

SOUND-SYMBOL RELATIONSHIPS

Acknowledgement:

This material is from the work of Dr Annah Healy, Queensland University of Technology

Use this information to explore the sounds in the English language, and the many spelling combinations that make those sounds. Students have more chance of being able to break words down into their sound 'chunks' when reading, and more chance of developing a spelling sense if they know that each of the sounds has multiple letter combinations to represent it.

BRUSH UP YOUR ENGLISH
T.S.Watt

I take it that you already know
Of *tough* and *bough* and *cough* and *dough*?
Others may stumble, but not you,
On *hiccough*, *thorough*, *tough* and *through*.
Well done! And now your wish perhaps
To learn of less familiar traps?

Beware of *heard*, a dreadful word
That looks like *beard* and sounds like *bird*.
And dead! It's said like *bed* - not *bead* -
For goodness sake don't call it *deed*.
Watch out for *meat* and *great* and *threat*
[they rhyme with *suite* and *straight* and *debt*]

A *moth* is not a *moth* in *mother*
Nor *both* in *bother*; *broth* in *brother*.
And *here* is not a match for *there*,
Not *dear* and *fear* for *bear* and *pear*,
And then there's *dose* and *rose* and *lose* -
Just look them up - and *goose* and *choose*.
And *core* and *work* and *card* and *ward*,
And *font* and *front* and *word* and *sword*.
And *do* and *go* and *thwart* and *cart*!

Come, come, I've hardly made a start!
A dreadful language? Man alive,
I'd mastered it when I was five.

Watt's poem clearly points out the complex English spelling system. SOUND-SYMBOL relationships in English take many students a long time to remember. Understanding the relationships is a part of reading and spelling for writing, and thus is very important!

Learning to sound out words is largely a VISUAL skill. That is, students must gain experience in remembering and recalling the various letter combinations for each sound.

HOW MANY SOUNDS?

Standard Australian English (SAE) is made up of 42-44 sounds (dependent on regional accents).

It is worth noting that the difference between 42 and 44 sounds concerns the sounds relating to *th* and *oo*. For example:

the *th* sound has a hard and a soft interpretation -
the soft sound as in *truth*; and the hard sound in *feather*.

Most school students cannot distinguish between the two in early phases of sound awareness. It is far more effective in teaching sound-symbol relationships to consider the *th* as one sound.

The second example is the *oo* sound. In the word *moor* most Australians (and especially most children born in Australia) rhyme the sound with the one found in *door* and *more*. While a few might pronounce the sound as *oo-er* (as some with English accents might), it is not generally pronounced this way in Australian speech.

The 42 sound boxes contain the sound and letter clusters that make up the sound. Note that where an * appears, it means that there are other letter combinations to be added. Encourage students to find them!

ee (as in eek!)					
e	ee	ei	ie	y	i
<u>m</u> e	<u>m</u> ee <u>t</u>	re <u>cei</u> ve	re <u>lie</u> f	da <u>dd</u> y	di <u>v</u> a
<u>h</u> e	str <u>ee</u> t	per <u>cei</u> ve	gri <u>ef</u>	pu <u>pp</u> y	
ey	ea	*			
mon <u>key</u>	l <u>ea</u> f	?			
<u>key</u>	<u>mea</u> t				

f (as in ruff!)				
f	ff	ph	gh	*
<u>f</u> ather	to <u>ff</u> ee	ele <u>ph</u> ant	rou <u>gh</u>	?
<u>fi</u> x	gr <u>uff</u>	phan <u>to</u> m	to <u>ugh</u>	
			en <u>ough</u>	

ch (as in chook!)		
ch	tch	*
<u>ch</u> icken	ba <u>tch</u>	?
mis <u>ch</u> ievous	ha <u>tch</u>	
ri <u>ch</u>	ma <u>tch</u>	

j(as in jam!)			
j	dge	g	ge
ma <u>j</u> or	f <u>d</u> ge	gi <u>an</u> t	ra <u>g</u> e
ja <u>m</u>	ri <u>d</u> ge	gyro	pa <u>g</u> e

