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# About this book

## Spelling vs reading: the 75 phonograms and the 42 sounds

In order to *read* a word, one needs to answer the question ‘Which sound is that particular phonogram saying?’ In order to *spell* a word, the question becomes ‘Which phonogram should I use to say that particular sound?’

For this reason Parts 2 and 3 of this book are divided into rules for phonograms (reading rules or rules of position) and rules for sounds (spelling rules). The 75 phonograms are ordered alphabetically, and show the positions where they use their particular sounds. The 42 sounds are also ordered alphabetically and show the rules and guidelines where particular phonograms are used to represent them.

The sounds are shown using the clearest representation of that sound (i.e. using a phonogram that can only say that sound where possible). All sounds for all phonograms are cross referenced to the 42 sounds. For example:

**2** **a** lady see *ay*

Cross referenced sounds are coloured in grey.

Example words in these first sections are all base words (root words). The addition of suffixes and prefixes may affect pronunciation, stress or rules.

## Suffixes and prefixes

Part 4 is devoted to suffixes and prefixes. There are very few rules for prefixes, so the prefixes are listed at the end of the section. The suffixes and their rules are listed alphabetically, and are cross referenced in a similar manner to the 42 sounds. Rules for suffixes may be listed under the suffix itself (e.g. **ment** is listed under **m**), but there are also entries for concepts like **plural** and **noun**.

## Pronunciation

Pronunciation guidelines are shown in Part 5. This section contains much helpful information for the ESL student — it covers syllables, the schwa sound and other tips on how to pronounce various letter patterns which don't fit into normal phonogram or sound guidelines.

## Appendixes

At the end of the book several appendixes appear which group together information on topics such as homophones, silent letters and anomalies. The final appendix shows the marking system used by LEM Phonics for word analysis.

## Getting around

This book is designed as a reference book and is ordered alphabetically so that information is easy to find. Along the right edge of the pages the main section is listed, along with the first entry to appear on that page.

Throughout the book the plus symbol (+) denotes further information and related topics from the various sections, for example:

- + Related phonograms: **s** — **where s cannot be used**
- + Related suffixes: **s, 's**
- + Related pronunciation: **When does s say <sup>1</sup>s and <sup>2</sup>s?**

**l**

- + Related sounds: l
- + Related suffixes: **al, ful**

**m**

- + Related sounds: m

**n**

**n** is sometimes silent on the end of a word, usually after **m**:

autumn      solemn      column      hymn      condemn      damn

However if the word has a suffix added and **n** slips over to the next syllable, the sound of **n** is heard:

solem-nity      hym-nal      condem-nation

- + Related sounds: n
- + Related appendix: **silent letters**

**ng**

**n** is pronounced as 'ng' before the sound 'k' as well as 'g', because 'k' and 'g' have a common initial mouth position. This is why **ng** never appears before **k, c** or **g**, otherwise the sound would be duplicated:

before k	before c	before <sup>1</sup> g
think	uncle	angry
thank		hungry
blink		language

When **er** is added as a suffix to a verb ending in **ng**, **g** is part of the phonogram **ng**:

sing — sing-er      wring — wring-er      hang — hang-er

When **er** is added to adjectives ending in **ng**, the syllable break changes and '<sup>1</sup>g' is pronounced:

strong — stron-ger      long — lon-ger      young — youn-ger

- + Related sounds: **ng**
- + Related pronunciation: **syllables — irregularities in syllable breaks**

**o**

<sup>1</sup> o	<sup>2</sup> o	<sup>3</sup> o	<sup>4</sup> o	
<i>long</i>	<i>rope</i>	<i>moves</i>	<i>monkey</i>	
boss	go	do	come	son
cot	flamingo	move	cover	oven
dot	home	prove	done	love
doll	hope	shoe	money	dove
fond	open	tomb	month	glove
got	project	two	oven	govern

1. **o** usually says '<sup>1</sup>o' if followed by one consonant in the same syllable:

pot      flop      col-lar      bot-tom

# th

<sup>1</sup> th	<sup>2</sup> th
<i>think</i>	<i>worthy</i>
thick	this
thin	that
moth	mother

1. At the beginning of a word  
 In most words beginning with **th**, **th** says 'th'. Words that begin with the sound 'th' must be learned.

