

Speaking the English You See

The 15 “Color” Vowels

Lists by
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These lists are intended to promote recognition of *spelling patterns* that produce specific speech sounds.

These lists are NOT intended for vocabulary development.
To do so will distract students from the purpose.

1--Double Vowel A: sound = /A/ → gray day
spellings: ae, ai, ay, eigh

Double Vowels: *Usually* say the Name of the 1st vowel. The 2nd vowel is silent.

Practice:

- bake, cake, drake, fake, Jake, lake, make, (qu=kw) quake, rake, sake, take, wake
- bale, bail, Dale, gale, Gail, hale, hail, kale, male, mail, pale, pail, rale, rail, sale, sail, tale, tail, vale, whale, wail, Yale
- ate, bate, bait, crate, date, fate, gate, grate (v.), hate, Kate, late, mate, Nate, pate, rate, sate, slate, skate, state, Tate, wait
- bare, care, chair, dare, fare, fair, hare, hair, lair, mare, nare, pare, pair, rare, share, spare, stare, stair, tare, ware
- bay, clay, day, Fay, gay, hay, Jay, Kay, lay, may, nay, pay, play, pray, prayer, (qu=kw) quay, ray, say, stay, sway, way
- bade, Dade, fade, glade, grade, jade, made, paid, raid, shade, trade, wade
- ape, cape, drape, gape, grape, jape, nape, rape, shape, tape
- aim, blame, came, claim, dame, fame, game, James, lame, Mame, name, same, shame, tame
- eigh = /A/ → freight, weigh (v.), weight (n.), neighbors (=people who live near you), neighborhood (=houses and buildings, near your house)

***Why do some words have Capital letters? Right, they are names!

These words do NOT say /A/:

- ae = /a/[#6] → have

Practice all: May James is my neighbor. She takes a walk every day at eight o'clock. Then, she bakes cakes and makes a kale shake to have with her cake. After school she takes care of Dale, Gail, Jake, Jane, Nate, Kate, Jay, Ray, and Layla. They play games, then do homework, so they don't fail in school.

2--Double Vowel E: sound = /E/ → green tea
spellings: ea, ee, ei, ey

Double Vowels *usually* say the Name of the 1st vowel. The 2nd vowel is silent.

Practice:

- beak, creak (v.), creek (n.), eke, geek, leak (v.), leek (n.), meek, peak (n.), peek (v.), reek, seek, sleek, teak, weak, week
- bean, Dean, jeans, keen, lean, mean, preen, queen, seen, sheen, teen, wean
- beer, deer, ear, fear, gear, hear, here, jeer, leer, mere, near, peer, queer, sear (v.), seer (n.), sere (adj.), smear, steer, shear (v.), sheer, tear (n.), veer, weir, year
- beat (v.), beet (n.), cheat, cleats, eat, feat, feet, fleet, greet, heat, meat, meet, mete, neat, peat, pleat, seat, sheet, sleet, teat, wheat
- beach, each, leech, peach, preach, reach, teach
- bee, fee, free, key, Lee, pea, pee, sea, see, tea, tee, vee, zee
- people

These words also say /E/:

- e=/E/ (at end of 1-syllable words) = /E/ → be, he, me, she, we, ye
- y=/E/ (at end of 2-syllable words) → airy, bleary, dairy, easy, freely, glory, hairy, leery, nosy, posy, rosy, Tony, wary, yearly

These words do NOT say /E/:

- *sometimes* ea=/A/ → bear, pear, tear (v.), steak, great

Practice: DeeDee eats beans and peas and peaches, drinks tea, reads a lot, and lives in a tree house. She sees deer and other beasts. She doesn't fear them. She fears the leeches in the lake. They make her bleed, so she leaves.

3--Double Vowel I: sound = /I/ → white tie spellings: ia, ie, igh, ye

Double Vowels: Usually say the Name of the 1st vowel. The 2nd vowel is silent.

Practice:

- bite, cite, kite, mite, (qu=kw) quite, rite, site, smite, white
- bile, dial, file, guile, I'll, mile, Nile, pile, rile, smile, tile, vial, while
- dine, fine, kine, line, mine, nine, pine, sine, shine, spine, tine, vine, wine
- bide, cried, chide, died, dried, guide, glide, hide, lied, plied, pride, pried, ride, side, snide, tide, tied, tried, wide
- chime, dime, grime, lime, mime, prime, rime, rhyme, slime, time, type
- bike, dike, hike, like, mike, pike, trike

These words also say /I/:

- y or ye = /I/ (at end of 1-syllable words) → by, cry, dye, fry, lye, my, ply, pry, rye, stye, shy, why
- igh = /I/ → blight, bright, delight, fight, flight, fright, high, light, might, night, night, plight, right, sigh, sight, slight, tight, thigh
- ind = /Ind/ → bind, blind, find, hind, kind, mind, rind, wind (v.)
- uy = /I/ → buy, guy

These words do NOT say /I/:

- ie = double /E/[#2] → belief (n.), believe (v.), fiend, grieve, yield
- ie = single /e/[#8] → friend

Practice: Mike is a nice guy. He rides bike to work, runs nine miles at night, flies kites in July, drinks white wine, and likes to eat white rice with pine

nuts.

