Somewhere along about the Third Grade we discovered that certain words are not pronounced at all the way they should be from their spellings. Remember PNEUMONIA with a silent P?

Logological research in this area appears to have been restricted to single letters. A list of 26 words containing the 26 silent letters and a corresponding list in which a letter sound appears without the letter was printed in the August 1970 issue of Word Ways (both lists were originally compiled by Dmitri Borgmann).

Most people know WORCESTERSHIRE has a silent RCE. Some also know that BROUGHAM has a silent UGHA.

Yet the Merriam-Webster dictionaries furnish us with a number of examples in which the pronunciation adds letters. Whereas the U.S. in U.S. ARMY is pronounced "u-s" , the D.F. in MEXICO D.F. is (with a Spanish accent) "distrito federal". And, OO GAGE is "double-o gage". Also, AAA is "a-a-a" or "triple-a".

Watch out for V. In V-BELT it is "vee", in PARA BROWN V it is "vee" or "five", and in GEORGE V COAST it is "the fifth".

Beware of X. In X-AXIS it is "ex", in XMAS it is "chris" or "ex", and in XP it is "chi".

Abbreviations from Latin are treated in a variety of ways:
(1) Sometimes the pronunciation is ignored, as EG (exempli gratia, for example), CA (circa, about), and NB (nota bene, note well).
(2) Sometimes it is the sounds of the letters and the English translation: QV is "q-vee" and "which see", and (in reverse order) IE is "that is" and "1-e".
(3) Sometimes it is the English translation, the Latin words, and the abbreviation pronounced as a word: ETC as "and so forth", sometimes "et cetera", also "ets", and (to be thoroughly inconsistent) VIZ as "namely", "viz", and "videlicet".