Elevate & Evaluate

What teachers need to teach and what students need to learn about written English

Grades K–3

ELEVATING TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

EVALUATING STUDENT KNOWLEDGE

EVALUATING EVIDENCE

■ Joy Allcock

Foreword by Professor John Hattie

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The Early Learning Experts

Elevate & Evaluate is a professional learning and development resource that gives teachers the knowledge and tools to elevate literacy instruction and evaluate student achievement, making it an invaluable support for structured and systematic literacy instruction. Sections include:

- **Elevating teacher knowledge** — everything teachers need to know to explicitly teach the code and structure of written English from speech to sounds to print, including a complete scope and sequence for the first four years of school and strategies for supporting students with diverse learning needs

- **Evaluating student knowledge** — the essentials of formative and summative assessment, visual assessment timelines, yearly achievement expectations, and a full suite of assessment tools for informing instruction and tracking progress

- **Evaluating evidence** — clear evidence from a five-year study involving more than 5,000 students, showing the efficacy of Joy Allcock's linguistic phonics approach as well as the reliability and validity of the Code-Ed assessments

Also by Joy Allcock, these instructional resources work alongside *Elevate & Evaluate* to systematically teach the code and structure of written English year by year, in simple and engaging whole-class lessons that take only ten minutes a day.
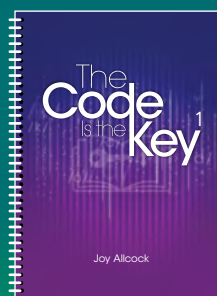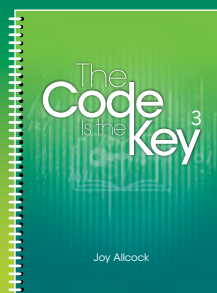
The Code Is the Key Grade K

Learning graphemes for all the sounds of English and linking them to writing and reading
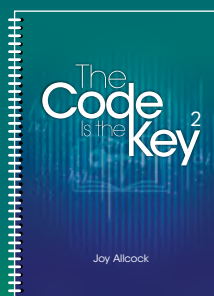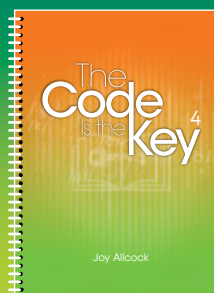
The Code Is the Key Grade 1

Developing diverse knowledge of the alphabetic code and linking it to writing and reading

The Code Is the Key Grade 2

Linking the alphabetic code to the most common spelling rules and conventions

The Code Is the Key Grade 3

Expanding knowledge of the code, spelling rules and conventions, and morphology

66 The resources and assessments throughout this book are a step above most programs. . . . So go forth and implement to achieve the goal of 100% literacy success. 99

— Professor John Hattie

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■ Foreword

The debates about optimal methods to teach early reading continue. The answer, surely, is simple — if students do not have the skills to read, then teach them the skills; when they have some reading skills, then help them enjoy the meaning, the thrill, and the messages from the readings. It is not either/or; it is for what purpose and when. As Allcock notes, "Unlike learning a sport, students can't decide literacy is not for them. Being able to read and write fluently is critical in today's world."

My research has shown the devasting impact of the Matthew effect — if students do not have basic literacy skills by age 8, they rarely catch up. There should be NO child left behind at age 8. Likewise, no teacher should be left behind who does not have the skills and knowledge to succeed in teaching literacy skills. There are so many classes with 100% success. This book is based on supporting teachers to reach this goal, as the cost of failure is simply too high.

With this book, the 'Queen' of teaching reading, writing, and spelling skills is giving us another gem. Thank goodness for authors like Joy Allcock who get the messages right — and for her relentless focus across many books on teaching the skills for learning to read, write, and spell. She notes that learning these skills depends on knowledge and skills about print and oral language. The latter is so often forgotten; indeed, the 'Big Five' of reading — phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension — should be the 'Big Seven', with the addition of oral language and listening (as phonemic awareness and phonics both depend on great listening). No wonder the approach elaborated in this book is so powerful.

