

VOWEL PAIRS

There are many, MANY vowel pairs or vowel teams in our English language (more than 20). The fancy word for a vowel pair or vowel team is diphthong.

A diphthong usually has two vowels together that have one sound.

The diphthong might carry a similar sound to one of the vowels included:

ee = long /e/ sound as in feet.

Most likely, the sound of the vowel team will be a unique sound:

oi & oy have a unique sound as in boy and boil.

The letters y and the letters w are often part of a vowel pair. We also have some very unique diphthongs that contain the letters gh.

ay = long /a/ as in day

ow = long /o/ as in snow or /ow/ as in plow

igh = long /i/ as in fight

VOWEL PAIRS – Week 13

ea typically found in the middle of a syllable though sometimes found at the beginning

three sounds; in order of frequency:

1. long /e/ as in bleachers
2. short /e/ as in weather
3. long /a/ as in break, steak and great (these 3 words only)

When reading an unknown word with the vowel pair **ea**, always try the long e sound first.

A saying to remember the three sounds of **ea** in order of frequency:
Eat bread and steak.

oi typically found in the middle of a syllable though sometimes found at the beginning

one unique sound: /oi/ or /oy/ as in the word boil

oy always has this same sound though is typically used at the end of a word.

ou typically found in the middle of a syllable though sometimes found at the beginning

one unique sound: /ou/ or /ow/ as in the word shout

ow always has this same sound though is typically used at the end of a word.

VOWEL PAIRS – Week 14

ai typically found in the middle of a syllable
typically followed by the letters n or l

one sound: long /a/ as in the word pail or pain

ay always has this same sound though is typically used at the end of a word.

Many words with **ai** are homonyms. This means that the word may have more than one spelling.

Examples:	main	mane	tail	tale
	pain	pane	waist	waste

igh found in the middle of a syllable
typically followed by the letter t

one unique sound: long /i/ as in the word fight

oa typically found in the middle of a syllable

one sound: long /o/ as in the word boat

ow always has this same sound though is typically used at the end of a word.

aw typically found at the end of a syllable (mostly one syllable words)
often followed by the letters n or l

one unique sound: /aw/ as in the word saw

VOWEL PAIRS – Week 15

au typically found in the middle of a syllable

one unique sound: /aw/ or /au/ as in the word fault

aw, au & augh share this same sound

augh typically found in the middle of a syllable

All seven words in our language with this spelling and pronunciation are in this sentence:

The distraught farmer caught his naughty, haughty daughter and taught her not to slaughter.

VOWEL PAIRS – Week 16

There are many ways to spell the sound /oo/ in the English language.

u-e	u	oo	ew	ue	ui	eu
(rude)	(puny)	(school)	(new)	(blue)	(suit)	(feud)

The first three listed above are the most common. The next two vowel pairs are the first choice at the end of the word though there are no rules to guide which vowel pair to use. The last two vowel pairs are used very rarely.

ew typically found at the end of a syllable
one sound: long /oo/ as in the word new

ui typically found in the middle of a syllable
one sound: long /oo/ as in the word suit

ue typically found at the end of a syllable
one sound: long /oo/ as in the word blue

VOWEL PAIRS – Week 17

ough typically found in the middle of a syllable

VOWEL PAIRS – Week 18

ie typically found at the end of a syllable

VOWEL PAIRS – Week 19

ei typically found in the middle of a syllable