Pronunciation - Silent Letters

From Kenneth Beare,
Your Guide to English as 2nd Language.
FREE Newsletter. Sign Up Now!

Here is a list of common letter combinations with silent letters. This list contains most of the silent letters that give English as a second language students difficulties.

Silent B

B is not pronounced when following M at the end of a word.

climb
crumb
dumb
comb

Silent C

C is not pronounced in the ending "scle"

muscle

Silent D

D is not pronounced in the following common words:

handkerchief
sandwich
Wednesday

Silent E

E is not pronounced at the end of words and usually makes the vowel long.

hope
drive
gave
write
site

Silent G

G is not often not pronounced when followed by an N

champagne
foreign
sign
feign
Silent GH

GH is not pronounced before T and at the end of many words

thought
through
daughter
light
might
right
fight
weigh

Silent H

H is not pronounced when following W. Some speakers whisper the H before the W.

what
who
when
where
whether
why

Silent H

H is not pronounced at the beginning of many words. Use the article "an" with unvoiced H. Here are some of the most common:

hour
honest
honor
heir
herb

Pronounced H

H is pronounced at the beginning of these common words. Use the article "a" with voiced H.

hill
history
height
happy
hangover

Silent K

K is not pronounced when followed by N at the beginning of a word.

knife
knee
know
knock
knowledge

Silent L
L is often not pronounced before L, D, F, M, K.

calm
half
salmon
talk
balk
would
should

Silent N

N is not pronounced following M at the end of a word.

autumn
hymn

Silent P

P is not pronounced at the beginning of many words using the suffix "psych" and "pneu".

psychiatrist
pneumonia
psychotherapy
psychotic

Silent S

S is not pronounced before L in the following words:

island
isle

Silent T

T is not pronounced in these common words:

castle
Christmas
fasten
listen
often
whistle
thistle

Silent U

U is not pronounced before after G and before a vowel.

guess
guidance
guitar
guest

Silent W
W is not pronounced at the beginning of a word followed by an R.

wrap
write
wrong

Silent W

W is not pronounced with these three pronouns:

who
whose
whom

This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit:
http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/silent.htm

©2007 About.com, Inc., a part of The New York Times Company. All rights reserved.
When to Use Any or Some

- Use "some" in positive sentences. We use some for both countable and uncountable nouns.

  Example: I have some friends.

- Use "any" in negative sentences or questions. We use any for both countable and uncountable nouns.

  Example: Do you have any cheese? - He doesn't have any friends in Chicago.

- Use "some" in questions when offering or requesting something that is there.

  Example: Would you like some bread? (offer) - Could I have some water? (request)

- Use "any" in negative sentences or questions. We use any for both countable and uncountable nouns.

  Example: Do you have any cheese? - He doesn't have any friends in Chicago.

- Use "some" words - somebody, someone, somewhere and something - in positive sentences.

  Example: He lives somewhere near here.

- Use "any" words - anybody, anyone, anywhere and anything - in negative sentences or questions.
English Pronunciation Exercises - E Diphthongs

The following series of pronunciation exercises combines words beginning with the same diphthong sound followed by similar diphthong sounds. Voiced and voiceless consonants are paired (b - voiced / p - voiceless, d - voiced / t - voiceless, etc.) to help students compare and contrast similar consonant formation.

1. Repeat each line slowly, listen for the minor differences between the vowel and consonant sounds.
2. Repeat each line three times. Each time repeat more quickly trying to keep the sounds distinct.
3. Find a partner and listen to each other repeat the lines.
4. Try to invent sentences using each sound at least once. For example: The bear went into the bar and had a beer. - Don't worry too much about the sentence making much sense!

Note: The following diphthongs are pronounced differently in British and American English. British English drops the 'r' sound and pronounces a slight 'uh' - 'hair' becomes 'hehuh'. In American English the 'r' is strongly pronounced - 'hair' becomes 'hehrrr'.

'ieh(r)' as in 'near'  'eih(r)' as in 'hair'
beer  bear
peer  pear
dear  dare
tear (drop of water)  tear (rip)
gear  garish
clear  Claire
seer  snare
sheer  share
jeer  Jerry
cheer  chair
here  hair

Vowel Sounds

'eh' - as in 'let', 'ih' - as in 'hit', 'ee' - as in 'see', and 'ae' - as in 'cat'
'long ah' - as in 'car', 'short ah' - as in 'got'
'long uh' - as in 'put', 'short uh' - as in 'up', 'oo' - as in 'through'

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_dihehv.htm?p=1

11/7/2007
Diphthong Sounds

'ay' - as in 'day', 'ai' - as in 'sky'
'ou' - as in 'home', 'ow' - as in 'mouse', 'oi' - as in 'boy'
'ieh(r)' - as in 'near', 'ehi(r)' - as in 'hair'

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_dipdehv.htm

©2007 About.com, Inc., a part of The New York Times Company. All rights reserved.
English Pronunciation Exercises - A Diphthongs

From Kenneth Beare,
Your Guide to English as 2nd Language.
FREE Newsletter. Sign Up Now!