<sup>1</sup> th (most words)			<sup>2</sup> th (just these words)	
think	thought	theme	this	the
thank	thing	thistle	that	they/their
thick	three	thimble	those	them
thin	third	thermos	these	there
thirst	thirty		then	though

2. At the end of a word  
 In words which end with **th**, **th** says 'th'. If **e** follows, **th** will say 'th'.

<sup>1</sup> th (when e does not follow th)		<sup>2</sup> th (when e follows th)	
mouth	myth	teethe	soothe
wrath	Corinth	breathe	writhe
teeth	path	bathe	loathe
tooth	bath	blithe	lithe
oath	health	clothe	scathe
both	wealth	lathe	wreathe
truth	south	seethe	clothe
moth	north	<i>Exception: smooth</i>	

3. Within a word  
 No specific rules apply when **th** says 'th' or 'th'. However these guidelines may help.

<sup>2</sup> th (mainly words which end with er, en or ern)					
mother	weather	dither	father	feather	either
another	brother	rather	neither	leather	other
lather	whether	bother	smother	heather	tether
further	wither	slither	zither	hither	northern
southern	heathen	earthen			

*Exceptions: fathom, rhythm*

<sup>1</sup> th (mainly words which do not end with er, en or ern)					
ethic	lethal	method	polythene	pathetic	methyl
aesthetic	author	authentic	marathon	anathema	mathematics
anthem	mythical	Gothic	brothel	athlete	atheist

*Exceptions: panther, ether*

ai a-e ei eigh ea

	wake			
ail	ale			
bail	bale			
	dale			
fail				
	gale			
hail	hale			
jail	kale			
mail	male			
nail				
pail	pale			
rail				
sail	sale			
	scale			
snail	shale			
tail	tale			
(a)vail	vale	veil		
wail	whale			
aim	blame			
claim	came			
	dame			
	fame			
	frame			
	flame			
	game			
	lame			
maim	name			
	same			
	shame			
	tame			
	bane			
	cane			
drain	Dane			
fain				
gain				
grain	Jane			
lain	lane			
pain	pane			
plain	plane			
rain		reign/rein		
slain	sane			
stain		skein		
Spain				
vain	vane	vein		
	wane			
	ape			
	cape			
	gape			
	grape			
	nape			
	rape			
	scrape			
	tape			
	base*			
	case			
	chase			
	ate		eight	
bait	debate			
	crate			
	date			
	fate		freight	
gait	gate			
	grate			great

ai a-e ei eigh ea

	plate			
	rate			
	sate			
	skate			
	slate			
	spate			
trait				
strait*				
wait			weight	
	brave			
	cave			
	crave			
	Dave			
	gave			
	grave			
	knave			
	pave			
	rave			
	save			
	slave			
	stave			
waive	wave			
dainty				
faint		feint		
paint				
quaint				
saint				
taint				
	baste			
	caste			
	haste			
	paste			
	taste			
waist	waste			
faith				
	bathe			
	lathe			
	scathe			

r modifies 'ay'

air	heir	
	bare	bear
	care	
	dare	
fair	fare	
flair	flare	
	glare	
hair	hare	
lair		
	mare	
pair	pare	pear
	scare	
	rare	rear
stair	stare	
	snare	
	spare	swear
	tare	tear
	ware	wear
chair	share	their

\* Note the homophones base/bass and strait/straight.

## Unusual ways to represent 'igh'

ei	ai	ay	ey	oi	eigh
either/ neither* eider seismic kaleidoscope	aisle	kayak	geyser	choir ( <i>'quire'</i> )	height sleight

\* The **ei** in **either** and **neither** may be pronounced 'ee' or 'igh'.

