Graphemes that can represent different phonemes
Grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences

Examples use British English pronunciation. The relevant grapheme is shown in bold.

Table 1. Single-letter graphemes

These are individual letters that can represent more than one phoneme. Multi-letter spellings such as ea, sh and a-e can be found in Tables 2 and 3.

Grapheme	Different phonemes	Examples showing different pronunciations
a	5	**a**pple · **a**pron · w**a**tch · m**a**ny · vill**a**ge
c	2	**c**at · **c**ity
d	2	**d**og · sol**d**ier
e	4	**e**gg · h**e** · pr**e**tty · tak**e**n
f	2	**f**ish · o**f**
g	2	**g**o · **g**iant
i	4	**i**t · f**i**nd · mach**i**ne · on**i**on
n	2	**n**et · pi**n**k
o	7	h**o**t · s**o**n · g**o** · d**o** · w**o**men · lem**o**n · **o**ne
s	4	**s**un- (hiss sound) · ha**s-** (buzz sound) · **s**ugar- (sh sound) · mea**s**ure (‘zh’ sound)
t	2	**t**ap · na**t**ure
u	6	c**u**p · p**u**t · men**u** · b**u**sy · t**u**rn · tr**u**th
y	4	**y**es · m**y** · happ**y** · g**y**m

Note: Some correspondences are context- or accent-dependent. For example, n in pink and t in nature are not as straightforward as c in cat/city. The letter x is not included because it often represents a sequence of two phonemes (for example, /k/ + /s/ in box), rather than one phoneme.

Table 2. Two-letter graphemes

These two-letter spellings can represent more than one phoneme in different words.

Grapheme	Different phonemes	Examples showing different pronunciations
ai	2	r**ai**n · s**ai**d
ay	2	d**ay** · qu**ay**
ch	3	**ch**ip · **ch**ef · s**ch**ool
ea	4	s**ea** · br**ea**d · gr**ea**t · h**ea**rt
ei	4	v**ei**n · rec**ei**ve · **ei**der · w**ei**rd
ew	2	dr**ew** · s**ew**
ey	2	th**ey** · k**ey**
ie	3	f**ie**ld · p**ie** · fr**ie**nd
oe	3	t**oe** · sh**oe** · d**oe**s
oo	3	m**oo**n · b**oo**k · bl**oo**d
ou	7+	**ou**t · y**ou**ng · s**ou**p · c**ou**ld · s**ou**l · f**ou**r · fam**ou**s

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ow	3	c**ow** · sn**ow** · kn**ow**ledge
th	2	**th**in · **th**is
ue	2+	bl**ue** · g**ue**ss
ui	3	fr**ui**t · b**ui**ld · g**ui**de
wh	2	**wh**en · **wh**ole

Table 3. Examples of graphemes with three or more letters

English also has longer graphemes that can be pronounced differently in different words. The examples below are particularly useful illustrations.

Grapheme	Different phonemes	Examples showing different pronunciations
ough	6+	c**ough** · t**ough** · th**ough** · thr**ough** · th**ough**t · b**ough**
ear	4	h**ear** · b**ear** · l**ear**n · h**ear**t
ere	2	h**ere** · th**ere**
our	3	f**our** · t**our** · j**our**ney
oor	2	d**oor** · p**oor**
ure	2	c**ure** · pict**ure**
eigh	2	**eigh**t · h**eigh**t

A particularly striking example is ough: c**ough**, t**ough**, th**ough**, thr**ough**, th**ough**t and b**ough** show several very different pronunciations of the same spelling.

Important: Pronunciation varies by accent, particularly for spellings such as ear, our, oor and ure. The tables are intended to demonstrate that the same grapheme can represent different phonemes, rather than to claim that every listed pronunciation occurs identically in every English accent.

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