4--Double Vowel O: sound = /O/ → rose coat
spellings: oa, oe, ow

Double Vowels: *Usually say the Name of the 1st vowel.* The *2nd vowel is silent.*

Practice:

- doe, foe, hoe, Joe, Moe, Poe, roe, sloe, toe, woe
- bode, code, goad, load, lode, mode, node, ode, rode, road, toad
- bone, cone, (ph=f) phone, hone, Jones, lone, loan, moan, pone, prone, roan, stone, shone, Sloan, tone, zone
- coal, dole, foal, goal, hole, Joel, mole, pole, role, sole, stole, tole, vole
- oat, boat, coat, dote, float, goat, groat, gloat, moat, mote, note, (qu=k) quote, rote, smote, tote, vote, (wr=r) wrote
- dome, foam, home, loam, Nome, Rome, roam, tome
- cope, dope, grope, hope, lope, mope, nope, rope, soap, slope

These words also say /O/:

- “ow” sometimes says /O/: → bow (n.), bowl, flow, low, mow, (kn=n) know, row, sow (v.), show, slow, snow, stow, tow

These words sometimes do NOT say /O/:

- oe= single /u/[#10] → done (dun), none (nun), love (luv), above (u.buv)
- oe= /ɔ/[#11] → gone (gawn)
- oe= /U/[#5] → shoe (shU)

Practice all: Joan went to Rome. She loves to see domes on top of buildings. In Rome, Joan saw many domes. She wrote, “I hope young people will build more buildings with domes! I love domes.”

Sloan loves boats. She put on her rain coat, went out to her boat, and sailed along the coast for hours. She hopes her children will love boats, too.

***Learn to “dance” with English vowel sounds. Say different sounds when you see English vowels, until your ear tells you that you are right! Or a friend does.

5--Double Vowel U: sound = /U/ or /yU/ → blue moon
 spellings: ui, ue, ew, oo

Double Vowels: *Usually* say the Name of the 1st vowel. The 2nd vowel is silent.

Practice:

- fruit, juice (ce=/s/), suit
- brute, flute, lute, cute (=yU), mute (=yU)
- blue, clue, due, flue, glue, rue, sue, cue (=yU), hue (=yU), queue (=kyU)
- dude, glued, hued, Jude, nude, rude, sued
- dune, June, prune, rune, tune

These words also say /U/:

- ew=/U/ → blew, dew, drew, flew,, grew, Jew, Lew, (kn=n) knew, new, stew, slew, yew, jewel, jewelry, ewe (=yU), few (=fyU), hew (=hyU), pew (=pyU)
- Sometimes oo=/U/ →
 - boon, coon, goon, loon, moon, noon, soon
 - boom, bloom, doom, groom, gloom, loom, room, zoom
 - goop, hoop, loop, poop, sloop, whoop
 - boot, coot, hoot, loot, moot, root, shoot, toot, zoot
- Sometimes oe=/U/ → move, prove, shoe

Practice all:

Judy and Drew are friends. Judy is cute, has blue eyes, and plays the flute. Drew grew big and tall. He looks like a brute in a suit, but he is never rude. They like to cook together. Yesterday they made blue corn stew.

Judy glued a bloom on the door of her room. In Judy's room, you can see her shoes. She has 44 pairs of shoes in her bedroom. She has many more shoes than Drew.

Drew plays the lute. It is a very old musical instrument. He wants to ask Judy to play her flute with him, when he plays his lute. They can play music

together. Drew is usually shy. But tomorrow he will ask her to play a duet.

