Vowel Chart

short	AB	EB	IB	OB	UB	YB
long	BA	BE	BI	BO	BU	BY
short	BAT	PET	SIT	HOP	MUT	TYP
long	BATE	PETE	SITE	HOPE	MUTE	TYPE
short	GAPPING	NETTING	HITTING	HOPPING	HUMMING	
long	GAPING	MEETING	HIDING	HOPING	FUMING	
short	BANDIT	SEPTIC	VINTAGE	BONNET	MUSKET	
long	BASIC	SEQUIN	VIRUS	BONUS	MUSIC	

	LONG A	LONG E	LONG I	LONG O	OO (food)	Ū (cute)	OI	OU	AU
within word	AI	IE		OA	UI		OI	OU	AU
end of word	AY		Y	OE	UE	UE	OY		
within word	EI	EI							
end of word	EY	EY			EW	EW			
either		EE	IGH	OW	OO			OW	AW
either		EA							

	LONG A	LONG E	LONG I	LONG O	OO (food)	Ū (cute)	OI	OU	AU
within word	MAIL	YIELD		BOAT	FRUIT		BOIL	OUT	PAUSE
end of word	SAY		MY	TOE	BLUE	CUE	TOY		
within word	VEIN	CEILING							
end of word	THEY	MONEY			FLEW	FEW			
either		FEET	RIGHT	GLOW	FOOD			BROWN	LAWN
either		MEAT							

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Vowel Chart: Vowel Team Endings

	LONG A	LONG E	LONG I	LONG O	OO (food)	Ū (cute)	OI	OU	AU
within word	AI	IE		OA	UI		OI	OU	AU
end of word	AY		Y	OE	UE	UE	OY		
within word	EI	EI							
end of word	EY	EY			EW	EW			
either		EE	IGH	OW	OO			OW	AW
either		EA							

	LONG A	LONG E	LONG I	LONG O	OO (food)	Ū (cute)	OI	OU	AU
within word	MAIL	YIELD		BOAT	FRUIT		BOIL	OUT	PAUSE
end of word	SAY		MY	TOE	BLUE	CUE	TOY		
within word	VEIN	CEILING							
end of word	THEY	MONEY			FLEW	FEW			
either		FEET	RIGHT	GLOW	FOOD			BROWN	LAWN
either		MEAT							

Red	i changes to y at the end: ai → ay, oi → oy, ei → ey
Green	u changes to w at the end: au → aw, ou → ow
Dark Blue	a changes to e at the end: oa → oe
Light Blue	i changes to e at the end: ui → ue

How the endings work

Many vowel teams come in pairs. The sound stays the same, but the team is spelled one way inside a word and another way at the end, because English words almost never end in i or u. (Borrowed words like ski, taxi, menu, and bonsai are the exceptions.) So at the end of a word, i becomes y and u becomes w.

Say it as a pair: “ai inside, ay at the end” — rain, ray. “ou inside, ow at the end” — out, now.

Endings keep the end spelling: play → played, playing; boy → boys; draw → drawing; new → newer. (paid, said, and laid are the exceptions.)

