

# Phonics Rules!

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A TEACHING RESOURCE FROM...



AUTHOR  
Helen Zeitzoff

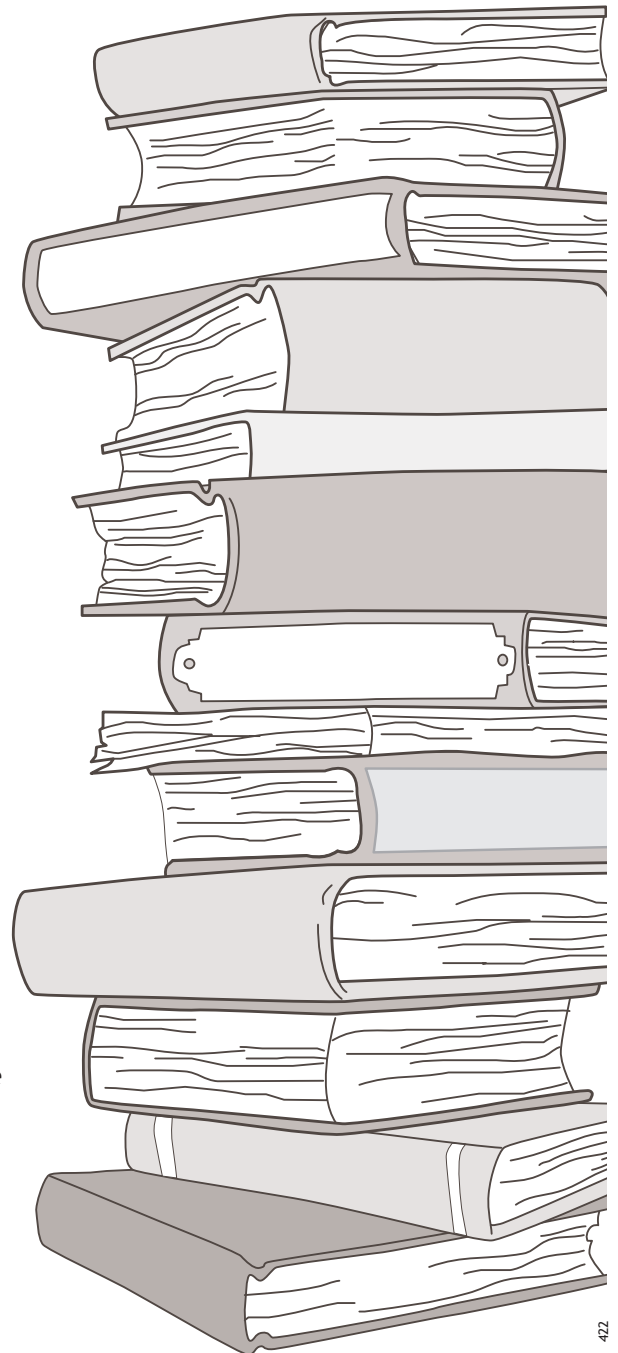
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# INTRODUCTION

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Phonics—or sound/symbol association—is a key element for students learning to read.

This teaching manual was designed as a resource guide. Teachers, school assistants, and parents can use it to gain knowledge of the basic phonetic principles necessary for instructing students to decode words.

The principles found here are geared for the Elementary Level. Students must first be familiar with the alphabet and the most common sound(s) that each letter makes. This handbook focuses on breaking words down into smaller parts to help facilitate both pronunciation and word recognition.

The book has been organized to include the most important phonetic rules, patterns, and explanations. Exceptions to the rules are noted. Overall, there is a logical progression of concepts, each building upon the last.

Helen Zeitzoff, the author of this book, is a teaching veteran with 32 years of classroom experience. She has done an outstanding job of making phonics make sense, mapping out an effective phonics teaching guide, and assembling effective hands-on phonics activities.

## TEACHING PHONICS

In order to decode words, it is necessary for students to obtain an understanding of the different sound/symbol relationships that make up our language. This is what phonics is all about. This sound/symbol association is very important for word recognition—especially when students attempt to figure out more difficult words.

The teaching section in this book covers the main components of a strong phonics curriculum: Vowels, Consonants, and Syllables. Short, concise phonetic rules are followed by specific examples demonstrating each major principle.