Allcock identifies these skills and notes how priorities can differ for reading, writing, and spelling. Learning the most common graphemes may aid reading, but writing can invoke many words with graphemes outside this common set. Reading is a print-to-speech task, whereas writing is a speech-to-print task. There is, however, much crossover. Learning can be accelerated across all domains by using the crossover methods outlined in this book.

And so, to the richness of the resources in this book. The resources and assessments throughout this book are a step above most programs. They are derived from many years of working in schools, developing programs and assessments that have been subjected to rigorous academic evaluation, and collaborating with teachers to ensure that the resources created are easy to use

and work in real classrooms. This extensive work has given Allcock much clarity about teacher knowledge, and about the value of using a linguistic phonics approach, which has significant advantages for teaching the alphabetic code.

Allcock invites teachers to focus on teaching students to recognize and write the sounds in words they know and to understand the diversity that exists in the ways we record sounds and pronounce graphemes. I love this approach, as there is so much evidence that learning to write has powerful effects on the acquisition of other literacy skills. Her explicit and systematic approach highlights the power of learning to write the code, which leads to great improvements in reading, writing, and spelling. No child — and no teacher — is left behind.

This book is a *Joy* to read. So go forth and implement to achieve the goal of 100% literacy success.

John Hattie, Ph.D.

Professor **John Hattie**, Director of the Melbourne Educational Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, Australia, has long focused his research on what works best for learning in schools. His groundbreaking books, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (2008) and *Visible Learning: The Sequel, A Synthesis of Over 2,100 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (2023), document what is believed to be the world's largest evidence-based study into the factors that improve student learning. Those works, along with his many professional learning resources for educators, have earned Professor Hattie international acclaim, the *Times Educational Supplement* calling him "possibly the world's most influential education academic".

■ Author's note

Learning to read, write, and spell are different but related processes.
All depend on knowledge about print and skills with oral language but applied in different ways. Reading requires decoding skills, language comprehension, and cognitive processing; writing requires the ability to record the sounds in words and to use knowledge of spoken language; spelling requires knowledge of the alphabetic code, spelling rules and conventions, and morphology.

Knowing the way the alphabetic code works is the platform for learning to read, write, and spell, but it is not sufficient for ensuring students will become fluent and accurate with all three tasks. Instruction must also focus on building students' knowledge of spoken English and their oral language skills, so that once they learn to process print fluently, they can use these skills to craft the texts they write and to understand the texts they read.

Most instructional approaches for teaching the alphabetic code teach print-to-sound relationships — students learn to recognize and pronounce written letters and other graphemes. The English alphabetic code has hundreds of graphemes, so to reduce the learning load, a controlled sequence of grapheme-phoneme relationships is usually taught. This may work for teaching reading, where reading resources can be carefully controlled, but it does not work for writing because students may want to write words that contain any grapheme. This approach also makes it difficult for students to grasp the diversity of the code.

There is an assumption that once students learn to read words, they will be able to write and spell them. This is a false assumption. Many students can read words, but they cannot write the words or the graphemes they contain. Reading is a print-to-speech task, whereas writing is a speech-to-print task.

The most effective way to teach writing and spelling is to work from speech to sounds to print, teaching students to hear, isolate, and segment sounds in words they know, and to learn to write each sound in at least one way. This linguistic approach provides the beginning writer with the tools to write any word in their spoken vocabulary by sounding it out. They then need to learn about the diversity of the alphabetic code, the English spelling system, and morphology, so they can spell words accurately.

What many fail to realize is that teaching this way not only accelerates writing and spelling skills, but it also accelerates reading. This was one of the key findings of the *Shine* Literacy Project, a five-year research study that validated

the efficacy of this approach. In the study, what students learned about writing sounds fluidly transferred to decoding, meaning that once they could write a word, students could easily decode and read it. This skills transfer from writing to reading greatly improved reading accuracy, comprehension, and fluency. (For more information about the *Shine* Literacy Project, see pages 177–182.)

