

## Predicting /ɜr/ and /ər/

/ɜr/ is a prediction not found in any patterns before now. It is the typical prediction of  $\acute{V}C\#$ ,  $\acute{V}CC$ , and  $\acute{V}C2+ed/ing$  patterns when the first C is r, e.g.  $\acute{V}r\#$ ,  $\acute{V}rC$ ,  $\acute{V}r2+ed/ing$ , and the V is spelled either e, i, or u. When unstressed, these patterns predict the reduced vowel /ər/.

### A. Vr#, Vr2+ed/ing Patterns

Vr2 is another way of writing Vrr. Doubled r occurs when a stressed Vr# pattern is followed by the endings, -ed and -ing, as in *stir* → *stirred*, *stirring*. When spelled with the vowel letters e, i, or u, the predictions are /ɜr/. (When spelled with the vowel letter a, the predicted vowel is /ɑ/; when spelled with the vowel letter o, the predicted vowel is /ɔ/ or /ow/.) In summary, to predict /ɜr/, watch for the letters e, i, and u followed by either r#, or rred or rring. Any unstressed vowel in a  $\check{V}r\#$  pattern predicts the reduced vowel /ər/.

<b>ér# = /ɜr/</b>	<b>ír# = /ɜr/</b>	<b>úr# = /ɜr/</b>	<b>ǃr# = reduced /ər/</b>
defér	stír	occúr	rúdděř
<b>ér2+ed/ing = /ɜr/</b>	<b>ír2+ed/ing = /ɜr/</b>	<b>úr2+ed/ing = /ɜr/</b>	elíxř
deférrred	stírred	occúrrred	múrműř
deférring	stírring	occúrring	cálendăř

- Underline the Key Syllable.
- Write out the vowel quality pattern of the Key in each word.
- Say each word aloud and check your pronunciation.

E.g. inférring	<u>ér2+ing =</u> _____ / ɜ r /	6. únděřfűř	_____ / /
E.g. to shátter	<u>ǃr# = reduced</u> _____ / ə r /	7. Sir	_____ / /
1. I demúr	_____ / /	8. to fíltěř	_____ / /
2. chirred	_____ / /	9. spurring	_____ / /
3. to cólłăř	_____ / /	10. his féműř	_____ / /
4. we spónsűř	_____ / /	11. we defér	_____ / /
5. conférrred	_____ / /	12. to sűgăř	_____ / /

**Note 1:** érr#, írr#, and úrr# make the same prediction as ér#, ír#, and úr#, namely /ɜr/, as in *err* (also /ɛ/), *whirr*, *purr*. These are the only common words in this category.

**Note 2:** A few foreign borrowings are pronounced with /ɪ/ instead of /ɜr/: *emir*, *fakir*, *souvenir*.

## B. Patterns with rC

The same stressed vowels, *e*, *i*, and *u*, also predict /ɜr/ when a consonant follows the *r*. If the rC pattern is unstressed, any vowel in the pattern will predict reduced /ər/.

<b>érC = /ɜr/</b>	<b>írC = /ɜr/</b>	<b>úrC = /ɜr/</b>	<b>ŤrC = reduced /ər/</b>
<u>verb</u>	<u>girl</u>	<u>urged</u>	<u>stándǎrd</u>
<u>emérge</u>	<u>confírm</u>	<u>retúrñ</u>	<u>éffört</u>
<u>cómmerce</u>	<u>chíldbírn</u>	<u>súburb</u>	<u>móðern</u>

- Underline the Key of each word.
- Write out the vowel quality pattern of the Key.
- Say each word aloud and check your pronunciation.

E.g. <u>blurng</u>	úrC = _____ / ɜr /	5. nursed	_____ / /
E.g. cáv <u>ěrn</u> s	ŤrC = reduced _____ / ər /	6. smirking	_____ / /
1. <u>spurng</u>	_____ / /	7. <u>désert</u>	_____ / /
2. <u>germs</u>	_____ / /	8. It <u>áugurs</u>	_____ / /
3. <u>stámměrn</u>	_____ / /	9. thirds	_____ / /
4. <u>recórd</u>	_____ / /	10. <u>deterrred</u>	_____ / /

Two other rC patterns are also common. Be careful to note the final C in the first pattern and the initial w in the second pattern; without them, these patterns predict different vowels.

<b>éarC = /ɜr/</b>	<b>wórC = /ɜr/</b>
Earth	work
learn	worth
overhéard	wórship

- Underline the Key of each word.
- Write out the vowel quality pattern of the Key.
- Say each word aloud and check your pronunciation.

E.g. <u>mírn</u>	írC = _____ / ɜr /	5. <u>éarning</u>	_____ / /
E.g. to <u>súccör</u>	Ťr# = reduced _____ / ər /	6. <u>bestír</u>	_____ / /
1. <u>rehéarse</u>	_____ / /	7. <u>recúrning</u>	_____ / /
2. <u>inférrred</u>	_____ / /	8. <u>pearl</u>	_____ / /
3. <u>impówěrn</u>	_____ / /	9. dirt	_____ / /
4. <u>worse</u>	_____ / /	10. <u>dewórm</u>	_____ / /

**Note 3:** These words do not follow the dominant patterns: *heart* /ɑ/, *beard* /ɪ/; *worn*, *sworn*, *sword* /ɔ ~ owl/.

Now put the patterns with *r* together with the non-*r* patterns you already know. Compare the predictions as you work through the following exercise.

- a. *Underline the Key of each word.*
- b. *Write out the vowel quality pattern of the Key.*
- c. *Say each word aloud and check your pronunciation.*

E.g. churning	úrC = _____	/ ɜr /	12. to rebel	_____	/ /
E.g. chugging	ŮCC = shape _____	/ ʌ /	13. a rebel	_____	/ /
1. escápe	_____	/ /	14. concúrring	_____	/ /
2. to lévĕl	_____	/ /	15. so cunning	_____	/ /
3. to lévĕr	_____	/ /	16. earl	_____	/ /
4. rehéating	_____	/ /	17. east	_____	/ /
5. rehéarse	_____	/ /	18. fórwărd	_____	/ /
6. avérred	_____	/ /	19. hónĕst	_____	/ /
8. avérted	_____	/ /	20. astír	_____	/ /
9. avóided	_____	/ /	21. spit	_____	/ /
10. worldly	_____	/ /	22. spite	_____	/ /
11. whole	_____	/ /	23. réspĭte	_____	/ /

Check your answers to items 1-5. **p. 1.** 1. demur, úr# = /ɜr/; 2. chirred, ír2+ed = /ɜr/; 3. collar, Ůr# = reduced, /ər/; 4. sponsor, Ůr# = reduced, /ər/; 5. conferred, ér2+ed = /ɜr/. **p. 2top.** 1. spurring, úr2+ing = /ɜr/; 2. germs, érC = /ɜr/; 3. stammer, Ůr# = reduced, /ər/; 4. record, ŮrC = reduced, /ər/; 5. nursed, úrC = /ɜr/. **p. 2bot.** 1. rehearse, éarC = /ɜr/; 2. inferred, ér2+ed = /ɜr/; 3. impower, Ůr# = reduced, /ər/; 4. worse, wórC = /ɜr/; 5. bestir, ír# = /ɜr/. **p. 3.** 1. escape, ŮC+E = name, /ey/; 2. level, ŮC# = reduced, /ə/; 3. lever, Ůr# = reduced, /ər/; 4. reheating, ŮV = name, /iy/; 5. rehearse, éarC = /ɜr/.