

## Spelling Patterns for Vowel Sounds

spelling	example	observations
<i>/i:/</i>		
ea	sea, tea, peace, teach, lead, read, peak, deal, reveal, scream, team, clean, leap, please, release, beat, beneath, breathe, creature, leave.	<i>Exceptional spellings: people, key, quay, geyser</i>
ee	see, free, agree, knee, feel, feed, proceed, succeed, keen, seek, seem, screen, deep, greet, sleeve.	
e	me, be, he, she, we; Pete, eve, these, theme, scene, complete, precede.	
ei	receive, receipt, deceive, conceive, perceive, ceiling; seize, protein, caffeine, seizure; Leigh, Keith, Neil, Sheila.	
ie	piece, field, achieve, believe, relief, brief, chief, fiend, siege, shriek, priest.	
i	police, gasoline, machine, magazine, marine, routine, vaccine, prestige, regime, elite, naive, ski, fatigue, intrigue, antique, technique, unique.	
oe	Oedipus, foetus, phoenix	
ae	aegis, Caesar, antennae	
is	debris, precis	
<i>/ɪ/</i>		
i	it, sit, miss, tip, pick, pin, bring, list, fill, film, trim, dinner, finger, river, consist.	<i>One-off spellings: women</i>
e	English, pretty, ecology, enough, eleven, electric.	
y	symbol, lyrics, hymn, pyramid, sympathy, synchronize, crystal, system, typical, tyranny, mystery, myth, rhythm, antonym, synonym, lady, family, Daddy, duty, whisky, carry, hurry, funny,	
u	busy, business, lettuce	
ui	build, circuit	
a	village, orange, character, spinach	
ie	sieve, mischief, Annie, Katie, auntie, hippie.	
ei, ey	forfeit, surfeit, sovereign, foreign, honey, hockey, journey, money, monkey, Sydney, Casey.	
ai	captain, bargain, mountain, fountain.	
ee	Yankee, coffee, committee, toffee.	
-a+cons+e	Image, postage, village; furnace, preface, surface, private, octave, chocolate.	
<i>/e/</i>		
e	wet, help, bet, set, well, guest, seldom, empty, every, berry, regular, accept, connect, inspector, impress, address, project, enter, entrance, entire.	<i>Exceptional spellings: friend, lieutenant.</i>
ea	<b>Learn them by heart:</b> bread, dead, head, header, lead, read, spread, thread, dread, tread, instead; already, ready, steady, meadow; sweat, sweater, threat, threaten; breath, death, health, stealth, wealth; weather, leather, feather; measure, pleasure, treasure, treasury, pleasant, peasant, pheasant; dealt, meant, cleanse, jealous, realm; heaven, heavy, endeavour, deaf; breakfast, breast, treachery, weapon.	
a	any, many, ate, Thames	
ei, ey	leisure, Leicester, heifer, Reynolds.	
eo	leopard, jeopardise, Leonard, Geoffrey	
u	bury, burial	
ai, ay	said, says, again	
<i>/æ/</i>		
a	black, mat, ankle, hat, man, sat, exam, have, apple, stand, rat, cat, flat, back.	This vowel is spelt <i> </i> only in a few words of French origin.
ai	plaid, plait	
i	meringue, lingerie, timbre	
<p>The letter &lt;a&gt; pronounced /eɪ/ changes to /æ/ in some derivatives: nature /eɪ/ – natural /æ/; nation /eɪ/ – national /æ/; sane /eɪ/ – sanity /æ/; vain – vanity.</p>		

**/ɑ:/**

a	father, last, path, after, draft, staff, bath, rather.	
a+nasal	command, demand; can't, plant, grant, shan't, advantage; branch; answer, chance, dance, glance, France; banana; drama, example, sample.	
a+s	Ask, basket, task; pass, class, glass, grass; grasp, gasp, cast, last, fast, fasten, past, vast, master, castle, disaster, nasty, broadcast, forecast.	
ar	arm, art, car, card, yard, part, charge, large, margin, argue, guard, regard, garden, pardon, market.	
al	half, calf, calm, palm, balm, alms, psalm. (The <l> in these words is silent.)	<i>Exceptional spellings: bazaar, Afrikaans</i>
au	laugh, aunt, draught	
er	clerk, derby, sergeant, Berkeley.	
ear	heart, hearth	
oi	memoir, repertoire, reservoir, patois	<i>This vowel is spelt &lt;oi&gt; only in French loanwords ( and in very few of those)</i>
ah	ah, bah, aha, hurrah.	

