

Figure 6.3 Vowel sounds in English

Phonemes or speech sounds	Graphemes	Common spellings	Less common spellings	
Short vowel: sound made with mouth open				
1	/a/	cat		
2	/e/	pet	ea in head said	
3	/i/	pin		
4	/o/	lot	wash	
5	/u/	bun		
Schwa: unstressed vowel sound in multisyllabic words				
6	/ə/	about broken pencil parrot album		
Long vowel: sounds like the name of the letter				
7	/a/	a-e cake	ai wait ay day	weight
8	/e/	ee bee	ea in meat y in happy	e-e in these
9	/i/	i-e bike	ie pie y in fly	igh in high
10	/o/	o-e hope	oa in coat ow in row	
11	/u/	u-e flute	ew few oo goose ue blue	suit
Diphthongs: the mouth moves				
12	/oi/	toy	oi noise	
13	/ow/	cow	ou shout	
Other vowels				
14	/oo/	look book		
15	/aw/	saw		caught
R-controlled vowels: the vowel is influenced by /r/ sound				
16	/ar/	car		
17	/or/	fork		chore
18	/er/	her	ir fir ur in burn	
19	/air/	hair	care	
20	/ear/	dear	deer	