6--Single Vowel a: sound = /a/ → black cat

Practice:

- ad, bad, brad, cad, clad, Chad, Dad, fad, glad, had, lad, mad, pad, rad, sad, shad, tad, Thad
- at, bat, cat, chat, fat, flat, hat, mat, Nat, pat, rat, sat, tat, that, vat
- an, ban, bran, can, clan, Chan, Dan, fan, Fran, Gran, Jan, man, Nan, pan, plan, Stan, tan, than, van
- am, cam, clam, dam, dram, ham, jam, lam, Pam, ram, Sam, slam, sham, tam, tram, wham, yam
- cab, dab, drab, gab, jab, lab, nab, slab, stab, tab
- ax, fax, lax, max, pax, sax, tax, wax
- ag, bag, brag, flag, gag, hag, jag, lag, nag, rag, sag, stag, tag, wag, zag
- app, cap, chap, crap, flap, gap, lap, map, nap, pap, rap, sap, slap, tap, trap, yap, zap
- batch, catch, hatch, latch, match, patch, thatch
- back, black, flak, hack, Jack, lack, Mack, pack, rack, sack, tack, yak

These words do NOT say /a/:

- a = /o/[#9] → want, water, wash, wach
- a = /u/[#10] → was, what
- a = /ɔ/[#11] → all, ball, balk, call, chalk, fall, gall, hall, halt, mall, malt, pall, tall, talk, wall, walk

Practice all: Dad feels glad and sad and bad on different days. He is glad when he can drive a taxi cab, to make money. He is sad when his children grab or slap, because he wants them to talk to each other. He feels bad when he

has back pain.

7--Single Vowel e: sound = /e/ → red dress

Practice:

- beg, egg, leg, Meg, peg
- bed, Ed, led, Ned, red, shed, Ted, wed, zed
- bet, Chet, debt, get, jet, let, met, net, pet, Rhett, set, vet, wet, yet
- etch, fetch, ketch, retch, sketch, vetch
- Deb, ebb, web
- Ben, den, fen, hen, Jen, ken, Len, men, pen, (wr=r) wren, ten, then, wen, yen, Zen
- Bess, dress, ess, fess, Hess, Jess, less, mess, press, Tess, yes
- bell, cell, dell, ell, fell, gel, hell, quell, sell, shell, tell, well, yell

Word pairs with /E/ and /e/:

deal dell	feel fell	heel hell	seal sell	teal tell	wheel well	dean den	keen Ken
bean Ben	Jean Jen	cheat Chet	lean Len	mean men	teen ten	each etch	beat bet
meet met	neat net	Pete pet	seat set	wheat wet	bead bed	feed fed	read red
need Ned	lead led	teed Ted	weed wed	freed Fred	she'll shell	she'd shed	sheep Shep

Practice all: Deb and Ben went to the house next door. They went to beg for an egg. “Please, lend us an egg. Let us borrow an egg. We will bring you an egg tomorrow. We need an egg today!” they said. Jen let them borrow an egg.

Meg sells sea shells at the market. She sells very well. She sells better

than Ned or Ted. She sells many shells from the sea shore.

8--Single Vowel i: sound = /i/ → silver pin, Ithaca

Practice:

- bid, did, hid, Id, kid, lid, mid, quid, rid, slid, vid
- big, dig, fig, gig, jig, pig, rig, wig, zig
- brick, crick, Dick, flick, Glick, hick, kick, lick, Mick, Nick, pick, prick, quick, rick, sick, slick, stick, tick, thick, Vic, wick
- bill, chill, dill, fill, gill, grill, hill, ill, Jill, kill, Lil, mill, nil, pill, quill, rill, sill, shill, still, till, will
- dim, him, Jim, Kim, prim, rim, sim, slim, shim, Tim, trim, vim, whim
- bin, din, fin, (gi=j) gin, kin, pin, sin, shin, tin, thin, win, yin, Zinn
- bling, bring, ding, fling, king, Ming, ping, ring, sing, sting, swing, thing, wing, zing

These words also say /i/:

- o = /i/ → women=/wi.men/

These words do NOT say /i/:

- ti=/sh/ → vacation=/vA.cA.shun/, education, action, traction, diction, dictionary, fiction, friction, affection, protection

/i/ and /I/:

fill	bill	pill	dill	Tim	dim	shin	fin
file	bile	pile	dial	time	dime	shine	fine

Practice all: Jim and Kim have one kid, Liz. Jim makes pills in a pharmacy. Kim pays bills for a women's swimming suit company. Liz is a kid

who likes to swim and swing. They like to sing songs together when they visit their friends.

