

Grapheme Frequency List

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This resource has been prepared as a supplemental resource for the Veritas Educational Consulting (VEC) **Sound Spelling Cards** printed by Souslebois Press. Dr. Underwood compiled the frequency data in this document by sourcing it directly from Fry (2004), Hanna et al. (1966), and CORE. The Sound Spelling Cards include the majority, but not all, of these graphemes. VEC offers different versions of the Sound Spelling Cards, and the graphemes included on each set of card will vary based on the grade level for which they were designed. This list is the complete set of common graphemes, some of which are not commonly taught in grades K-3 and are reserved for upper grades on the VEC cards. Also, this list intentionally does not include the phoneme /zh/, as in the grapheme “s” in measure, because it is very infrequent in English.

Note that some entries are morphographic spelling patterns that are not true graphemes (e.g., *_ed* for /d/ and /t/, *_ve* for /v/, and *_ti_* for /sh/). These are highlighted and labeled below. The VEC Sound Spelling Cards include these as reliable patterns for reading and spelling that often act like a single phoneme, though technically they are not a single grapheme.

#	Phoneme	Grapheme	Frequency
1	/ă/	a	97%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	3%
2	/b/	b	99%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
3	/k/	c	73%
		k	13%
		_ck	8%
		ch	4%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	2%
4	/d/	d	99%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
		<i>_ed (not a grapheme)</i>	n/a
5	/ě/	e	94%

#	Phoneme	Grapheme	Frequency
		ea	4%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	2%
6	/f/	f	87%
		ph	12%
		_gh	<1%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	<1%
7	/g/	g	93%
		gu_	3%
		gh_	1%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	3%
8	/h/	h_	98%
		wh_	2%
9	/i/	i	95%
		_y	2%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	3%
10	/j/	ge	40%
		j	22%
		gi_	20%
		_dge	6%
		gy	6%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	6%
11	/k/	c	73%
		k	13%
		_ck	8%
		ch	4%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	2%
12	/l/	l	100%
13	/m/	m	98%
		_mb	1%

#	Phoneme	Grapheme	Frequency
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
14	/n/	n	98%
		kn_	1%
		gn	1%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	<1%
15	/ö/	o	94%
		a	5%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
16	/p/	p	100%
17	/kw/	qu_	100%
18	/r/	r	99%
		wr_	1%
		rh_	<1%
19	/s/	s	80%
		ce	8%
		ci_	7%
		cy	2%
		sc_	1%
		ps_	<1%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	2%
20	/t/	t	99%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
		<i>_ed (not a grapheme)</i>	n/a
21	/ü/	u	86%
		o	10%
		ou_	2%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	2%
22	/v/	v	99%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%

#	Phoneme	Grapheme	Frequency
		<i>_ve (not a grapheme)</i>	n/a
23	/w/	w_	92%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	8%
24	/ks/	_x	100%
25	/y/	_i_	55%
		y_	44%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
26	/z/	_s	64%
		z	25%
		x_	4%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	7%
27	/eɪ/	a	45%
		a_e	35%
		ai_	9%
		_ay	6%
		_ey	1%
		eigh	1%
		ea	1%
		ei_	1%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	<1%
28	/ē/	_y	41%
		e	40%
		ea	6%
		ee	6%
		e_e	2%
		_ie	1%
		i_e	1%
		ei_	1%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	2%

#	Phoneme	Grapheme	Frequency
29	/ɪ/	i	38%
		i_e	38%
		_y	15%
		_igh	6%
		_y_e	2%
		_ie	1%
		ei_	<1%
30	/ō/	o	74%
		o_e	14%
		_ow	5%
		oa_	5%
		ou_	1%
		_oe	1%
		_eau	<1%
31	/ū/	u	69%
		u_e	22%
		_ew	3%
		_ue	2%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	4%
32	/ar/	ar	95%
		ear	3%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	2%
33	/air/	ar	31%
		_are	24%
		air	23%
		ere	15%
		ear	7%
34	/er/	er	70%
		or	11%

#	Phoneme	Grapheme	Frequency
		ur	8%
		ir	4%
		ear	1%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	6%
35	/or/	or	64%
		ore	14%
		our	7%
		oor	6%
		oar	6%
		ar	3%
36	/aw/	a	40%
		au_	35%
		aw	18%
		ough	4%
		augh	3%
37	/ōō/	oo	41%
		u	21%
		o	11%
		u_e	8%
		ou_	6%
		_ew	5%
		_ue	4%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	4%
38	/öö/	u_	54%
		oo_	31%
		ou_	7%
		o	5%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	3%
39	/oi/	oi_	67%

#	Phoneme	Grapheme	Frequency
		oy	33%
40	/ow/	ou_	69%
		ow	30%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
41	/ch/	ch	55%
		t_	35%
		_tch	11%
		Rare other grapheme(s)	1%
42	/ng/	_ng	59%
		n_	41%
43	/sh/	_ti_	53%
		sh	26%
		si	10%
		ci	8%
		ch	2%
		s	1%
44	/th/	th	100%
45	/TH/	th	100%
46	/hw/	wh_	100%

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