

Vowel Quality Patterns

The spelling of a word can often help you figure out the sound of the word. This lesson will give you practice recognizing **vowel letters**. Read the instructions carefully, and check your answers against those given on the last page.

A. Vowel Letters

Vowel sounds are spelled with the letters *a, e, i, o, u, w,* and *y*.

Circle the vowel letters in each set below.

1. l i j c o e 2. v u f e c j 3. f u v a o q 4. n u a s e b 

The letters *u, w,* and *y* deserve special care. Sometimes they are used as vowel letters, and sometimes they are used as consonant letters. The patterns below show how these letters are used.

In two general positions, *u* is a consonant letter (C). Elsewhere, *u* is a vowel letter. Both general positions have *q* or *g* (q/g) before the *u*. In the first position below, the *u* is followed by a basic weak ending (B), *-e, -ed,* or *-ing*. In the second position below, the *u* is followed by a vowel letter (V) that does not belong to a basic weak ending. *Study the examples.*

- The letter *u* is a C in q/gu+B: *plaque, leagued*
- The letter *u* is a C in q/guV: *quest, guidance*

Is u a vowel letter or a consonant letter?

Write V for vowel or C for consonant in each blank.

- | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------|---------------|---|
| E.g. gun | _____ V _____ | 5. guild | _____ | 11. liquid | _____ |
| E.g. quote | _____ C _____ | 6. gully | _____ | 12. oblique | _____ |
| 1. rogue | _____ | 7. languish | _____ | 13. glue | _____ |
| 2. language | _____ | 8. mystique | _____ | 14. intrigued | _____ |
| 3. figure | _____ | 9. miscue | _____ | 15. quickly | _____ |
| 4. include | _____ | 10. guitar | _____ | 16. impute | _____  |

If *u* is a consonant letter, how should it be pronounced? Four patterns tell you whether *u* represents silence (Ø) or *-w-*. The +B pattern above predicts only silence. So watch for *-e, -ed, -ing* after *u*; they are always +B. The uV pattern above predicts Ø or *-w-*, depending on the preceding

consonant letter(s). The nguV pattern below is more detailed than the guV pattern and should be tried first. (The marking, , identifies the letter in question.) *Learn these consonant correspondence patterns.*

- q/gu+B = Ø *critique, tongue* • nguV = -w- *linguist, pengin*
- quV = -w- *quick, liquefy* • guV = Ø *guess, guarantee*

Is u a vowel (V), -w-, or silent (Ø)? Circle your answer.

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| E.g. quest | V <input checked="" type="radio"/> w <input type="radio"/> Ø | 5. sanguine | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 11. singular | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø |
| E.g. antique | V -w- <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ø | 6. critiqued | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 12. physique | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø |
| 1. antiquity | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 7. overdue | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 13. penguin | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø |
| 2. disgust | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 8. vague | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 14. gusty | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø |
| 3. guilty | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 9. quiet | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 15. guest | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø |
| 4. haranguing | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 10. extinguish | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø | 16. plaguing | V -w- <input type="radio"/> Ø |

Read these common exceptions to the q/gu patterns. Try to remember them.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> V : ambig<u>u</u>ity, ambig<u>u</u>ous, <u>á</u>rgue, contig<u>u</u>ity, contig<u>u</u>ous</p> <p><input type="radio"/> -w-: gu<u>á</u>va</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Ø : bouqu<u>e</u>t, cóqu<u>e</u>try, cónqu<u>e</u>r, étiqu<u>e</u>tte, líqu<u>o</u>r, queu<u>e</u>, m<u>á</u>nnequin, mosqu<u>i</u>to</p> |
|---|--|

The letters *w* and *y* are also vowel and consonant letters. *W* and *y* are vowel letters when they come after a vowel letter that is **not** part of a prefix. *Y* is a vowel letter after a consonant letter. Everywhere else, *w* and *y* are consonant letters. *Learn these patterns.*

- Vw is a vowel letter *blown* • Vy is a vowel letter *tray*
- Cy is a vowel letter *fly*

*Are w and y vowel letters or consonant letters?
Write V for vowel or C for consonant in each blank.*

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| E.g. wait | C | 5. twin | _____ | 11. vowels | _____ |
| E.g. raw | V | 6. enjoy | _____ | 12. swell | _____ |
| 1. war | _____ | 7. youth | _____ | 13. syntax | _____ |
| 2. cry | _____ | 8. dwell | _____ | 14. crystal | _____ |
| 3. crypt | _____ | 9. gayeties | _____ | 15. brown | _____ |
| 4. jewels | _____ | 10. deny | _____ | 16. yogurt | _____ |

Vowel Quality Patterns

Summary

The lesson focuses on (1) recognizing vowel letters and four vowel spellings: VC#, VCC, VC+W, and VV, (2) distinguishing vowel patterns left of weak (-e, -ed, -ing) and neutral (-s, -'s, -ly) endings, and (3) matching a vowel quality to stressed and unstressed spellings.

U is a consonant letter pronounced as silence (Ø) or -w-, as shown below. Everywhere else, u is a vowel letter.

$$q/gu+B = \emptyset \quad guV = \emptyset \quad nguV = -w- \quad quV = -w-$$

The letters w and y are vowel letters after vowel letters; after consonant letters, y is also a vowel letter.

A vowel spelling pattern consists of a vowel letter, relevant neighboring letters, and a relevant position marker. A vowel spelling pattern is one part of a vowel quality pattern. The other two parts are a degree of stress (´, ˘, ˜) and a vowel quality prediction (long, short, reduced). VC# and VCC predict short vowels, while VC+W and VV predict long vowels. V̇C#, V̇CC, V̇C+W, and V̇VC predict reduced vowels.

A. Identify the U

For each word, identify the u as a vowel letter (V), -w-, or as silent (Ø).

E.g. league	V	-w-	⊙	7. recure	V	-w-	Ø
1. tongue	V	-w-	Ø	8. mosquito	V	-w-	Ø
2. quest	V	-w-	Ø	9. misquote	V	-w-	Ø
3. guest	V	-w-	Ø	10. mosque	V	-w-	Ø
4. gullible	V	-w-	Ø	11. miscue	V	-w-	Ø
5. guillemot	V	-w-	Ø	12. anguish	V	-w-	Ø
6. require	V	-w-	Ø	13. angular	V	-w-	Ø



Answers

p. 81 top: Vowel letters: 1. i, o, e; 2. u, e; 3. u, a, o; 4. u, a, e.

p. 81 bot: V/C? 1. C; 2. C; 3. V; 4. V; 5. C; 6. V; 7. C; 8. C; 9. V; 10. C; 11. C; 12. C; 13. V; 14. C; 15. C; 16. V.

p. 82 top: V/w/ø? 1. /w/; 2. V; 3. ø; 4. ø; 5. /w/; 6. ø; 7. V; 8. ø; 9. /w/; 10. /w/; 11. V; 12. ø; 13. /w/; 14. V; 15. ø; 16. ø.

p. 82 bot: V/C? 1. C; 2. V; 3. V; 4. V; 5. C; 6. V; 7. C; 8. C; 9. V; 10. V; 11. V; 12. C; 13. V; 14. V; 15. V; 16. C.

p. 87 bot: V/w/ø? 1. ø; 2. /w/; 3. ø; 4. V; 5. ø; 6. /w/; 7. V; 8. ø*; 9. /w/; 10. ø; 11. V; 12. /w/; 13. V.

*exception