


FREE CLASSROOM RESOURCE

10 Essential Phonics Rules Anchor Charts

A Visual Reference Pack for K–3 Classrooms

- The 6 Syllable Types
- Magic E / Silent E (5 Jobs)
- Blends vs Digraphs
- The 1-1-1 Doubling Rule
- 3 Sounds of the -ED Suffix
- The FLOSS Rule (F, L, S, Z)
- 4 Forbidden Ending Letters
- Soft & Hard C and G
- Vowel Position Rule (OI/OY)
- The 3 Sounds of Y

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THE 6 SYLLABLE TYPES

Master these patterns and you can decode ANY English word

a = vowel sound **b** = consonant  = silent letter **·** = syllable break

① CLOSED SYLLABLE

CVC pattern — most common in English

Ends in a **consonant** → the vowel is **SHORT** (ă, ě, ĩ, ô, ū)

PATTERN

VC — consonant "closes" the vowel in

TEACHING TIP

"The consonant door slams shut — the vowel says its **short** sound"

MORE WORDS

cat, bed, hit, fog, nut, pump·kin, kit·ten

rab·bit

nap·kin

② OPEN SYLLABLE

CV pattern — the vowel is "free"

Ends in a **vowel** → the vowel is **LONG** (ā, ē, ĩ, ô, ū)

PATTERN

V — nothing blocks the vowel

TEACHING TIP

"The door is open — the vowel can say its **name**"

MORE WORDS

go, me, hi, flu, ba·by, po·ny, spi·der

ti·ger

mu·sic

③ SILENT E (VCE)

Also called "Magic E" or "Bossy E"

Final E is **silent**, but makes the vowel before it **LONG**

PATTERN

VCe — silent E "reaches over" the consonant

COMPARE

hop /hɒp/ → hope /hōp/ — E changes everything!

MORE WORDS

make, ride, cute, pine, globe, com·pete

cake

hop

④ VOWEL TEAM

Two vowels team up to make ONE sound

Two (or more) vowels together → usually the **first vowel is LONG**

COMMON TEAMS

ai, ay, ea, ee, oa, oe, ue, le, oo, ou, ow

SAYING

"When two vowels go walking, the **first one does the talking**"

MORE WORDS

team, play, boat, sleep, fruit, ex·plain

rain

boat

⑤ R-CONTROLLED

Also called "Bossy R" — R steals the vowel's sound

Vowel + R → a **new blended sound** (ar, er, ir, or, ur)

5 SOUNDS

ar /är/, or /ôr/, er·ir·ur all say /ər/

TEACHING TIP

"R is the bully — it changes the vowel's sound completely"

MORE WORDS

star, fork, her, girl, burn, tur·tle, corner

bird

car

⑥ CONSONANT + LE

Always the **LAST** syllable — the E is silent

Final syllable is **-ble, -dle, -gle, -ple, -tle, -kle** — vowel is silent

HOW TO SPLIT

Count back 3 letters from the end: ta | ble, ap | ple

TEACHING TIP

"The E is always silent — you only hear the consonant + /ul/"

MORE WORDS

bub·ble, sim·ple, lit·tle, an·kle, jun·gle

ta·ble

ap·ple

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BLENDS VS DIGRAPHS

Consonants "singing together" vs "making a brand new sound"

🎵 Two Ways Consonants Team Up

Consonants often pair up in English, but they team up in two completely different ways: **Blends** are a duet — you hear each sound, just smoothed together. **Digraphs** are a transformation — two letters fuse into one brand-new sound.