**/ʌ/**

u	Cup, bus, blush, up, rush, hungry, nut, cut, unfair, hut, blunt, hum, nun, sun	<i>Exceptional spellings: does, dozen, colour, worry, thorough, borough</i>
o+nasal	son, accompany, become, comfort, company, stomach, front, honey, London, Monday, money, once, onion, sponge, won, wonder, among, monkey, tongue, month, none, ton, one, come, done, some, something.	
o+v	love, dove, oven, glove, above, cover, govern, recover, shove	
o+th	mother, brother, other, another, nothing	
ou	enough, young, couple, rough, double, trouble, courage, flourish, nourish, country, cousin, southern, touch, tough, Douglas.	
oo	blood, flood, bloody	
wo	twopence, twopenny	

**/ɒ/**

(w)a	want, watch, wash, what, swamp, swallow, swan, wander, quality, qualify, quantity, quarrel, quarantine.	<i>Exceptional spellings: knowledge, bureaucracy, yacht</i>
o	got, hot, not, stop, rob, odd, off, clock, coffee, gone, bomb, bond, soft, often, body, hobby, dollar, doctor, document, occupy, college, model, monitor, option, promise, prompt, follow, borrow, sorrow, tomorrow, sorry, orange.	
ou	cough, trough	
au	because, cauliflower	

**/ɔ:/**

all, al	all, ball, call, fall, hall, wall, appall, alter, always, already, walk, talk, chalk, false, salt, halt.	<i>Exceptional spellings: drawer (a sliding container), drawer (a person who draws), awe, Sean</i>
au	cause, pause, applause, sauce, audio, audience, fraud, August, auto, author, Paul, fault, haunt, launch, laundry	
aw	law, draw, drawer, saw, thaw, crawl, shawl, hawk, dawn, lawn, awful, awkward.	
our, oar, oor	course, court, four, mourn, pour, source, your; board, hoarse, hoard, roar, soar, broad; door, floor.	
or, ore	cord, Ford, form, born, corn, torn, short, sport, torch, porch, orange, order, orient, normal, mortal, storm, story, glory, forum, forty, morning; bore, more, before, shore, sore, store, tore, explore, ignore.	
ought	bought, brought, fought, ought, sought, thought	
ure	sure	
augh	caught, taught, daughter, slaughter, haughty, naughty.	
war, wa	war, warm, ward, warden, warn, warning, award, reward; water.	
quar	quart, quarter, headquarters, quartz.	

**/ʊ/**

u	put, push, pull, bush, bull, bullet, full, pudding, sugar, cushion, butcher, bully, fulfil, pudding, pussy, bulletin.	
o	Only in wolf, woman, bosom, worsted, Worcester	

oo	book, brook, cook, cookie, look, hook, nook, rook, shook, took, good, stood, wood, hood, childhood, foot, soot, wool, broom, rookie.	
ou	could, should, would; courier, bouquet.	
or	Worcester, worsted	
<b>/u:/</b>		
u	rude, crude, rule, rumour, brutal, prune; Lucy, Luke, lumen, flute; June, junior, Julia, judo; chute, parachute, crucial, flu.	<i>Exceptional spellings: two</i>
oo	food, mood, room, broom, moon, cartoon, cool, pool, school, scoop, tooth, boots, poodle, ooze, choose, soothe, shoot, too, zoo, bamboo, taboo, kangaroo, shampoo, tattoo.	The words room, broom and groom have two alternative pronunciations, one with /u:/ and one with /ʊ/.
ou	group, soup, loupe, cougar, coupon, mousse, route, routine, wound, souvenir, through, rouge.	
o	do, who, whom, whose, lose, move, prove, improve, tomb, womb.	
ew	jewel, Jew, flew, blew, chew, crew, screw.	
oe	shoe, canoe, manoeuvre	
ue	true, blue, clue, glue.	
ui	juice, fruit, bruise, cruise, recruit, sluice.	
eu	Rheumatism, lieu, Reuben	
<b>/ɜ:/</b>		
ear	learn, heard, search, early, earn, earth, pearl, yearn, rehearse.	<i>Exceptional spellings: were, colonel</i>
er, err	herb, serve, verb, verse, certain, person, concern, emergency, percent, prefer, herd, err.	This vowel is spelt <eur> and <eu> in French loanwords and proper names: entrepreneur, voyeur, connoisseur, cordon bleu, Richelieu
ir, irr	sir, fir, girl, bird, stir, shirt, skirt, third, whirl, circle, circus, dirty, thirsty, whirr.	
our	courtesy, journey, journal, journalist, scourge.	
or	word, work, worm, world, worry, worse, worth; attorney	
ur, urr	urge, fur, burn, turn, curse, purse, purr, hurry, current, occur, curtain, furnish, turkey, purpose, pursue, disturb, urn, blur, nurse.	
yr, yrr	myrtle, myrrh	
eur	raconteur, masseur	
eu	milieu	
<b>/ə/</b>		
a	banana, policeman	<i>This vowel, usually called 'schwa', only occurs in unstressed syllables and can be represented by any vowel letter, digraph or combination of vowel plus &lt;r&gt;</i>
e	seven, postmen	
i	edible, possible	
o	second, correct	
u	until, August	
y	sibyl, analysis	
ai	chieftain	
ia	parliament	
io	question	
oi	tortoise, porpoise	
ie	ancient	
ea	vengeance	
ar	custard, bursar	
er	father, other	
or	mirror, forget	
ur	surpass, murmur	
re	centre, litre	
ou	vociferous, famous	
our	parlour, rancour	
ure	nature, vulture	

