

## VC+E and VV in Key Syllables

To use the standard spelling of a word to predict that a key vowel is glided, unglided, or reduced, you need a **vowel quality pattern** (a combination of word stress, vowel spelling pattern, a vowel prediction) and the **name-shape translator**. This lesson introduces five basic vowel quality patterns.

### A. Parts of a Vowel Quality Pattern

The two most common spellings for glided vowels are illustrated in these two words, pronounced with the vowel /ow/. If we did not know how to pronounce these words, which clues would tell us to use a glided pronunciation? Three clues are needed.

**sole**

**soap**

1. **Vowel Spelling Pattern.** A vowel spelling pattern always consists of (a) the target vowel letter. It may also consist of (b) some surrounding letters (but not the *i* or *u* of *iV* or *uV* spellings (see VS-3, p. 3) and (c) a position marker which tells where the target letter is in the word. (Remember always to ignore neutral endings, such as *-s*, *-s'*, *-ly*; they are not part of a spelling pattern.)

We can represent the target vowel letter with V and a single consonant letter (but not *r*) with C. A relevant position marker is a non-neutral ending (E) such as a basic ending (e.g. *-e*, *-ed*, *-ing*). +E means "before a non-neutral ending." The spelling patterns for the words above are these:

**sole**

↓↓↓  
VC+E

**soap**

↓↓  
VV

VC+E has one target vowel letter and one consonant letter. +E means that the VC come before a non-neutral ending, like *-e*, *-ed*. Remember that word-final *e* is always a basic ending except in *be*, *he*, *me*, *she*, *the*, *we*. +E is mentioned only after VC. We call this the VC+E (**vee-cee-plus-e**) pattern.

VV has two vowel letters. The first is the target vowel. Remember that the letters *w* and *y* are vowel letters after a vowel letter, as in *ow*, *ay*, *ey*, *oy*. A following consonant letter is irrelevant, except as noted below. A following ending is also irrelevant; that is, there is no such pattern as VV+E. We call this the VV (**vee-vee**) pattern.

- a. *Underline the key syllable in each word below.*
- b. *Identify the spelling pattern of each key syllable.*

E.g. <u>cheeses</u>	<u>VV</u>	5. grueling	_____	11. guide	_____
E.g. <u>eloped</u>	<u>VC+E</u>	6. employ	_____	12. styled	_____
1. quote	_____	7. minnow	_____	13. Greek	_____
2. encroach	_____	8. fathomed	_____	14. scheme	_____
3. appealing	_____	9. valley	_____	15. trialing	_____
4. chimes	_____	10. explaining	_____	16. poised	_____

2. **Stress.** A degree of stress, major ( ´ ), minor ( ` ) (together called ‘stressed’), or unstressed ( ˘ ), **must** be part of every vowel prediction pattern. If a word has a minor stress on the target vowel, the pattern should have minor stress over its vowel, too. We center the stress mark directly over the V or VV, e.g.  $\acute{V}C+E$ ,  $V\acute{V}$ .
3. **Vowel Quality Clue.** In VS-2, you learned the name-shape translator: a vowel “name” is equivalent to a glided vowel, vowel “shape” is a clue to an unglided vowel, and “reduced” translates as schwa, regardless of how the vowel is spelled.

Recall the “name” clues for glided vowels:

<b>a, A</b>	/ey/	<b>fade</b>	<b>o, O</b>	/ow/	<b>bone</b>
<b>e, E</b>	/iy/	<b>feed</b>	<b>u, U</b>	(y)/uw/	<b>boot</b>
<b>i, I</b>	/ay/	<b>fine</b>	<b>y, Y</b>	(w)/ay/	<b>fine</b>

## B. Vowel Quality Patterns for Glided and Reduced Vowels

Spelling pattern, stress, and vowel quality clue combine in a vowel quality pattern, a formula you must learn. Spelling and stress information are on the left of the “predicts” sign (=); a vowel quality clue is on the right. Note how the patterns for stressed vowels work with the name-shape translator to predict specific vowel sounds in the key.

NOTE: In the following examples and exercises, the stress of vowels in polysyllabic words is marked. Later, you will predict word stress for yourself and will not need stress marks. In one-syllable words, no stress is marked; **major** stress is assumed to be present.

1.  $\acute{V}C+E = \text{name}$       *case, compéted, tiles, style, díòdes, rudely. The key syllable (underlined) matches either the  $\acute{V}C+E = \text{name}$  or  $\acute{V}C+E = \text{name}$  pattern. We predict the vowel sound in the key as the “name” of the vowel letter in the spelled word, /ey, iy, ay, ay, ow, uw/, respectively. Here are the steps to follow:*

**Step 1: Match Key to Pattern    Step 2: Use Name-Shape Translator**

case

↓↓↓

VC+E = name

a + "name" translates into /ey/

2. VV = name  
(VV = name)

*quaint, greet, received, coal, snow.* The two steps above apply: Match the key to a pattern, then use the name-shape translator with the **first** vowel letter. That process yields /ey, ey, iy, iy, ow, ow/ for these six words, respectively.

*annoy, poised.* When the two key vowel letters are *oy* or *oi*, the translator uses **both** letters to convert the spellings into /oy/, not /ow/: *oy, oi* + "name" predicts /oy/, a glided vowel.

Since a reduced vowel requires an unstressed vowel and a following consonant letter, two patterns for reduced vowels are the following, each with C after the vowel. (If the letter *r* follows the unstressed vowel in either pattern, the prediction is /ər/.)