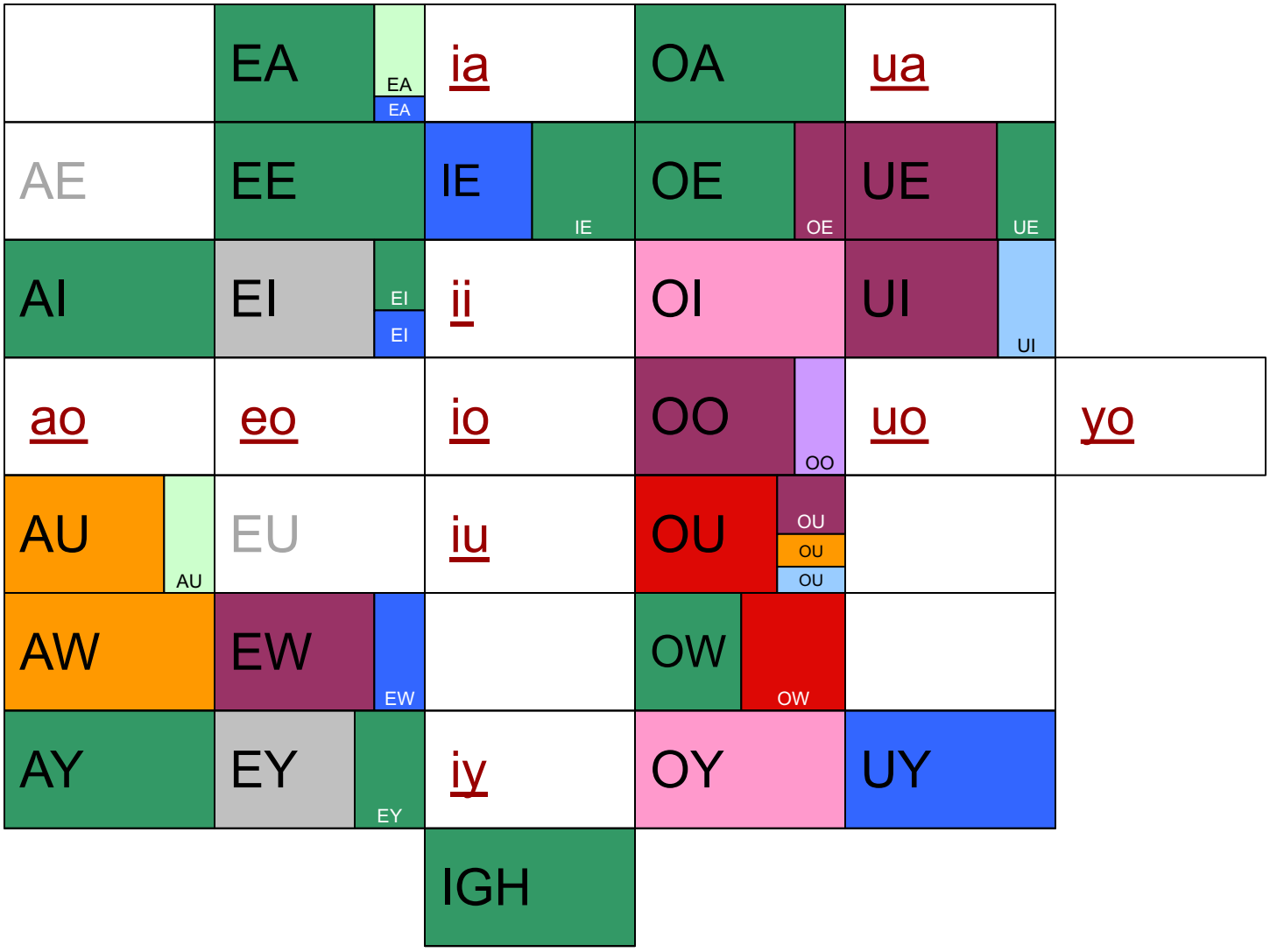
“Either” teams can go anywhere in a word: ee (feet, tree), ea (meat, sea), igh (right, high), ow (glow, snow; brown, cow), aw (lawn, saw), oo (food, too).

OO and Ū use the same teams. ui, ue, and ew can say oo (fruit, blue, flew) or ū (cue, few). See the Two Sounds pages for how to tell which.

Same root word, both spellings: pay → paid, joy → rejoice, pursue → pursuit, renown → renounce, draw → draught (the British spelling of draft).

