

Ar 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 /ar/ (ɑ:) sound as in park:

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

Ark, arm, art, bar, barb, bard, barf, bark, barn, car, carb, card, Carl, carp, cart, dark, darn, dart, far, farm, garb, hard, hark, harm, harp, jar, lard, lark, mar, mark, Mars, mart, nark, par, parcel, park, part, scar, scarf, snarl, spar, spark, star, stark, start, tar, tarn, tart, yard, yarn, zarf.

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

Arch, are*, armed, barge, char, charm, chart, czar/tsar, farce, gnarl, harsh, larch, large, March, marsh, parched, shard, shark, sharp.

*this could be described as a trigraph

Two or more syllable words – may contain other digraphs:

Afar, agar, ajar, alarm, apart, apartment, arbor/arbours (UK), Arctic, arcade, archer, ardor/ardour (UK), argon, argue, armor/armour (UK), army, arson, artist, barber, bargain, barley, barmy, calamari, cardboard, cardigan, cargo, carpet, carton, cartridge, cigar, embark, farmer, garbage, garden, garlic, garment, guitar, harpoon, harvest, karma, larva, marble, market, marshal, marsupial, parcel, pardon, parsley, parsnip, party, sardine, scarlet, radar, tardy, target, tartan, Tarzan.

Words containing the /or/ (ɔ:) sound as in wart:

Award, dwarf, quart, quarter, quartet, reward, swarm, towards, war, ward, warden, wardrobe, warm, warn, warp, wart, wharf.

Words containing the /air/ (eə) sound as in vary:

Aquarium, area, Ares, aria, canary, caring, daring, garish, glaring, hilarious, librarian, malaria, Mary, parent, scarce, scary, sharing, staring, vary, vegetarian, wary.

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Words containing the schwa sound (ə or ɜ) as in dollar:

Altar, beggar, briar burglar, calendar, cellar, collar, cougar, dollar, friar, grammar, jaguar, liar, lunar, molar, nectar, nuclear, pillar, polar, solar, sugar, vicar, vinegar, vulgar.

Words where ar doesn't act as a digraph:

Area, arena, arid, arise, aroma, array, arrow, baron, carat, caravan, carol, diary, kangaroo, para, parade, Paris, salary, summary, tarot.

Plus most words where the ar letter combination is followed by the letter e, as this forms a trigraph as in care or hare. Trigraphs are also formed when the ar letter combination is preceded by the letters e or o, as in dear or boar.

Pseudo-words Containing the oo Digraph:

Arf, Argus, Arpen, Chark, Darb, Fard, Jarl, Karn, Pard, Sark, Wark.

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. Since this digraph can represent different sounds in different words, you could allow any of the alternative pronunciations when children are reading some of these words. 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.