## Vowel Sounds 2: Diphthongs

### /aɪ/

i	l, kite, rabbi	<i>Exceptional spellings: eye, aye, guise, maestro.</i>
y	cry, by	
ie	die, lie	
ye	dye, bye	
ei	either, neither, Geiger	
ai	aisle	
igh	high, sight	
eigh	height, sleight	
uy	buy, guy	

Letter <i> is usually pronounced /aɪ/ in the following cases:

- (1) when followed by a single consonant + <e>, as in *time, line* and *kite*.
- (2) when followed by another vowel letter, as in *biology, dioxide, diurnal*. When <i> is followed by <a> or <e>, the result is /aɪ/ + /ə/. Examples are *diagnose, science* and *diet*.
- (3) when followed by the letters <nd>, as in *find, grind* and *behind*. But note the homographs *wind* /wɪnd/ and *wind* /waɪnd/.
- (4) when it occurs in Latin plurals. Some examples are *nuclei, foci, termini, alumni, gladioli, radii, cacti*. But note the singular *alibi* and the combining form quasi- /'kweɪzɪ/ or /'kwa:zɪ/.

### /eɪ/

a	cable, chaos, plane	<i>Exceptional spellings: Gaelic, gauge, gaol</i>
ai	saint, explain, jail	
ay	pay, day	
ey	they	
ea	break, steak, great, Reagan, Yeats	
eigh	eight, weight, sleigh	

Letter <a> is typically pronounced /eɪ/ when followed by a single consonant + <e>, as in *plane, mate, fame*.

#### French loanwords

e/é	<i>debut, cafe, regime</i>	
e/ê	<i>fete, crepe, suede</i>	
ee/ée	<i>toupee, soiree, matinee</i>	
et	<i>ballet, chalet, bouquet</i>	
er	<i>dossier, foyer, atelier</i>	

*There are a number of words ending in -ate whose grammatical function depends on whether the suffix is pronounced with /eɪ/ or /ə, ɪ/. The diphthong is typically used in the pronunciation of verb forms, while the weak vowel is used in adjectives and nouns; advocate, alternate, approximate, duplicate, elaborate, estimate, graduate, intimate, moderate, separate.*

### /ɔɪ/

oi	boil, point, tabloid	<i>Exceptional spellings: buoy</i>
oy	oyster, boym Lloyd	This diphthong is spelt <eu> in a few Gherman names and borrowings: Freud, Kreutzer, Plattdeutsch.

### /aʊ/

ou	sound, house, loud	<i>Exceptional spellings: MacLeod</i>
ow	cow, down, renown	
ough	plough, bough, drought	
au	Audi, Saudi Arabia	

### /əʊ/

o	go, roll, photo, home	<i>Exceptional spellings: sew, brooch, pharaoh</i>
ow	own, show	
ou	although, shoulder	
oe	toe, doe, woe	
oa	boat, road, load	

Letter <o> is typically pronounced /əʊ/ when followed by a single consonant + e, as in *home, phone, dole*.

*This diphthong also occurs in a number of French loanwords, where it is represented by the spellings <au, eau> and less commonly, <ot>.*

au	mauve, au pair, chauffeur	
eau	beau, bureau, château	
ot	argot, haricot, tarot	

**/ɪə/**

ear	hear, dear year	
eer	deer, peer, queer	The letters <e> and <i> are sometimes pronounced /ɪə/ when they are followed by <r> + a vowel letter or the letter <y>, as in <i>Vera, Algeria, query, lira, Algeciras</i> .
ere	here, sphere, mere	
eir	weird, weir	
ier	pier, fierce, chandelier	
ir	fakir, emir, nadir	
ea	idea, real, theatre	

**/eə/**

air	hair, pair, hairy, dairy	<i>Exceptional spellings: mayor, prayer, scarce, ne'er, Verdi</i>
are	care, fare, scare	
ear	pear, bear, wear	
ere	there, where, père	
eir	heir, their	

(1) Letter <a> is sometimes pronounced /eə/ when it is followed by <r> + a vowel letter or the letter <y>, as in *parent, canary, aquarium, vary, wary, Mary, Sarah*.

(2) The only items in which <ear> is pronounced /eə/ are *pear, bear, wear, swear, tear* (ad words derived from them). All other words are pronounced with /ɪə/.

(3) In present day RP this diphthong is often realised as a long open <e> ([ɛ:]).

