

Ai Digraph Word List

We've split the lists into different sound categories in alphabetical order to help you locate words you might want to use with your students.

Words containing the /ai/ sound (eɪ) as in aim...

One-syllable words with regular spelling patterns and no other digraphs:

Aide, aids, aim, bail, bait, baize, braid, brain, Cain, cairn, chain, claim, drain, fail, fain, faint, flail, frail, gain, gait, grail, grain, hail, jail, laid, maid, mail, maim, main, mail, maize, nail, paid, paint, plain, raid, rails, sail, saint, snail, staid, stain, tail, taint, trail, train, trait, waif, waist, wait.

One-syllable words with other digraphs or some irregular spelling patterns:

Faith, quaint, waive.

Two or more syllable words - may contain other digraphs:

Abstain, acclaim, affair, afraid, aiding, ailing, ailment, assail, attain, avail, await, curtail, daily, dainty, daisies, daisy, derail, detail, detain, disdain, domain, email, entail, exclaim, explain, mermaid, obtain, painter, rainbow, raisin, remain, retail, retain, sailor, trainer, traitor, waiter.

Words where the ai digraph represents alternative sounds (see [ai digraph sounds](#) on our website)...

Again, aikido, aisle, bargain, Britain, bonsai, captain, certain, chaplain, chieftain, curtain, Dalai Lama, Dubai, fountain, Masai, mountain, Nairobi, plaid, plait, said, samurai, Shanghai, tai chi, Taiwan, Thailand, villain.

Words where ai doesn't act as a digraph (see [ai digraph sounds](#) on our website):

Affair, air, airy, algebraic, archaic, chair, éclair, fair, flair, formulaic, hair, impair, lair, lairy, mosaic, naïve, repair, stair, Zaire.

Pseudo-words Containing the ai Digraph:

Blain, Caid, Haik, Kain, Maist, Spail, Staig.



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See the information on our website about pseudowords. You could use some of these as practice words for a screening check or as part of a less formal assessment of a child's decoding ability. Some of the words in the list might have a real meaning in some regions, groups, or sub-cultures, but they will be unfamiliar to most children so can be used alongside genuine pseudowords.

