BBN-ANG-141 Foundations of phonology 6. Spelling vowels

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this is a spelling rule: it usually does not matter what the vowel is pronounced (but see AE above), or whether it is pronounced at all: in *cater*, *cure* there is a front vowel/glide after the C, in *cite* there is a back vowel after it, in *nice* there is no vowel pronounced after it

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but life is more complicated: gaol /dejl/, gynecology /gajnikolədejj/

spelling short/checked vowels with single vowel letters

VOWEL	SPELLING	EXAMPLES
i	I/Y	kit, myth, mint, crystal
е	Е	dress, ten, belt, depth
а	А	trap, lax, talc, thank
0	0	lot, moth, loss, pond
Э	U	strut, cup, punk, thumb

note we're talking only about the spelling of stressed vowels today

	put	full	cut	dull
Middle English, North of England	u	u	u	u
Modern English in the rest of the world		u	Ð	ə

▶ earlier English had U=/u/, which turned into $/\sqrt[3]{}$ in most words

	put	full	cut	dull
Middle English, North of England	u	u	u	u
Modern English in the rest of the world		u	ə	ə

- ▶ earlier English had U=/u/, which turned into $/\frac{\pi}{2}$ in most words
- ▶ but not

	put	full	cut	dull
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	put	full	cut	dull
Middle English, North of England	u	u	u	u
Modern English in the rest of the world		u	ə	ə

- ▶ earlier English had U=/u/, which turned into $\sqrt{9}$ in most words
- but not
 - ▶ in some words, like put or full
 - ▶ in the North of England
- ▶ this results in $U=/\sqrt[9]{}$, and, in a few words, $U=/\sqrt[4]{}$

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- ▶ GA had a later /o/ > /a/ change, but want and rant do not rhyme in GA either

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summary of the spelling of short vowels with SVLs

	SPELLING		
VOWEL	REGULAR	RARE	EXCEPTIONAL
i	kit, myth	_	English, England, pretty, busy
е	dress	_	any, many, Thames, bury
a	trap		_
0	lot	want	_
ə	strut	love	_
u	_	put	wolf, woman, Boleyn, Wolsey, etc

► /u/ has no regular spelling

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- ► /u/ has no regular spelling
- ► /a/ can only be spelled A

spelling diphthongs/free vowels

single vowel letters

VOWEL	SPELLING	EXAMPLES
ij	Е	scene, meme, complete, these
ej	А	ace, fate, name, wave
aj	I/Y	bite, hi, type, sky
uw	U	Jude, use, super, mute
ЭW	0	go, home, dose, post

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digraphs

VOWEL	SPELLING	EXAMPLES
oj	OI/OY	voice, join, joy, envoy
aw	OU/OW	loud, round, now, vowel

further digraphs: common equivalences

VOWEL	SPELLING	EXAMPLES
ij	EA, EE, IE	sea, meat, see, meet, siege, fiend
ej	AI/AY, EI/EY	plain, play, eight, vein, convey
aj	_	
ЭW	OA	oak, coal, boat, roam
uw	EU/EW, UI, OO	Euston, Newton, bruise, boot, fool

further digraphs: less common equivalences

VOWEL	SPELLING	EXAMPLES
ij	EI/EY, EO	seize, key
ej	EA	break, great, steak
aj	EI/EY	height, eye
ЭW	OU/OW	soul, shoulder, tow, know
uw	OU	group, route, soup

	SPELLING		
VOWEL	REGULAR: SVL DIGRAPH	OTHER	"FOREIGN"
ij	scene keen, mean, thief	seize/key, people	chic, quay
ej	name plain/play, weight/grey	gr <mark>ea</mark> t	f <mark>e</mark> te
aj	time/skype —	height/eye	aisle
uw	rude sleuth/new, suit, room	lose	gr <mark>ou</mark> p
ЭW	home roam	soul/bowl, sew	chauffeur
oj	— voice/joy	_	Freud
aw	— house/how	_	Faust

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digraphs representing short/checked vowels