Elevate & Evaluate is a professional development resource for teachers that builds teachers' knowledge of how written English works. It also provides a series of assessments that allow teachers to analyze gaps in knowledge, track student progress, and use data to drive instruction. It can be used on its own or alongside *The Code Is the Key* for Grade K, 1, 2, & 3, which provide scaffolded, explicit instruction that teaches students to understand phonology, the alphabetic code, the spelling system of English, and morphology.

These resources provide teachers with a research-aligned and evidence-based approach for teaching writing and spelling in the first four years of school, and beyond for students with gaps in foundational knowledge — an approach that also informs and improves decoding skills. They are the result of 25 years of research, resource development, and revision. I am grateful to all the teachers who have trialled them and contributed their skills and ideas to their evolution.

Joy Allcock, M.Ed. (Hons.)

Joy Allcock has dedicated her career to finding simple ways to teach the complex code and structure of written English. Her work focuses on developing literacy resources that build a bridge between research and practice, ensuring that teachers have access to research-driven methods that really work. She has also led a number of research projects, including the *Shine* Literacy Project, which together have shown remarkable results for learners of all ages and backgrounds.

■ Inside this book

Elevate & Evaluate supports teachers with the knowledge and resources to elevate literacy instruction and evaluate student achievement.

ELEVATING TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

The resources in this section provide helpful information and concrete support for teaching the code and structure of written English, including:

- What research shows about **effective practices for literacy instruction**,
- The phonological (sound), orthographic (writing), and morphological (meaning) **systems of the English language**,
- A **comprehensive teacher knowledge assessment** for quickly identifying and addressing any knowledge gaps,
- The **essential knowledge and skills** students need to learn in the most critical areas of literacy development,
- Helpful references for the **sounds of English**, how they are pronounced, and the **graphemes that can represent them**,
- An overview of common **consonant blends and digraphs** and the difference between the two,
- **The vowel sounds of English** and tips for how to spell and read them,
- The most useful **prefixes, suffixes, and root words** for students to learn,
- How to recognize different **types of syllables** and to pronounce and spell them correctly,
- The most **useful and reliable spelling rules** to teach in the early years,
- How to teach **vocabulary, comprehension strategies, text structure,** and **thinking and reasoning skills**,
- A guide to **the Code-Ed instructional resources** and a **scope and sequence** that shows how the skills build across the first four years of school,
- **How students learn to write, spell, and read** and how teachers can support their literacy development at each stage, including how to teach essential **proofreading strategies** and **decoding skills**,
- **Flowcharts for analyzing students' writing, spelling, and decoding skills** and for using each analysis to inform needs-based instruction,
- Common reasons why students experience **literacy delays or difficulties** and ways to address them,
- **How to support English learners**, who face some unique challenges when learning the code and structure of written English.

Teachers can use the support materials in this section independently or collaboratively with peers to elevate their knowledge and practice.

EVALUATING STUDENT KNOWLEDGE

This section includes assessment essentials and timelines, yearly achievement expectations, and a full suite of assessment instruments for the first four years of school and for older students with learning gaps.

The assessments progress from an observational assessment of foundational literacy skills to assessments that measure phonological and phonemic awareness skills, knowledge of letter names and sounds, simple and advanced code knowledge, and knowledge of conventions that influence the spelling and pronunciation of words. The assessments include:

- **Foundations for literacy checklist**
- **Phonological and phonemic awareness**
- **Grapheme knowledge**
- **Letter formation**
- **Sound-to-letter knowledge**
- **Pseudoword spelling**
- **Consonant blends**
- **Short and long vowel discrimination**
- **Spelling knowledge**
- **Spelling analysis**
- **Decoding analysis**

These assessments can be used to drive instruction, to track progress, and to measure the impact of instruction on student achievement.

