

Spelling conventions for sounds and letters

There will be words that do not follow these conventions!

y

The letter **y** represents a ‘y’ sound at the start of words (*yes, yet*) but at the end of words it usually represents a long vowel sound (*cry, baby*). In most one-syllable words ending with **y**, the **y** sounds like a long ‘i’. In most two-or-more syllable words ending with **y**, it sounds like a long ‘e’. A few two-syllable words ending in **fy** or **ply** end with a long ‘i’ (*multiply, horrify*). The vowel-plus-**y** spellings on the end of words also represent vowel sounds (*play, they, money, boy, buy*).

l

Many one-syllable words end with **l** or **ll**. Use a single **l** if it follows a vowel digraph (*howl, peal, soul*) and a double **ll** if it follows a single vowel (*fell, ball, pull, doll, hill*).

al/ful

Words that start with ‘all’ or end with ‘full’ have only one **l** (*although, always, beautiful, careful*).

al/el/ol/il/le

The **al**, **el**, **ol**, **il** and **le** endings are on the end of two-or-more syllable words and they sound like ‘il’.

re/er/ar/or/re

When these vowel-plus-**r** patterns are on the end of words, they are often part of an unstressed syllable. These unstressed endings in British English pronunciation sound like a short ‘u’, but in American English they sound like ‘ir’.

j

The ‘j’ sound can be written with **j** or **g** spelling patterns. If **g** is to be pronounced ‘j’ it must be followed by **e**, **i** or **y** (*gentle, giant, gypsy*). If a word ends with ‘j’ it will always end with **ge** or **dge** and never with **j**. **dge** is used when the ‘j’ sound follows directly after a short vowel (*hedge, badge*).