As a rule, phonics “rules” cannot be set in stone. There are always exceptions or “rule breakers.” To address this issue, the book promotes teaching general phonics concepts before presenting readers with the exceptions that exist. Along with their decoding skills, the reader should then be able to make sense of a rule-breaking word in a given sentence using context clues and vocabulary knowledge.

## STUDENT PHONICS ACTIVITIES

Putting the phonics rules presented in Part I into practice is what Part II of this book is all about. The numerous hands-on activities found here will reinforce the phonics principles being taught. The pages are reproducible. An answer key is included.

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# PART I: TEACHER'S REFERENCE GUIDE

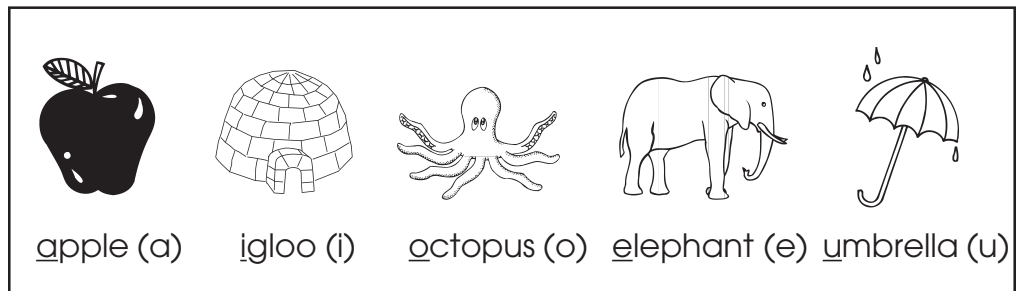
## CHAPTER 1

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### *Vowels*

# SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS

Vowels can have many sounds. Students need to learn short vowel sounds in the beginning. The short sounds for each vowel will be the first sound in each word below. Short vowel sounds can be taught with key pictures to help students remember the sounds. Some pictures that can be used for the short sounds are:



It is important for students to know the correct placement of a vowel in a word for it to have a short sound. Then, by applying the sound/letter association to each letter in the word and blending the sounds together, the students can decode the word.

## RULE 1

**Vowels will be short in a syllable that has the CVC (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) or VC pattern.**

him cvc	pot cvc	sad cvc	fed cvc	at vc	in vc	is vc
glad cvc	stick cvc	plus cvc				

## RULE 2

**Vowels will be short in a one-syllable word that ends in *dge*. The vowel before *dge* will be short.**

fudge	Madge	ledge	ridge	dodge	badge
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RULE 3

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**Vowels will be short in a one-syllable word that ends in a silent *e* with two consonants between the silent *e* and the first vowel. For a multi-syllable word, the same rule applies to the final syllable.**

since   fence   dense   prance   insistence   assistance

RULE 4

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**When *a* follows *w* in a word, the *a* will make the short *o* sound (as in octopus).**

wash   watt   swap   swamp   watch   wasp

Exception: *swam*

# LONG VOWEL SOUNDS

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When a vowel has a long sound, it will say its own name. For example, in the words *came*, *feet*, *cute*, you say the name of the first vowel. The rules for long vowels are listed below.

## RULE 1

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**Syllables that end in a single vowel will have a long vowel sound.**

he	so	my	she	go	hi
cv	cv	cv	cv	cv	cv

## RULE 2

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**When a word ends in a silent *e*, the vowel that comes before the *e* will be long and will say its name. The final *e* is sometimes called a *magic e* because of the way it can change the sound of the first vowel from short to long.**

pin / pine	hop / hope	fin / fine
------------	------------	------------

**Some exceptions to the silent *e* rule include:**

have	come	some	love
done	gone	give	move

## RULE 3

**Some words end in a silent *e* and do not have a long vowel sound because two consonants keep the first vowel and the silent *e* too far apart.** (*This rule is also listed under short vowel rules.*)

since    fence    dense    glance    rinse    scone

***Here is a long vowel exception to this rule.***

The words below have the two consonants between the first vowel and the ***magic e***, yet the first vowel will get a long sound. These words belong to the ***aste*** and ***ange*** word families.

haste    paste    waste    strange    change

## RULE 4

**When special consonants (*gh, nd, ld, ll, st*) follow *i* or *o*, the *i* or *o* will have a long sound.**

<u>igh</u>	<u>ind</u>	<u>ild</u>
bright	kind	child

<u>old</u>	<u>oll</u>	<u>ost</u>
The <u>old</u> man ate the <u>most</u> <u>rolls</u> .		