**/ʊə/**

oor	moor, boor, spoor	
our	tour, dour, gourd	
ure	sure, lure, cure	Currently, many speakers use /ɔ:/ rather than /ʊə/ in words like <i>cure, tour, moor, sure, and even you're</i> .
ur	euro, during, curious	This diphthong is often preceded by /j/ represented by <e> in such words as <i>Europe, euro</i> .

## CONSONANTS

/p/		
p	put, super, lip	<i>Exceptional spellings: shepherd, hiccough/hiccup</i>
pp	happy, apple, supper	
Silent <p>: This letter is silent when it occurs before <n, t and s> in several words of Greek origin: <i>pneumonia, psychology, pterodactyl</i> . This letter is also silent in these words: <i>corps, coup, receipt, cupboard, raspberry</i> .		
/b/		
b	boy, table, pub	
bb	hobby, abbey, ebb	
Silent <b>: it occurs after <m> and before <t>: <i>climb, comb, crumb, numb, plumb, thumb, tomb, plumber, debt, doubt, subtle</i> . But <i>tumble, crumble, rumble, humble, stumble!!!</i>		
/t/		
t	ten, petrol, cat	
tt	letter, battle, butt	
th	Thyme, Thames, Thomas, Theresa, Thailand, Thomson, Chatham, discotheque, Anthony, Esther.	<i>Pronunciation hints: generally speaking, &lt;th&gt; is pronounced /θ/ or /ð/. The pronunciation of &lt;th&gt; as /t/ is found only in a very small number of words, most of which are indicated left. The names Anthony and Esther are also pronounced with /θ/.</i>
-ed	washed, stopped, laughed	
Silent <t>: it is silent in <i>Christmas</i> and <i>soften</i> , as well as in words ending in <i>-stle</i> and <i>-sten</i> : <i>thistle, whistle, jostle, rustle, castle, forecastle, nestle, listen, glisten, hasten, christen, moisten, fasten, chasten</i> . But <i>often</i> can be pronounced either with or without <t>. It is also silent in several words of French origin, especially those words ending in <i>-et</i> and <i>-ot</i> : <i>ballet, beret, bidet, buffet, cabaret, gourmet, parquet, duvet, debut, nougat, rapport, argot, depot, haricot, tarot, penchant</i> .		
/d/		
d	day, medal, glad	
dd	ladder, middle, caddie	
-ed	played, travelled, banned	
Silent <d>: it is silent in <i>handkerchief</i> , and usually also in <i>sandwich, handsome, and Wednesday</i> .		
/k/		
k	key, baker, lake, park	<i>Exceptional spelling: Akkadian.</i>
c	cow, scale, picnic	
ck	clock, hacker, ticking	
cc	account, occasion, tobacco	
qu	quay, quiche, clique, cheque	
ch	Chemist, masochism, monarch	
kh	gymkhana, khaki, Tutankhamen	
Pronunciation hints: The digraph <qu> is pronounced /kw/ in words like <i>quite, quirk, square, banquet</i> and <i>liquid</i> . It is commonly pronounced /k/ in medial position, especially in words of French origin: <i>bouquet, etiquette, piquancy, liquor</i> . Note that <i>conquer</i> with /k/ but <i>conquest</i> with /kw/. <cqu> is pronounced /k/ in <i>lacquer, racquet</i> , but <i>acquire, acquaint, acquit</i> /kw/. The words <i>Celt</i> and <i>Celtic</i> are pronounced /kelt, 'keltz/, but in Scotland the usual pronunciation is /selt, 'seltz/. The names of the Glasgow football team and the Boston basketball team are both pronounced with /s/.		
Silent <k and c>: letter <k> is silent in the initial cluster kn-: <i>know, knight, knife, knuckle</i> . <i>Likewise, &lt;c&gt; is silent in the cluster -sc-: muscle, sceptre, corpuscle.</i> <i>It is also silent in the words indict, indictment, victuals and Connecticut.</i> <i>Note the silent -ck- in blackguard and Cockburn.</i>		
/g/		
g	girl, tiger, finger, flag	
gu	guest, guess, guard, guarantee	
gue	dialogue, catalogue	
gg	trigger, foggy, aggression	
gh	ghoul, ghastly, ghost	
Silent <g>: It's silent in the initial and final cluster <gn> and in the final cluster -gm: <i>gnarled, gnome, gnostic, gnaw, align, feign, foreign, assign, benign, campaign, champagne, malign, reign, consign, resign, sign, design; diaphragm, paradigm, phlegm</i> . But it is pronounced in the words <i>paradigmatic, phlegmatic, signal, assignation, resignation</i> . <i>Note the derived word phlegmy, with no /g/, and physiognomy, both ways.</i>		
/f/		
f	few, cafe, scarf	

