

Vowel Digraph Examples

Digraph	Corresponding Phonemes	Example Words	Comments
ae	/ai/ (eɪ)	Gaelic, Israel, reggae, vertebrae	Uncommon.
	/e/ (e)	haemorrhage, haemorrhoids	UK spelling. Rare.
	/ee/ (i:)	Aeon, algae, haemophilia, paediatrician	Mostly UK spellings.
	/igh/ (aɪ)	maestro, taekwondo, curriculum vitae	Rare correspondence.
a-e	/ai/ (eɪ)	ape, bake, cave, snake, tale	Split digraph, sometimes called 'magic e'.
	/i/ (ɪ)	baggage, cabbage, damage, language	Less common than the /ai/ sound.
	/a/ (æ)	have	Rare.
ai	/ai/ (eɪ)	aim, brain, faint, snail, waist	Most common sound for this digraph.
	/i/ (ɪ) or /ə/ (ə)	bargain, captain, mountain, fountain	/ə/ represents the schwa sound. Similar to 'uh'. The actual sound spoken depends on individual accents.
	/e/ (e)	again, said	Rare sound for this digraph.
	/a/ (æ)	plaid, plait	Rare sound for this digraph.
al	/or/ (ɔ:)	talk, walk, chalk, stalk	
	/ar/ (ɑ:)	half, calm, calve, palm	Less common.
	/a/ (æ)	salmon	Very rare.
ar	/ar/ (ɑ:)	arm, car, dark, farm	Most common sound for this digraph
	/or/ (ɔ:)	dwarf, war, wardrobe, wart	Uncommon – usually after 'w'.
	/air/ (eɪ)	area, Mary, parent, vary	Uncommon.
	/ə/ (ə)	cellar, dollar, nectar, vinegar	Schwa sound. Similar to 'uh'.
au	/or/ (ɔ:)	August, caught, haunt, pause	
	/o/ (o)	Australia, because, fault, vault	Uncommon.
	/ar/ (ɑ:)	aunt, draught, laugh	Rare - can be pronounced as /a/ for ant in the north of England.
aw	/or/ (ɔ:)	awful, crawl, draw, saw	
ay	/ai/ (eɪ)	day, play, say, tray	
ea	/ee/ (i:)	beach, clean, eat, meal	Most common sound for 'ea'.
	/e/ (e)	bread, dead, feather, head	
	/ai/ (eɪ)	break, great, steak, Reagan	Rare correspondence.
ee	/ee/ (i:)	bee, cheese, geese, sheep	

The symbols between forward slashes // are used in the UK Government's Letters and Sounds phonics programme. The green symbols in round brackets are used in the International Phonetic Alphabet.



