

Phonics Generalizations

CONSONANTS – Speech sounds which are made by closing or restricting the breath channel. *All letters of the English language except A E I O U.*

CONSONANT BLENDS – A combined or “blended” sound of two or three consonant letters which appear consecutively. Each of the consonants involved retains its own sound.

“L” blends: bl cl fl gl pl sl
 “R” blends: br cr dr fe gr pr tr
 “S” blends: sc sk sl s msn sp st sw
 “W” blends: dwt w sw
 3 letter blends: scr spr squ str spl shr thr

Final Blends that appear at the end of words
 ct ft ld lf lk lm lt lp mp
 nc nd nk nt pt rb rd rg rk
 rl rm rn rp rs nch

CONSONANT DIGRAPHS – Two consecutive consonants which produce a single sound (not a blended sound). The single produced sound does not sound like the individual consonants involved.

Ch (chick)	sh (ship)
Ph (phone)	th (this/thumb)
Gh (laugh)	wh (whale)

Notes: ph and gh have the sound of “f”
 Th can be voiced (vocal chords vibrate) i.e. this
 Or unvoiced (vocal chords do not vibrate) i.e. thumb
 Ch sometimes sounds like sh (chef, chiffon)

VARIANT CONSONANT SOUNDS – Several of the consonant letters use more than a single sound.

C	hard “c” sounds like “k” (cat, come, cut) when followed by an a, o, or u soft “c” sounds like “s” (cent, city, cycle) when followed by e, i, or y
G	hard “g” sounds like “g” (game, good, guy) when followed by an a, o, or u soft “g” sounds like “j” (gem, ginger, gym) when followed by e, i, or y
S	“s” sounds like “s” (some, seven) “s” sounds like “z” (runs, his, bears, was) “s” sounds like “sh” (sugar) and zh (treasure) when followed by a u
Q	“q” sounds like “kw” (quick, queen, quite) “q” sounds like “k” (liquor, picturesque)
D	“d” sounds like “d” (dog, dance, dime) “d” d sounds like “j” (gradual, individual) when followed by “u”
X	“x” sounds like “ks” (box, mix) at the ends of syllables “x” sounds like “gz” (exit, examine) when ex appears “x” sounds like “z” (xylophone, Xerox)
T	“t” sounds like “t” (top, tail) “t” sounds like “sh” (vacation, motion) when followed by an “ion” “t” sounds like “ch” (virtue, mutual)

SILENT CONSONANT LETTERS – Some consonant letters are silent (do not make a sound) in certain combinations of two or three letters.

Double letters	pull	fluff	balloon	sudden
Silent k (kn combination)	knot	knit		
Silent g (gn combination)	gnaw	gnash		
Silent w (wr combination)	write	wrong		
Silent b (mb combination)	comb	lamb		
Silent t (tch combination)	match	itch		
Silent c (ck combination)	duck	trick		
Silent gh (gh combination)	light	sight		

VOWELS – are speech sounds which are produced by a relatively free passage of air from the lungs through the lips without intervening stops or obstructions. The mouth is somewhat in an “open” position during pronunciation.

Vowels – A E I O U and sometimes Y and W
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Y is a vowel when:

it follows one of the vowels (day, key, toy).

it is the only vowel in a word (by, fly).

it is the only vowel in the syllable (fun/ny).
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W is a vowel when:

it follows one of the vowels (new, saw, how).

