

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.

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|------------|---------|-------|--------|
| 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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