

**Vowels:** Vowels are letters that are pronounced by forcing air over your vocal cords through your mouth.

It is the shape of your mouth that decides which vowel sound comes out. There are many tape or video cassette lessons available from schools, libraries and stores which will help you with your pronunciation.

You can also learn a lot by listening to the radio and watching television and films.

Letter	Sounds of the letter	Alternate Spellings	Examples
A a	The "long" sound of this letter is the same as the name of the letter.	a, a+consonant+e, ea, ei, eigh, aigh, ai, ay, ere	able, late, great, heir, weigh, straight, rain, play, where, there
A a	The "short" sound of this letter is often found in 3-letter and 4-letter words.	a, augh	ad, bad, cat, dab, fact, gab, hat, lack, mat, rap, sad, tap, yak, laugh, draught
A a	The "soft" sound of this letter is like the sound you make when a child is hurt - Aw.	a, aw, augh	father, awful, lawn, taught,
E e	The "long" sound of this letter is the same as the name of the letter.	e, e+consonant+e, ee, ea, ie, ei, y	be, here, cede, meet, bean, thief, receipt, carry, steady
E e	The "short" sound of this letter is often found in short words.	e, ea, ai	bet, chef, dead, fed, head, get, led, met, net, red, pez, said, wet, yet
I i	The "long" sound of this letter sounds like the name of the letter.	i, y, igh, i+consonant+e, ai	I, my, sigh, ride, aisle, file, cry,
I i	The "short" sound of this letter is often found in short words.	i, u	bit, city, click, lid, spin, tin, rip, omit, trip, busy
O o	The "long" sound of this letter sounds like the name of the letter.	o, oa, ough, o+consonant+e, ow,	no, go, boat, coal, though, dough, lone, pole, show, blow
O o	The "short" sound of this letter is often found in short words. It is very close to the "soft" A sound.	o, ough	body, cot, clod, flop, bought, shot, mop
U u	The "long" sound of this letter sounds like the last part of the name of the letter.	u, oo, ou, ough, ew, ue, o, u+consonant+e, oe	gnu, do, boot, through, flew, glue, rude, shoe, uvula, roof, threw, flue, tune
U u	The "short" sound of this letter is often found in short words.	u, oo	but, cut, fun, gun, stud, bum, blood, flood, rump, fuzz

**Diphthongs:** No, this is not a type of dinosaur. When two vowel sounds blend together in a word, it is called a diphthong.

Sometimes the sound is spelled with two letters and other times one letter does the job. In fact, many of the Long Vowel sounds in English are called Diphthongs by language experts - A is really a blending of the A and E sounds, I is really a blending of the Soft A and E sounds, etc.

To make matters more simple, however, in these lessons, we will treat the Long Vowel sounds as pure sounds. That leaves us with a few very definite Blended Vowel sounds, or Diphthongs.

Description	Possible spellings	Examples
The "soft" A or the "short" O followed by a "long" U sound.	ou, ow, ough	loud, sprout, cow, plow, bough, clown
A "long" E sound followed by a "long" U sound.	ew, eu,	few, feud

**Consonants** are letters that are pronounced by forcing air through, over or between the various parts of your mouth: palate, teeth, tongue, lips.

Sometimes the sound is made by stopping the flow of air and then releasing it. Again, examples of the correct pronunciation of these letters can be found elsewhere.

This lessons will deal with the relationship between spelling and pronunciation.

Consonant	How to pronounce it	Examples
<b>B b</b>	Press both lips together and with your vocal cords vibrating, open your lips suddenly.	baby, boy, bed, bird, table, rabbit, ribbon, black, crab, stable
<b>C c</b>	"Soft" C is a hissing sound with the tip of your tongue pushed against the back of your bottom teeth and the air forced between your tongue and the roof of your mouth.	city, cement, ceiling, cell, cyclops, certain, circle, facet, mice
<b>C c</b>	"Hard" C, like the letter "K", is made by pressing the back of your tongue against top of your throat opening and releasing it suddenly with a puff of air.	can, corn, curl, cable, copper, cut, act, bacon, cry, close, cramp
<b>D d</b>	Push the tip of your tongue against the roof of your mouth just behind your front teeth, vibrate your vocal cords and release your tongue.	dog, day, dirty, duty, drum, drip, bad, paddle, lid, spread, radar
<b>F f</b>	Press your upper front teeth against your bottom lip. Force air through the opening, then	father, fence, find, forty, funny, flake, fry, wafer, golfer, lift, safe, stiff, muff

