

Absurdities of Written English

The following table gives a listing of the various ways that the sounds of the English language are represented in writing. The leftmost column gives the sounds of the language. The next column lists the ways the sound is written using the Deseret Alphabet (using ligatured letters when needed). Next is a column listing the ways the sound is spelled using the Roman Alphabet with traditional orthography. The final column gives example words to illustrate the traditional orthography. The Roman spellings and example words are arranged alphabetically. Proper nouns are capitalized and have their first letter underlined. You will notice other capitalized words as well. This is because the Roman Alphabet has separate symbols to represent upper and lower case letters. In fact, those who have learned the Roman Alphabet have in reality learned two alphabets. One uppercase set of letters and one lowercase set of letters. These differences in case are therefore listed as alternate ways of spelling the sound in question. In contrast, the Deseret Alphabet does not have additional symbols to represent upper and lowercase letters. Rather, the case of the letters is distinguished simply by their size.

It is admitted that many of the examples given in this table are rare spellings, and perhaps it is not really a fair comparison to include them. However, it is these exceptions to the rules that make written English all the more absurd, and therefore many have been included in this table. It is not claimed that this table gives an exhaustive listing (If you know of any more spellings I have missed please let me know). It should also be noted that some of the example words may be pronounced in more than one way, so if you don't pronounce a word as it is presented in the table that doesn't preclude someone else from pronouncing it that way.

SOUND	DESERET	ROMAN	EXAMPLE WORDS
\ā\	Ǝ	A, a, Ae, ae, ai, aig, aigh, ao, au, ay, e, ea, ee, eg, Eh, ei, eig, eilles, Eigh, eigh, er, es, et, ey, ez, ie	Ape, mate, Aerobic , <u>Mae</u> , faith, arraign, straight, gaol, gauge, hay, cafe, great, matinee, thegn, Eh , veil, reign, <u>Marseilles</u> , Eight , weigh, dossier, demesne, crochet, they, chez, lingerie
\a\	∨	A, a, a'a, ah, ai, al, au, i, ui	At, hat, ma'am, <u>Fahrenheit</u> , plaid, salmon, laugh, meringue, <u>guimpe</u>
\ah\	Ɔ	A, a, Aa, aa, Aah, ach, Ah, ah, al, as, E, e, ea, i, is, ua	Art, far, Aardvark , bazaar, Aah , Ah , blah, calm, pas, Envoy, sergent, hearken, <u>Antoine</u> , bourgeois, guard
\au\	Ɔ	A, a, al, as, Au, au, Augh, augh, aul, Aw, aw, Awe, ea, eo, hau, O, o, Oa, oa, oe, oo, Ough, ou, ough, owa	All, tall, walk, <u>Arkansas</u> , <u>Australia</u> , taut, Aught , caught, caulk, Awful , saw, Awe , <u>Sean</u> , <u>George</u> , exhaust, Ore, for, Oar , boar, Boer, floor, Ought , your, thought, toward
\b\	Ɔ	B, b, bb, be, Bh, bre, pb	Bad , stab, dabble, tribe, <u>Bhutan</u> , macabre, cupboard
\ch\	Ɔ	C, cc, Ch, ch, che, Cz, Ji, t, te, tch, tsch, ti, tu, tzsche	Cello, fettuccine, Churn, birch, niche, <u>Czech</u> , Jia , actual, righteous, witch, <u>Deutsch</u> , mention, nature, <u>Nietzsche</u>
\d\	Ɔ	D, d, dd, de, Dh, ed, ld, T	Deck , sad, muddy, made, <u>Dharma</u> , played, could, <u>Taoism</u>

