

PRONUNCIATION ■ SPELLING ■ STRESS

In the last lesson we learned about English sounds (phonemes) and their phonemic symbols to help us know the correct pronunciation of a word from the dictionary. Today, let's start with some tips about English spelling and pronunciation and stress.

Presentation-1

Read the following poem and see how the letter 'e' changes the sound of 'a' in a word.

The Magic E

In my long can
I have a plan
For making new word
Out of old.
To make can cane,
To make plan plane,
Add e.
And see new words unfold
My magic e
Is like a key:
It turns the vowel sound
Of a word
Each time you see
A final e.
You know a diphthong.
Or, two vowel sounds
Together
May be heard.



Presentation-2

Here's a poem to make you remember when to pronounce 'c' as /s/, as in cyber or cinema, and when to pronounce it as /k/, as in 'cat' or 'college'.

Oh Say! Can You C?
C as in ceiling, before y, i.e.
Sounds soft and smooth as silk.
Before a, u, o, as in can't cure this cold.
C is hard, like the k in milk.

A. ii. Read the following passage and identify the words with the letter 'c' in them. Now group them in two columns: one where 'c' has the sound /s/; and the other where 'c' has the sound of /k/.

Example: princes/s/ castle/k/

Once upon a time, there was a princess who lived all by herself in her father's castle. Her only companion was her little cat called "Cindy." Every day the princess became more and more depressed and ate less and less until she wouldn't eat at all. But she couldn't care less. Day after day she lay on her cold bed with silk cushions scattered all around her, staring in silence at the high ceiling. In the corner by the window, a golden cage which once had a yellow canary in it hung empty. And all the while, in the centre of the carpet, the princess' white cat lay curled and never made a sound.



B. Sometimes we come across words which have a certain letters in writing which are not pronounced in saying.

For example: bomb calf.

If you look the word 'bomb' up in a dictionary, you'll find that the pronunciation of the word has been shown in phonemic transcription in this way: /bʌm/. Notice that the second 'b' is silent here.

Again, if you look up the word 'calf' in a dictionary, you'll see that the pronunciation of the word is: /kɑːf/. Notice that 'l' is silent in saying 'calf'.

i. Say the following words. Check the dictionary and the sound symbol chart if you have any doubt.

comb lamb dumb climb tomb numb

CLUE: When 'b' follows 'm' at the end of a word, the 'b' is silent.

ii. Say these words.
talk half chalk walk folks

CLUE: When 'l' comes before 'k' or 't', it is usually silent.

Activity-1

A. i. Read the following sentences. Add 'e' to the underlined word in each sentence to make a new word. Now complete each sentence by filling in the blank with the new word.

Example: The man looked at the horse and admired its mane.

- Can you please buy me a new _____?
- I _____ to ask you, but can you get me a hat, too?
- I lost both at the restaurant where I _____ lunch with you the other day.
- Remember Sam, the young man from the neighbourhood who was at the _____ restaurant having lunch?
- He is mad at me because I _____ him go there and look for my things afterwards.

ii. Which of the following diphthongs or two vowel sounds together do you use when you say the new words aloud?

/aɪ/ /ɔɪ/ /eɪ/ /əʊ/

Activity-2

A. i. Look at each group of words. Write /s/ against the words in which 'c' has its soft sound as in 'cell', and write /k/ against the ones where 'c' is pronounced as /k/ as in 'camera'.

calendar	fence
race	coal
reception	cylinder
custody	cafe
Cinderella	mice

iii. Read the following passage. Fill in each blank with an appropriate word from the box below.

Last summer Shahid went to his village home during the holidays. He hadn't been home for quite a while and had started missing his _____. He and his cousins would go for _____ in the woods for hours and _____ about old times.

One day Shahid decided to _____ a big mango tree. He went far out on a branch. From there he could see the little _____ getting milk from its mother and the _____ following the flock of sheep.

He felt very peaceful. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes. A minute later, he found himself on the ground. Luckily, he wasn't hurt, except that his left _____ felt quite _____.

lamb thumb walks calf numb folks climb talks.



B. Say the following sentences aloud. Notice the sound the magic e gives to the letter 'i'.

: Ready? Okay, smile everybody!
: Thanks!
: Can you ride a bike?
: Yes, I can.
: Can you play hide and Seek?
: Yes, I can.

i. Read the sentences below and choose the right words from the list of words below to fill in the blanks.

Mike is a _____ young man. He's an accountant and works from _____ to _____ in a local firm. In his free _____ he loves to _____ his _____ along the sea _____.

ride time bike nine side fine five

ii) Which of the following diphthong sounds do you hear in all the above words that have 'e' at the end?

/ɔɪ/ /eɪ/ /aɪ/ /əʊ/



Presentation-3: Stress

In speaking English, using the right stress is as important as using the right sound. By 'stress' we mean the emphasis that a speaker would place on a syllable in a word, or on a word in a sentence.

In a good dictionary, the syllable of a word on which the stress should fall is shown by a mark (') on it.

Look at the following words up in a dictionary and notice where the stress mark is shown in each case:

Monday computer idea language teacher

Recognising word stress in a sentence is important because the meaning of what we say can be changed by changing the stress from one word to another.

Read each sentence below by putting stress on the word in bold and notice how the meaning changes every time.

Did you talk to the Principal?
(not to the Vice Principal)
Did you talk to the Principal?
(you, not your friend)
Did you talk to the Principal?
(talked, not just met)

C. Review the sound that the magic e gives to the letter 'o'. Add 'e' to each of the following words to make a new word and then say both the words aloud.
Example: hop hope.

hop rob not rod

i. Choose a word from the list of words below to fill in each of the blanks in the following sentences.

Before leaving _____ I left a _____ next to the telephone for my friend. It read, "The tea kettle is on the _____. Make yourself a cup of tea if you want. There is a cake and some oranges in the fridge. Sorry, the _____ is out of order, but there is a public phone booth _____ by. By the way, _____ you liked the _____ on the dining table. I got them especially for you."

stove home phone hope close note rose

ii. Which is the sound that you hear in the above words with a final 'e'?

/eɪ/ /ɔɪ/ /aɪ/ /əʊ/

D. Say the following words and notice the sound that the magic 'e' gives to the letter 'u'.

cut	cute	tub	tube	us	use
cub	cube	hug	huge		

i. Which vowel sound do you hear in 'tube'?

/u:/ /ju:/ /ʊ/ /əʊ/

ii. Fill in the blanks in each of the sentences below with a pair of words from the pairs of words above.

- When Shikha saw the _____ chocolate cake on the table, she ran to her mother and gave her a big _____.
- Your little sister is very _____ but she shouldn't _____ her nails with her teeth.
- Mohan gave _____ a video camera and also explained how to _____ it.

Activity-3

i. Read the pairs of sentences below emphasizing the underlined words, and see how the meaning changes each time you say it.

Have you every seen a horsefly?
Have you ever seen a horsefly?

Give me the paperback.
Give me the paper back.

Selim went to the zoo on Saturday.
Selim went to the zoo on Sunday.

ii. Try saying the sentence below in different ways by putting stress on a different word each time. Try saying the sentence at least 3 times and describe the different meanings you can bring out each time.

Why don't you buy her a watch?



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