🔪 BLENDS — HEAR BOTH SOUNDS

Each consonant keeps its own sound, blended quickly

st	stop, star, stand	hear s + t
bl	blue, black, blow	hear b + l
gr	green, grow, great	hear g + r
sw	swim, sweet, swing	hear s + w

🎨 DIGRAPHS — ONE NEW SOUND

Two letters combine to make a single new sound

sh	she, fish, wish	/ʃ/ "shh" sound
ch	chair, teach, lunch	/tʃ/ "choo" sound
th	think, this	/θ/ or /ð/
ph	phone, photo	/f/ from Greek

📖 COMMON BLENDS AT A GLANCE

L-BLENDS

bl cl fl gl pl sl

R-BLENDS

br cr dr fr gr pr
tr

S-BLENDS

sc sk sm sn sp
st sw

📖 COMMON DIGRAPHS AT A GLANCE

PAIR	SOUND	EXAMPLES	TIP
sh	/ʃ/	she, fish, wish, ship	"shhh" quiet sound
ch	/tʃ/	chair, teach, lunch	like a train "choo"
th	/θ/ or /ð/	think, this, math	bite your tongue!
wh	/w/	what, when, why	h is silent
ph	/f/	phone, photo, elephant	Greek origin, ph = f
ng	/ŋ/	sing, ring, long	nasal sound
ck	/k/	back, duck, stick	after short vowels
wr	/r/	write, wrong, wrist	w is silent
kn	/n/	know, knife, knee	k is silent

🎯 Quick Test: Blend or Digraph?

Listen! Can you hear both sounds? = Blend (stop = s + t ✓)

Only one new sound? = Digraph (shop = one "shh" sound, NOT s + h)

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THE DOUBLING RULE

hopping vs hoping — one letter changes everything

Why Do We Double Consonants?

When you add a **vowel suffix** (-ing, -ed, -er, -y...) to a short vowel word, the suffix "steals" the closing consonant. The vowel loses its guard and switches from short to long. **Doubling the consonant** = cloning the guard — one stays to protect the vowel, one goes with the suffix.

DOUBLE → SHORT VOWEL

hopping

/hɒp-pɪŋ/
hop (to jump) + ing

hop → closed syllable → short ɒ

vs

SINGLE → LONG VOWEL

hoping

/hō-pɪŋ/
hope (to wish) + ing

hope → VCe → long ō

THE 1-1-1 RULE: WHEN TO DOUBLE

1

1 Syllable

The word has only one syllable: hop ✓ (also: the stressed final syllable of longer words, like begin)

1

1 Vowel Letter

The syllable has only one vowel letter: hop (one O) ✓, boat (two vowels OA) ✗

1

1 Final Consonant

Ends in one consonant letter: hop (one P) ✓, jump (two: MP) ✗

All 3 conditions met → DOUBLE the final consonant before a vowel suffix

SIDE-BY-SIDE EXAMPLES

SHORT VOWEL (DOUBLE)	+ SUFFIX	RESULT	LONG VOWEL (DROP E)	+ SUFFIX	RESULT
run	+ ing	running	tune	+ ing	tuning
sit	+ ing	sitting	site	+ ing	siting
win	+ er	winner	dine	+ er	diner
big	+ er	bigger	nice	+ er	nicer
hot	+ est	hottest	late	+ est	latest
sun	+ y	sunny	shine	+ y	shiny

Consonant Suffixes Don't Need Doubling

Only **vowel suffixes** (-ing, -ed, -er, -est, -y, -able...) steal consonants.
Consonant suffixes (-ly, -ful, -less, -ness...) just attach — no changes needed:
hope + ful = hopeful (keep the E) | sad + ness = sadness (just add it)

The Golden Rule

Double consonant = short vowel (hopping = jumping)
Single consonant = long vowel (hoping = wishing)

When you see a doubled consonant, you instantly know the preceding vowel is short!

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3 WAYS TO PRONOUNCE -ED

walked, played, and wanted all end in -ed — but sound completely different!

🤔 Why Does -ED Have 3 Different Sounds?

The past tense -ed ending changes its pronunciation based on the **final sound of the verb**. The core principle: the **Lazy Mouth Rule** — your mouth automatically picks the easiest sound to say.

