

## Handout 12: The Utility of 45 Phonic Generalizations

*Generalization	# of Words Conforming	# of Exceptions	Percent of Utility
1. When there are two vowels side by side, the long sound of the first one is heard and the second is usually silent.	309 (bead)	377 (chief)	5
2. When a vowel is in the middle of a one syllable word, the vowel is short.	408	249	62
• middle letter	191 (dress)	84 (scold)	69
• one of the middle two letters in a word of four letters	191 (rest)	135 (told)	59
• one vowel within a word of more than four letters	26 (splash)	30 (fight)	46
3. If the only vowel letter is at the end of a word, the letter usually stands for a long sound.	23 (he)	8 (to)	74
4. When there are two vowels, one of which is final e, the first vowel is long and the e is silent.	180 (bone)	108 (done)	63
5. The r gives the preceding vowel a sound that is neither long nor short.*	484 (horn)	134 (wire)	78
6. The first vowel is usually long and the second silent in the digraphs ai, ea, oa, and ui.	179	92	66
• ai	43 (nail)	24 (said)	64
• ea	101 (bead)	51 (head)	66
• oa	34 (boat)	1 (cupboard)	97
• ui	1 (suit)	16 (build)	6
7. In the phonogram i.e., the i is silent and the e has a long sound.	8 (field)	39 (friend)	17
8. Words having double e usually have the long e sound.*	85 (seem)	2 (been)	98
9. When words end with silent e, the preceding a or i is long.	164 (cake)	108 (have)	60
10. In ay the y is silent and gives a its long sound.*	36 (play)	10 (always)	78
11. When the letter i is followed by the letters gh, the i usually stands for its long sound and the gh is silent.	22 (high)	9 (neighbor)	71
12. When a follows w in a word, it usually has the sound a as in was.	15 (watch)	32 (swan)	32
13. When e is followed by w, the vowel sound is the same as represented by oo.	9 (blew)	17 (sew)	35
14. The two letters ow make the long o sound.	50 (own)	35 (down)	59
15. W is sometimes a vowel and follows the vowel digraph rule.	50 (crow)	75 (threw)	40

Clymer, T. (1996). The utility of phonic generalizations in the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 50, No. 3.

Every  
Child  
Reads

K-12

EXCELLENCE  
IN TEACHING  
AND LEARNING

*Handout 12 (continued)*  
*The Utility of 45 Phonic Generalizations*

*Generalization	# of Words Conforming	# of Exceptions	Percent of Utility
16. When y is the final letter in a word, it usually has a vowel sound.	169 (dry)	32 (tray)	84
17. When y is used as a vowel in words, it sometimes has the sound of long i.	29 (fly)	170 (funny)	15
18. The letter a has the same sound (o) when followed by l, w, and u.	61 (all)	65 (canal)	48
19. When a is followed by r and final e, we expect to hear the sound heard in care.	9 (dare)	65 (are)	90
20. When c and h are next to each other, they make only one sound. *	103 (peach)	0	100
21. Ch is usually pronounced as it is in kitchen, catch, and chair, not like sh.*	99 (catch)	5 (machine)	95
22. When c is followed by e or i, the sound of s is likely to be heard. *	66 (cent)	3 (ocean)	96
23. When the letter c is followed by o or a the sound of k is likely to be heard. *	143 (camp)	0	100
24. The letter g often has a sound similar to that of j in jump when it precedes the letter i or e.	49 (engine)	28 (give)	64
25. When ght is seen in a word, gh is silent.*	30 (flight)	0	100
26. When a word begins kn, the k is silent.	10 (knife)	0	100
27. When a word begins with wr, the w is silent.	8 (write)	0	100
28. When two of the same consonants are side by side only one is heard.*	334 (carry)	3 (suggest)	99
29. When a word ends in ck, it has the same last sound as in look.*	46 (brick)	0	100
30. In most two-syllable words, the first syllable is accented. *	828 (famous)	143 (polite)	85
31. If a, in, re, ex, de, or be is the first syllable in a word, it is usually unaccented.*	86 (belong)	13 (insect)	87
32. In most two syllable words that end in a consonant followed by y, the first syllable is accented and the last is unaccented.*	101 (baby)	4 (supply)	96
33. One vowel letter in an accented syllable has its short sound.	547 (city)	356 (lady)	61
34. When y or ey is seen in the last syllable that is not accented, the long sound of e is heard.	0	157 (baby)	0
35. When -ture is the final syllable in a word, it is unaccented.	4 (picture)	0	100
36. When -tion is the final syllable in a word, it is unaccented.	5 (station)	0	100
37. In many two- and three- syllable words, the final e lengthens the vowel in the last syllable.	52 (invite)	62 (gasoline)	46

HANDOUTS

*Handout 12 (continued)**The Utility of 45 Phonic Generalizations*

*Generalization	# of Words Conforming	# of Exceptions	Percent of Utility
38. If the first vowel sound in a word is followed by two consonants, the first syllable usually ends with the first of the two consonants.	404 (bullet)	159 (singer)	72
39. If the first vowel sound in a word is followed by a single consonant, that consonant usually begins the second syllable.	190 (over)	237 (oven)	44
40. If the last syllable of a word ends in le, the consonant preceding the le usually begins the last syllable.*	62 (tumble)	2 (buckle)	97
41. When the first vowel element in a word is followed by th, ch, or sh, these symbols are not broken when the word is divided into syllables and may go with either the first or second syllable.*	30 (dishes)	0	100
42. In a word of more than one syllable, the letter v usually goes with the preceding vowel to form a syllable.	53 (cover)	20 (clover)	73
43. When a word has only one vowel letter, the vowel sound is likely to be short.	433 (hid)	322 (kind)	57
44. When there is one e in a word that ends in a consonant, the e usually has a short sound. *	85 (leg)	27 (blew)	76
45. When the last syllable is the sound r, it is unaccented.*	188 (butter)	9 (appear)	95
Words in parentheses are examples – either of words which conform or of exceptions, depending on the column.			
*Generalizations marked with an asterisk were found “useful” according to the criteria.			