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e-e	/ee/ (i:)	ath lete , comp ete , phon eme , these	Split digraph, also known as 'magic e'.
ei	/ee/ (i:)	ceiling, prote in , rece ive , se ize	Rare correspondence.
	/ai/ (eɪ)	beige, fe int , re indeer , ve il	Rare correspondence.
	/e/ (e)	he ifer , lei sure	UK accents. Very rare correspondence.
er	/ur/ (ɜ: Br. or ɜ US)	fer n , ger m , he r , pe rson	
	/ear/ (ɪə)	cafete ria , cere al , he ro , ze ro	
	/ə/ (ə) or (ə) US	afte r , bu tt er, corne r , si ster	Schwa sound. Similar to 'uh'.
	/r/ (r)	differe n t, eve r y	'Silent e.'
eu	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	sle uth , leuka emia , rheu matism	Rare correspondence.
	/y/ (j) + /oo/ (ɔɪ)	Europe, fe ud , neu ron , pneu monia	Arguable whether acting as a digraph in these words as it represents 2 sounds.
ew	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	ble w , che w , fle w , gre w	
	/y/ (j) + /oo/ (ɔɪ)	de w , fe w , ne w , nephe w , skew er	The /y/ sound isn't spoken in all these words in some accents.
	/oa/ (əʊ or oʊ)	se w	Very rare correspondence.
ey	/ee/ (i:)	abb ey , donke y , hone y , monke y	
	/ai/ (eɪ)	he y , pre y , the y , obe y	Less common correspondence than /ee/ sound for 'ey'.
ie	/ee/ (i:)	ach ieve , belie f , ch ief , fie ld	
	/igh/ (aɪ)	cri ed , fl ies , pie , satisf ied	Less common.
	/e/ (e)	fr ie nd	Very rare correspondence.
i-e	/igh/ (aɪ)	bike , dice , hide , kite 	
	/i/ (ɪ)	g ive , live d , engine , evas ive	
	/ee/ (i:)	elite , mach ine , police , sard ine	
ir	/ur/ (ɜ: Br. or ɜ US)	bir d , chir p , dir t , gir l	
oa	/oa/ (əʊ or oʊ)	cloa k , goa t , loa f , soa p	
	/or/ (ɔ:)	abroa d , broa d	Rare correspondence.
oe	/oa/ (əʊ or oʊ)	do e , goe s , Jo e , toma toes	
	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	canoe , shoe 	Rare correspondence.
o-e	/oa/ (əʊ or oʊ)	alone , cho ke , home , nose 	Split digraph, sometimes called 'magic e'.
	/u/ (ʌ)	come , done , love , some 	
	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	lose , move , prove 	Rare correspondence.
oi	/oi/ (ɔɪ)	avoi d , boi l , coi n , oi nk	



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oo	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	balloon, food, room, too	
	/oo/ (ʊ)	book, foot, good, look	
	/u/ (ʌ)	blood, flood	Rare correspondence.
or	/or/ (ɔː)	born, cork, for, horse	Most common correspondence for 'or'.
	/ur/ (ɜː Br. or ɜ˞ US)	attorney, word, work, world	Uncommon.
	/ə/ (ə) or (ə) US	doctor, mirror, sailor, tractor	Schwa sound. Similar to 'uh'.
ou	/ow/ (aʊ)	bounce, cloud, fountain, house	Most common correspondence for 'ou'.
	/u/ (ʌ)	cousin, touch, rough, young	Less common.
	/oa/ (əʊ or oʊ)	boulder, mould (UK), shoulder, soul	Rare correspondence.
	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	group, soup, you, toucan	Rare correspondence.
	/ə/ (ə)	anxious, enormous, hideous, serious	Schwa sound. Similar to 'uh'.
ow	/ow/ (aʊ)	allow, cow, flower, how	Both sound correspondences for 'ow' have a similar frequency in words.
	/oa/ (əʊ or oʊ)	arrow, blow, grow, thrown	
oy	/oi/ (ɔɪ)	annoy, boy, enjoy, toy	
re	/ə/ (ə) or ə in some words with US accent)	acre, centre (UK), mediocre, ogre	Schwa sound. Similar to 'uh'.
ue	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	blue, clue, glue, true	
	/y/ (j) + /oo/ (ɔɪ)	argue, cue, rescue, venue	Arguable whether this is acting as a digraph in these words as it represents 2 sounds.
u-e	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	fluke, June, rude, salute	Split digraph, sometimes called 'magic e'.
	/y/ (j) + /oo/ (ɔɪ)	amuse, costume, cute, mule	*Arguable whether this is acting as a digraph in these words as it represents 2 sounds.
ui	/i/ (ɪ)	build, biscuit, circuit	Rare correspondence.
	/oo/ (ɔɪ)	bruise, cruise, fruit, juice	Rare correspondence.
ur	/ur/ (ɜː Br. or ɜ˞ US)	burn, fur, hurt, nurse	
	/ə/ (ə) or (ə) US	Arthur, lemur, murmur, sulfur	Schwa sound. Similar to 'uh'.
uy	/igh/ (aɪ)	buy, guy	Rare correspondence.
ye	/igh/ (aɪ)	dye, goodbye, rye	Rare correspondence.
y-e	/igh/ (aɪ)	analyse, style, type, tyre	Split digraph. Rare correspondence.



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