	j	ch
Most Common Spelling	<i>th</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>Few words begin with the /zh/ sound.</i>	<i>sh</i>	<i>j, g</i>	<i>ch</i>
Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	<u>this</u> <u>them</u> <u>that</u> <u>those</u>	<u>thick</u> <u>thin</u> <u>thing</u> <u>thrill</u>	<u>zap</u> <u>zeal</u> <u>zip</u> <u>zone</u>	<u>sack</u> <u>skate</u> <u>stone</u> <u>small</u>		<u>shack</u> <u>shape</u> <u>sheep</u> <u>shop</u>	<u>jack</u> <u>jet</u> <u>joke</u> <u>gem</u>	<u>chat</u> <u>chair</u> <u>cheat</u> <u>chin</u>

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Initial Consonant Sounds

Dictionary Sound-Symbol	m	n	ng	r	l	h	w	y
Most Common Spelling	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>There are no words that begin with the /ng/ sound.</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>y</i>
Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	<u>m</u> ad <u>m</u> ade <u>m</u> all <u>m</u> ean	pe <u>n</u> pi <u>l</u> e pl <u>a</u> te sp <u>o</u> t		<u>r</u> ack <u>r</u> ead <u>r</u> ound <u>t</u> rip	<u>l</u> ast <u>l</u> ea <u>f</u> <u>l</u> ost <u>s</u> lum	<u>h</u> air <u>h</u> at <u>h</u> ire <u>h</u> ope	<u>w</u> ait <u>w</u> all <u>s</u> wing <u>t</u> win	<u>y</u> ear <u>y</u> ell <u>y</u> et <u>y</u> ou

◆ **HOW FINAL CONSONANT SOUNDS ARE SPELLED.** The sound/symbol patterns for consonant sounds and blends at the *ends* of words vary more than those in initial word positions. After simple vowel sounds, single consonant letters are sometimes doubled, as in the examples *bill*, *mass*, *mitt*, and *jazz*. The "doubled spellings" for the /k/ and /ch/ and /j/ sounds are *ck*, *tch*, and *dge*, letter combinations that follow simple vowel sounds spelled by single letters, as in *crack*, *pitch*, and *fudge*. The letter *v* cannot be doubled. Even after simple vowel sounds, it precedes final silent *e*, as in the words *give* and *love*. After complex (tense) vowel sounds or diphthongs, /g/ requires the addition of the letter *u*, as in the word *league*. The /k/ sound is spelled *k* (Examples: *bake*, *like*); the /j/ sound, *g* (Example: *page*). An *-e* after the letters *th* signals the voiced /th/ sound— as in *bathe*. The /z/ sound can be spelled *z* or *s* (Examples: *maze*, *rose*); the /s/ sound may be represented by *s* or *c* (Examples: *loose*, *rice*).

The following charts illustrate these phonics patterns and sound/spelling principles. They include a few more letter combinations than appear in the *Beginning-Level Phonics Bingo Games*. Even so, such examples and their rhyming words might be introduced at this level.

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Final Consonant Sounds

Dictionary Sound-Symbol	b	p	d	t	g	k	v	f
Most Common Spelling	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>c, k</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>f</i>
Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	cab <u>b</u> ro <u>b</u> bri <u>b</u> e ro <u>b</u> e tu <u>b</u> e	tip stop tape ro <u>p</u> e ho <u>o</u> p	dad hid od <u>d</u> pai <u>d</u> ri <u>d</u> e	ba <u>t</u> ge <u>t</u> mi <u>t</u> t trea <u>t</u> bi <u>t</u> e	ba <u>g</u> le <u>g</u> co <u>g</u> plagu <u>e</u> rogu <u>e</u>	sack lic <u>k</u> bo <u>o</u> k lea <u>k</u> li <u>k</u> e	gi <u>v</u> e lo <u>v</u> e sa <u>v</u> e fi <u>v</u> e car <u>v</u> e	le <u>f</u> t if off sa <u>f</u> e ro <u>o</u> f

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Final Consonant Sounds

Dictionary Sound-Symbol	<u>th</u>	th	z	s	zh	sh	j	ch
Most Common Spelling	th	th	z	s	Few words end with the /zh/ sound. It most often occurs in the middle of words.	sh	j, g	ch
Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	bat <u>h</u> teet <u>h</u> smooth soot <u>h</u>	bat <u>h</u> fif <u>th</u> teet <u>h</u> bo <u>th</u>	buz <u>z</u> maz <u>e</u> siz <u>e</u> ris <u>e</u> nos <u>e</u>	bus <u>s</u> pass <u>s</u> rest mous <u>e</u> nic <u>e</u>		fish rush wash leash	badg <u>e</u> ridg <u>e</u> judg <u>e</u> pag <u>e</u> chang <u>e</u>	catc <u>h</u> witc <u>h</u> whic <u>h</u> reac <u>h</u> roac <u>h</u>

Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns: Final Consonant Sounds

Dictionary Sound-Symbol	m	n	ng	r	l	h	w	y	
Most Common Spelling	m	n	ng	r	l	h	w	y	
Examples, with Letters for the Sound Underlined	gem <u>m</u> sum <u>m</u> gam <u>e</u> tim <u>e</u>	pen <u>n</u> sun <u>n</u> can <u>e</u> foun <u>d</u>	ban <u>g</u> leng <u>th</u> ring son <u>g</u>	car <u>r</u> fear purr fir <u>e</u> part	pal <u>l</u> bell fall faul <u>t</u> col <u>d</u>	Few words end in the /h/ sound.	When a word ends in the letter <i>y</i> or <i>yl</i> , it is part of the complex vowel sound. It does not produce a consonant sound.		

How can teachers and learners best make use of *Beginning-Level Phonics Patterns & Principles?*

Instructors and tutors might want to present the information on previous pages in short "lecture-type" lessons with plenty of examples. However, it is probably better communicated when it comes up—that is, within a *Phonics Bingo* game, a group activity, or another lesson that reveals learners' lack of knowledge or confusion in pronunciation of sounds, phonics patterns, spelling rules, and/or vocabulary.

Learners can make use of the information when they complete the "mastery checks" (worksheets or quizzes) on the following pages. If this book is laid opened and flat on the photocopier, the pages are reproducible two to one—that is, each worksheet can be copied onto an 8.5 x 11-inch piece of paper, and four pages will fit on a two-sided copy.