ENDS IN T OR D

/ɪd/

Adds a syllable!

want → want**ed**
need → need**ed**
start → start**ed**
end → end**ed**

ENDS IN VOICELESS SOUND

/t/

No extra syllable

walk → walk**ed**
help → help**ed**
wash → wash**ed**
kiss → kiss**ed**

ENDS IN VOICED SOUND OR VOWEL

/d/

No extra syllable

play → play**ed**
love → lov**ed**
open → open**ed**
call → call**ed**

📌 3-STEP DECISION FLOW

Step 1: Does it end in /t/ or /d/? → Yes: **/ɪd/ (add syllable)**

Step 2: Is the final sound voiceless? → Yes: **/t/**

Step 3: Everything else (voiced/vowel) → **/d/**

👂 VOICED VS VOICELESS QUICK REFERENCE

VOICELESS (-ED = /T/)

/p/ helped
/k/ walked
/f/ laughed
/s/ kissed
/ʃ/ washed
/tʃ/ watched

VOICED (-ED = /D/)

/b/ robbed /g/ hugged
/v/ loved /z/ used
/dʒ/ judged /m/ named
/n/ opened /l/ called
/r/ cared vowels: played

SPECIAL (-ED = /ɪD/)

/t/ wanted, started
/d/ needed, ended

👂 The Throat Test

Put your hand on your throat and say the **last sound** of the verb:

Vibration = voiced → -ed says /d/ | **No vibration = voiceless** → -ed says /t/

All vowels are voiced. /t/ and /d/ endings get the special /ɪd/ to avoid collision.

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THE FLOSS RULE

Why off, bell, and miss double the final letter

FLOSS

The word "floss" itself is a perfect example of this rule!
One syllable + short vowel + F/L/S/Z at the end → **double it**

The Rule

In **one-syllable** words with a **short vowel**, if the word ends in **F, L, S** (and sometimes **Z**), that final letter is **doubled**. This protects the short vowel from being "stolen" by suffixes.

FF

off
cliff
stuff
puff
bluff
stiff
sniff

LL

bell
tell
well
fill
hill
doll
full
all
ball

SS

miss
boss
class
dress
bless
grass
cross
kiss

ZZ

buzz
fuzz
jazz
fizz
frizz

WHY DOUBLE?

If "bell" were spelled "bel"...

bel + ing = beling
Syllable split: be-ling (V/CV)
The E becomes an **open syllable** → long sound!
But bell's E is short **ĕ** 

Doubling LL protects the short vowel

bell + ing = bell-ing
LL "locks" the E in a **closed syllable**
E stays short ✓
The double letter = built-in protection!

Common Exceptions (Not Doubled)

if of us bus gas yes this pal

Pattern: exceptions are usually **extremely common short words** (spelling simplified over time) or **borrowed words** (bus from Latin "omnibus")

FLOSS vs The Doubling Rule

FLOSS: The word itself has the double letter (bell, miss, off) → don't double again when adding suffixes

Doubling Rule: You double when adding a suffix (hop → hopping)

Compare: kiss + ing = kissing (SS already there) vs hop + ing = hopping (need to double P)

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4 LETTERS THAT CAN'T END A WORD

English has forbidden endings — and clever disguises to get around them

🚫 English Has 4 Forbidden Final Letters

Ever wonder why "I" is **my** not **mi**? Why "give" has a silent E? English has an ancient rule: the letters **I, U, V, and J** cannot end a word. They must put on a "disguise" instead.

① NO FINAL I → USE Y INSTEAD

When a word needs to end with the /i/ sound, use **Y** instead of I. This is why Y says long I at the end of one-syllable words!

~~mi~~ ~~cri~~ ~~ski~~
my **cry** **sky**

MORE EXAMPLES

⚠️ ONE EXCEPTION

fly, why, try, dry, by, spy ski (borrowed from Norwegian)

② NO FINAL U → USE UE OR EW

Option A: Add a Silent E → **UE** (blue, true)
Option B: Swap to **EW** (new, few)

~~blu~~ ~~nu~~ ~~tru~~
blue **new** **true**

UE WORDS

EW WORDS

glue, clue, due, rescue few, grew, blew, drew

③ NO FINAL V → ADD SILENT E → VE

⚠️ This E only prevents V from ending the word — it does **NOT** make the vowel long!