3. VC+E = reduced    *furnace, determines, piloting minutes.* Again, the two steps above apply. This time, "reduced" translates directly into /ə/ or, if the key vowel is *i, e, or y*, the prediction is /ə/ or /ɪ/.
4. VVC = reduced    *captain, forfeited.* When the two steps above apply, we can predict the vowel sound in these keys as /ə/ (or /ɪ/ if the first vowel is spelled *i, e, or y*).

- Underline the key syllable in each word below.
- Write out the vowel quality pattern of the key.
- Transcribe the key vowel using the name-shape translator.
- Say each word aloud and check your pronunciation.

- |                |                       |         |              |       |     |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------|-------|-----|
| E.g. engrained | <u>VC+E = name</u>    | / ey /  | 8. convoy    | _____ | / / |
| E.g. coveting  | <u>VC+E = reduced</u> | / ə/ɪ / | 9. serenely  | _____ | / / |
| 1. managing    | _____                 | / /     | 10. kerchief | _____ | / / |
| 2. to invite   | _____                 | / /     | 11. pleased  | _____ | / / |
| 3. hearsay     | _____                 | / /     | 12. acolyte  | _____ | / / |
| 4. repléte     | _____                 | / /     | 13. quail    | _____ | / / |
| 5. boiling     | _____                 | / /     | 14. rioting  | _____ | / / |
| 6. excludéd    | _____                 | / /     | 15. préface  | _____ | / / |
| 7. colléges    | _____                 | / /     | 16. porpoise | _____ | / / |

As noted, reduced vowels require an unstressed vowel plus a following consonant. What if there is no following consonant? One general patterns predicts "name" vowels.

5.  $\check{V}\check{V}$  = name *mónkěy, hállōwed*. The prediction steps used before apply equally in these cases. The **first** vowel is subject to the name-shape translator, yielding /iy/ and /ow/, respectively.

- Underline the key syllable in each word below.
- Write out the vowel quality pattern of the key.
- Transcribe the key vowel using the name-shape translator.
- Say each word aloud and check your pronunciation.

E.g. tóurněy	<u>V<math>\check{V}</math> = name</u>	/ iy /	8. phóněy	_____	/ /
E.g. párrōting	<u>ŤC+E = reduced</u>	/ ə /	9. insánely	_____	/ /
1. shádōwing	_____	/ /	10. a chálíce	_____	/ /
2. complaĭnt	_____	/ /	11. wídoĥwed	_____	/ /
3. he entóned	_____	/ /	12. regrów	_____	/ /
4. intúĭted	_____	/ /	13. prizes	_____	/ /
5. plántaĭn	_____	/ /	14. cásěròle	_____	/ /
6. permúted	_____	/ /	15. vólleĥyed	_____	/ /
7. overseás	_____	/ /	16. Plýmōuth	_____	/ /

### C. Name-Shape Translator (revised)

Modifications to the name-shape translator since lesson VS-2 are summarized here:

The name-shape translator (NST) converts vowel spellings into vowel symbols, given the clue to vowel quality – “name”, “shape”, and “reduced”.

letter + “name” translates into the glided name of the vowel letter.

**If the spelling is *oy* or *oi*, the prediction is /ɔy/, not /ow/.**

letter + “shape” translates into the unglided vowel linked to the letter.

letter + “reduced” translates into /ə/, or if the letter is *e*, *i*, or *y*, /əɪ/.

**If the letter after the vowel letter is *r*, only /ər/ is predicted.**

Check your answers: p. 2. 1. ot, VC+E; 2. oach, VV; 3. ea, VV; 4. im, VC+E; 5. e, VC+E; 6. oy, VV; 7. ow, VV; 8. om, VC+E; 9. ey, VV; 10. ain, VV; 11. id, VC+E; 12. yl, VC+E; 13. ee, VV; 14. em, VC+E; 15. al, VC+E; 16. ois, VV. p. 3. 1. ag, ŤC+E = reduced, /ə/; 2. it, VC+E = name, /ay/; 3. ay, VV = name, /ey/; 4. et, VC+E = name, /iy/; 5. oi, VV = name, /ɔy/; 6. ud, VC+E = name, /uw/; 7. eg, VC+E = reduced, /əɪ/; 8. oy, VV = name, /ɔy/; 9. en, VC+E = name, /iy/; 10. ief, VVC = reduced, /əɪ/; 11. eas, VV = name, /iy/; 12. yt, VC+E = name, /ay/; 13. ail, VV = name, /ey/; 14. ot, VC+E = reduced, /ə/; 15. ac, VC+E = reduced, /ə/; 16. ois, VVC = reduced, /əɪ/. p. 4. 1. ow, VV = name, /ow/; 2. aint, VV = name, /ey/; 3. on, VC+E = name, /ow/; 4. it, VC+E = reduced, /əɪ/; 5. ain, VVC = reduced, /ə/; 6. ut, VC+E = name, /uw/; 7. ea, VV = name, /iy/; 8. ey, VV = name, /iy/; 9. an, VC+E = name, /ey/; 10. ic, VC+E = reduced, /əɪ/; 11. ow, VV = name, /ow/; 12. ow, VV = name, /ow/; 13. iz, VC+E = name, /ay/; 14. ol, VC+E = name, /ow/; 15. ey, VV = name, /iy/; 16. outh, VVC = reduced, /ə/.