

English Diphthongs

A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds pronounced together, for example, /eɪ/ as in *play* /pleɪ/ and /əʊ/ as in *cold* /kəʊld/.

The first vowel sound is always longer than the second. There are eight diphthongs in English, but one of them is hardly ever used. Many native speakers use /ɔ:/ instead of /ʊə/. For example, *poor* is usually pronounced /pɔ:/ instead of /pʊə/.

Here you have the 8 English diphthongs and two examples of each so that you can recognize and remember how they sound:

/ɪə/ real, clear

/eɪ/ say, table

/ʊə/ tour, cure

/ɔɪ/ boy, noise

/əʊ/ coat, zero

/eə/ where, bear

/aɪ/ five, ride

/aʊ/ how, sound

1. Match the word with the same pronunciation

1 / / crowd

2 / / phone

3 / / try

4 / / day

5 / / noise

6 / / wear

7 / / year

a grey

b hair

c here

d high

e loud

f shown

g toys

2. Choose the phonetic symbol for each word

1 overweight /eɪ/ /aɪ/

2 emotional /aʊ/ /əʊ/

3 here /ɪə/ /eə/

4 noisy /ɔɪ/ /əʊ/

5 blonde-haired /ɪə/ /eə/

6 foreground /aʊ/ /əʊ/

7 stylish /eɪ/ /aɪ/

8 tour /əʊ/ /ʊə/

3. Classify each word according to the phonetic symbol

jury	brown	beer	cloud	flow
<u>client</u>	there	lawyer	<u>nearly</u>	<u>noise</u>
where	high	<u>window</u>	wait	<u>radio</u>
poor	chair	<u>trainers</u>	<u>take</u>	flour
height	<u>severe</u>	<u>deny</u>	ghost	smoke
appear	coin	scary	<u>visual</u>	only
my	<u>taste</u>	doubt	<u>medium</u>	<u>oyster</u>
<u>during</u>	<u>employ</u>	towel	really	range

er	əʊ	aɪ	aʊ	ɔɪ	ɪə	eə	ʊə
late /leɪt/	go /gəʊ/	light /laɪt/	cow /kaʊ/	boy /bɔɪ/	dear /dɪə/	fair /feə/	tour /tʊə/

4. Which of the following words include these diphthongs?

/eɪ/ feed – bed – food – fight – say

/aɪ/ said – read – high – food – says

/ɔɪ/ should – boy – though – blood – so

/əʊ/ through – there – here – so – hot

/aʊ/ now – hair – face – tour – lower

/ɪə/ there – seed – hair – late – here

5. Odd One Out. Circle the word with a different sound. Use a dictionary to check.

1. dead	mean	bread	head
2. fruit	suit	juice	built
3. half	have	has	ham
4. horse	history	story	cord
5. look	good	foot	blood
6. country	young	youth	couple
7. oven	colour	son	gone
8. talk	chalk	calm	fall



nice job!

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