

My 'simply better' Pronunciation Method

Guide to Phonetics

Diphthongs



My 'simply better' Guide to Phonetics



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Introduction

In this lesson, I will teach you the second group of phonemes: the diphthongs.

A diphthong is also called a 'gliding vowel' in which a combination of two vowel sounds occur within the same syllable. They are also known as 'double sounds'.

To make the sound of a diphthong the tongue shifts, or glides, from one position to another.

They are different from single, 'pure' vowels such as a, e, i, o and u.

You will understand more as we explore this small group of sounds.

Don't forget to have your notebook handy, to practise writing each phoneme.

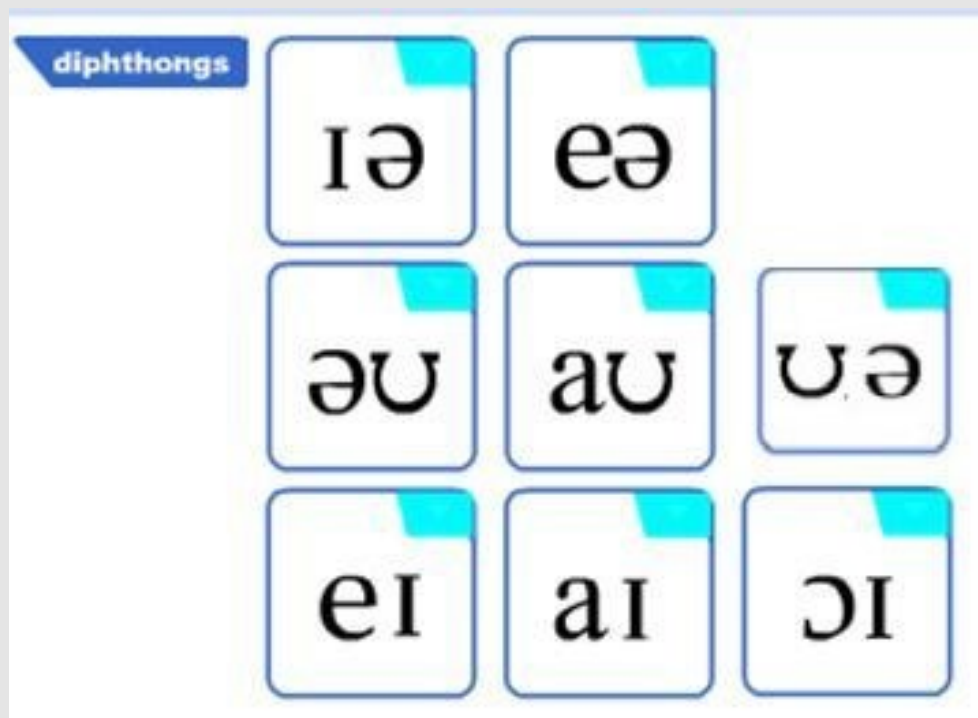
So, let's begin.

The aim for you in these lessons is:

- to be able to look at a phoneme
- be able to say the sound it represents
- To be able to write the phoneme.

The picture shows the group of eight diphthongs.

I will begin with the top left one and move down and from left to right.



/ɪə/

This is the first one that uses 2 phonemes to make one sound.

You might remember from the lesson on vowels that the first part /ɪ/ is a long sounding 'e'.

The second sound is written as an upside down and backwards 'e'.

.You can see it used in 'here' - /h ɪə (r)/

It will be the same phoneme in 'hear'- /h (ɪə (r)/

And in other words that rhyme with that: ear, fear, dear, near, rear, tear, mere, seer, leer, etc.

Also: 'dearly' - /d ɪə (r)li:/ and 'nearly' etc

/eə/

You can see this one used in these words.

air /eə(r)/

bear /beə(r)/

care, dare, mare, pair, pear, wear

stare /steə(r)/ has the same phonemic spelling as stair.

But as you know, it's not about determining spelling, it's about establishing correct pronunciation.

/əʊ/

You can see this phoneme used in words such as 'no' /nəʊ/ and 'know' /nəʊ/

Even though these words are spelt differently, the pronunciation is exactly the same. So, the phonemic spelling is also the same.

Other words:

so / sew /səʊ/

crow /krəʊ/

grow /grəʊ/

/bəʊ/ is the same for 'beau', and also in 'bow' (and)
'arrow' /ærəʊ/

Also: /əʊv(ə)l/ (oval)

/aʊ/

This one is seen in words like: now /naʊ/ and how /
haʊ/

Other words include:

power /paʊ'ə(r)/

tower, cower, bower, flower.

endow

noun /naʊn/ (town, down, gown, but not 'sown' or
'mown')

Also: around, ground /graʊnd/ (hound, mound, found, sound, wound - but not 'wound' - to hurt)

Practise saying this: how now brown cow.

Many English words are pronounced with this phoneme.

But be careful with some. (e.g. bow/bow).

/ʊə/

You can see it used in this word: 'sure' /ʃʊə(r)/ (UK)

But 'sure' is also pronounced /ʃɔː(r)/ (UK) to rhyme with 'shore'.

Other words include:

cure

ewer

fewer

endure

/eɪ/

This one uses the same two characters as the previous one but in a different order to produce a different sound: an 'ay' sound.

You see this in words such as 'day' - /deɪ/

Also: say, ray, pay, lay, may, hay, playground etc.

Other words are: raid, /reɪd/ and paid /peɪd/

/aɪ/

You can see it used in words like 'buy' /baɪ/ and 'try' /traɪ/ as well as in 'fly' /flaɪ/.

Other words include: sty /staɪ/

write and right /raɪt/

fright' /fraɪt/ and flight /flaɪt/

Keep on practicing this one by saying 'buy'. 'guy', and I, right, die, sigh, sight

This is the last of the diphthongs.

/ɔɪ/

It's used in the word 'boy' /bɔɪ/

To write it by hand, it's a backward C and I

Other words:

boil, loyal, oil, enjoy, toy, voice

For practice, add a number of consonants to make different words.

For example:

soil, toil, coil, foil.

/sɔɪ/ /tɔɪ/ /kɔɪ/ /fɔɪ/

A short Test

Now that you have learned the phonemes for diphthongs, here's a short test of your understanding.

Try to do the test without looking back at the lessons,
Answers are on the next page.

Write the phonemes for the diphthongs in these words:

- 1 bear
- 2 beer
- 3 mow
- 4 soy
- 5 pure
- 6 plough
- 7 grey/gray
- 8 my

Is the diphthong in the word 'scare' **/eə/** or **/ɔɪ/** ?

Is the diphthong in the word 'boat' **/əʊ/** or **/ɔɪ/** ?

Write an English word using the phoneme **/aʊ/**

Answers to the Test

1 bear **/eə/**

2 beer **/ɪə/**

3 mow **/əʊ/**

4 soy **/ɔɪ/**

5 pure **/ʊə/**

6 plough **/aʊ/**

7 grey/gray **/eɪ/**

8 my **/aɪ/**

The phoneme in the word 'scare' is **/eə/**

The phoneme in the word 'boat' is **/əʊ/**

Some words you could use for the phoneme **/aʊ/** are: how, brow, cow, flour.

How did you go?

The test is a good way to know which phonemes to revise.

Conclusion

In this lesson, I have taught you about eight diphthongs (gliding vowels).

You have learned how two vowels combine to produce a particular sound that appears in certain words.

So, now you have learned the phonemes for vowels and diphthongs.

I hope you are enjoying my lessons so far.

The last lesson on phonemes is Consonants.

[When you are ready, click or tap here.](#)

Find the PDF called **Consonants**.

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