ff	suffer, off, stuff	
ph	phone, nephew, triumph	
gh	laugh, rough, tough, enough, laughter, tougher, roughly	
<i>Eye-opener: the pronunciation of nephew as /ˈnefjuː/ has gained considerable ground over the more traditional /ˈnevjuː/.</i>		
<b>/v/</b>		
v	van, cover, give	<i>Exceptional spelling: of.</i>
vv	navvy, savvy, skivvy	
ph	Stephen, nephew	
<b>/θ/</b>		
th	thin, think, through, cathedral, author, north, worth, path	
<b>/ð/</b>		
th	the, this, that, these, those, than, though, thy, then, although, weather, worthy, with, smooth, northern, southern	
<p><i>Pronunciation hints: 1) In initial position, &lt;th&gt; is pronounced /ð/ in determiners, pronouns, conjunctions and adverbs (e.g., this, than, then, there, theirs, thus). An exception is the word through /θruː/. Most other words beginning &lt;th&gt; are pronounced with /θ/.</i></p> <p><i>2) In medial position, &lt;th&gt; is pronounced /ð/ when followed by -er or -ing (e.g., other, bother, brother, together, either, dither, gather, clothing, bathing, loathing). There are three exceptions, panther, ether and thing (and its compounds anything, nothing, plaything, etc.)</i></p> <p><i>3) In final position, &lt;th&gt; is usually pronounced /θ/. Two exceptions are with and smooth (with /ð/). Note also booth and bequeath, which are pronounced either /ð/ or /θ/.</i></p>		
<p><i>The /θ/ - /ð/ alternation:</i></p> <p><i>There are several cognates in which the contrast /θ/ - /ð/ serves to mark nouns and adjectives. Some examples are:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>north, south, worth (/θ/)/northern, southern, worthy (/ð/).</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>But note frothy and pithy (/θ/).</i></p> <p><i>This alternation is signalled orthographically in noun and verb cognates ending in -th and -the respectively. Examples are:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Nouns: bath, breath, sheath, sooth, teeth, wreath (/θ/).</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Verbs: bathe, breathe, sheathe, soothe, teethe, wreathe (/ð/).</i></p>		
<b>/s/</b>		
s	soup, this, expensive	
ss	boss, missile, passive	
c	ceiling, accent, peace	
sc	scene, science, abscess	
z	blitz, quartz, waltz	
x (/ks/)	expect, exhibition, box	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pronunciation hints:</i></p> <p><i>1) The final sequence -ce is pronounced /s/, never /z/: advice, once, rice, race, mace.</i></p> <p><i>2) However, the final sequence -se may be pronounced /s/ or /z/: Pronounced /s/ in some nouns and adjectives: abuse, close, diffuse, excuse, house, use. When these words function as verbs, all are pronounced with /z/. Exceptions: fuse, surprise, always with /z/; decrease, increase, promise, release, always with /s/. In used to, when it means 'accustomed' /s/; /z/, when it means 'employed'.</i></p> <p><i>3) Spelling &lt;s&gt;, e.g., base, case, chase, purchase; cease, crease, lease; geese; concise, paradise, practise, precise; dose; goose, noose, loose; louse, mouse; dense, rinse; conclusive, elusive, exclusive, expensive; comparison; nuisance, with /s/.</i></p> <p><i>4) Spelling &lt;z&gt;, only in eczema, quartz, ritzy, waltz, Switzerland, with /s/.</i></p>		
<b>/z/</b>		
s	cousin, desert, these	
z	zoo, freeze, dozen	
zz	puzzle, muzzy, jazz	
ss	dessert, scissors, possess, dissolve, Missouri, hussar	
x	xylophone, xerox, xenophobia	
Also x (/gz/)	example, exactly, Alexander	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pronunciation hints:</i></p> <p><i>1) The final sequence -ze is always pronounced /z/, never /s/: maze, daze, seize, organize.</i></p> <p><i>2) The adjective and noun suffix -ese is always pronounced /-i:z/: Chinese, Portuguese, Siamese, Sudanese, Pekinese.</i></p> <p><i>3) The noun suffix -ism is always pronounced /-izəm, -zm/: athleticism, capitalism, Marxism, racism, relativism.</i></p> <p><i>4) The only words in which &lt;ss&gt; is pronounced /z/ are dessert, scissors, possess, Missouri, dissolve and hussar.</i></p> <p><i>5) Spelling &lt;s&gt; e. g. Disease, ease, erase, phase, phrase; these; advertise, bruise, despise, disguise, noise, praise, revise, raise, rise, surprise, wise; choose, dispose, expose, hose, lose, nose, oppose, propose, suppose, those; arouse, blouse, cause, confuse, pause; deposit, desert, deserve, design, desire, disaster, hesitate, houses, miserable, museum, music, physics, positive, position, president, resemble, resign, resist, resort, result, trousers, visible, visit; busy, cosy, daisy, jersey, lousy; husband, Tuesday, Thursday; cousin, pleasant, poison, present, prison, reason.</i></p>		
<p><i>The /s/ - /z/ alternation:</i></p> <p><i>There are a number of words which are pronounced with final /z/ when used as verbs and final /s/ when used as nouns or adjectives. This alternation is signalled orthographically in the pairs advise /ədˈvaɪz/ – advice /ədˈvaɪs/, devise /dɪˈvaɪz/ – device /dɪˈvaɪs/, but there are other words in which the contrast is orthographically invisible: abuse, close, diffuse, excuse, house, use.</i></p> <p><i>Nevertheless, one must not be misled by the spelling, for there are quite a few words in which the /z/ – /s/ alternation does not operate. For instance, the words decrease, increase, promise and release are always pronounced with final /s/ regardless of their function. Similarly, fuse and surprise are</i></p>		