"have" still has short A, "love" still has short O

~~hav~~ ~~giv~~ ~~lov~~
have **give** **love**

MORE EXAMPLES

💡 KEY POINT

live, solve, nerve, serve, twelve Silent E's only job here = prevent V at the end

④ NO FINAL J → USE GE OR DGE

After a **short vowel** → DGE (badge, edge, bridge)

After a **long vowel or consonant** → GE (age, page, change)

~~badj~~ ~~ej~~ ~~bridj~~
badge **age** **bridge**

DGE (AFTER SHORT VOWEL)

GE (AFTER LONG VOWEL/CONSONANT)

badge, edge, bridge, judge, fudge age, page, huge, stage, change

📄 QUICK REFERENCE

🚫 FORBIDDEN	✅ DISGUISE	EXAMPLES
Final I	→ Y	my, cry, fly, sky
Final U	→ UE or EW	blue, true / new, few
Final V	→ VE (add Silent E)	have, give, love, live
Final J	→ GE or DGE	age, page / badge, edge

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MAGIC E RULES

How one silent letter changes everything about vowel sounds

What is Magic E?

When a word ends in a **silent E**, it "reaches over" the consonant and makes the vowel before it say its **long sound** (its letter name). The E itself is silent — you don't pronounce it. This pattern is also called **Silent E**, **Bossy E**, or **VCe** (Vowel-Consonant-e).

✗ WITHOUT MAGIC E — SHORT VOWEL

hop	short O → /hŏp/
cub	short U → /kŭb/
kit	short I → /kĭt/
cap	short A → /kăp/
pet	short E → /pĕt/

✦ WITH MAGIC E — LONG VOWEL

hope	long O → /hōp/
cube	long U → /kūb/
kite	long I → /kīt/
cape	long A → /kāp/
Pete	long E → /pēt/

THE 5 JOBS OF SILENT E

- 1 Makes the vowel LONG (VCe pattern)**
The most common job. E makes the preceding vowel say its name.
cake hope ride cute theme
- 2 Prevents words from ending in V or U**
English words don't end in V or U, so E is added. The vowel stays short.
have give love blue true
- 3 Softens C and G**
E after C makes /s/ sound; E after G makes /j/ sound.
dance ice page huge change
- 4 Prevents words from ending in S alone**
Every English word needs a vowel. E stops words from looking plural.
house purse cause nurse
- 5 Makes TH say /ð/ (voiced TH)**
In some words, the final E signals the TH is voiced, not voiceless.
breathe bathe loothe

⚠ Watch Out — Common Exceptions

come, some, done, gone, none — E doesn't make the vowel long (these are irregular)

are, were — R-controlled vowels override Magic E

have, give, live — Job #2 words (E prevents ending in V, vowel stays short)

love, dove, glove — Historical spelling, vowel stays short

📖 Magic E Word Wall — Practice These!

make	time	home	name	life	note	rule	line	fire	smile
safe	place	share	bone	slide	prize	shape	space		

SOFT C & G VS HARD C & G

The same letter changes its sound depending on what comes next

C and G Are "Two-Faced" Letters

C sometimes says /k/ (hard) and sometimes /s/ (soft). G sometimes says /g/ (hard) and sometimes /j/ (soft). The secret? It's all about the letter that follows. The letters E, I, Y act as "softening agents" for C and G.

HARD C = /K/

cat C + A → /k/

cup C + U → /k/

come C + O → /k/

class C + consonant → /k/

SOFT C = /S/

cent C + E → /s/

city C + I → /s/

cycle C + Y → /s/

dance Silent E softens

HARD G = /G/

game G + A → /g/

go G + O → /g/

gun G + U → /g/

green G + consonant → /g/

SOFT G = /J/

gem G + E → /j/

giant G + I → /j/

gym G + Y → /j/

change Silent E softens

THE CORE RULE

C/G + E, I, Y → Soft (C=/s/, G=/j/)

C/G + A, O, U, consonant → Hard (C=/k/, G=/g/)

Remember: "E-I-Y make C and G go soft"

Common G Exceptions — Just Remember This Sentence

"Get the girl a gift"

get

give

girl

gift

tiger

finger

begin

These words have G before E/I but still say hard /g/ — they come from Old Germanic origins. Soft C has almost no exceptions!

