

## PHONICS

Phonics tells you how to break a word into parts called syllables and how to pronounce each syllable. It is true that English letters do not always sound the way you expect them to, but phonics can help you figure out the pronunciation of most words.

There is not necessarily a correspondence between sounds and letters. There are 26 letters and 44 speech sounds. The number of sounds in a word can be different than the number of letters (e.g. light has five letter but three sounds /l/ /i/ /t/).

Some words cannot be sounded out phonetically. These words are called red words and the student should be taught to read these words using a multisensory method.

## CONSONANTS

The English alphabet is made up of 26 letters. Twenty one of the letters are consonants.

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

The letters in **Bold are vowels** and the letters in Black are consonants. The sounds of consonants are made when the tongue, lips, or teeth block the air that comes out of your mouth as you speak.

Fifteen of the consonants have only one sound when they appear by themselves.

**B F H J K L M N P R T V W Y Z**

Six consonants have more than one sound.

**C D G Q S X**

### The sounds of C and G:

When C is followed by e, i or y, it usually has the sound of /s/ as in salt. This is called the soft sound of c. When G is followed by e, i or y, it usually has the sound of /j/ as in germ. This is called the soft sound of g. There are some common exceptions to this rule such as get, girl and gift.

When c is not followed by e, i or y, it sounds like /k/ as in can. This is called the hard sound of c. When g is not followed by e, i or y, it sounds like /g/ as in gum. This is called the hard sound of g.

### The sounds of D:

The consonant d usually sounds like the /d/ in dot. At times d sounds like a /j/ like in educate and soldier. There is no clear guideline for knowing when the d sounds like a j.

### The sounds of q:

The consonant q, in English is always followed by u. Qu is always followed by a vowel and usually sounds like /kw/ as in queen and require. Sometimes qu sounds like /k/ as in antique and mosquito. Qu will usually sounds like /k/ when a word ends in que or in a word that comes directly from a foreign language such as quiche.

### The sounds of s:

The consonant s usually sounds like the /s/ as in salt. Sometimes s sounds like /z/ as in the

word those. The /z/ sound is common in two situations: 1) when s comes between two vowels (as in rose) and 2) at the end of a word that possession or ownership (such as his).

### **The sounds of x:**

The consonant x usually sounds like /ks/ as in fox. When the combination ex is followed by a vowel, then x usually sounds like /gz/ as in exam. When x begins a word it has the sound of /z/ as in Xerox.

## **THREE TYPES OF CONSONANT COMBINATIONS**

A consonant combination is two or more consonants that work together. There are three kinds of consonant combinations:

- Consonant blends
- Consonant digraphs
- Silent consonants

**Consonant Blends** are two or more neighboring consonants that keep their own sounds, but are spoken together. The sounds blend with each other or run together. For example the letters sm are a consonant blend. To pronounce this blend, just pronounce the /s/ and then glide into the /m/. This is the sound you say at the beginning of the word smile.

Consonant blends also occur in the middle and end of words.

There are four types of consonant blends:

- Blends that begin with s ( /sc/ /scr/ /sk/ /sl/ /sm/ /sn/ /sp/ /spl/ /spr/ /squ/ /st/ /str/ /sw/ )
- Blends that end with l ( /bl/ /cl/ /fl/ /gl/ /pl/ )
- Blends that end in r ( /br/ /cr/ /dr/ /fr/ /gr/ /pr/ /tr/ )
- Other blends in the middle or end of a word ( /dl/ /ft/ /lt/ /mp/ /nd/ /nk/ /nt/ )

Consonant digraphs is a pair of consonants with only one sound. The three types of digraphs are:

- Digraphs that sound like /f/: gh and ph
- Digraphs with new sounds of their own: /sh/ and /th/.
  - /sh/ as in washer, show, fish
  - /th/ has two similar sounds:
    - Voiced /th/ as in their, they, bathe
    - Unvoiced /th/ as in third, thin, thank and bath
- Digraphs with three sounds: /ch/
  - The most common is the sound you hear in the word check, chip and ranch. The sound is hard and short.
  - The sound of /ch/ can also sound like another digraph /sh/ like in chef, chute and Michelle.
  - ch can also have the sound as the single consonant /k/ as in chorus, chemist, and character. When words begin with ch followed by r, ch will sound like /k/ as in

Christian, chronic and chrome.

- In certain letter combinations, one consonant is pronounced and one is silent.
  - Mb the /b/ is silent after m as in bomb, limb and climb
  - Ck the /c/ is silent before k as in deck, stick and packer
  - Gn the /g/ is silent before n as in gnaw, gnat and sign
  - Wh the /h/ is often silent after w when wh begins a word as in white, whisper, and whip
  - Who the /w/ is often silent when a word begins with who as in who, whose and whole
  - Kn the /k/ is silent before n as in know, knife and knick-knack
  - Wr the /w/ is silent before r as in wreck, write and unwrap
  - When two of the same consonant are next to each other, one of them is silent as in bell, add, narrow, and fuss

## Vowels

There are five letters that are vowels

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Sometimes Y is a vowel.