pronounced with final /z/ whether they are used as nouns or verbs. To add further confusion, in British English the <s> spelling of the verbs *license* and *practise* serves to distinguish them from the nouns *licence* and *practice*, yet both verbs and nouns have the same pronunciation, i.e., 'laɪsɪns, 'præktɪs/.

/ʃ/

sh	ship, cushion, bash	Exceptional spelling: <i>fuchsia</i>
s	extension, pension	
ss	passion, pressure	
t	mention, motion, function	
c	special, ocean, musician	
sc	conscience, fascist, luscious	
ch	chic, champagne, chaperon, Chicago, machine, brochure, machete, Michigan, moustache, niche, gauche, crèche	
sch	schedule, Schweppes, schnapps, schmuck, schmaltz	

Pronunciation hints:

Spellings -C+sion and -tion, e.g. *expulsion*, *tension*, *version*, *session*; *fiction*, *caution*. Possible exceptions: *equation*#, *transition*#.

/z/

s	vision, fusion, lesion	
g	genre, regime, beige	
j	bijou, déjà vu, je ne sais quoi	
z	seizure, azure	

Eye-opener: Despite its spelling, the word *equation*# is normally pronounced /ɪ'kweɪʒn/. The variant /ɪ'kweɪfɪn/ is not common in RP.

Pronunciation hints:

- 1) Spellings -V+sion, -V+sure and -V+sual; e.g. *confusion*, *closure*, *casual*. No exceptions.
- 2) Spelling <g> in French loanwords, e.g. *camouflage*, *collage*, *espionage*, *garage*#, *sabotage*; *beige*, *rouge*; *protégé*; *genre*, *gigolo*.

/h/

h	house, hotel, Bahamas	
wh	who, whose, whole	

Silent <h>: It is always silent in final position: *cheetah*, *doh*, *hurrah*, *oh*, *pharaoh*, *shah*, *verandah*.

There are also a good many words in which non-final <h> is silent: *heir*, *honest*, *honour*, *hour*, *annihilate*, *vehement*, *vehicle*, *diarrhoea*, *shepherd*. To these may be added many proper names ending in -ham: *Chatham*, *Graham*, *Nottingham*, *Durham*.

Notice that *historian*, *historic*, *historical* and *historically* are sometimes pronounced without /h/ when they are preceded by an. Thus, a *historical re-enactment* /ə'his'tɔːrɪkl̩, rɪ:'næktmənt/ or an *historical re-enactment* /ən'ɪs'tɔːrɪkl̩, rɪ:'næktmənt/, but a *crisis of historical proportions* /ə'kraɪsɪs əv'his'tɔːrɪkl̩ prə'pɔːʃnz/. The word *hotel* is most commonly pronounced /'həʊ'tel/, but the old aitchless pronunciation /əʊ'tel/ can still be heard.

/tʃ/

ch	chair, leech	Exceptional spellings: Czech /tʃek/, <i>putsch</i> /putʃ/.
tch	match, watch, pitch	
t	picture, digestion	
c	cello, concerto	

Pronunciation hints:

- 1) Letter <t> is pronounced /tʃ/ in the final sequences -ture and -stion: *picture*, *feature*, *creature*, *question*, *exhaustion*, *suggestion*.
- 2) This letter is also usually pronounced /tʃ/ in *righteous* /raɪtʃəs/.

Silent <ch>: the digraph <ch> is silent in these words: *fuchsia* /'fjuːʃə/, *yacht* /jɔːt/.

