

Spoken English

What are vowels and Consonants ?

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Vowels and Consonants?



There are two kinds of letters in English language. One is vowel and another is

consonant. Vowel is a letter that makes a definite sound by itself. Vowels are a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y. Consonant is a letter of the alphabet that makes a consonant sound. Consonants are b,c,d,f,g,h,j,k,l,m,n,p,q,r,s,t,u, v w, x,y, z. The letter y sometimes acts as a vowel and sometimes as a consonant. For example when it appears at the beginning of the word it makes a consonant sound (for example yellow) and it makes a vowel sound when it comes at the end of the word (for example hairy).

Long and Short Vowel



mule



june



tub



truck



tube



flute



jump



mug

Long and Short Vowel

Vowels are of two types. They are long and short vowels. A vowel becomes a long vowel when the sound of the letter is heard just as it is in the alphabet.

Example:



He bakes awesome cakes.

Here a long vowel sound (vowel a) is heard in bake and cake.

Example:



Can you finish this task?

In the above mentioned example, a short vowel sound (vowel a) is heard in task.

A vowel usually has a short sound when it appears in the middle of the word. A short vowel has a soft sound. For example: got, mom, dad, eat.

Examples of Long and Short Vowels

kit	kite
cub	cube
pin	pine
mad	made
bit	bite
can	cane
tub	tube
cap	cape
tap	tape
pan	pane

Long and Short Vowels

Below mentioned are examples of long and short vowels.

Long Vowel

Long a	Long e	Long i	Long o	Long u
Ache	Season	Crime	Flower	Huge
Cape	Greedy	midnight	Elbow	Cute
Take	Bleed	Write	Coat	Fruit

Short Vowel

Long a	Long e	Long i	Long o	Long u
Ache	Season	Crime	Flower	Huge
Cape	Greedy	midnight	Elbow	Cute
Take	Bleed	Write	Coat	Fruit

Note: If there is only one vowel in the word (can) then it will make a short sound but if there are two vowels in a word (cane) the first one will make a long sound and the second one will make a short sound or be silent.

Vowel and Consonant Rules



A Unicorn



A University

According to the Grammatical rule “a” should be used before words that begin with consonant (b,c,d,f,g etc) and “an” should be used before words that begin with vowels (a,e,i,o,u). However it should be kept in mind that the usage of “a” and “an” depends on the sound of the word (vowel/consonant sound)

Example:

We should say a unicorn (a mythical creature which resembles a horse) even if it starts with “u”. In unicorn, the pronunciation starts with “yu” which is a consonant sound. Similarly the word university also makes a consonant sound and that is the reason why it is preceded by “a” not “an”. We should say an hour because hour starts with a vowel sound.

Basic Spelling Rules



Below mentioned are some of the important rules of spelling.

1. Short Vowel Rule :

A vowel usually has a short sound when it is in the middle of the one-syllable words.

Example:

Ran, can, hat, cap.

2. Two Vowel Together:

When two vowels are placed together i.e. next to each other that first vowel is usually long and the second vowel is silent.

Example:

Team, Meat, Meal, goat.

3. Letter Y As Long As I :

When letter y comes at the end of words and there is no other vowel in the word, it makes a long sound of i.

Example:

Try, fry, cry, by.

4. Letter Y As Long E:

When a word ends in y or ey then y makes a long sound of e.

Example:

Money, funny, honey.

5. I Before E:

When the sound is long we can write i before e except after the letter c.

Example:

Relieve, relief.

Note: When I is written after c, the sound becomes short.

Example:

Receipt, deceive.

6. E Before I:

If the sound is long of a, then we can write e before i.

Example:

Reign, weight, freight.

7. Use of Oi and Oy:

We can use oi in the middle of the word and oy at the end of the word.

Example:

Foil, boil boy, toy.

8. Double Consonants:

When letters like b,d,g,m, n, or p come after a short vowel in two syllable words we have to double the consonant.

Example:

Rabbit, drummer.

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Reference Links:

- <http://www.ezschool.com/Tutorials/Vowels/Intro.html>
- <http://www.dailywritingtips.com/using-a-and-an-before-words/>
- http://www.montessoritraining.net/elementary_program2/courses/language_arts1/sample_lessons.pdf
- <http://www.examples-help.org.uk/english-grammar/index.htm>

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