EVALUATING EVIDENCE

This section presents the research foundations and evidence supporting the instructional approach that underpins all of the Code-Ed resources, including a summary of the *Shine* Literacy Project, which validated the efficacy of the speech-to-sounds-to-print approach, and evidence of the reliability, validity, and significance of the Code-Ed assessments.

APPENDIX

The appendix includes a reference to the sounds and graphemes of English and a comprehensive glossary of literacy terms.

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ELEVATING TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

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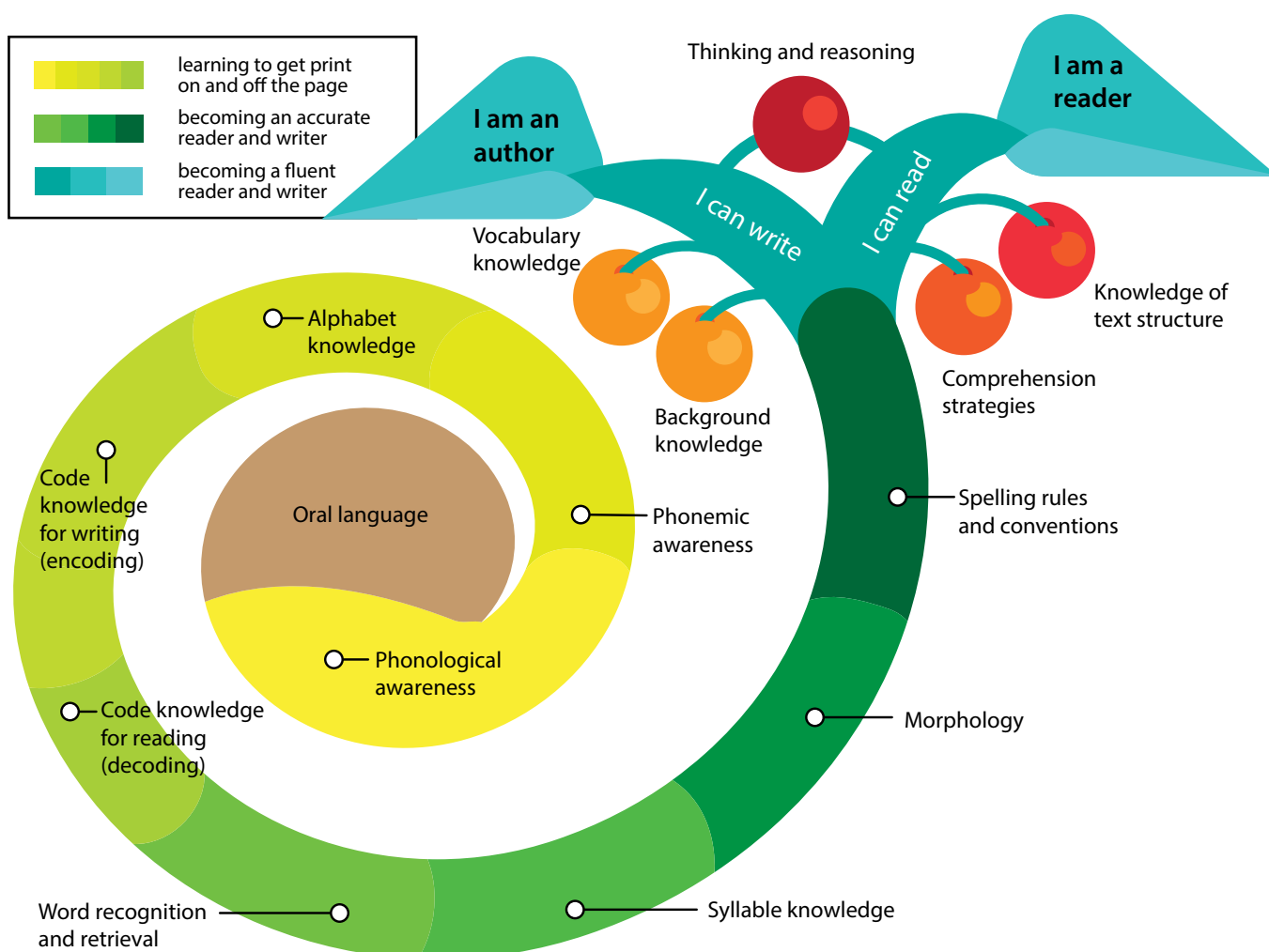
Literacy knowledge and skills

