

PHONIC RULES/PATTERNS, WHICH MAY BE USEFUL AT EACH PHASE OF LETTERS AND SOUNDS

- *In English there are 26 letters which represent 44 phonemes. These phonemes are represented by 140 different letter combinations.*

Phases 2 + 3:

- After a short vowel, words end in 'ss' instead of 's', ff instead of 'f', ll instead of 'l', zz instead of 'z' (eg hiss, whiff, hill, fizz).
- After a short vowel, words end in 'ck' instead of 'k' (eg lick). **NB. These are the only consonants which double in this position.**
- Although not technically at this step, the following information may be useful: at the end of a word /v/ is usually spelled 've' (eg have, live).

Phase 4:

- CCVC words: After a short vowel, words end in 'ss' instead of 's', 'ff' instead of 'f', 'ck' instead of 'k', 'll' instead of 'l' (eg. dress, sniff, block, frill). This is the same as CVC words at Step 4.
- CVCC words: After a consonant, words end in 'f' instead of 'ff', 'k' instead of 'ck' (eg shelf, sink). // doesn't appear in final position and /s/ only as a plural (and therefore represented by 's').

Phase 5:

- After a digraph, words end in 'f' instead of 'ff', 'k' instead of 'ck', 'l' instead of 'll' (eg surf, park, heel), 'ce' or 'se' instead of 'ss'.
- Regional pronunciation: (this is relevant in areas where 'path' is pronounced 'parth') /ar/ followed by /s/ (eg grass), /th/ (eg bath) or a consonant cluster (eg plant, ask, clasp) is written 'a'. Where it is followed by /s/, this is written 'ss' (eg glass).

Which representation of each vowel phoneme is most likely in different positions:

- A) Which representation is **most likely** in initial/medial/final position in a monosyllabic word. See chart. Letters in brackets show less likely representations.

Initial and Medial position	Final position
ai a-e	ay
ea ee (e-e)	ee e ea (words with 1 syllable) y (words with 2 or more syllables)
i-e (igh i ie)	y (ie igh)
oa o-e (o ow)	ow (o oe)
oo u-e	ew (oo ue)
ar (a*)	ar
oi	oy
ou ow	ow
ir ur er (ear or)	ir ur er
aw or a (augh ough)	ore aw (oor)
oo u (oul)	-
-	are (air ear)
-	ear eer

* areas of the country in which 'bath' is pronounced 'b-ar-th'

The initial/medial position is the most problematic in a monosyllabic word, as a vowel phoneme can usually be represented in more than one way (eg 'ai' and 'a-e' are equally likely in this position).

- B) Which representation of a vowel phoneme in initial/medial position is **most likely** to occur before particular final consonants.

In the mini charts below, the grapheme in the column heading is the most likely representation before the final phonemes shown in that column. Where 2 or more graphemes are in the column heading (eg ai a-e), both representations are equally likely.

• **ai a-e:**

ai	a-e	ai a-e
/n/	/b/	/d/
'nt'	/f/	/l/
	/j/	
	/k/	
	/m/	
	/p/	
	/s/	
	/t/	
	/v/	
	/z/ (except present tense verbs, which take 'ays' eg plays)	

• **ee ea (e-e):**

ee	ea	ee ea ee ea ie
/d/	/m/	/k/ /f/
/p/	/v/	/l/ /s/
	/ch/	/n/
	'st'	/t/

• **i-e (igh i ie):**

i-e	i	i-e igh	ie i-e
/f/	'nd'	/t/	/d/ (only past tense verbs take 'ie')
/k/	'nt'		
/l/	'd'		
/m/			
/n/			
/p/			
/s/			
/v/			
/z/			

• **oa o-e (o ow):**

o-e oa	o	o-e oa	oa o
/b/	/f/	'ld'	/d/ 'st'
/k/	/t/		
/p/			
/v/			
/z/			

o-e o oa	o-e oa ow	o-e oa
/l/	/n/	/s/
/m/		

- **oo u-e:**

u-e oo		u-e oo
/b/	/f/	/d/
/j/	/l/	/n/
	/m/	
	/p/	
	/t/	

- **ou ow:**

ou	ow
/d/	/l/
/s/	/n/
/t/	
/ch/	
/th/	
'nd'	
'nt'	

- **ir ur er (ear or):**

- 'ir', 'ur', 'er' are equally likely in initial/medial position.
- 'or' is most likely after 'w' eg **worm**, **work**.

- **aw or a (augh ough):**

or	a	or awor ough
/k/	/l/	/n/
/th/		/t/ (most words taking 'ough' are past tense verbs)
/ch/		
/m/ (except where it follows 'w', in which case 'ar' is used eg warm , swarm)		

- **oo u (oul):**

oo	u	oo u	oo oul
/k/	/l/	/t/	/d/
	/sh/		

C) Which representation of a vowel phoneme is **most likely** to occur in final position.

- **ee e ea**

- 'e' is mostly found in pronouns eg **he**, **she**

- **are (air ear)**

- 'are' is more likely in verbs
- 'air' and 'ear' are equally likely in other words.

Other rules at Phases 6

- **e ea in medial position:**

e	ea	e ea
/b/	/f/	/d/
/g/	/th/	
/j/	'lth'	
/k/		
/l/		
/m/		
/n/		
/p/		
/s/		
/t/		
'nt'		

- **Unaccented vowel represented by 'er':**

- Words ending with a consonant add 'er'.
- Words containing a split digraph just add 'r' (because they already have the 'e' at the end).
- Words containing a short vowel, double the following consonant before adding 'er'.

- **Alternative representations of phoneme /s/:**

In initial position:

- 's' is most likely.
- 'c' is sometimes used before /i/ or /e/.

In final position (not including plurals):

- 'ss' is most likely after a short vowel.
- 'ce' is most likely after /ie/ /ai/, /oi/.
- 'se' is most likely after /oo/, /oa/, /ow/, /ur/.
- 'se' and 'ce' are equally likely after 'n', /ee/, /au/

- **// (as in 'little'):**

- Occurs at the end of polysyllabic words.
- Words containing a short vowel double the last consonant before adding 'le'.
- Words containing digraphs or consonant clusters before // just add 'le'.
- Words containing /ai/ or /ie/ often use just one letter to represent the long vowel eg **table**.
- 'le' is much more common than 'el', 'al', 'il'.

- **Alternative representations of /j/:**

In initial position:

- 'j' is most likely.
- 'g' is sometimes used when followed by 'i' or 'e' (eg **gel**).

In final position:

- 'dge' is most likely after a short vowel.
- 'ge' is most likely after a digraph or consonant.