+ Related phonograms: **i, y**

**ir**      bird      *see er*

**j**      jump      |dge |  $\frac{2}{g}$  | j |

## At the beginning of a word

**j** will always be used to say 'j' before any letter other than **e, i** or **y**. Before **e, i** or **y** either **g** or **j** may be used.

The following words will use **j** at the beginning of a word before **e, i** or **y**:

jealous	jeans	jeep	jetty	jeer	jerk
jersey	jest	jet	jilt	jig	jest
jingle	jiggle	jive	jitter	Jew	jif-fy
jeopardize	jewel	jibe	jelly		

## Within a word

**j** will always be used to say 'j' before any letter other than **e, i** or **y**:

major	adjust	adjudicate	ejaculate	conjugal	rejoice
rejuvenate	perjury	injure			

**g** will be used to say 'j' before **e, i** or **y**, except for the pattern **ect**:

subject	object	injection	reject	adjective	conjecture
interject	abject	<i>Exception:</i> majesty			

## At the end of a word

**j** may never end a word. **dge** will be used to say 'j' after a single vowel which says its first sound (if the syllable is stressed):

bridge	edge	dodge	ridge	badge	fudge
budge	trudge	ledge	grudge	lodge	sledge
hedge					

**ge** will be used to say 'j' after a long vowel, a consonant, or two vowels.

long vowel	consonant	two vowels
page	hinge	rouge
age	plunge	Scrooge
rage	range	beige

**ow**<sup>2</sup>

know

*see oa***oy**

boy

| oi | oy |

The sound 'oy' is represented by two phonograms only, **oi** and **oy**. Rules are clear where to use each.

### At the end of a word

**oy** is always used to say 'oy' at the end of a word. **oi** is never used because English words do not end in **i**:

boy          toy          con-voy          en-joy          soy

### At the end of a syllable

**oy** is used to say 'oy' if a vowel follows:

foy-er          loy-al          roy-al          voy-age          soy-a

**oi** is used to say 'oy' if a consonant follows:

toi-let          poi-son          loi-ter

*Exceptions: oy-ster, boy-sen-ber-ry*

### Within a syllable

**oi** is generally used to say 'oy' within a syllable:

avoid          boil          coil          coin          join          joint  
 anoint          adroit          quoit          noise          poise          hoist  
 moist          rejoice          voice

### Endings following the sound 'oy'

The endings **l** and **al** can easily be confused for spelling. Students should learn the spelling of **royal** and **loyal**. Other similar sounding words will all be spelled with **oil** on the end.

roy-al          loy-al          boil          spoil

**p**

pet

| p |

**p** is the only phonogram which represents the sound 'p'. **p** does not sound if it is part of a phonogram (e.g. **ph** says f).

**ph**

phonics

*see f***qu**<sup>1</sup>

quick

| qu<sup>1</sup> |

**q** is the the letter which normally represents the sound 'qu<sup>1</sup>'. The letter **u** always follows **q** in English words, but it doesn't count as a vowel in **qu**. Rules are applied as if **u** were not there. For example, with derivatives of **quiz**, (**quizzes**, **quizzing**), use the one, one, one double rule treating **i** as a single vowel.