Nurturing the development of reading and writing requires teachers to teach a broad range of knowledge and skills. This sprout diagram uses the analogy of how a plant grows to explain how literacy develops.

A seed provides the sustenance for plants to germinate — to change from a seed to a seedling. **Oral language is the seed from which literacy grows**.

The stem of a plant provides support for the leaves and fruit and conducts food and water to them to allow them to grow. **The elements of literacy instruction in the stem are the nutrients that support and feed the development of literacy**.

Growing fluent readers and writers is only possible if the seed and every part of the stem are strong. The following pages provide information about the sections of the literacy sprout, with an overview of what students need to learn about each one.

learning to get print on and off the page	
becoming an accurate reader and writer	
becoming a fluent reader and writer	

Thinking and reasoning

I am an author

I am a reader

I can write

I can read

Vocabulary knowledge

Knowledge of text structure

Alphabet knowledge

Comprehension strategies

Code knowledge for writing (encoding)

Oral language

Phonemic awareness

Spelling rules and conventions

Background knowledge

Phonological awareness

Code knowledge for reading (decoding)

Morphology

Word recognition and retrieval

Syllable knowledge

Oral language

Oral language skills are the most important foundation for literacy. They are critical for communication, social and emotional development, and academic success.

Using oral language to communicate effectively requires knowledge of:

- The sounds that make up words (**phonology**),
- Vocabulary, the meaning of words (**semantics**),
- Grammar, the way we organize and use words (**syntax**),
- The meaning structure of words, including prefixes, suffixes, and roots (**morphology**), and
- The social use of language, knowing how and when to use certain kinds of language (**pragmatics**).

The number of words we are exposed to is described as **vocabulary breadth**. Hearing the same word spoken thousands of times helps us recognize and pronounce it, hear the sounds it is made from, and discriminate between similar words and similar sounds. We need a wide breadth of vocabulary knowledge to develop **vocabulary depth** — the words we understand and can use.

Students who have not had as much exposure to language as their peers, and multilingual students who do not yet speak much English, need as many opportunities as possible to hear and speak English.

Building language skills is the most important daily task for teachers in all classrooms. **Oral language is the seed from which literacy grows**.

What students need to learn

Oral language instruction should develop the following:

- Vocabulary and background knowledge

- Receptive and expressive language

- Description skills

- Comparison skills

- Categorization skills

- Association skills

- Questioning skills

- Confidence with spoken language

Phonological and phonemic awareness

Phonological awareness is an awareness of the sounds and sound patterns in spoken words. **Phonemic awareness** is a sub-category of phonological awareness that involves an awareness of the individual sounds in words.

Alphabetic languages developed from an idea that words could be broken into individual sounds (phonemes), and each sound could be written with a code (one or more letters).

Most young students are not aware that spoken words are made by putting sounds together in a particular order, and they don't need this knowledge until they begin to read and write in an alphabetic language.

Some of the earliest phonological skills include awareness of rhyming words and syllables. Later, children develop the ability to hear and manipulate the individual sounds in words. These are auditory skills that develop from hearing and playing with the sounds in spoken words.