u (as in treasure!)						
or	ar	a	ure	u	o	i
<u>doct</u> or	coll <u>ar</u>	patell <u>a</u>	measur <u>e</u>	circ <u>us</u>	<u>on</u> ion	fossil <u>i</u> ?
<u>fact</u> or	dollar <u>ar</u>	umbrell <u>a</u>	pleasur <u>e</u>	focus		
o-e	ou	er		*		
<u>gl</u> ove	enough	teacher		?		
	mucous	preacher				
	tough					

a (as in lady!)				
a	ai	ay	a-e	*
<u>bab</u> y	paid	<u>ba</u> y	<u>da</u> te	?
<u>Sa</u> die	<u>ma</u> id	<u>la</u> y	<u>fa</u> te	
			<u>la</u> te	

m(as in mummy!)				
m	mm	mb	me	*
<u>ma</u> id	<u>du</u> mmy	th <u>um</u> b	<u>fa</u> me	
<u>me</u> mber	accom <u>mo</u> date	<u>du</u> mb	<u>na</u> me	

g (as in giggle!)		
g	gg	*
<u>bi</u> g	<u>ga</u> ggle	?
<u>gi</u> ve	<u>to</u> ggle	

i(as in tiger!)					
i	igh	y	I-e	ye	ie
<u>m</u> iser	<u>tigh</u> t	<u>my</u>	<u>bit</u> e	<u>ry</u> e	<u>li</u> e
<u>w</u> iser	<u>mi</u> ght	<u>by</u>	<u>kit</u> e	<u>dy</u> e	<u>di</u> e

c (as in duck!)					
c	k	ck	q	ch	ke
<u>c</u> ake	<u>k</u> ite	<u>ba</u> ck	<u>r</u> equest	<u>sch</u> ool	<u>b</u> ake
<u>c</u> andle	<u>k</u> itten	<u>br</u> acken	<u>b</u> equest	<u>sch</u> ooner	
<u>mac</u> aroon	<u>k</u> ill	<u>pac</u> ked	<u>q</u> ueer	<u>sch</u> eme	<u>c</u> ake

b(as in baby!)		
b	bb	be
<u>b</u> undle	<u>da</u> bble	<u>Ba</u> be
<u>da</u> b	<u>bu</u> bble	
<u>fa</u> ble	<u>ru</u> bbing	

s (as in snake!)					
s	ss	ce	se	c	st
<u>s</u> imilar	<u>f</u> uss	<u>i</u> ce	<u>h</u> orse	<u>c</u> ity	<u>w</u> histle
<u>m</u> isty	<u>m</u> istress	<u>v</u> oice	<u>m</u> orse	<u>tr</u> icycle	<u>b</u> ustle

or(as in door!)

or	au	aw	oor	a	our	ore
<u>for</u>	<u>sauce</u>	<u>paw</u>	<u>floor</u>	<u>ball</u>	<u>four</u>	<u>encore</u>
<u>core</u>	<u>because</u>	<u>saw</u>	<u>poor</u>	<u>fall</u>	<u>tour</u>	<u>chore</u>

n (as in number!)

n	nn	kn	ne	on
<u>name</u>	<u>nanny</u>	<u>knee</u>	<u>sane</u>	<u>action</u>
<u>run</u>	<u>uncanny</u>	<u>known</u>	<u>lane</u>	<u>television</u>

er(as in fern!)

er	ur	ir	ear
<u>lantern</u>	<u>burn</u>	<u>fir</u>	<u>learn</u>
<u>fern</u>	<u>urn</u>	<u>sir</u>	<u>earn</u>

d (as in David!)

d	dd	de
<u>pad</u>	<u>paddle</u>	<u>spade</u>
<u>dismiss</u>	<u>waddle</u>	<u>made</u>
<u>maid</u>	<u>daddy</u>	<u>lemonade</u>

ear(as in dear!)					
eer	ear	ere	eir	ier	er
<u>beer</u>	<u>fear</u>	<u>severe</u>	<u>weir</u>	<u>tier</u>	<u>serious</u>
<u>eerie</u>	<u>spear</u>	<u>mere</u>	<u>weird</u>	<u>frontier</u>	<u>mysterious</u>

a (as in cab!)		
a	ia	*
<u>damage</u>	<u>carriage</u>	?
<u>fat</u>	<u>marriage</u>	

