

DECODING ENGLISH

Understanding the Structure of Language

<http://neuhaus.org/videos/decoding-english/>

WHAT IS READING?

Reading is decoding (translating symbols on a page into words) and language comprehension (attaching meaning to the words.)



<http://neuhaus.org/concepts-activities/#SVR>

DECODING

To be able to decode the English language you have to know two things: the letters and the sounds. The English language is based on the alphabetic principle. The alphabetic principle is when written symbols called *graphemes* match sounds in spoken words that are called *phonemes*. Graphemes are letters or groups of letters that represent the sounds you hear in spoken words. Phonemes are the sounds in spoken language.

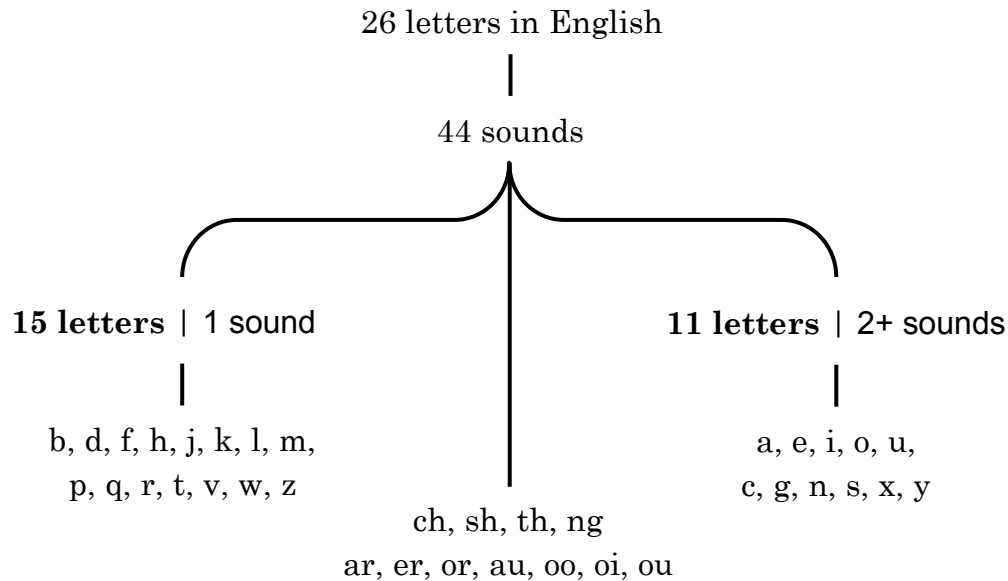
	# of letters	# of phonemes	# of graphemes
sat	3 – s, a, t	3 - /s/, /ă/, /t/	3 – s, a, t
creek	5 – c, r, e, e, k	4 - /k/, /r/, /ē/, /k/	4 – c, r, ee, k
shop	4 – s, h, o, p	3 - /sh/, /ō/, /p/	3 – sh, o, p

<http://neuhaus.org/concepts-activities/#Phonemes> (case sensitive)

Putting the phonemes and graphemes together is called sound-symbol association. Repeated exposure to the sound-symbol patterns reinforces and secures this knowledge in your memory so you are able to recognize words instantly. When you read words you are not familiar with, your focus is at the decoding level instead of the comprehension level because you are not secure with the knowledge of how sounds and symbols match together.

<http://neuhaus.org/glossary/#Decoding> (case sensitive)

STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE



There are approximately 44 sounds in the English language, but only 26 letters to represent all 44 sounds. Fifteen letters represent only one sound while 11 letters represent two or more sounds. To represent all the sounds of English, groups of letters like *ch*, *sh*, *ar*, *oi* and *ou* form entirely new sounds.

SIX SYLLABLE TYPES

A strategy in decoding unfamiliar words is understanding the patterns of the English language, specifically having knowledge of the six syllable types. A syllable is a word or part of word that has one vowel sound. Around 80-85% of English words represent six different syllable types or a composite of the six syllable types.

She wiggles her nose and tail.

closed syllable	open syllable	vowel consonant-syllable	vowel-r syllable	vowel pair syllable	Final Stable syllable
and	she	nose	her	sea	ramble
mend	go	cake	stir	cow	uncle
hip	hi	theme	fur	zoo	candle
got	sky	cube	far	point	mention
mud			nor	boy	package

<http://neuhaus.org/glossary/#SyllableType> (case sensitive)

SYLLABLE DIVISION

For longer words, a more efficient strategy to read an unfamiliar word is break it apart using syllable division and identify the vowel sound in each syllable. There are four main types of syllable division in English.

Syllable Division			
VC CV	V CV	VC CCV	V V
nap kin com bine pos ter	ro tate e vent la dy	lob ster sur prise pan try	sto ic cha os du et

<http://neuhaus.org/glossary/#SyllDivPat> (case sensitive)

REGULAR, IRREGULAR, AND SIGHT WORDS

There are 15-20% of words that do not fit the regular patterns of the English language. These words must be memorized. Regular words are words that follow reliable patterns of the language and can be sounded out. When you know the patterns of the language, more words become regular.

Sight words are common every day words that appear frequently in reading and writing. Sight words can be regular words like *can*, *like*, *day*, and *or* and be sounded out while other sight words are irregular like *said*, *there*, *were*, and *was* and must be memorized.



regular words

- catch
- can
- like
- day
- or
- dedication
- chorus
- remorseful
- photograph
- ...



irregular words

- said
- there
- were
- was
- thought
- enough
- lamb
- friend
- country
- ...

<http://neuhaus.org/glossary/#Regularwords> (case sensitive)

<http://neuhaus.org/glossary/#IrregularWords> (case sensitive)