### Short Vowel Sounds

◌̏ is a breve. When a breve is located over a vowel it indicates that the vowel sound is short.

ă sounds like /a/ as in pat

ĕ sounds like /e/ as in pet

ĭ sounds like /i/ as in pit

ŏ sounds like /o/ as in pot

ŭ sounds like /u/ as in cut

When a word or a syllable has only one vowel, and that vowel is followed by one or more consonants, the vowel is usually short.

There are predictable patterns for mapping sounds to letters when spelling these sounds. These patterns depend upon the vowel sound and the position of the sound in the word. For example, the /k/ sound is usually spelled as ck and the /j/ is spelled as /dge/ at the end of a word after a short vowel. This makes ck and dge combinations are short vowel indicators.

◌̄ is a macron. When a macron is located over a vowel it indicates that the vowel is long. Long vowel sounds say their name.

ā sounds like the /a/ in pay

ē sounds like the /e/ in bee

ī sounds like the /i/ in pie

ō sounds like the /o/ in toe

ū sounds like the /u/ in fuse

## Rules for long vowels sounds

1. Silent e When a word or syllable ends in a vowel-consonant-e, the vowel before the consonant is long and the final e is silent.
2. Two vowels together When two of certain vowels are together, the first vowel is long and the second is silent. ( /ai/ /ay/ /ea/ /ee/ /ie/ /oa/ /oe/ )
3. Final single vowel A single vowel at the end of a word or syllable (other than silent e) usually has a long sound.

## Other Vowel Sounds

1. The vowel y When y starts a word (as in yell) it a consonant. Otherwise, y is a vowel and usually has one of the following three vowel sounds:
  - a. In the middle of a word or syllable, y usually sounds like short /i/, as in myth, gym and syllable.
  - b. At the end of a one-syllable word, y sounds like long /i/ as in my, sty, and fry.
  - c. At the end of a word with more than one syllable, y sounds like long /e/ as in many, baby, and city. Sometimes y will sound like, as in deny, July and reply.

Remember that y is also considered a vowel when it follows the letter a. The combination ay, as in play and stay, follows the rule for two vowels together, the /a/ is long and the /y/ is silent.

2. Sounds of vowels followed by r When r follows a vowel, it changes the sound of the vowel. The vowel sound is neither short nor long.

Long vowels	Short vowels	Vowels followed by r
came	can	car
heat	help	her
site	sit	sir
code	cod	cord
fuel	fun	fur

3. Long and short oo When two o's appear together, they are pronounced in one of two ways:

- a. The long double o sound as in boot, spoon, and food
- b. Short double o sound as in foot, stood and good.

4. Diphthongs are vowels that have a gliding sound in the middle when combined with other vowels or consonants. oy as in boy and all as in ball. Vowel diphthong refers to the blending of two vowel sounds, both vowel sounds are usually heard and they make a gliding sound. Examples of vowel diphthongs include: oi--- boil, oy----- toy, au---- haul, aw----- saw, ew----- new , ow---- cow, oo--- - moon, oo----- look, ou--- mouth

## Syllables

Syllables are units of spoken language consisting of an uninterrupted sound formed by a vowel sound alone or a vowel sound alone or a vowel sound with one or more

consonants.

**“Every word has as many parts as it has talking vowels”**

Divide between compound words and prefixes and suffixes. The suffix ed is a separate syllable only when it follows d or t as in ended, molded, and dented. Otherwise, ed is not a separate syllable, it is the end of the syllable as in played, happened

There are seven major types of syllables

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Syllable type</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>C</b>	Closed syllable	A syllable that has one vowel and is closed in by at least one consonant (closed make up 43% of syllables in English)	cat luck bridge
<b>L</b>	Consonant + le syllable	A syllable that has one consonant followed by a le ending. The schwa vowel sound is heard between the consonant and the le. The final e is silent. This is one syllable that has to be in a two syllable word. It cannot stand by itself.	bubble apple kettle
<b>O</b>	Open syllable	A syllable that ends with one vowel and the vowel says its name. (When combined with closed syllables, these two types make up 75% of syllables in English.)	go robot
<b>V</b>	Vowel Team Syllable	A syllable in which there are two vowels together. They can either be a team or a diphthong.	stain – vowel team broil- diphthong
<b>E</b>	Magic – e syllable	A syllable where a vowel is followed by a consonant and a final e. The e is silent and it makes the vowel long.	cake bike
<b>R</b>	R controlled syllables	A syllable that has a vowel followed by an r. The r controls the sound of the vowel.	stir sailor
<b>S</b>	Schwa vowel sound ə	This is the mid-central, neutral vowel sound that typically occurs in unstressed syllables in English	alone system easily gallop circus