Ow (as in cow!)		
ou	ow	*
<u>hour</u>	<u>bow</u>	?
<u>flour</u>	<u>now</u>	

ng (as in ring!)		
ng	n	*
<u>sing</u>	<u>drink</u>	?
<u>bring</u>	<u>brink</u>	

sh(as in shark!)			
sh	ti	ch	*
<u>rush</u>	<u>action</u>	<u>chef</u>	?
<u>shimmy</u>	<u>station</u>	<u>chivalry</u>	

l (as in lolly!)		
l	ll	le

<u>love</u>	<u>willing</u>	<u>bottle</u>
<u>alive</u>	<u>mill</u>	<u>whistle</u>

air(as in fair!)

air	are	aer	heir	aire
<u>hair</u>	<u>square</u>	<u>aeroplane</u>	<u>heiress</u>	<u>debonaire</u>
<u>lair</u>	<u>share</u>	<u>aero</u>	<u>heirloom</u>	<u>millionaire</u>

p (as in poppy!)

p	pp	pe
<u>drip</u>	<u>apple</u>	<u>slope</u>
<u>pig</u>	<u>appropriate</u>	<u>gripe</u>

oa(as in goat!)

ow	oa	ow	o-e	oe	*
<u>low</u>	<u>coat</u>	<u>bow</u>	<u>bone</u>	<u>foe</u>	?
<u>stow</u>	<u>moat</u>	<u>slow</u>	<u>stone</u>	<u>doe</u>	

r (as in run!)

r	rr	wr	re	ar
<u>rabbit</u>	<u>berry</u>	<u>wring</u>	<u>are</u>	<u>darn</u>
<u>very</u>	<u>merry</u>	<u>wrist</u>		<u>farm</u>

ar(as in large!)

ar	a	ah
<u>marjoram</u>	<u>banana</u>	<u>rajah</u>

barge last lah (musical note)

z (as in zebra!)

z	zz	ze	s	se
<u>z</u> ip	<u>d</u> azzle	<u>d</u> aze	<u>l</u> aser	<u>ch</u> ee <u>s</u> e
<u>r</u> azor	<u>r</u> azzle	<u>b</u> ree <u>z</u> e	<u>F</u> ras <u>e</u> r	<u>ph</u> as <u>e</u>

w(as in win!)

w	wh	u	*
<u>w</u> illing	<u>w</u> hich	<u>q</u> ueen	?
<u>a</u> ware	<u>w</u> hen	<u>q</u> u <u>i</u> lt	

t (as in tough!)

t	tt	te	*
<u>t</u> wist	<u>r</u> attle	<u>t</u> aste	?
<u>t</u> ongs	<u>b</u> atter	<u>w</u> aste	

e(as in bed!)

e	ea	*
<u>b</u> ed	<u>t</u> read	?
<u>s</u> tep	<u>l</u> ead (rhyme with bed)	
<u>e</u> mp <u>y</u>	<u>b</u> read	

s (as in treasure!)

s	si	*
<u>p</u> leas <u>u</u> re	<u>t</u> ele <u>v</u> is <u>i</u> on	?
<u>m</u> ea <u>s</u> ure	<u>v</u> is <u>i</u> on	

oo(as in moo!)