/dʒ/

j	jack, major, raj	
g	gin, logic, danger, strange	
dg	hedge, ridge, lodge	
dj	adjust, adjective	
gg	suggest, exaggerate, loggia, veggie	
ch	sandwich, spinach, Greenwich, Norwich (UK)	

/m/

m	more, ram	
mm	accommodate, dilemma	
mb	climb, dumb, lamb, plumber	
mn	autumn, column, damn	

/n/



n	now, dance, pin	
nn	annoy, penny, tennis	
gn	gnaw, sign, reign	
kn	knee, knob, acknowledge	
pn	pneumatic, pneumonia	

*Silent <n>: this letter is silent at the end of a word when it follows the letter <m>: autumn, column, damn, condemn, hymn, solemn. But note that the <n> in these words corresponds to /n/ when it is followed by a suffix beginning with a vowel: autumnal, columnist, condemnation, damnation, hymnal, solemnity.*

### /ŋ/

ng	hanger, banging, sing, wrong	
n	finger, anxious, uncle, bank	

*Pronunciation hints: 1) The spelling <ng> usually corresponds to the pronunciation /ŋ/ at a morpheme boundary, whether or not it is a word boundary: sing, hang, slang, long, Reading, singing, hanger, slangy, longed, Birmingham. But the morpheme-final -ng is pronounced /ŋg/ in the comparatives and superlatives of the adjectives long, strong and young, and in words derived from monophthong, diphthong and triphthong: longer, longest, stronger, strongest, younger, youngest, triphthongal, monophthongise, diphthongisation. Note that <ng> also represents /ŋ/ in the words amongst, gangster, youngster, length and strength.*

*2) The spelling <n> usually represents /ŋ/ in stressed syllables when followed by /k/ or /g/: anchor, distinguish. Note /ndʒ/, e.g. astringent, change, danger, mingy, strange(r).*

### /l/

l	long, child, oil	
ll	cellar, village, dull	

*Silent <l>: It is silent before <d, f, k and m> in these words: could, should, would; half, calf; talk, walk, chalk, caulk, stalk, folk, yolk, Norfolk, Suffolk; almond, alms, balm, calm, palm, psalm, qualm, salmon, Malcolm, Holmes, Stockholm. Note also baulk /bɔ:k/ or /bɔ:lk/. Other words in which <l> is silent are: Lincoln, Renault, Versailles.*

### /r/

r	read, around, three	
rr	arrive, currant, arrow	
rh	rhino, rhubarb, rhythm	
rrh	cirrhosis, diarrhoea, haemorrhage	
wr	wrist, wrong, wry	

### /j/

y	year, yolk, beyond	
i	million, onion, senior	
e	few, new, euro, beauty	
u (!)	cute, muscular, tube	
u+r+vowel (!)	mural, cure, pure, mature	

*Spelling and pronunciation hints: Yod is commonly spelled <y> in word-initial position and <y or i> when it occurs medially. Because of its gliding nature, however, it is much easier to predict when it should be used looking at the vowels and diphthongs that follow:*

*a) In stressed syllables, /j/ occurs before /u:/ and /ʊə/ if they are spelled <u, ue, eu, ew, ure> and are not preceded by the letters <j, ch, or r>, or by a <consonant + l>: tube, duty, music, fuel, due, cue, Tuesday, feud, neutral, Eucharist, ewe, few, new; Urals, mural, euro, pure, mature. Examples without /j/: Jew, June, juice, chew, chute, rude, crew, prune, blue, plural, sluice.*

*b) In unstressed syllables, /j/ occurs before /u:, ʊ, uə, uə, ə/: menu, argue, regular, uvular, pedicure, annual, manual, million, onion, senior.*

*c) In unstressed syllables, the two-syllable sequence /tə/ is often compressed into a single syllable, so becoming /jə/. This gives rise to a number of alternative pronunciations: audience, idiot, immediate, India.*

*d) Other alternative pronunciations result from the weakening of unstressed /ju, ju/ to /jə/: communist, manufacture, document.*

*e) There are many words in which /j/ may or may not be dropped, especially but not exclusively in stressed syllables after /θ, s, z, l/: suit, sewage, lute, absolute, revolution, salute, enthusiasm.*

*Minority spelling: in some French loanwords the sequence /nj/ is represented by <gn>: cognac, poignant, vignette, lorgnette.*

### /w/

w	well, win, reward	
wh	what, where, whine	
u	quick, antiquity, squad, anguish, language	
o (!)	one, once	
oi (!)	choir, abattoir, chamois, memoir, repertoire, reservoir	

*Silent <w>: it is silent in the following cases:*

*a) Before <r> as in write, wrist, wrestle and wrong.*

*b) In many proper names ending in -wich or -wick: Greenwich, Norwich, Chiswick, Warwick.*

*c) In the words who, whom, whose, whole, where. Some speakers pronounce many words beginning with <wh> → /hw/ (what, which, why, whisky, wheat), but this pronunciation is now considered old-fashioned in RP.*

*d) In the words answer and sword.*

#### Eye-openers:

1) Note that the <u> is pronounced /w/ in the sequence <qu+vowel> and also sometimes in the unstressed sequence <gu+vowel>. Thus, /w/ occurs in anguish because the second syllable, containing -gu-, is unstressed. But letter <u> is silent in words like guard, guest and guide, since the sequence -gu- is stressed. Exceptions are numerous: iguana, McGuire, guerrilla, guarantee.

2) The two-syllable sequence /uə/ is often compressed into a single syllable, so becoming /wə/. This gives rise to a good number of pronunciation variants in words like usual, innocuous, obituary.

