

A helpful list of sounds in English & some of the letters that make them:

The usual letters that make this sound:

Exceptions- words with other letters that make this sound:

*How this sound is made:
(Click on drawing to hear)*

VOWEL and VOWEL BLEND SOUNDS

a (short sound)

apple

pat, crash

catch, sarcasm

half, gallon

badge

dance, chance

bank, rang

*have, *halve

/plaid



jaw: quite open; lips slightly apart
tongue: quite low, relaxed, slightly pushed forward

a (long sound)

ace, *ate

*pale, *pail

*way, gray, *pray, say

*straight, *strait

gauge

educate

change, rang

they, obey, /*prey, convey

great, break, steak

*eight, *weigh, neighbor,

/vein, freight, veil, sleigh

/reign, reindeer

/buffet, filet, Chevrolet,

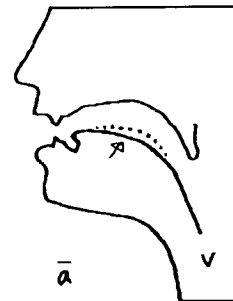
crochet, bouquet, beret

resume/blase',

fiancee', naivete'

/matinee, suede

/lingerie



jaw, slight
tongue: starts out the same as short e, quite low, but tenses and moves up to long e

ah (close to o - short sound)

afraid, ago

ah! ha, papa

spa, algeba

phobia, sofa

father, want, wash, wach,

garage, /wand, swan, swap,

calm, swamp, watt,

balmy, suave, facade

/bourgeois (bur-zhwa)

/rendezvous



tongue:
lips: slightly rounded

*watch these spellings, sounds!

aw (same as au)

all, wall, also

talk, walk

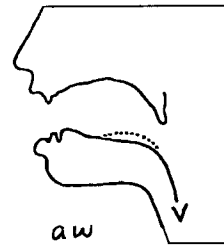


VOWELS 1.

aw (same as au)

all, wall, also
paw, yawn
awful, awe
caught, haul, applaud
August

talk, walk, chalk, etc.
 broad
 cough, though, fought,
 bought, brought
 off, soft, log, cost, cloth
 Utah
 salt, false, Arkansas (Arkansaw)



jaw: open; tongue: very low,
 lax, rises slightly in back
 lips: slightly rounded

e (short sound)

egg, happiness
pet, techniqe
wedding
edge, fence
 defese
 *red, *led

bread, breakfast, dead,
 deaf, weather, head, health,
 instead, *lead, *read, sweater,
 /threat, meant, feather
 sweat, weapon, etc.
 friend
 guess, guest
 said (sed)
 says (sez)
 /gazelle, mademoiselle

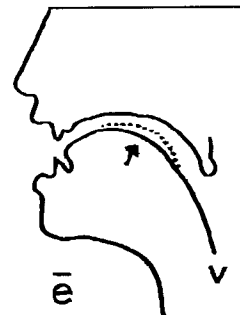



jaw: slightly open
 lips: unrounded
 tongue: quite low, relaxed

e (long sound)

eagle
 peel
either, receive
 money, key
 me
 *lead, *read
 people
 /reed

belief, believe, diesel, field,
 yield, niece, piece, brief,
 /shield, thief, grief, chief,
 siege, prairie, achieve, etc.
 police
 automobile
 poorly, happily, etc.
 any, pretty, etc.
 gasoline, machine, magazine,
 vaccine, /marine, nicotine
 /macaroni, ski, pita, chic
 /antique, technique, unique
 /suite
 /Caesar



 lips: unrounded
 tongue: tense, high, and moves
 higher

*watch the spelling, sounds!

i (short sound)

ink

*i
E



VOWELS 2.

i (short sound)

ink

pit, children

think, signal

mist, filth

width

journalism

bridge, wince

wilderness

*live

English, pretty

been (AmE)

women

marriage

busy, business

build, guilt

foreign /counterfeat, forfeat

/sieve, handkerchief

syrup, /myth, synonym, lynx

Unaccented endings with *ice*: office, practice, etc.

“ “ “ *ile*: fragile, missile, etc.

“ “ “ *ine*: engine, medicine, etc.

“ “ “ *ite*: opposite, favorite, etc.

“ “ “ *ive*: positive, negative, etc.



jaw: slightly open

lips: unrounded

tongue: mid level, does not move, is half-tense

i (long sound; really a double sound: ah-ee)

ice, nice

*pie

mile, reptile

advice (ad-VICE)

fine, valentine

drive, arrive, *live

*bite, excite

final

*i, *hi, /*pi

aisle

height, /stein

child, mild, wild, etc.

light, right, night, etc.

blind, find, kind, grind

sign, /benign, design

*high, sigh, thigh

island (silent **s**)

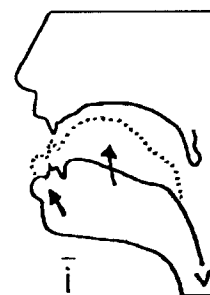
/coyote

guide, /disguise

buy

my, try, fly, *eye, rye, /dye

*byte, rhyme, electrolyte



sound slides from back to front

jaw and tongue: move up, start lax, become tense

lips: from open to "smiling"

o (short sound - similar to **ah**)

October, on, upon

pot, doll, cloth

clock, co-op

gone

honest, honor (silent **h**)

resonse

/mosque

bomb



o is simi

*check sound, spelling!