9--Single Vowel o: sound = /o/ → olive sock

Practice:

- cot, dot, got, hot, jot, lot, Mott, not, pot, rot, sot, shot, slot, snot, tot
- bog, blog, cog, clog, fog, flog, frog, hog, jog, log, nog, slog
- con, don, Jon, Lon, Ron, won, yon
- bod, cod, Dodd, god, hod, mod, nod, pod, rod, sod, shod, Todd
- block, clock, dock, flock, hock, jock, lock, mock, knock, pock, rock, sock, stock, shock, tock
- bop, cop, chop, flop, hop, lop, mop, Nop, pop, sop, slop, stop, shop, top

These words also say /o/:

- sometimes a=/o/ → want, wash, watch, waffle, watt

These words do NOT say /o/:

- sometimes o=/u/[#10] → son
- sometimes o=/ɔ/[#11] (aw) → dog, long, song, strong, Boston, gone

/o/ and /O/:

not note	rod road	con cone	cot coat	pock poke	nod node	clock cloak	Tom tome
cod code	Lon loan	block bloke	Dom dome	got goat	jock joke	dot dote	smock smoke

Practice all: Todd has twin sons, Lon and Ron. Todd likes to jog in the fog. Lon likes to look for frogs and rocks. Ron likes to watch TV and play video

games a lot. Todd worries that Ron will get fat. He makes Ron run around the block before watching TV. The family has a dog that likes to run with Ron.

10--Single Vowel u, sound = /u/ → a cup of mustard

Practice:

- but, cut, gut, hut, jut, mutt, nut, putt, rut, shut, tut
- cub, club, dub, grub, hub, nub, pub, rub, sub, tub
- bun, Chun, dun, fun, gun, Hun, nun, pun, run, sun, shun
- bud, cud, HUD, mud, Rudd, suds, thud
- cull, dull, gull, hull, lull, mull, null
- brush, crush, hush, lush, mush, rush, thrush
- bus, cuss, fuss, Gus, muss, pus, Russ, thus
- dung, hung, jungle, lung, mung, rung, sung
- budge (dge=/j/), fudge, grudge, judge, nudge, sludge, trudge

These words also say /u/:

- *sometimes* a=/u/ → what, was
- *sometimes* o=/u/ → mother, brother, another
- *sometimes* oe=/u/ → above, come, done, dove, glove, love, shove
- *sometimes* ou=/u/ → couple, young, cousin

These words do NOT say /u/:

- *sometimes* u=/oo/[#12] → bull, full, pull, bush, push, put

/u/ and /yU/:

cut cute	cub cube	mull mule	mutt mute	dun /U/ dune	tub /U/ tube
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Read: Russ and Gus are cousins. They like to play putt-putt golf. They take the bus downtown. Then, they take another bus to the putting green. They don't like to rush, so the game can take a couple of hours.

11-- Vowel Sound /ɔ/ → auburn dog

6 spellings: aw, au, al, augh, ough, o

Practice:

- aw → saw, bawl, caw, dawn, fawn, Gaw, haw, jaw, law, lawn, maw, paw, raw, shawl, Shawn, thaw, yawn
- au → bauble, caulk, daub, faucet (ce=/s/), laud, Maud, Paul, Saul, sauce (ce=/s/), fault, sausage (ge=/j/)
- al → all, ball, call, chalk, fall, gall, hall, mall, pall, stalk, talk, tall, wall, walk
- augh → caught, taught, daughter, slaughter, distraught
- ough → ought, bought, fought, nought, sought, thought, (wr=r) wrought
- o → dog, cost, lost, long, song, Boston [*this sound is U.S. East Coast and West Coast, but not used in the U.S. Midwest]

Practice:

- The fawn yawned on the lawn at dawn.
- Maud, Paul, and Saul ate sausage with hot sauce for lunch.
- When the ball falls, the ball will hit the hall wall.
- Her daughter taught baseball. They all threw and caught the balls.
- He ought to have bought pens, not pencils.
- They took a long trip to Boston on a bus. It cost a lot.

Practice all: Paul's daughter, Maud, went to the mall. She bought a shawl (for her mother), a ball (for her dog), and some chalk (for her teacher). Later, she called her friend, Dawn, and they talked for a while.

/A/ and /a/ and /ɔ/:

pail	bait	sale	take	ail	Kate	fain	made
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pal Paul	bat bought	Sal Saul	tack talk	Al all	cat caught	fan fawn	mad Maud
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12--Vowel Sound /oo/ → wooden hook
spellings: oo, oul, u

Practice:

- book, brook, cook, crook, hook, look, nook, rook, shook, took
- foot, soot
- good, hood, stood, wood
- wool
- hoof
- would, could, should
- bush, push, put, pull

Practice:

- Dave likes to read books. He likes to go to the little brook near his house. He sits near the brook and reads his book. He hears the water in the brook. He looks at the trees, then reads his book again. He feels good.
- Daisy likes to cook. Sometimes she looks in a cookbook for new cooking ideas. She has a good stove in her kitchen, with a good hood over it. The hood takes away the cooking smells and the heat when Daisy is cooking. Her family feels lucky to have a good cook in the family.
- Sook likes good wood. He makes wooden tables, desks, beds, and other furniture. He is a good woodworker. He makes good money!
- You go in the front and pull on the piano. I'll go in the back and push it. Pianos are hard to move! Where do you want to put it?