**ch** says 'qu<sup>1</sup>' in **choir** (pronounced 'quire').

+ Related phonograms: **qu**

+ Related suffixes: **double — one, one, one double rule**



# Comparison: ant/ance/ancy and ent/ence/ency

	ant	ance	ancy		ent	ence	ency	
BASE WORDS	currant elephant gallant giant infant merchant pageant pendant tyrant warrant	balance substance		BASE WORDS	accident agent ardent continent current incident parent parliament student tangent torment	cadence consequence experience influence reference		
COMBINED FORMS	<i>verb/noun</i>	<i>noun/adj</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>verb/noun</i>	<i>noun/adj</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>noun</i>
assist	assistant	assistance		adolesce	adolescent	adolescence		
attend	attendant	attendance		benevolent	benevolence			
confide	confidant	confidence		competent	competence	competency		
defend	defendant	defence		complacent	complacence	complacency		
serve	servant			confide	confident	confidence		
	abundant	abundance		consist	consistent	consistence	consistency	
	arrogant	arrogance		convene	convenient	convenience		
	brilliant	brilliance		differ	different	difference		
defy	defiant	defiance		diligent	diligence			
deviate	deviant	deviance		eloquate	eloquent	eloquence		
	distant	distance		equivalent	equivalence	equivalency		
	elegant	elegance		impudent	impudence			
	extravagant	extravagance		innocent	innocence			
	fragrant	fragrance		magnify	magnificent	magnificence		
ignore	ignorant	ignorance		obey	obedient	obedience	residency	
import	important	importance		patient	patience			
	petulant	petulance		persist	persistent	persistence		
ply	pliant	pliance	pliancy	present	presence			
	relevant	relevance	relevancy	prude	prudence			
rely	reliant	reliance		quiesce	quiescent	quiescence		
resist	resistant	resistance		reside	resident	residence	residency	
tolerate	tolerant	tolerance		resile	resilient	resilience		
valour	valiant	valiance		silent	silence			
vigil	vigilant	vigilance		turbid	turbulent	turbulence	turbulency	
		alliance		violate	violent	violence		
ally		ambulance		refer		reference		
ambulate		performance		emerge	emergent		emergency	
perform		sustenance		preside	president		presidency	
sustain		vengeance		urge	urgent		urgency	
(a)venge			blatancy	current			currency	
	blatant		buoyancy	decent			decency	
	buoyant		vacancy	efficient			efficiency	
vacate	vacant			fervent			fervency	
		appearance		frequent			frequency	
appear		ambiance		potent			potency	
		dependance		regent			regency	
depend	dependant			apparent		ambience		
				ambient				
				(in)dependent		(in)dependence	(in)dependency	

Note that words which mean ‘a person who does what the base word suggests’ must always be written with **ant**.

This list cannot include every word which has the patterns shown, but it shows the existent patterns and certain irregularities. There are many common words included which could greatly help both ‘mother tongue’ and ESL students.

## ist typist

**ist** as a suffix always defines a person who does what the base word indicates ('doer nouns'). Never spell 'doer nouns' with **est**:

type | typist (*not **typest***)

race | racist

motor | motorist

journal | journalist

If the word means

tour | tourist

perfection | perfectionist

terror | terrorist

nation | nationalist

education | educationist

science | scientist

flora | florist

ideal | idealist

+ Related suffixes: **ian, or**

## istic realistic

*see combining suffixes*

## ite composite

### Comparison: the ending **ite**

**ite** says 'schwa+t'

composite

definite

exquisite

favourite

granite

infinite

opposite

requisite

**ite** says 'igh+t'\*

appetite

chrysolite

contrite

excite

expedite

extradite

gelignite

ignite

incite

masonite

parasite

polite

recite

requite

respite

stalactite

stalagmite

termite

Vegemite

**ite** says 'ee+t' (*French i*)

elite

marcasite

petite

\* One syllable words ending in **ite** always use the sound 'igh+t', e.g. **bite, mite, quite**

+ Related pronunciation: **the schwa sound — ite**

## ity severity

**ity** added to an adjective always forms a noun which means the quality which the base word implies:

severe | severity

sincere | sincerity

necessary | necessity

adverse | adversity

popular | popularity

diverse | diversity

grave | gravity

sterile | sterility

facile | facility

rigid | rigidity

senile | senility

hostile | hostility

serene | serenity

agile | agility

real | reality

Note the change in these base words ending in **le** when **ity** is added. **i** is inserted between **b** and **l**:

noble | nobility

credible | credibility

suitable | suitability

able | ability

visible | visibility

sensible | sensibility

When **ed** sounds like its second and third sounds 'd' and 't', it doesn't form a new syllable:

fixed            helped            dragged

+ Related phonograms: **ed**

In words like **ri-ding**, although silent **e** is removed, its effect on the base word **ride** still holds.

