Pronouncing the Vowel *o*

The letter *o* is pronounced many different ways in English. In the words *hotel, shop, come, woman,* and *move,* the letter *o* is pronounced five different ways. Sometimes the letters around *o* can help you guess how to pronounce the vowel, but not always.

Read and listen to the example. Notice how the letter *o* is pronounced. Is it pronounced the same in any of the words?

Example

The **long**-necked **women** of Padaung talk with tourists, **pose** for pictures, and sell souvenirs. They have **become** an important source of **commerce** and **money** in small villages **along** the Thai / Myanmar border.

	Spelling	Pronunciation Tips
a)	*o* + a consonant + silent *e* *home, bone, pose, hope, close*	/ow/, like the vowel in *go*. Keep rounding your lips.
b)	*o* + one or more consonants *shop, lot, job, commerce, problem*	/a/, like the vowel in *father*; this vowel has no "o" sound. Do not round your lips.
c)	*o* + *ng, ss, st, ll, ff* *long, boss, lost, collar, office*	/ɔ/, like the vowel in *law*. This vowel is like /a/, but the lips are a little rounded. NOTE: Some Americans pronounce these words with /a/, like the vowel in *father*. You can use this vowel, too.
	Exceptions	
d)	*come, mother, brother, love, other*	/ə/, like the vowel in *cut*. Your mouth is almost closed.
e)	*move, lose*	/uw/, like the vowel in *do*
f)	*woman*	/u/, like the vowel in *could*
g)	*women*	/ɪ/, like the vowel in *sit*

1 **Listen to the words and repeat them.**

1. positive
2. progress
3. economic
4. modern
5. proposal
6. month
7. won't
8. money
9. vote
10. popular
11. company
12. local
13. controversy
14. sold
15. option
16. hospital
17. ocean
18. done

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 **Work with a partner. How is the letter *o* pronounced in the words in Exercise One? Complete the chart. The number of lines in each column tells you how many words are in that column. Ask your teacher to repeat the words if you're not sure. Compare your answers with the class.**

O SOUNDS LIKE . . .		
The Vowel in Father	The Vowel in Go	The Vowel in Cut
positive		

3 **Make phrases by writing words from the box in the blanks. Check your answers with a partner's. Practice saying the phrases to your partner. Pronounce the vowels carefully.**

~~economic~~	local	modern	popular	positive

1. economic progress (business, jobs)
2. a _____ controversy (not in earlier times)
3. a _____ proposal (one that will have good results)
4. a _____ option (one people like)
5. a _____ company (in this area)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Choose the correct answer to complete each statement. Use your notes to help you.

1. The traffic on Cape Cod ____ .
   a. gets worse during the summer
   b. is bad all year
   c. is better now that there are buses
2. ____ is difficult to find on Cape Cod.
   a. Housing for regular people
   b. Housing near shops and restaurants
   c. Vacation housing
3. The restaurant owner knows a waitress who lives ____ .
   a. in her car
   b. far from her work
   c. in a hotel
4. The woman who runs the souvenir shop says ____ .
   a. she plans to open another store next year in a neighboring village
   b. she does most of her business during the summer
   c. her business is doing badly this year
5. The male business owner says he lost money because ____ .
   a. the same things are sold by too many stores
   b. tourists go to the beach instead of going shopping
   c. the rainy weather kept tourists away

USE YOUR NOTES

Compare your notes with a partner's. How can you improve your notes next time?

LIVEWORKSHEETS