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Vowel Chart



Key:

Dark Green	First vowel long ea in eat, ai in rain, ie in pie
Light Green	First vowel short ea in head, au in laugh
Dark Blue	Second vowel long (W acts as U, Y acts as I) ie in field, ew in few, uy in buy
Light Blue	Second vowel short ui in build, ou in touch
Dark Purple	Long OO as in food school, blue, fruit, new
Light Purple	Short OO as in book good, look, could
Pink	OI as in coin, toy
Red	OU as in out, brown
Orange	AU as in pause, lawn also thought, broad
Grey	Long a spelled with EI or EY eight, vein, they

AE EU
Gray letters: rare. Skip them for now.

Red lowercase
vowels usually divide between the vowels, as in radi-o, me-ow, cre-ate.

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Vowel Chart

	EA	EA EA	ia		OA		ua				
AE	EE		IE	IE	OE	OE	UE	UE			
AI	EI	EI EI	ii		OI		UI	UI			
ao	eo		io		OO	OO	uo		yo		
AU	AU	EU		iu		OU	OU OU OU				
AW	EW	EW			OW	OW					
AY	EY	EY	iy		OY		UY				
			IGH								

Say the sound or sounds for each team. The small boxes show how many sounds a team has. Check yourself with the color chart.

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Vowel Teams with Two Sounds

After students know the main sounds, have them point to each team and say all of its sounds, most common first: “ea: ē, ĕ.” “oo: oo (food), oo (book).” Percentages are for common one-syllable words.

Team	Say it	How often (most common first)	Clues
ea	ē, ĕ	ē 80%: eat, each, team, read ĕ 17%: head, bread, dead, health ā 3%: great, break, steak	ĕ is mostly in -ead (head, bread, dead, spread), -ealth (health, wealth), and -eath (breath, death). Only great, break, and steak say ā. Everything else: try ē first.
oo	oo (food), oo (book)	oo 75%: too, food, school, moon oo 23%: good, look, book, foot	-ook is almost always book (book, look, took). -oo, -oom, -oon, -oop, -oose, -ooth say food. -ood and -oot go both ways (good/food, foot/boot). Blood and flood say ŭ.
ow	ō, ow	ō 51%: know, show, grow, low ow 49%: how, now, down, town	In short words it is close to half and half, so try both. -owl, -owd, and plain -own say ow (owl, crowd, town). Known, shown, grown, and blown say ō because they come from know, show, grow, blow.
ou	ow, oo, aw	ow 63%: out, house, found, round oo (food) 17%: you, group, soup aw 9%: thought, bought, brought ŭ 5%: young, touch, tough ō 4%: soul, though oo (book) 3%: could, would, should	ou before nd, nt, nce, se, t, d, or th says ow (round, count, mouse). -ought says aw. -oup says oo (soup, group). Could, would, and should are the only oo-as-in-book words.
ie	ē, ī	ē 49%: field, chief, piece, yield ī 47%: pie, tie, die, tried	The ie rule: ie at the end of a short word says ī (pie, tie, lie). ie before a consonant says ē (field, chief, piece). When ie takes the place of a y, it says what the y said: cry → cries, tried (ī); baby → babies (ē). Friend (ĕ) is the odd one.

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Vowel Teams with Two Sounds (continued)

Team	Say it	How often (most common first)	Clues
ei	ā, ē	ā 80%: eight, weigh, vein, reign ē 12%: seize ī 8%: height	eigh says ā (eight, weigh, sleigh). After c, ei says ē (receive, ceiling) — the “except after c” part of “i before e.”
ey	ā, ē	ā 67%: they, hey, grey, prey ē 33%: key	At the end of a short word, ey says ā (they, hey, prey); key is the odd one. Eye is an exception, not a pattern, so it is not counted. In longer words, ey at the end says ē (money, valley, turkey).
ue, ew	oo, ū	ue: oo 72% (blue, true, due), ū 28% (cue, hue) ew: oo 83% (new, grew, chew), ū 14% (few)	After r, l, j, ch, and s, it is oo (true, blue, flew, chew, sue). After t, d, and n, it is oo in most American speech (due, new). After f, p, c, h, m, and v, it is ū with a y sound (few, cue, hue).
ui	oo, ĭ	oo 73%: fruit, suit, juice, cruise ĭ 27%: build, built	In build and built the u is silent. After g or q, the u is not part of a vowel team: in guide, guilt, and guess the u keeps the g hard, and in quit and quick qu says kw.
au	aw, ă	aw 78%: cause, caught, taught, sauce ă 19%: laugh, aunt	Laugh and aunt are the only common ă words.
ai, oa	one sound	ai: ā 97% (rain, wait, main) oa: ō 98% (boat, road, coat)	Said says ĕ. Broad says aw. Air and oar are r-controlled (hair, board).