oo	ew	ue	ough	ugh	o-e
----	----	----	------	-----	-----

<u>l</u> oom	st <u>e</u> w	gl <u>u</u> e	thr <u>o</u> ugh	H <u>u</u> gh	l <u>o</u> se
bo <u>o</u> m	f <u>e</u> w	tr <u>u</u> e			

			o (as in frog!)		
o	a		ou		
m <u>o</u> p	sw <u>a</u> n		tr <u>ou</u> gh		
opt <u>o</u> n	qu <u>a</u> ntity				

			v(as in vase!)		
v	ve				
div <u>i</u> ne	br <u>av</u> e				
v <u>a</u> st	kn <u>av</u> e				

			oi(as in boil!)		
oi	oy		*		
<u>oi</u>	<u>oy</u>		?		
cho <u>i</u> ce	bo <u>y</u>				

			th(as in thumb [soft] and in feather [hard])		
th (soft)	th(hard)		the(hard)		
wr <u>ath</u>	fe <u>ath</u> er		lat <u>h</u> e		
ba <u>th</u>	<u>th</u> en		ba <u>th</u> e		

			y(as in yesterday!)		
y	*				
y <u>a</u> wn	?				
y <u>e</u> llow					

			i(as in tin!)		
i	e				
b <u>i</u> n	ro <u>e</u> t (not all speakers sound this as 'i')				

<u>w</u> in	socket (<u>s</u> ditto)
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		U (as in glove)
o	u	*
<u>g</u> love	<u>b</u> us	?
<u>d</u> ove	<u>f</u> uss	
<u>sh</u> ove	<u>f</u> unny	

		h (as in hand)
h	*	
<u>h</u> as	?	
<u>h</u> eavy		
<u>H</u> enry		

		n (as in knew)	
n	kn	nn	*
<u>n</u> ame	<u>k</u> now	<u>n</u> anny	?
<u>e</u> normous	<u>k</u> nitting	<u>f</u> unny	
<u>m</u> any	<u>u</u> nknown		

		oo (as in book)
oo	u	*
<u>b</u> ook	<u>b</u> ull	?
<u>l</u> ook	<u>f</u> ull	
<u>sh</u> ook		

Some Problem Solving Ideas to Help Your Readers (And Spellers)

Use the following questions to help readers to associate sounds with letter clusters. The aim is for readers to sound out words they find difficult, and to begin to recognize the various letter combinations that make up that sound (and to recall the various letter combination that make up a sound for spelling):

ACTIVITIES

1. Do the letter combinations for that sound usually come at/in the
 - beginning of a word?
 - end of a word?
 - middle of a word?
 - beginning, end and middle?
2. As you sound out a word, do you notice that
 - *a vowel sound always comes before or after that sound's letter clusters?
 - *a consonant letter always follows or comes before that sound?

Note: If this is a word document, can thee still be pop-ups? If not, leave as text boxes

VOWEL SOUNDS

The vowels are A(a) E(e) I(i) O(o) U(u) and have short (as in bat) and long (as in bath) sounds.

A vowel sound may be written using letters and letter clusters such as:

(a) ai - ay - ey - a

(e) ee - ey - i - ea - e

(i) i - ie - y - ei

(o) o - ow - o-e

(u) u - ew - ue - ough

CONSONANTS

Consonants are all the other 32 sounds that are not vowels!

3. Do doubled consonant letters (i.e., accompany) usually come at the
 - beginning?

- middle?
 - end of a word?
4. What words do you know that end in a double consonant?
 5. Mark the regular (spelt consistently) letter groups known as *blends in the following words:

BRIDGE	FLOOD	SNAP	STRAIGHT
SPREAD	SPLASH	ACROSS	ASTRIDE
AFFAIR	LAMP MILK	THRONG	SLINK.

BLENDS and DIGRAPHS

BLENDS include **pl str cr** (as in 'place', 'stretch' and 'cry'). Listen carefully to the way each letter sound runs into the next one. There are two and three letter blends.

Blends are different from **DIGRAPHS**. These make only one sound. For example **ch sh th** (as in 'chicken', 'shoe' and 'then'). There are always two letters in a digraph.

6. Can **BLENDS** be found in/at the
 - beginning of a word?
 - middle of the word?
 - end of a word?
7. Mark the regular (spelt consistently) ***digraphs** in the following words:

QUEEN	ATTACH	CHEAP	ACQUAINT
ITCH	WHEN	SHOPPING	WISH
WITCH	RICH	DITCH	HATCH
WITH	THISTLE	FETCH	