In words containing **ti**, **ci** or **si** to begin the suffix, the **t**, **c** or **s** of the base word generally shifts to the next syllable and joins with **i** to sound as 'sh' in the suffix:

create | cre-a-tion                      pollute | pol-lu-tion                      deplete | de-ple-tion  
face | fa-cial                              office | of-fi-cial                              tense | ten-sion  
manse | man-sion

+ Related sounds: **sh**

4. When a word has a prefix, the word is divided between the prefix and the base word:

dis-like            un-happy            in-human            over-play            sub-marine  
ex-press            mis-conceive            pre-meditate            re-consider            inter-national  
semi-final            il-legal            il-lustrious            im-material            im-mature

+ Related suffixes: **prefixes**

5. When two or more consonants come between two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided between the first two consonants:

an-gry            trac-tor            sin-ful            pat-tern            gad-get            an-cient  
pen-cil            ver-bal            mys-ter-y            glis-ten            moun-tain            ful-crum

Note that **dge** and **ng** are not phonograms in **gadget** and **angry** because the syllable break divides them.

6. When a single consonant comes between two vowels in a word, the word is usually divided after the consonant if the first vowel says its short sound:

mod-est            man-y            an-y            or-al            or-ange            pal-ace  
bod-y            met-al            med-al            lem-on            mel-on            car-ol  
lim-it            cor-al            ver-y            lev-er            nev-er            cab-in  
mod-el            bat-on            pet-al            for-est            bur-y            at-om  
cam-el            plan-et            stud-y            sub-urb            pit-y            cit-y  
civ-il            com-et            cop-y            cov-er            pol-ish            im-age  
liz-ard            haz-ard            prom-ise            fin-ish            cop-y            dep-ot  
fam-ine            rap-id            fam-i-ly            san-i-ty            ag-on-y            in-fin-i-ty  
grat-i-tude            gen-er-ate            ven-om            des-ert            pel-i-can            sim-i-lar  
cyl-in-der            sal-ad            val-id            pris-on            vis-it

For ESL students, it will be uncertain whether the vowel is short or long. The pronunciation of the above words needs to be learned because if the sound is not known, the syllable break cannot be certain. If the syllable break is known, usually the sound can be certain.

In **ro-ver** and **cov-er**, **pol-ish** and **Po-lish**, **mo-dem** and **mod-el**, it is the syllable breaks which determine the vowel sound. But syllable breaks are not given in normal text!

7. Syllable breaks will usually come directly after a single vowel saying its long sound (because vowels usually say their long sound at the end of a syllable):

la-dy            ba-by            me-tre            e-vil            e-ven            ru-by  
vi-tal            vi-brant            fi-nal            si-lent            i-de-a            li-on  
du-ring            su-ture            mo-tor            lo-cal            so-cial            po-tent  
la-bel            le-gal            ma-jor            pre-tend

+ Related phonograms: **vowel**

# The schwa sound

## What is the schwa?

The schwa sound is not represented by any one phonogram. Any vowel in an unstressed syllable may be pronounced as the schwa sound. We call it a neutral vowel sound. It sounds something like 'uh'. The schwa sound is indicated by a small zero above the vowel.

`per-<sup>0</sup>son    `per-<sup>0</sup>fect    `pen-<sup>0</sup>cil    a-<sup>0</sup>go    re-<sup>0</sup>sponse

+ Related appendix: **explanation marks**

In the above words, the vowel in the syllable which does *not* have the stress is not heard clearly. The sound heard is the same for each one. It is the schwa sound.

The schwa sound is used in various other languages as well as English. It originated as a Hebrew concept and was adopted by the Germans who first called it the 'schwa'.

## Schwa ending charts

The charts on the following pages give words in which the last syllable sounds similar because of the schwa sound.

Rules, in some instances, can guide the student in correct spelling. The part of speech which the word signifies may also have a bearing on which ending should be used.

