

BBC TEXT SPELLING GUIDE

The BBC Pronunciation Unit provides pronunciations in written form using BBC Text Spelling – a respelling system based on English spelling conventions and mainly English sounds (with a few additions).

Syllables are separated by hyphens. Stressed syllables are given in CAPITALS.

VOWELS

a as in <i>hat</i>	i as in <i>bit</i>	ow as in <i>now</i>
aa as in <i>father</i>	i as in <i>aria, elect, happy</i>	oy as in <i>boy</i>
arr as in <i>marry</i>	igh as in <i>high, fire</i>	u as in <i>cup</i>
ar as in <i>bar</i>	(sometimes, y as in <i>cry*</i>)	uh as in <i>ago, lotus, cannon</i>
air as in <i>hair</i>	irr as in <i>mirror</i>	uhr as in <i>cellar, ladder, doctor</i>
aw as in <i>law</i>	o as in <i>not</i>	ur as in <i>fur</i>
ay as in <i>day</i>	oh as in <i>no</i>	urr as in <i>hurry</i>
e as in <i>get</i>	oo as in <i>boot</i>	uu as in <i>book</i>
err as in <i>merry</i>	oor as in <i>poor</i>	oe as in French <i>peu</i> or <i>coeur</i>
ee as in <i>street</i>	or as in <i>corn</i>	oey as in French <i>fauteuil</i>
eer as in <i>deer</i>	orr as in <i>sorry</i>	ue as in French <i>vu</i> or German <i>fünf</i>

-(ng) after a vowel indicates nasalization. Example from French *un bon vin blanc*: oe(ng) bo(ng) va(ng) blaa(ng).

CONSONANTS

b as in <i>bat</i>	kh as in Scottish <i>loch</i>	s as in <i>sit</i>
ch, tch as in <i>church,</i> <i>catch</i>	or can be German <i>ich</i>	sh as in <i>ship</i>
d as in <i>day</i>	l as in <i>leg</i>	t as in <i>top</i>
f as in <i>fit</i>	m as in <i>man</i>	th as in <i>thin</i>
g as in <i>get</i>	n as in <i>not</i>	dh as in <i>there</i>
h as in <i>hat</i>	ng as in <i>singer</i>	v as in <i>vet</i>
hl as in Welsh <i>llan</i>	ng-g as in <i>finger</i>	w as in <i>will</i>
j as in <i>Jack</i>	nk as in <i>thank</i>	y as in <i>yes</i>
k as in <i>king</i>	p as in <i>pen</i>	z as in <i>zebra</i>
	r as in <i>red</i>	zh as in <i>measure</i>

Example: *pronunciation* would be respelt as **pruh-nun-si-AY-shuhn**.

Pronunciation of R:

Our respellings acknowledge word-final or pre-consonantal R (e.g. *hair, party*), pronounced in some accents of English (rhotic) but not in others (non-rhotic). Example: *Parker* is transcribed as PAR-kuhr, not PAA-kuh, and the rs will be pronounced or not according to the speaker's accent.

Pronunciation of Y*:

In Text Spelling, when y appears between a consonant and a vowel, it represents a glide (e.g. *beauty*: BYOO-ti; *dune*: dyoon; *few*: fyoo; *argue*: AR-gyoo; *Hugh*: hyoo; *music*: MYOO-zick, *manual*: MAN-yoo-uhl; *pew*: pyoo; *ensue*: in-SYOO; *tune*: tyoon; *view*: vyoo; *Zeus*: zyooss).

Syllabification:

The way words are broken into syllables in respelling is not an attempt to reflect actual syllabification.

It is a tool to reinforce vowel pronunciations and to ensure the most intuitive transcription.

When a vowel is long, the following consonant will be placed after the hyphen: PEE-tuhr (*Peter*).

When a vowel is short, the consonant goes immediately after the vowel, before the hyphen: JEN-i (*Jenny*).