o (long sound)

open, owe

old, c



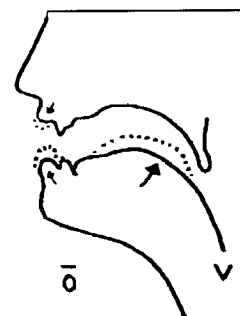
st, both, /bolt,

VOWELS 3.

o (long sound)

open, owe
coat, *pole,
toe, *so
no, ago, radio
*clothes, *close
chose, chosen
dose, dosage

old, cold, hold, most, both, /bolt,
*poll, post, folk, yolk
doughnut, though, /boulder
comb
*sew
pillow, yellow, low, bowl, own,
throw, know, *row, /mower
*sow, *bow
thorough
/bureau, plateau
/chauvinist
/depot
/soul
/yeoman

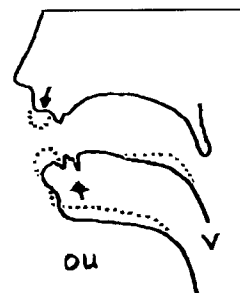


jaw: slightly open
lips: rounded, move closer together
tongue: tense, glides up and back

ou (really two sounds: ah-oo)

out, *flour, house,
count, ounce, *our,
cow, *flower, *bow, *row
how, brown, owl
*sow

/*bough, drought
*hour (silent h)
/lounge

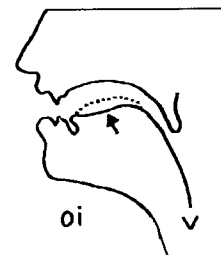


jaw: very open, closes slightly
lips: open, then rounded
tongue: relaxed, very low and flat in front, then moves up in back

oi (really two sounds: oh-ee)

boy
oil, coin

lawyer
noise, choice
Illinois (silent s)



sound moves back to front
jaw: slightly open, moves up
lips: from rounded to unrounded
tongue: tense, glides up, forward

*watch these spellings, sounds!

oo (really between a short o a

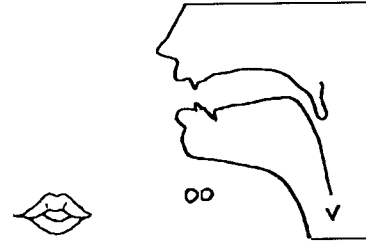
W.....,



VOWELS 4.

oo (really between a short o and short u)

woman, wolf
look, cook, good,
 /root, wool, wood, brook
 coold, woold, shoold
 put

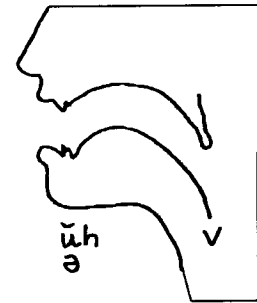


Compare with: u below.
 jaw: open
 lips: rounded, do not move
 tongue: curves high in back

u (short sound)

up, but
butter, luck
 *sum, medum
 dumb (silent **b**)
fudge, plunge
 dunce, pulse

was, wat
 does (duz)
country, couple, cousin,
 trouble, young, rough
 come, love, done, cover,
 *some, oven, tongue,
 front, brother, mother,
 /kingdom, sponge, etc.
flood, blood



jaws: half open; sound is low: "uh"
 tongue: curved up in the center
 lips: relaxed, not rounded.

ALL UNSTRESSED VOWELS TAKE THIS SOUND, as in banana (buh-NA-nuh).
 In dictionaries, the symbol for this sound is an upside-down e:

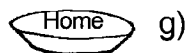
abbreviation
 silent
 minimum
 connect
 cucumber
 captain
 oean
 fashion, nation
 famous
 MecDonald's

ə

*watch these spellings, sounds!

Vowels 5.

u (long sound, with y sound a
used, uniform bɜː

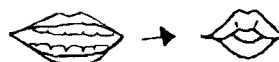
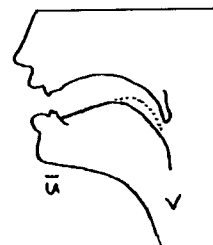


g)

u (long sound, with **y** sound at the beginning)

used, uniform
university, usual
ukelele, ugue
uel, ute
use, ute, use

uty
uputer, ute,
u, /u
u, ulogy
u
u, u
u

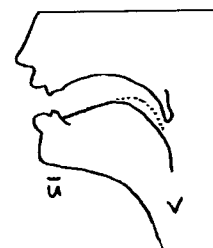


(also see **y** sound)
 lips: go from unrounded to rounded;
 tongue: flat in front, moves up in back, tenses.
 Sound is held long

u (long sound, with no **y** sound; usually after these consonants: **d, j, l, n, r, s, t, w** and **z**)

*u, u,
u, u
u, *u, u
 /*u, *u, u
u, u
u

u, u, /u,
u, u
 *u, *u, u, *u, *u, /u, *u,
u, u, u, u, u, etc.
 *u
u, u *u, u
u, u
 *u, u, u, u, u,
u, u, u, u,
 /u, u, u, etc.
u, u, /u u, u
 *u
 /u, u
 /*u
 /u



jaw: open; lips: quite rounded
 tongue: flat in front, moves up in back, tenses. Sound held long.



*Check out these spellings and sounds.

Have you been able to match each starred word to one or two others on the same page that are either spelled the same but sound differently, or that are spelled differently but sound the same?

Of course, hundreds of words in English are simply one word with different meanings.