\ē\	ð	a, Ae, ae, agh, ay, E, e, Ea, ea, E'e, ee, Ei, ei, eigh, eo, es, ey, i, ie, is, it, je, Oe, oe, ois, ue, Y, y	bologna, A eon, <u>C</u> aesar, shillelagh, quay, E vening, b e, E at, E' en, leaf, see, E ither, conceit, <u>R</u> aleigh, people, key, demesne, mini, thief, debris, esprit, kopje, O ecology, phoenix, chamois, <u>P</u> ortuguese, Y vonne, merry
\e\	ɹ	A, a, Aa, Ai, ai, Ae, ae, ai, Ay, ay, E, e, E'e, ea, ei, eo, Ey, Hei, hei, ie, u, ue	<u>A</u> ryan, many, <u>A</u> aron, A ir, chair, A esthetic, anaesthesia, again, <u>A</u> yr, says, E d, met, E' er, death, heifer, leopard, E yrie, H eir, coheir, friend, bury, guess
\f\	ɸ	F, f, ff, ffe, fe, ugh, Pf, Ph, ph, pph	F ive, lift, stiff, giraffe, reference, enough, <u>P</u> fieffer, P hone, graph, sapphire
\g\	ɢ	ckg, G, g, gg, Gh, gh, gue, x	blackguard, G et, tag, bigger, G host, spaghetti, plague, example
\h\	ɸ	G, H, h, Wh, J, j, Ch	<u>G</u> ila (monster), H eel, ahead, <u>J</u> ai-alai, fajitas, W ho, <u>C</u> hanukah
\ī\	ɔ	a, ae, ai, Ais, ay, Aye, ayh, Ei, ei, eigh, Ey, ey, Eye, eye, I, i, ia, ie, ig, igh, Is, is, ui, uy, y, ye	naive, maestro, <u>T</u> hailand, A isle, tayra, A ye, <u>B</u> ayh, E igenvalue, stein, height, E ying, geyser, E ye, walleye, I , mice, diaper, vie, sign, nigh, I sland, viscount, guide, buy, thy, bye
\i\	ɸ	a, Ae, ai, E, e, ea, ee, ei, eig, hi, I, i, ia, ie, o, oi, on, u, ui, Y, y	damage, <u>A</u> egean, bargain, E nglish, pretty, mileage, been, forfeit, foreign, annihilate, I t, hit, marriage, sieve, women, tortoise, monsieur, busy, build, Y tterbium, physics
\j\	ɹ	ch, d, dg, dge, di, Dj, dj, du, G, g, ge, gg, Gi, gi, J, j, jj	<u>G</u> reenwich, graduate, ledger, grudge, soldier, D jellabah, adjust, procedure, G em, aged, college, exaggerate, G iaour, <u>B</u> elgian, <u>J</u> ew, major, hajj
\k\	ɔ	C, c, cc, cch, Ch, ch, che, ck, cq, cqu, cque, cu, g, gh, K, k, ke, kg, Kh, kh, kk, lk, Q, q, qu, que, x	C ape, escape, broccoli, <u>B</u> acchus, C haos, schematic, ache, pick, acquaint, racquetball, sacque, biscuit, disgust, lough, K id, maker, take, ginkgo, K haki, <u>S</u> ikh, trekker, yolk, Q uarter, <u>I</u> raq, mosquito, pique, excellent
\l\	ɹ	L, l, le, Lh, Ll, ll, lle, ln, tle	L ap, wilt, temple, <u>L</u> hasa, <u>L</u> loyd, well, belle, kiln, castle
\m\	ɔ	chm, gm, M, m, me, mb, mbe, Mh, mm, mme, mn, nd	drachm, diaphragm, M op, warm, lame, thumb, jambe, M ho, tummy, programme, solemn, grandpa
\n\	ɸ	Cn, dn, Gn, gn, gne, Kn, kn, m, Mn, N, n, nd, ne, nn, nne, nh, Pn	C nidarians, <u>W</u> ednesday, G nu, feign, champagne, K new, acknowledge, comptroller, M nemonic, N ew, town, handsome, vane, annul, tonne, piranha, P neumatic
\ŋ\	ɹ	n, nd, ng, ngg, ngh, ngue	think, handkerchief, singer, mahjongg, <u>S</u> ingh, tongue
\ō\	0	aoh, au, aut, aux, eau, eaux, eo, ew, ho, hou, O, o, Oa, oa, oe, Oh, oh, ol, oo, os, ot, ou, ough, Ow, ow, Owe	pharaoh, chauffeur, hautboy, faux, plateau, gateaux, yeoman, sew, mho, silhouette, O ld, go, O at, boat, roe, O h, <u>S</u> hiloh, <u>H</u> olmes, brooch, apropos, depot, soul, dough, O wn, row, O we