SHORT VOWELS: a word normally uses the short vowel sound when there is just one vowel in the word or in the syllable and that vowel is followed by a consonant (help, in lemon)

a – äpple	e –	i – ĩgloo
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e –		
ělephant		

i – ĩgloo

o –	u -
öctopus	ũmbrella

u -
ũmbrella

LONG VOWELS: long vowels say their name

a – cāke	e – sēe	i – ĩce
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e – sēe

i – ĩce

o – bōat	u – cūbe,
	blūe

u – cūbe,
blūe

“R” CONTROLLED VOWELS: (sometimes called Murmur Diphthongs) when a vowel is followed by the consonant letter “r,” the “r” controls the sound of the preceding vowel, giving it an “r” sound.

ar – car	er – her	ir – bird	ur - turtle
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er – her

ir – bird

ur - turtle

NOTE: er, ir, ur have identical sounds
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VOWEL DIPTHONG: a combined vowel sound appearing in one syllable having one sound different from either sound of the vowels.

oy –boy	oi – oil	ow – cow	ou - out
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oi – oil

ow – cow

ou - out

SCHWA SOUND: An unaccented vowel sound indicated by an upside-down “e” and closely resembles the short sound for “u.”

May be represented by any of the vowels		
a in əbout	i in pencəl	u in cīrcəs
	o in atəm	e in quiət

REGULAR VOWEL DIGRAPHS: Two vowels appearing consecutively having a single long vowel sound (usually the first vowel is long and the second is silent). There are exceptions.

ee – swēet	ei – cēiling	ea – ēasy
oe – tōe	ie – pīe	oa – bōat
ey – kēy	ay – plāy	ow - grōw

PRONUNCIATION RULES

<u>PATTERN</u>	<u>RULE</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>	<u>EXCEPTION</u>
VC (closed)	Use the short vowel sound when there is only one vowel followed by a consonant letter(s). (one vowel in a closed syllable).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pĭg • shĭps • crămp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • old • fĭnd • sign
CV (open)	Use the long vowel sound when there is only one vowel in the syllable and it ends the syllable. (One vowel in an open syllable).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mē • gō 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to • ma
VV	When two vowels come together, the first is usually long and the second is usually silent. (vowel digraph)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bōat • mēet • trāin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buĭld
VCE	When the word ends in a vowel-consonant-e combination, the first vowel is usually long and the e is usually silent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bīke • mūle • hōpe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • love • have • give
ĭ CYC	When “y” is the only vowel in a closed syllable it takes on the short “i” sound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ĭ gym • ĭ gyp 	
ī CY	When “y” is the only vowel in an open syllable and there is no other vowel before it in the word, it takes on the long “i” sound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ī my • ī by • ī myopia 	

<u>PATTERN</u>	<u>RULE</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>	<u>EXCEPTION</u>
ē CVCY	<p>When “y” is at the end of a multi-syllabic word, it takes on the long “ē” sound.</p> <p>When “y” is the only vowel in an open-syllable and there is another vowel before it in the word, it takes on the long “ē” sound.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ē strawberry • ē baby 	

SYLLABICATION RULES

(Note: Many exceptions exist)

<u>PATTERN</u>	<u>RULE</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
This is not the rule!		
VC/CV	When there are two consonants between two consonants. (Note: you cannot divide between two consonants that form a consonant digraph).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mǎr/ket • pěn/cil • băsk/ket
V/CV	When there is only one consonant between two vowels, you will divide the syllables in one of two ways:	
	1. If the first vowel is long, the consonant goes with the second vowel to keep the first syllable open (consistent with vowel rule).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ō/pen • cū/pid
VC/V	2. If the vowel is short, the consonant stays with the first vowel to keep the syllable closed (consistent with the vowel rule).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cǎb/in • sěv/en
-le	When a word ends in -le, the last syllable is made up of the preceding consonant and -le.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ap/ple • jun/gle • pud/dle

<u>PATTERN</u>	<u>RULE</u>	<u>EXAMPLE</u>
P/R/S	Prefixes and suffixes usually form their own syllables. (Note: root words may have more than one syllable. Some affixes also have more than one syllable).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • de/part/ment • im/port/er • dis/a/gree/ment
EXCEPTIONS	<p>Do not divide r-controlled vowel combinations (for/age).</p> <p>Do not divide consonant digraphs (au/thor).</p>	Note: r-controlled combinations and consonant digraphs each have a single sound.