Students need to learn to recognize, pronounce, and manipulate the sounds of a language before they can truly understand how the letters of the alphabet create a code to represent them. Different languages have different sounds. English, for example, has more than 40 sounds, whereas most Pacific languages have fewer than 20. Multilingual students may need additional support and practice to recognize, differentiate, and pronounce the sounds of English.

Phonological and phonemic awareness skills are foundational skills for literacy because working with the sounds of English is the key to understanding how to use the alphabetic code.

What students need to learn

Phonological and phonemic awareness instruction should develop the following skills:

Recognizing and producing rhyme

To recognize words that end with the same sound pattern containing the stressed vowel.

Which word rhymes with *bed*? *lid, road, head*   Which word rhymes with *funny*? *baby, honey, slowly*

To generate words that rhyme.

What words rhyme with *owl*? (*growl, fowl, towel*)   What words rhyme with *puddle*? (*muddle, cuddle, huddle*)

Hearing common sounds in words

To identify and pronounce a common phoneme in different words.

What is the sound at the start of *hat, house, hand*? (**/h/**)   What is the sound at the end of *cut, hat, bit*? (**/t/**)

To match words according to a target sound.

Which word starts with the same sound as *hat*? *run, hope, jump*
Which word ends with the same sound as *bus*? *buzz, house, bush*

Segmenting sentences into words

To understand that sentences are made up of words and to segment sentences into words.

How many words are in these sentences?   *We are friends.* (3)   *I can run fast.* (4)   *This is my new dog.* (5)

Blending and segmenting syllables

To blend syllables together to pronounce a word.

What word am I saying? *book/shelf, win/dow, tom/a/to, in/vi/ta/tion*

To count, clap, or tap (segment) the syllables in words.

How many claps are in *car*? (1)   How many claps are in *music*? (2)   How many claps are in *newspaper*? (3)

Blending and segmenting onsets and rimes in one-syllable words

To recognize onsets (initial consonants or consonant clusters) and rimes (the rest of the word that contains the vowel sound) and to blend and segment these sound chunks.

What words am I saying? *b/ake, c/ake, st/ake, sh/ake, l/ake* (bake, cake, stake, shake, lake)
What is the rhyming part of *cat, hat, mat, sat, rat*? (at)
Say the first sound and the rhyming part for each word. (c/at, h/at, m/at, s/at, r/at)

Blending phonemes into words

To pronounce a sequence of sounds and blend them together to make a word.

What word am I saying? **/k/ /ē/** (*key*), **/d/ /o/ /t/** (*dot*), **/s/ /p/ /ē/ /d/** (*speed*), **/s/ /t/ /a/ /m/ /p/** (*stamp*)

Segmenting words into phonemes

To segment words into individual sounds.

What are the sounds in *boy*? (**/b/ /oy/**)   *dish*? (**/d/ /i/ /sh/**)   *nest*? (**/n/ /e/ /s/ /t/**)

Manipulating phonemes

To create a new word by deleting a phoneme or syllable.

What word would we make if we said *butterfly* without the *fly*? (*butter*)   *sheet* without the **/sh/**? (*eat*)
keep without the **/p/**? (*key*)   *play* without the **/l/**? (*pay*)   *camp* without the **/m/**? (*cap*)

To create a new word by adding a phoneme at the start or the end of a word.

What word would we make if we added **/k/** to the start of *ape*? (*cape*)   **/ch/** to the end of *tea*? (*teach*)

To create a new word by substituting one phoneme for another.

What word would we make if we swapped the **/p/** in *pin* for **/b/**? (*bin*)
the **/i/** in *pin* for **/e/**? (*pen*)   the **/n/** in *pin* for **/t/**? (*pit*)

Pronunciation guide for the sounds of English

It is important when sounds are being taught that they are pronounced correctly and in isolation. If sounds are continuous, like **/sh/**, for example, (an unvoiced sound that can be carried on for as long as you have breath — **/shhhhhhh/**), they should not be cut off with a voiced schwa vowel sound added (**/shuh/**).