\o\	ɔ	a, ach, au, E, eau, Ho, O, o, ol, ow	want, yacht, haunt, Encore , bureaucracy, Honesty , Odd , <u>Joshua</u> , solder, knowledge
\oi\	ɔɪ	awy, eu, Oi, oi, ois, Oy, oy, uoy,	lawyer, <u>Freud</u> , Oil , toil, Iroquois, Oyster , toy, buoy
\ou\	əʊ	ao, aou, aow, au, eo, Hou, iao, Ou, ou, ough, Ow, ow	bacalao, caoutchouc, miaow, sauerkraut, <u>McLeod</u> , Hour , ciao, Out , foul, bough, Owl , cow
\p\	ɪ	bp, gh, P, p, pe, Ph, ph, pp, ppe	subpoena, hiccough, Pass , top, taupe, <u>Phuket</u> , diphthong, apple, steppe
\r\	ɹ	hr, l, R, r, re, Rh, rps, rr, rre, rrrh, rs, rt, Wr	<u>Bohr</u> , colonel, Ran , par, more, Rhyme , corps, barred, bizarre, diarrhea, velours, rapport, Wrestle
\ur\	ɜr	ar, Ear, ear, Er, er, ere, Err, err, eur, Her, her, ir, irr, irrh, oar, olo, or, our, re, uer, uhr, uor, Ur, ur, urr, ure, yr, yrrh	leopard, Earth , heard, Ernest , father, were, Err , deterrence, amateur, Herb , shepherd, bird, squirrel, <u>Quirrh</u> , cupboard, colonel, word, journal, acre, conquer, buhrstone, languor, Urban , burn, current, pressure, syrup, myrrh
\s\	ɝ	C, c, cc, ce, ci, cs, es, Ps, S, s, Sc, sc, sce, Sch, se, ss, sse, st, sth, Sw, sw, x, ys, z, zs	Cyst , cancer, flaccid, juice, species, <u>Tucson</u> , hypocrites, Psalm , Sour, cast, Scissors , disciple, coalesce, Schism , horse, miss, finesse, listen, isthmus, Sword , answer, execute, pepys, citizen, britzska
\sh\	ɔʃ	c, ce, Ch, ch, che, chs, ci, Ps, Psh, S, sc, Sch, sch, sci, se, Sh, sh, she, Shh, si, ss, ssi, ti, x, xi, zh	depreciate, ocean, <u>Charlotte</u> , machine, cache, fuchsia, mathematician, Pshaw , Sugar, crescendo, Schist , <u>Asch</u> , conscience, nauseous, Ship , misshapen, <u>Ashe</u> , Shh , mansion, pressure, mission, nation, sexuality, anxious, pirozhki
\t\	ɪ	bt, Ct, ct, d, dt, ed, ght, Phth, Pt, pt, T, t, te, Th, th, tt, tte, Tw, z	doubt, Ctenoid , indictment, width, bundt, whipped, night, Phthisic , Ptomaine , receipt, Too , bat, definitely, Thyme , <u>Esther</u> , pretty, gazette, Two , pizza
\θ\	l	Chth, dh, gh, Phth, Th, th, the, tt	Chthonic , edh, <u>Keighley</u> , Phthalic , Think , faith, withe, <u>Matthew</u>
\th\	ɹ	d, Th, th, the	fado, They , slither, breathe
\ū\	ʊ	eu, ew, hou, ieu, ioux, o, oe, oeu, Oo, oo, ooh, ou, ough, oup, ous, ow, u, ue, Uh, uh, ui, w, wo	pneumatic, blew, silhouette, lieu, <u>Sioux</u> , to, shoe, manoeuvre, Ooze , too, pooh, you, through, coup, rendezvous, crowd, ruling, blue, <u>Uhlán</u> , buhl, fruit, cwm, two
\oo\	ɔ	eu, o, oo, or, ou, oui, oul, u	pneumonia, woman, soot, worsted, courier, bouillon, should, put
\u\	ɪ	A, a, aa, ah, ai, e, ei, eo, i, ia, io, iou, O, o, oe, oi, oo, ou, U, Uh, u, uh, wo, wa, y	About, sofa, <u>Canaan</u> , <u>Messiah</u> , mountain, apparent, mullein, dungeon, condiment, parliament, cushion, conscious, Oven , son, does, porpoise, flood, double, Under , fun, Uh , huh, twopence, gunwale, beryl,
\v\	ɒ	f, ph, V, v, ve, vv	of, Stephen , Very , beaver, salve, savvy
\w\	ɹ	ju, O, o, Ou, ou, u, W, w, ww, Wh	marijuana, One , choir, Ouija , bivouac, persuade, Want , away, glowworm, What
\hw\	ɹ	Hu, Hw, hw, Ju, Wh, wh,	<u>Huang</u> , <u>Hwang</u> , manhwa, <u>Juan</u> , Whale , awhile

\y\	Ƶ	E, gn, i, j, l, ll, o, U, u, Y, y	<u>E</u> urope, po <u>ign</u> ant, on <u>ion</u> , hallelu <u>jah</u> , bouillon, tortilla, signor, <u>U</u> rine, figur <u>e</u> , <u>Y</u> odel, lanyard
\yū\	⊖	eau, Eu, eu, ew, Ewe, Hu, ieu, iew, ou, U, u, ue, ueue, ugh, ui, ut, uu, Yew, You, you, Yu, yu	beautiful, <u>E</u> unuch, feud, few, <u>E</u> we, <u>H</u> umor, adieu, view, coupon, <u>U</u> tah, music, cue, queue, <u>H</u> ugh, nuisance, debut, vacuum, <u>Y</u> ew, <u>Y</u> ou, bayou, <u>Y</u> ule, picayune
\z\	6	Cz, es, S, s, se, sc, ss, sth, thes, X, x, Z, z, ze, zs, zz	<u>C</u> zar, <u>C</u> lydesdale, <u>S</u> graffito, risen, cheese, discern, possess, <u>a</u> sthma, clothespin, <u>X</u> enon, example, <u>Z</u> oo, whiz, breeze, vizsla, jazz
\zh\	8	G, g, ge, J, s, sh, si, ssi, ti, x, z, zi, Zh, Zs, zs	<u>G</u> enre, regime, beige, <u>J</u> acques, pleasure, <u>P</u> ershing, vision, scission, equation, luxurious, seizure, <u>F</u> razier, <u>Z</u> hytomyr, <u>Z</u> sa, vizsla