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How to Use the Vowel Charts

Most students: focus on the first two sounds

For each vowel team, the first sound is the most common one, and the second sound is next. Most students only need those two. For almost every team they cover more than 9 out of 10 common words (ou covers 8 out of 10 with “ow” and “oo”). Practice the first two until they are quick and sure. The small boxes and rare sounds can wait.

1. Endings chart (pages 1–2)

Read across each pair: “ai inside a word, ay at the end.” Use the colors on page 2 to see which letter changes (i to y, u to w, a to e, i to e). Then have students read the example words on page 1 without color.

2. Color chart (page 3), one color at a time

Students go color by color, tapping every square or small box of that color and saying the sound:

- Dark green first: say the long sound of the first letter. EA “ē,” OA “ō,” AI “ā,” IE “ī.”
- Dark blue: say the long sound of the second letter (W acts as U, Y acts as I). IE “ē,” EW “ū,” UY “ī.”
- Light green and light blue: the short sound of the first or second letter. EA “ĕ,” UI “ĭ,” OU “ŭ.”
- Then the sounds that are not a letter name: dark purple oo (food), light purple oo (book), pink oi, red ou, orange au, and grey ā (ei/ey).

The bigger the color, the more often that team makes that sound. Small boxes are less common sounds.

3. Black and white chart (page 4)

Learn with the color as a clue, then try the same squares on the black and white page. The lines in each square still show how many sounds a team has. Students check themselves on the color page.

4. Teams with two sounds (pages 5–6)

Once the main sounds are solid, students point to each team and say all its sounds, most common first: “ea: ē, ĕ,” “oo: oo (food), oo (book),” “ow: ō, ow,” “ie: ē, ī.” For most students, stop after the first two sounds. When reading, they try the first sound, and if it is not a real word, they try the second one. The Clues column shows the spelling patterns that tell which sound to use.

5. Red lowercase pairs

ia, io, eo, ua, uo, iu, and the others are not teams. They usually divide into two syllables (radi-o, cre-ate, du-et). Exceptions: after t, c, or s, the i joins the consonant to say sh (na-tion, spe-cial), and after q, u says w (quit). Gray AE and EU are rare; skip them for now.

6. Schwa in longer words (not on the chart)

Schwa (“uh”) only happens in an unstressed syllable, so it never shows up in one-syllable words. In longer words, these teams sometimes say schwa (out of the 20,000 most common words): ai 7% (captain, mountain, certain), ui 7% (biscuit, circuit), ei 6% (foreign, sovereign), ie 1% (conscience, mischief), and the ending -ous, about 24% of all ou words (famous, nervous).

How the percentages were counted (2026 update)

The 2011 chart used the Hanna study (17,000 words), which mixed up long oo and ū in about a third of its words. This version counts the one-syllable words among the 20,000 most common English words (about 4,600 words, no names), using the same pronunciations as the 40L marking app. Left out: r-controlled teams (ear, air, our, oar) and qu and gu words (quit, guide). Sounds under about 4% are not shown in the squares.

Biggest changes from 2011: UE, UI, and EW now show long oo (blue, fruit, new) separately from ū (cue, few) — most of these words are oo. IE and OW are each about half and half. OU adds oo (you, soup) and aw (thought).

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