Unvoiced short sounds should also not have a voiced schwa vowel sound added. **/t/**, **/p/**, **/k/**, for example, are just bursts of air, they should not be pronounced **/tuh/**, **/puh/**, **/kuh/**. A tip for ensuring correct pronunciation is to begin to say a word that starts with the sound but stop after the first sound. For example, to pronounce the **/p/** sound, say *pot* but stop before saying *ot*.

Consonant sounds

Plosives or stops These sounds are made by the lips and tongue holding back the air for a moment before the sound bursts out. If you hold your hand in front of your mouth, you will feel a puff of air when you pronounce these sounds.

Unvoiced sounds (just air)		**Voiced sounds** (vibration in vocal cords)	
/p/	**p**an	**/b/**	**b**oy
/t/	**t**oo	**/d/**	**d**own
/k/	**c**an	**/g/**	**g**ot

(i) Voice refers to the vibration of the vocal cords. If they vibrate, a sound is voiced. If not, it is unvoiced.

Nasal sounds These sounds are made by closing the mouth completely and opening the nose cavity. The air is allowed to escape through the nose. They are continuous voiced sounds.

/m/	**m**e
/n/	**n**ot
/ng/	ri**ng**

Continuous sounds You can feel a continuous stream of air flowing from your mouth when you pronounce these sounds.

Unvoiced fricatives (just air)		**Voiced fricatives** (vibration in vocal cords)	
/f/	**f**an	**/v/**	**v**iolin
/th/	**th**ink	**/th/**	**th**en
/s/	**s**un	**/z/**	**z**ipper
/sh/	**sh**e	**/zh/**	trea**su**re
/h/	**h**e		

Approximants (voiced, vowel-like sounds)

/l/	**l**eg
/r/	**r**un
/y/	**y**es
/w/	**w**e

Mixed sounds These sounds are a mixture of a continuous sound and a stop.

Unvoiced sound (just air)		**Voiced sound** (vibration in vocal cords)	
/ch/	**ch**op	**/j/**	**j**ug

Two sounds commonly heard consecutively

/k/ /w/	**qu**een
/k/ /s/	e**x**it, par**ks**

Vowel sounds

Note: Some vowel sounds are called diphthongs or gliding vowels. The sound starts with one vowel sound and glides to another as it is pronounced. The vowel sounds that are diphthongs are marked with (*).

Short vowel sounds These sounds are made with little bursts of air pushed from the back of the throat. They are not usually heard on the end of words, although the schwa vowel sound on the end of words can sound like **/u/** (*pizza*).

short **/a/**	**a**m
short **/e/**	**e**nd
short **/i/**	**i**n
short **/o/**	**o**n
short **/u/**	**u**p
short **/oo/**	h**oo**k

Long vowel sounds These sounds are pronounced so that they sound like the name of their vowel letters, with the exception of the long **/ōō/** sound. This sound is usually heard inside or at the end of a word, but occasionally at the beginning.

long **/ā/***	**a**pron
long **/ē/**	**e**ven
long **/ī/***	**i**dea
long **/ō/***	**o**pen
long **/ū/***	**u**sual
long **/ōō/**	sp**oo**n

Other vowel sounds

/oy/*	**oi**l
/ow/*	**ou**nce
/aw/	**aw**ful (US/CA)
/er/	**ear**ly
/or/	**or**gan
/ar/	**ar**my
/ear/*	**ear**
/air/*	**aer**ial
/ure/*	c**ure** (UK)

The schwa vowel sound This vowel sound, written **/ə/**, is the vowel sound heard in an unstressed syllable, similar to a short **/i/** or **/u/** sound. The schwa sound can be written with any vowel spelling pattern (***a**gain, ben**e**fit, un**i**verse, less**o**n, s**u**pport*), and in some words, it is not pronounced at all (*basic**a**lly, int**e**rest, bus**i**ness, choc**o**late, act**u**ally*).