Exceptions: *cost, lost*

# VOWEL DIGRAPHS

When two letters (vowels) come together and have one vowel sound, this is called a vowel digraph. As a rule, the vowel digraph has one long vowel sound.

Sometimes it is taught that the first vowel of a digraph is long and the second is silent. As you look at the chart below, you will see that in some cases the second vowel can be long. For example, the digraph **ea** can make three sounds. It is best to try the sounds in the following order: Try the long **e** first. If that doesn't sound correct, then move to short **e**, and possibly long **a**.

Below are the vowel digraphs with their sounds and key words.

Digraph	Sound	Example(s)
<b>ai</b>	long a	rain
<b>ay</b>	long a	hay
<b>oa</b>	long o	boat
<b>oe</b>	long o	toe
<b>ow*</b>	long o	snow
<b>ee</b>	long e	meet
<b>ey</b>	long a	they
<b>ey</b>	long e	turkey
<b>ea</b>	long e	seat, eat
<b>ea</b>	short e	head
<b>ea</b>	long a	steak, break
<b>ie</b>	long e	piece, niece, yield
<b>ie</b>	long i	pie, tie, die, cried
<b>ei (gh)</b>	long a	eight, freight
<b>ei</b>	long e	weird, either

Exception: *said*

Exception: *friend*

\***Ow** (snow) can be considered a vowel digraph when it has the long **o** sound. In this instance, **w** is a silent vowel and the two letters together give the long **o** sound.

# VOWEL DIPHTHONGS

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The vowel diphthong is made of two vowels that come together and have a new, special sound. The sound is not long or short. (Diphthongs are like digraphs, in that digraphs also contain two connected letters that make one sound.) In the diphthongs **oy**, **ow**, **ew**, **aw**, the **y** and **w** act as vowels.

Vowel diphthongs for students to remember are listed below.

Diphthong	Example
au	automobile
aw	saw
oi	oil
oy	boy
oo	book
oo	moon
eu	sleuth
ue	blue
ew	crew
ui	juice
ou	soup
ou	house
ow	cow

Exception: *snow*

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## USING CONTEXT FOR **ou** SOUNDS

As students progress, they learn that the **ou** diphthong can extend into additional sounds. The use of context clues will enable the students to realize they may have to change the **ou** sound for the word pronunciation to make sense.

My cousin will come to visit next week.  
Mom is preparing the dough for the apple pie.  
I bought a toy at the store.  
My class will take a tour of the museum.

# R-CONTROLLED VOWEL SOUNDS

(A.K.A., "BOSSY R")

## RULE 1

When *r* follows a vowel, it influences or "bosses" the vowel so that the vowel cannot get a short or long sound.

ar	er	ir	or	ur
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car	card	murder perturb concern lunar terror
her	herd	
fir	firm	
for	form	
fur	purse	

## RULE 2

When an r-controlled vowel is followed by another vowel, its sound can be affected.

her	fir	purr	car
here	fire	pure	care

Additional vowel sounds that are affected by *r* include:

V/R	Examples (Sound 1/Sound 2/Sound 3)		
air	pair, stair, fair		
are	fare, stare, mare		
ear	hear, fear, clear	pearl, learn, early	bear, pear
eer	beer, cheer, steer		
oar	boar, soar, board		
ore	bore, sore, chore		
oor	door, floor, poor		
our	sour, hour	journey, courage	

RULE 3

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**When *ar* follows *w*, *war* will sound like *wor*.**

warm	ward	warp	war	wart
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**When *or* follows *w*, *wor* will sound like *wer*.**

world	worst	work	worm	worry
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RULE 4

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**In multi-syllable words with the *ar* in the unstressed (weaker) syllable, *ar* will have the sound of *er*.**

collar	Oscar	nectar	standard
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**In multi-syllable words with *or* in the unstressed (weaker) syllable, *or* will have the sound of *er*.**

doctor	tractor	mentor	scissors
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