Silent E Can Also Soften C & G

Some words have a final E not to make the vowel long, but to keep C/G soft:
dance (E keeps C = /s/), ice, large (E keeps G = /j/), change

THE VOWEL TEAM POSITION RULE

Same sound, different spelling — it all depends on where it sits in the word

I AND U CAN'T STAND AT THE END

Use I / U in the middle → Use Y / W at the end

AI / AY — BOTH SAY LONG A

MIDDLE → AI

rain

train

wait

mail

END → AY

day

play

stay

say

OI / OY — BOTH SAY /OI/

MIDDLE → OI

coin

join

voice

END → OY

boy

toy

joy

AU / AW — BOTH SAY /AW/

MIDDLE → AU

cause

pause

sauce

END (OR BEFORE N/L) → AW

saw

draw

dawn

OU / OW — BOTH SAY /OU/

MIDDLE → OU

house

mouse

cloud

END (OR BEFORE N/L) → OW

now

cow

down

QUICK REFERENCE

SOUND	MIDDLE	END	EXAMPLES
long A	AI	AY	rain / day
/oi/	OI	OY	coin / boy
/aw/	AU	AW	cause / saw
/ou/	OU	OW	house / now

⚠ Watch Out

OW has two sounds: /ou/ (now, how, cow) AND long O (snow, grow, show) — context determines which
Suffixes don't change the base spelling: play → playing (NOT plaining)

THE 3 ROLES OF THE LETTER Y

One letter, three completely different sounds based on position

🦎 Y Is the Chameleon of the Alphabet

Y is the only letter that can act as **both a consonant and a vowel**. Its sound depends entirely on its **position** in the word. Master this rule and you'll never mispronounce a Y-word again!

① CONSONANT: Y AT THE START = /Y/

yes

you

When Y begins a word or syllable, it's a consonant — a quick, light sound as the tongue rises

MORE EXAMPLES

yellow, year, young, yard, yoga, yawn

💡 TIP

If Y starts the word, it's always a consonant

② LONG I: Y AT THE END OF 1-SYLLABLE WORDS

my

fly

In one-syllable words, Y at the end says /i/ (long I). English doesn't allow the letter I at the end of a word, so **Y takes its place**.

MORE EXAMPLES

cry, sky, why, try, dry, by, spy, fry

💡 MEMORY SENTENCE

"My sky, why cry?" — all long I!

③ LONG E: Y AT THE END OF MULTI-SYLLABLE WORDS

happy

baby

In words with 2+ syllables, Y at the end says /ē/ (long E). This is the **most common Y pattern** — tons of adjectives and nouns end this way.

MORE EXAMPLES

funny, candy, family, story, easy, lucky

💡 HOW TO CHECK

Count syllables first! 2+ syllables + final Y = /ē/

④ SHORT I: Y IN THE MIDDLE OF A WORD

gym

myth

When Y appears in the middle of a word (no other vowels nearby), it says /i/ (short I). These words usually come from **Greek**.

MORE EXAMPLES

symbol, system, mystery, rhythm, hymn

💡 ORIGIN

Greek loanwords often use Y where I would go

📄 QUICK REFERENCE CHART

POSITION OF Y	ROLE	SOUND	EXAMPLES
Beginning	Consonant	/y/	yes, you, yellow, year
End (1 syllable)	Vowel	/i/ long I	my, cry, fly, sky, why
End (2+ syllables)	Vowel	/ē/ long E	baby, happy, funny, family
Middle	Vowel	/i/ short I	gym, myth, symbol, system

🎯 Rule: Y at the front is a consonant, at the end of 1 syllable = /i/, at the end of 2+ = /ē/

Counting syllables: Put your hand under your chin, say the word slowly — each time your chin drops is one syllable.
my → 1 drop → 1 syllable → /i/ | ba-by → 2 drops → 2 syllables → /ē/

⚠️ Don't Forget: Y Also Makes Teams!

When Y pairs with another vowel, look at the whole team:

AY = /ā/ (day, play, say) | OY = /oi/ (boy, joy, toy) | EY = /ē/ (key, monkey)

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