#### SILENT CONSONANTS:

There are a number of silent consonants which do not represent any sound at all:

<b>: in -mb and -bt, e.g. bomb(er) /'bɒm(ə)/, comb /'kɒm/, plumb(er) /'plʌm(ə)/, thumb /'θʌm/, tomb /'tu:m/, womb /'wu:m/, climb(er) /'klaɪm(ə)/; debt(or) /'det(ə)/, doubt /'daʊt/, subtle /'sʌtl/.

<c>: in corpuscle /'kɔ:pʌsəl/, muscle /'mʌsəl/; Connecticut /kə'netɪkət/, indict /ɪn'daɪt/, victual(s) /'vɪtəlz/. Note <ch> in schism /'sɪzəm/, yacht /'jɒt/.

<g>: in -gm, -gn and gn-, e.g. diaphragm /'daɪəfrəm/, plegm /'flem/; assign /ə'saɪn/, campaign /kəm'peɪn/, cologne /kə'ləʊn/, foreign /'fɔrən/, reign /reɪn/, sovereign /'sɔvrɪn/; gnash /nɑʃ/, gnat /nat/, gnaw /nɔ:/.

<h> in heir /eə/, honest /'ɒnɪst/, honour /'ɒnə/, hour /'aʊə/; in <rh>, e.g. rhetoric /'retərɪk/, rheumatism /'ru:mætɪzəm/, rhubarb /'ru:bɑ:rb/, rhythm /'rɪðəm/, diarrhoea /,daɪə'ri:ə/; also in annihilate /ə'naiɪleɪt/, bonhomie /'bɒnəmi/, vehement /'vi:əmənt/, vehicle /'vi:kl/; in proper names in -ham, e.g. Durham /'dʌrəm/, Fulham /'fʊləm/, Graham /'greɪəm/.

<k> in kn-, e.g. knee /'ni:/, know /'nəʊ/, knot /'nɒt/, knit /'nɪt/. Note <ck> in blackguard /'blagɑ:d/.

<l> in -lk and -lm, e.g. chalk /'tʃɔ:k/, folk /'fəʊk/, stalk /'stɔ:k/, talk /'tɔ:k/, yolk /'jɒk/; almond /'ɑ:mənd/, calm /'kɑ:m/, Holmes /hɒlms/, Malcolm /'malkəm/, palm /'pɑ:m/, salmon /'səmən/; also in calf /'kɑ:f/, half /'hɑ:f/; and in could /'kʊd/, should /'ʃʊd/, would /'wʊd/.

<n> in -mn, e.g. autumn /'ɔ:təm/, column /'kɒləm/, condemn /kən'dem/, damn /'dɑm/, hymn /'hɪm/, solemn /'sələm/.

<p> in coup /'ku:/, cupboard /'kʌbəd/, raspberry /'rɑ:zbəri/, receipt /rɪ'si:t/. Note <ps> in corps /'kɔ:/.

<s> in aisle /'aɪl/, apropos /,əprə'pəʊ/, chassis /'ʃasi/, debris /deɪbri:/, demesne /dɪ'meɪn/, Illinois /,ɪlɪ'nɔɪ/, island /'aɪlənd/, isle /'aɪl/, Louis /'lu:ɪ/, viscount /'vaɪkaʊnt/, Arkansas /ə'rkænsɔ:/.

<t> in stle, -sten, e.g. apostle /ə'pɒsəl/, castle /'kɑ:səl/, hustle /'hʌsəl/, mistletoe /'mɪsəltəʊ/, nestle /'nesəl/, thistle /'θɪsəl/; chasten /'tʃeɪsən/, christen /'krɪsən/, fasten /'fɑ:sən/, glisten /'glɪsən/, hasten /'heɪsən/, listen /'lɪsən/, moisten /'mɔɪsən/; also in French loanwords e.g. baccarat /'bakə,rɑ:/, beret /'berɛɪ/, ballet /'baleɪ/, cabaret /'kabəreɪ/, debut /'deɪbjʊ:/, rapport /ra'pɔ:/; note also mortgage /'mɔ:ɡɪdʒ/, often /'ɒfən/, and <th> in asthma /'æsmə/.

<w> in wr-, wh-, e.g. wrap /'rɑp/, wreck /'rek/, wring /'rɪŋ/, wrist /'rɪst/, wrong /'rɒŋ/; who /'hu:/, whole /'həʊl/, whom /'hu:m/, whore /'hɔ:r/, whose /'hu:z/; in proper names in -wick, -wich, e.g. Berwick /'berɪk/, Keswick /'keɪk/, Warwick /'wɒrɪk/; Greenwich /'grɪnɪdʒ/, Norwich /'nɒrɪdʒ/ (except Ipswich /'ɪpswɪtʃ/); also in answer /'ɑ:nsə/, sword /'sɔ:rd/.