- If I could, I would visit all my friends in their countries! If I come to visit you in your country, what should I bring you from Ithaca?

13--Vowel Blend /aO/ → brown cow
spellings: ou, ow

Practice ou:

- out, about, bout, clout, flout, gout, grout, lout, pout, rout, shout, spout, sprout, tout, trout, thou
- bound, found, ground, hound, mound, pound, round, sound, wound (v)
- our, dour, flour, hour, sour
- cloud, loud, proud
- blouse, grouse, house, louse, mouse, pounce (ce=s), tousle

Practice ow:

- bow (v.), cow, chow, how, now, prow, sow (n.), vow, allow
- bower, cower, dower, flower, power, shower, tower
- crowd, down, brown, dowel, growl, howl, jowl, owl, towel

These words do NOT say /aO/:

- ough=/ɔ/ → bought, brought, fought, nought, ought, sought, thought

Practice all:

- I found 5 pounds of sour lemons. I bought the sour fruit. I juiced the sour lemons, and I put a lot of sugar in my juice.
- A brown cow and a brown owl were friends. The cow let the owl sit nearby at night. The owl found many mice to eat, so it was happy. The cow was happy, too, because the mice ate the cow's grain (food).

- Mary likes tile. But she didn't know how to keep the grout clean (between the tiles). She wanted to take out all the tile and grout. Then she found out about new grout that is easy to clean. So, she took out the old grout. She put new grout between the tiles. She is happy about it.

14--Vowel Sound: /OE/→ turquoise toy
2 Spellings: oi, oy

Practice:

- boil, coil, foil, oil, soil, toil, toilet, turmoil
- coin, join, loin, (qu=kw) quoin
- koi, poi
- choice (ce=s), rejoice, voice, poise, noise, moist, void
- foible, goiter, loiter, point, poison, appointment
- boy, coy, goy, joy, annoy, Roy, soy, toy, ploy
- oyster, loyal, royal, voyage
- convoy, destroy

These words do not say /OE/:

- choir=/kwI.er/
- stoic = /stO.ic/
- heroin = /he.rO.in/
- coyote = /kI.yO.tE/
- buoy = /bU.E/

Practice all:

The royal prince eats boiled oysters with olive oil, on his voyage across the ocean. His loyal servant tastes the oysters to make sure they are not poisoned.

Roy enjoys playing with noisy toys. This play annoys his sister so much that she destroys Roy's toys.

When you have an appointment, it is important to arrive on time. Do not loiter on the way. When you are on time, you avoid annoying the person you are meeting.

15--Vowel influenced /r/ → purple shirt spellings: er=ir=ur=ear

Practice:

- Bert, bird, birth, burn, certain, circus, curb, dirt, Erma, fern, fir, furl, girl, gurgle, her, herd, hurt, irk, jerk, Kirk, lurk, lawyer, murmur, nerd, over, per, purge, quirk, surgery, terrain, turn, under, urge, urgent, verse, were, (work), (worry), exert
- Earth, earn, heard, learn, yearn
 - Bertha is a girl. She hurries to the bus stop. She hurt her foot, so she cannot run. Her friend carries her books for her.

These words do NOT say e/r/:

- ar = /or/ → are, bar, car, far, jar, mar, par, tar, war; arc, barn, card, dark, farm, garden, hard, heart, jargon, karst, lard, mark, narc, park, (qu=kw) quark, sharp, tarp, warm, yarn
 - Carl parks his car far away from school, because he does not want to pay for parking.
- or = /Or/ → (1 syllable): bore, core, door, for, gore, lore, more, nor, pore, pour, roar, soar, tore, tour, wore, your; (2 syllables): boring, court, dormer, forget, Gordon, Loring, morning, Norway, porter, sorted, torrent, worn, yourself
 - Gloria wore the same shirt so many times! She is bored with her clothes. She will go to the store soon, to look for more clothes.

One more thing to remember → Vowels change these consonant sounds:

- ca, co, cu = /k/ → cat, coat, cut
- ce, ci, cy = /s/ → cell, cilia, cyst; race, racism, racy
 - ga, go, gu = /g/ → gap, got, gut
 - ge, gi, gy = /j/ → gel, giant, gypsum