	SPELLING	
VOWEL	COMMON	RARE
i	_	sieve
е	bread, deaf, head	leisure, Geoff, said/says, friend
a	_	plaid, plait
0	_	cough, trough, knowledge
ə	country, rough, young	blood, flood
u	foot, book, look, good	could, would, should, courier

rare digraphs

DIGRAPH	VOWEL	
AE	/ij/ Caesar, faeces; /ej/ Israel	
AO	/ej/ gaol	
EO	/ij/ people, feoff; /e/ leopard, Leonard, jeopardy, Geoff	
OE	/ij/ foetus, Oedipus, phoenix, Phoebe, subpoena	

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two adjacent vowel letters may also represent

▶ two vowels: create /krijejt/, chaos /kejos/, Croat /krəwat/

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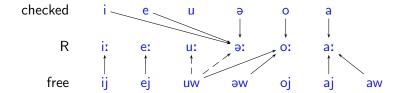
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- ► a vowel and word-final silent E: die (cf dying), toe, continue

the relation of checked and R vowels, free and R vowels



spelling R vowels: ix and ex

```
ij \sim i:

E: meme /mijm/ \sim mere /mi:/

EE: cheek /tʃijk/ \sim cheer /tʃi:/

EA: ease /ijz/ \sim ear /i:/

EI/EY: seize /sijz/ \sim weird /wi:d/

IE: thief /\thetaijf/ \sim tier /ti:/
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spelling R vowels: ix and ex

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ii \sim ix
E: meme /mijm/ \sim mere /mix/
EE: cheek /t \int ijk / \sim cheer /t \int iz /
EA: ease /ijz/\sim ear/ii/
EI/EY: seize /sijz/ ~ weird /wixd/
IE: thief \thetaijf/ \sim tier /tix/
ei \sim ex
A: state /stejt/ \sim stare /ster/
AI/AY: aid /ejd/ \sim air /eɪ/
EA: break /brejk/ \sim bear /bex/
EI/EY: they /\delta ej/\sim their /\delta ei/\sim
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spelling R vowels: ux and əx

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uw ~ uː

U: cute /kjuwt/ ~ cure /kjuː/

EU/EW: neutral /njuwtrəl/ ~ neural /njuːrəl/

UI: nuisance /njuwsəns/ ~ Muir /mjuː/

OU: Louvre /luwv/ ~ Lourdes /luːd/
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 $uw \sim u$

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 OU: Louvre /luwv/ ~ Lourdes /luxd/
a/e/i \sim ar
 U: hut /hat/ \sim hurt /hart/
 O: won /wən/ \sim work /wəɪk/
 OU: couple /k = p = 1/\sim courtesy / k = rtsij/\sim couple / k = rtsij/\sim co
 E: vest /vest/ \sim verse /vəɪs/
 EA: head /hed/ \sim heard /həid/
 I: bid /bid/ \sim bird /beid/
 Y: myth /mi\theta/\sim myrrh/max/
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EU/EW: neutral /njuwtrəl/ ~ neural /njuːrəl/

spelling R vowels: as and or

```
a/aj/aw ~ a:

A: bat /bad/ ~ bard /ba:d/
I: fine /fajn/ ~ fire /faː/
Y: type /tajp/ ~ tyre /taː/
OU: house /haws/ ~ hour /a:/
```

spelling R vowels: at and or

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a/aj/aw \sim ax
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I: fine fain \sim fire /fai 
Y: type /taip/ \sim tyre /tai/
OU: house /haws/ \sim hour /ax/
o/ew \sim or
O: port /pot/ \sim port /port/
A: swamp /swomp/ \sim swarm /sworm/
O: bone /b \rightarrow wn/ \sim bore /bor/
OA: roam /rowm/ \sim roar /rox/
OU: soul /səwl/ \sim source /sois/
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- lengthening in the south of England before /f θ s m n/: staff /sta:f/, laugh /la:f/, path /pa:θ/, past /pa:st/, ask /a:sk/, sample /sa:mpəl/, dance /da:ns/, demand /dima:nd/, etc

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- 3. lengthening without the loss of L: call /koːl/, small /smoːl/
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- 5. smoothing: idea /ajdiz/, vowel /vazl/
- lengthening in the south of England before /f θ s m n/: staff /sta:f/, laugh /la:f/, path /pa:θ/, past /pa:st/, ask /a:sk/, sample /sa:mpəl/, dance /da:ns/, demand /dima:nd/, etc
- 7. "foreign" words: toccata /təkaːtə/, Gestapo /gestaːpəw/

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- 2. you /juw/ and your /joː/
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