The following series of pronunciation exercises combines words beginning with the same diphthong sound followed by similar diphthong sounds. Voiced and voiceless consonants are paired (b - voiced / p - voiceless, d - voiced / t - voiceless, etc.) to help students compare and contrast similar consonant formation.

1. Repeat each line slowly, listen for the minor differences between the vowel and consonant sounds.
2. Repeat each line three times. Each time repeat more quickly trying to keep the sounds distinct.
3. Find a partner and listen to each other repeat the lines.
4. Try to invent sentences using each sound at least once. For example: We ate cake and flew a kite on my birthday. - Don't worry too much about the sentence making much sense!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'ay' as in 'day'</th>
<th>'ai' as in 'die'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bay</td>
<td>buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pay</td>
<td>pie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>day</td>
<td>die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>table</td>
<td>tie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gay</td>
<td>guy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cake</td>
<td>kite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>sigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zany</td>
<td>Zaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shape</td>
<td>shy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chase</td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hey!</td>
<td>hi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowel Sounds

'eh' - as in 'let', 'ih' - as in 'hit', 'ee' - as in 'see', and 'ae' - as in 'cat'
'long ah' - as in 'car', 'short ah' - as in 'got'
'long uh' - as in 'put', 'short uh' - as in 'up', 'oo' - as in 'through'

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_dipav.htm

This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit:
Diphthong Sounds

'ay' - as in 'day', 'ai' - as in 'sky'
'ou' - as in 'home', 'ow' - as in 'mouse', 'oi' - as in 'boy'
'ieh(r)' - as in 'near', 'eh(r)' - as in 'hair'
English Pronunciation Exercises - O Diphthongs

From Kenneth Beare,
Your Guide to English as 2nd Language.
FREE Newsletter. Sign Up Now!

The following series of pronunciation exercises combines words beginning with the same diphthong sound followed by similar diphthong sounds. Voiced and voiceless consonants are paired (b - voiced / p - voiceless, d - voiced / t - voiceless, etc.) to help students compare and contrast similar consonant formation.

1. Repeat each line slowly, listen for the minor differences between the vowel and consonant sounds.
2. Repeat each line three times. Each time repeat more quickly trying to keep the sounds distinct.
3. Find a partner and listen to each other repeat the lines.
4. Try to invent sentences using each sound at least once. For example: The Pope went to the pow-wow and was very poised. - Don't worry too much about the sentence making much sense!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'ou' as in 'home'</th>
<th>'ow' as in 'house'</th>
<th>'oi' as in 'boy'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bowl</td>
<td>bow</td>
<td>boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope</td>
<td>pow-wow</td>
<td>poise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't</td>
<td>Dow</td>
<td>doily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toe</td>
<td>towel</td>
<td>toy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>gouge</td>
<td>goiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cope</td>
<td>cow</td>
<td>coy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soap</td>
<td>sour</td>
<td>soy sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zone</td>
<td>zowie!</td>
<td>(none)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show</td>
<td>shower</td>
<td>(none)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>jowl</td>
<td>join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chose</td>
<td>ciao!</td>
<td>choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td>howl</td>
<td>hoist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowel Sounds

'eh' - as in 'let', 'ih' - as in 'hit', 'ee' - as in 'see', and 'ae' - as in 'cat'
'long ah' - as in 'car', 'short ah' - as in 'got'
'long uh' - as in 'put', 'short uh' - as in 'up', 'oo' - as in 'through'

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_dipov.htm

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_dipov.htm?p=1
11/7/2007
Diphthong Sounds

'ay' - as in 'day', 'ai' - as in 'sky'
'ou' - as in 'home', 'ow' - as in 'mouse', 'oi' - as in 'boy'
'ieh(r)' - as in 'near', 'eh(r)' - as in 'hair'
English Pronunciation Exercises - Short Vowels and Consonants

From Kenneth Beare,
Your Guide to English as 2nd Language.
FREE Newsletter. Sign Up Now!

The following series of pronunciation exercises combines words beginning with the same consonant sound followed by similar vowel sounds. Voiced and voiceless consonants are paired (b - voiced / p - voiceless, d - voiced / t - voiceless, etc.) to help students compare and contrast similar consonant formation.

1. Repeat each line slowly, listen for the minor differences between the vowel and consonant sounds.
2. Repeat each line three times. Each time repeat more quickly trying to keep the sounds distinct.
3. Find a partner and listen to each other repeat the lines.
4. Try to invent sentences using each sound at least once. For example: The big bat bet he could beat the others. - Don't worry too much about the sentence making much sense!

