

Basic rules for long and short vowel sounds in English

There are a few rules you can use to help figure out whether a vowel should be pronounced as a short vowel or a long vowel in English.



Long vowel rules

Rule	Examples
Vowel-consonant-e: When a word ends in this pattern, the first vowel is long and the final -e is silent	name, meme, lime, dome, plume
Two vowels together: When you see two vowels next to each other, the first vowel is usually long, and the second vowel is usually silent	rain, meat, pie, boat
i before e (except after c): When you see the vowel combination <i>ie</i> or <i>cei</i> , then the sound is usually a long e	relieve, receipt, conceive
e before i: When you see the vowel combination <i>ei</i> without a c before it, then the vowel sound is usually a long a	weight, neighbor, freight

✓ **Short vowel rules.**

Rule	Examples
Consonant-vowel-consonant: Vowels in the middle of short words are usual short vowel sounds	man, bet, tin, mom, cup
Vowel-consonant: Short words that start with vowels and end in consonants are usually short vowel sounds	at, in, on, up

Every word should come with a pronunciation guide using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). IPA is used to help people pronounce words in any language, including English. If you look up a new word, use the IPA spelling to figure out what the vowel should sound like.

✓ **Long vowel examples with IPA pronunciation**

Vowel	Long Vowel Example	IPA (Vowel Only)	IPA (Full Word)
a	cake	/eɪ/	/keɪk/
e	steam	/i/	/stim/
i	knife	/aɪ/	/naɪf/
o	coat	/oʊ/	/boʊt/
u	fume	/yu/	/fyum/

✓ **Short vowel examples with IPA pronunciation**

Vowel	Short Vowel Example	IPA (Vowel Only)	IPA (Full Word)
a	bat	/æ/	/bæt/
e	get	/ɛ/	/gɛt/
i	pin	/ɪ/	/pɪn/
o	top	/ɒ/	/tɒp/
u	pup	/ʌ/	/pʌp/



Quiz on English long and short vowels.

ate

maze

egg

bit

sit

hot

meet

knife

cube

bone

came

knit

kite

cone

aim

pop

same

It

meek

mean

oat

leaf

cop

pat

day

cake

hat

win

fine

cute

stump

wine

hope

pie

fur

help

prep

gin

fog

bike

fit

plop

bed

bin

seen

sleigh

fun

Jam