	release your teeth from your lip.	
<b>G g</b>	To make the "hard" G sound, close the opening at the back of your throat (back of tongue against rear roof of mouth), vibrate your vocal cords and release the pressure of your tongue.	game, girl, gone, guppy, bag, mug, sugar, bigger, gravy, glad, twig
<b>G g</b>	To make the "soft" G sound, like the letter "J", press the front third of your tongue against your upper front teeth and gums, vibrate your vocal cords and release your tongue.	giant, gentle, gem, germ, gigantic, widget, suggest, gesture
<b>H h</b>	The letter H is pronounced with your mouth relaxed, your jaw slightly open, and with a puff of air being forced from your throat.	hair, heavy, hill, home, hurt, behave, behind, inhale, rehearse
<b>J j</b>	To make the sound of the letter J, like the soft G, press the front third of your tongue against your top front teeth and gums, vibrate your vocal cords and release your tongue.	jail, jet, jiffy, jolly, jump, inject, injure, reject, misjudge
<b>K k</b>	To pronounce the K sound, press the back of your tongue against the rear roof of your mouth, then release it with a puff of air.	kale, kettle, kick, koala, basket, brisket, bucket, pack, stick, luck (note: the letters C and K often work together in the middle or at the end of words to make a single K sound.)
<b>L l</b>	To pronounce L, put the tip of your tongue against the ridge above your top front teeth, vibrate your vocal cords, then quickly release your tongue.	labor, lettuce, lip, love, luck, pilot, pillow, pullet, still, pail, bull, bowl
<b>M m</b>	To pronounce M, press your lips together, vibrate your vocal cords, then open your lips without a puff of air.	man, mend, milk, money, mug, woman, camera, simple, am, seem, come
<b>N n</b>	To pronounce N, put the tip of your tongue against the gums behind your top front teeth, raise the center of your tongue, vibrate your vocal cords, and release your tongue without a puff of air.	name, net, nickel, not, number, many, pint, sentence, run, pin, man
<b>P p</b>	To pronounce P, put your lips together and release them with a puff of air, without your vocal cords vibrating.	pan, pet, pick, pour, punt, rapid, tepid, hoping, strap, step, drop, dump
<b>Q q</b>	Q is always followed by U in English. QU is usually pronounced like KU (with a long U) with the U being held a very short time.	quake, question, quick, quote, inquest, require, liquid, sequel

<b>Q q</b>	Sometimes, QU is pronounced like K, usually in the middle or at the end of words.	bisque, toque, briquette, croquet
<b>R r</b>	To pronounce R, open your mouth slightly, raise the middle and back of your tongue toward the roof of your mouth without touching it, and vibrate your vocal cords.	rain, rent, ripe, rot, run, siren, syrup, sorrow, cereal, far, tear, north, year, fur
<b>S s</b>	To pronounce S, put the tip of your tongue behind your bottom front teeth, raise the rest of your tongue almost to the roof of your mouth, and let air hiss through the narrow opening.	sand, set, sick, some, such, basket, fiscal, posture, mustard, pass, miss, rest, yes
<b>S s</b>	At times, S is pronounced like the letter Z, with your mouth in the same position, but now with your vocal cords vibrating.	was, wisdom, trees, toes, bores, cows, cleans, tears, pours, claws
<b>T t</b>	To pronounce T, put the tip of your tongue behind your top front teeth and release it with a little puff of air.	tape, ten, time, top, tune, water, center, mister, poster, custard, sat, wet, fit, not, cut
<b>V v</b>	To pronounce V, place your top front teeth against your bottom lip (as with F), but then without releasing air, vibrate your vocal cords and release your teeth from your lip.	vase, very, vital, Volvo, waver, never, river, oven, lover, wave, leave, dive, favor
<b>W w</b>	To pronounce W, purse (round) your lips as if you are going to pronounce Long U. Vibrate your vocal cords for a very short U sound, then open your lips to pronounce the next sound in the word.	want, west, winter, wove, wool, beware, unwind, lower, tower
<b>X x</b>	X is usually pronounced like a K and S together except for the few words that begin with X, in which case X is pronounced like Z.	fax, text, mix, box, deluxe, relax, fixer, xylophone, xenon, xylene
<b>Y y</b>	Y is more like a vowel than a consonant. You pronounce it by forming your mouth to say a Long E sound, vibrate your vocal cords, then quickly go on to pronounce the next vowel sound in the word.	yard, yam, yet, year, young, yip, player, lawyer
<b>Z z</b>	To pronounce Z, put the tip of your tongue behind your bottom front teeth and raise the rest of your tongue until it almost touches the roof of your mouth. Then vibrate your vocal cords and let air escape through the	zap, zero, zing, zone, zoo, maze, doze, size, lazy, buzz, faze

	<b>narrow opening.</b>	
<b>CH</b>	To pronounce CH, press the whole width of your tongue against the roof of your mouth behind your top front teeth, then release your tongue just enough to let a wide hiss of air come out.	chair, chess, chin, chore, chum, teacher, church, winch, such (Note: many words will use TCH to stand for the CH sound.) watch, fetch, witch, pitcher
<b>SH</b>	To pronounce the SH sound, place the whole width of your tongue close to the roof of your mouth behind your top front teeth, but without touching the roof, then let air slowly escape through the opening.	ash, mesh, fish, wash, posh, bush, masher, usher, shape, shin, shop, shut
<b>TH (voiced)</b>	To pronounce the Voiced TH, put the tip of your tongue between your top and bottom front teeth and vibrate your vocal cords, then pull your tongue back to pronounce the rest of the word.	than, then, this, there, that, either, weather, other, bather, smooth, clothe, scythe
<b>TH (unvoiced)</b>	To pronounce the Unvoiced TH, put the tip of your tongue between your top and bottom front teeth and let air escape around your tongue, without your vocal cords vibrating.	thank, thin, think, thought, thump, therapy, bath, with, moth, path, youth