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ih</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td>eh</td>
<td>ae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ih' as in 'hit'</td>
<td>'ee' as in 'see'</td>
<td>'eh' as in 'let'</td>
<td>'ae' as in 'cat'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big</td>
<td>beat</td>
<td>bet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pig</td>
<td>peep</td>
<td>pet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>did</td>
<td>deal</td>
<td>death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tip</td>
<td>teeth</td>
<td>tell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gill</td>
<td>gee!</td>
<td>get</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kill</td>
<td>keep</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sip</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zip</td>
<td>zeal</td>
<td>zeppelin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ship</td>
<td>sheet</td>
<td>shelf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gin</td>
<td>jeep</td>
<td>jell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chip</td>
<td>cheek</td>
<td>chess</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hit</td>
<td>heat</td>
<td>help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowel Sounds

'eh' - as in 'let', 'ih' - as in 'hit', 'ee' - as in 'see', and 'ae' - as in 'cat'
'long ah' - as in 'car', 'short ah' - as in 'got'
'long uh' - as in 'put', 'short uh' - as in 'up', 'oo' - as in 'through'

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_shortv.htm

Diphthong Sounds

'ay' - as in 'day', 'ai' - as in 'sky'
'ou' - as in 'home', 'ow' - as in 'mouse', 'oi' - as in 'boy'
'ieh(r)' - as in 'near', 'ehi(r)' - as in 'hair'
The following series of pronunciation exercises combines words beginning with the same consonant sound followed by similar vowel sounds. Voiced and voiceless consonants are paired (b - voiced / p - voiceless, d - voiced / t - voiceless, etc.) to help students compare and contrast similar consonant formation.

1. Repeat each line slowly, listen for the minor differences between the vowel and consonant sounds.
2. Repeat each line three times. Each time repeat more quickly trying to keep the sounds distinct.
3. Find a partner and listen to each other repeat the lines.
4. Try to invent sentences using each sound at least once. For example: The man at the bar bought drinks for all. - Don't worry too much about the sentence making much sense!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'long ah' as in 'heart'</th>
<th>'short ah' as in 'got'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bar</td>
<td>bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>par</td>
<td>paw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark</td>
<td>dot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tar</td>
<td>taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garth</td>
<td>got</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpet</td>
<td>caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sergeant</td>
<td>saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zagreb</td>
<td>Zola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharp</td>
<td>shawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>jot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charred</td>
<td>chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart</td>
<td>hop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowel Sounds

'eh' - as in 'let', 'ih' - as in 'hit', 'ee' - as in 'see', and 'ae' - as in 'cat'
'long ah' - as in 'car', 'short ah' - as in 'got'
'long uh' - as in 'put', 'short uh' - as in 'up', 'oo' - as in 'through'

This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit:

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_longv.htm
Diphthong Sounds

'ay' - as in 'day', 'ai' - as in 'sky'
'ou' - as in 'home', 'ow' - as in 'mouse', 'oi' - as in 'boy'
'ieh(r)′ - as in 'near', 'ehi(r)′ - as in 'hair'
English Pronunciation Exercises - U Sounding Vowels

From Kenneth Beare,
Your Guide to English as 2nd Language.
FREE Newsletter. Sign Up Now!

The following series of pronunciation exercises combines words beginning with the same consonant sound followed by similar vowel sounds. Voiced and voiceless consonants are paired (b - voiced / p - voiceless, d - voiced / t - voiceless, etc.) to help students compare and contrast similar consonant formation.

1. Repeat each line slowly, listen for the minor differences between the vowel and consonant sounds.
2. Repeat each line three times. Each time repeat more quickly trying to keep the sounds distinct.
3. Find a partner and listen to each other repeat the lines.
4. Try to invent sentences using each sound at least once. For example: The butcher put on his boots but he forgot his hat. - Don't worry too much about the sentence making much sense!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'long uh' as in 'put'</th>
<th>'short uh' as in 'up'</th>
<th>'oo' as in 'shoe'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>butcher</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>boot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>put</td>
<td>pup</td>
<td>poof!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>duck</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokay</td>
<td>tough</td>
<td>tooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>gulp</td>
<td>Google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cook</td>
<td>cup</td>
<td>cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scot</td>
<td>supper</td>
<td>suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>zoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shook</td>
<td>shut</td>
<td>shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>jump</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>churn</td>
<td>Chuck</td>
<td>choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hook</td>
<td>hup!</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowel Sounds

'eh' - as in 'let', 'ih' - as in 'hit', 'ee' - as in 'see', and 'ae' - as in 'cat'
'long ah' - as in 'car', 'short ah' - as in 'got'
'long uh' - as in 'put', 'short uh' - as in 'up', 'oo' - as in 'through'

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_oov.htm

http://esl.about.com/od/speakingenglish/a/pr_oov.htm?p=1

11/7/2007
Diphthong Sounds

'ay' - as in 'day', 'ai' - as in 'sky'
'ou' - as in 'home', 'ow' - as in 'mouse', 'oi' - as in 'boy'
'ieh(r)' - as in 'near', 'eih(r)' - as in 'hair'