

PHONEMES & GRAPHEMES

There are 20 vowel sounds in British English, but they are spelled in many ways! (sorry!!). We can group the sounds into 3 types – short vowel sounds (there are 7 of these), long vowel sounds (5 of these) and ‘diphthongs’ (8 of these). ‘Diphthongs’ are sounds where you have to move something in your mouth while pronouncing the vowel so that it is heard as 2 vowel sounds that slide from one to the other. The 12 short and long sounds are called ‘monophthongs’. In these pages the red letters spell the sound indicated.

Vowel	Short sound	Long sound	Diphthong sound(s)	
A/a/a	apple ⁹	arm ¹¹	ale	-
	attack ⁶	urn ⁷	earring	-
E/e	egg ⁵	equal ¹	aircraft	-
I/i	igloo ²	-	eyebrow	owl
O/o	octopus ¹²	ore ⁸	oats	oil-rig
U/u	under ¹⁰	-	-	-
	book ³	(y)uniform ⁴	Europe	ewer

Numbers indicate the video’s monophthong sequence

Spellings

SHORT sounds	LONG sounds	DIPHTHONG sound
a sound – type i		
Cat	Cart Laugh Bath Past Half	Play Hate Sail Paste Great They
a sound – type ii		
Teacher Humour Attack Syringe Doctor Picture America Dollar Iron Circus	Urn / Earn Word Coward Shower Early Urgent Firm	Rear Cheer Here Pier Souvenir
e sound		
Bed Treasure Said Many Bury	Meet / Meat Piece Machine Money Busy	Air Rare Their Bear Fair Prayer Where

SHORT sounds	LONG sounds	DIPTHONG sound 1	DIPTHONG sound 2
i sound			
Big Crystal Pretty Busy		Eye Pie Light Cry Bike	Town Out Bough / Bow
o sounds			
Dog Cough Watch	Or / Awe Saw More Door Call Broad Caught Sure Your	Slow Dough Coat Go Toe Sew / Sow	Toy Oil
u sounds – type i			
Cup Flood Money			
u sounds – type ii			
Push Good	Glue Shoe Mood Rude You Two Through University Group Screw	Cure Tour Europe	Sewer Dual Fuel Pure Mature