## Creating homophones with suffixes

The following words are homophones, but one of the words has a suffix added which makes it sound like the other base word. This is important for spelling. For example if a student wants to write the word **guest**, both **guest** and **guessed** sound like it. Ask, ‘Which word do you mean? Does it have the base word **guess**?’

The word **guess** uses the rule that we double **s** because it follows a single vowel. Add the ending **ed** and it becomes **guessed**. If the word the student wants is already a base word and has no ending, it will be **guest**. Here are some further examples (with base words in square brackets):

<b>knows</b> [know]	<b>nose</b>	<b>fined</b> [fine]	<b>find</b>
<b>packed</b> [pack]	<b>pact</b>	<b>mined</b> [mine]	<b>mind</b>
<b>presents</b> [present]	<b>presence</b>	<b>missed</b> [miss]	<b>mist</b>
<b>rays</b> [ray]	<b>raise</b>	<b>dents</b> [dent]	<b>dense</b>
<b>wrapped</b> [wrap]	<b>rapt</b>	<b>cents</b> [cent]	<b>sense</b>
<b>allowed</b> [allow]	<b>aloud</b>	<b>prints</b> [print]	<b>prince</b>
<b>bored</b> [bore]	<b>board</b>	<b>chased</b> [chase]	<b>chaste</b>
<b>claws</b> [claw]	<b>clause</b>	<b>paws</b> [paw]	<b>pause</b>
<b>bridal</b> [bride]	<b>bridle</b>	<b>higher</b> [high]	<b>hire</b>
<b>seas</b> [sea]	<b>seize</b>	<b>genes</b> [gene]	<b>jeans</b>
<b>prays</b> [pray]	<b>praise</b>		

## Homographs

The following words are spelt exactly the same, but they don't sound the same and don't have the same meanings. These are called **homographs** (**homo**=same; **graph**=picture). Meanings are in square brackets:

row [argument]	row <sup>2</sup> [a boat]
bow [bend]	bow <sup>2</sup> [and arrow]
sow [mother pig]	sow <sup>2</sup> [seed]
wind [blow]	wind <sup>2</sup> [up the clothes hoist]
wound [I <i>wound</i> it up]	wound <sup>3</sup> [injury]
tear [cry]	tear <sup>3</sup> [rip]
rear [back]	rear <sup>3</sup> [raise up]

## Parts of speech

The following words are spelt the same but pronounced differently, according to the part of speech:

<b>Nouns</b>	<b>Verbs</b>	<b>Nouns</b>	<b>Verbs</b>
˘pro- <b>gress</b>	pro-˘ <b>gress</b>	˘con- <b>vict</b>	con-˘ <b>vict</b>
˘pres- <b>ent</b>	pre-˘ <b>sent</b>	˘es-tim- <b>ate</b>	˘es-ti-˘ <b>mate</b>
˘min- <b>ute</b>	mi-˘ <b>nute</b>	˘in- <b>crease</b>	in-˘ <b>crease</b>
˘con- <b>duct</b>	con-˘ <b>duct</b>	˘per- <b>fect</b>	per-˘ <b>fect</b>
use	u <sup>2</sup> <b>se</b>	˘in- <b>crease</b>	in-˘ <b>crease</b>
ex-˘ <b>cuse</b>	ex-˘ <b>cu<sup>2</sup>se</b>	˘per- <b>mit</b>	per-˘ <b>mit</b>
˘com- <b>bine</b>	com-˘ <b>bine</b>	˘pro- <b>ceed(s)</b>	pro-˘ <b>ceed</b>
˘con- <b>tent</b>	con-˘ <b>tent</b> ( <i>adjective</i> )	˘prod- <b>uce</b>	pro-˘ <b>duce</b>
˘con- <b>test</b>	con-˘ <b>test</b>		

Notice that the nouns have the stress on the first syllable and the verbs have it at the end.

+ Related pronunciation: **pronunciation hints — syllable stress**