44 Phonemes

PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

English has 26 letters but **44 sounds.** Learning these helps children sound out, read, and spell words.



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SHORT VOWELS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/ă/	a	apple
/ĕ/	e	egg
/ĭ/	i	igloo
/ŏ/	o	octopus
/ŭ/	u	umbrella

LONG VOWELS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/ā/	a_e, ai	cake
/ē/	e_e, ee	tree
/ī/	i_e, igh	bike
/ō/	o_e, oa	boat
/ū/	u_e, ew	cube

R-CONTROLLED VOWELS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/ar/	ar	car
/or/	or	corn
/er/	er, ir, ur	bird

DIPHTHONGS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/oi/	oi, oy	coin
/ou/	ou, ow	cow
/ow/	ow	now

OTHER VOWEL SOUNDS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/aw/	aw, au	saw
/air/	air, are	chair
/ear/	ear	ear
/oo/ (long)	oo	moon
/oo/ (short)	oo, u	book

AFFRICATES

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/ch/	ch	chin
/j/	j, g	jump

NASALS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/m/	m	man
/n/	n	nose
/ng/	ng	sing

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STOPS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/p/	p	pig 
/b/	b	bat 
/t/	t	top 
/d/	d	dog 
/k/	c, k	kite 
/g/	g	goat 

FRICATIVES

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/f/	f	fish 
/v/	v	van 
/s/	s	sun 
/z/	z, s	zip 
/th/	th	thin 
/th/	th	this 
/sh/	sh	ship 
/zh/	s, si, ge	treasure 

GLIDES

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/w/	w	win 
/y/	y	yes 

LIQUIDS

Sound	Grapheme	Example
/l/	l	lamp 
/r/	r	run 



TO SEE & HEAR THE 44 SOUNDS OF SPEECH