THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

SUSAN THORPE
Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, England
thorpeds@hotmail.com

The Long And The Short Of It is devoted to long and short vowel sounds of the same vowel, in various guises. No extraneous vowels are allowed. Long vowel sounds are underlined; short vowel sounds are italicised.

Almost all the words can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary 2nd Ed. and conform to the phonetics therein.

PHONETIC SYMBOLS USED FOR A, E, I, O AND U

short vowel sounds:

æ (as in CAN, WAAL, YAAS, LAUGH, DRAUGHT)

I (as in FIG, BISCUIT, WILITIES)

Λ (as in PLUS, ROUGH, BLOOD)

long vowel sounds:

ei (as in BASS, GAiT, VEIN, BRAE, GAOL)
iː (as in BE, FLEA, BEEN, BRIEF, CEIL, BLAE, DIX)
ai (as in FIND, DIE, GNEISS, TAI)
juː (as in MU, DUE, FEUD, QUEUE, LIEU)

The above words use only vowels to make long and short vowel sounds but long vowel sounds can also be made from adjacent vowel/consonant mixes.

ei (as in EH, SLEIGH, DEIGN, WEGHT)
ai (as in HEIGHT, SIGH)

SCEAUX

juː (as in STEW, VIEW)

SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS

the same single letter represents the same short vowel sound
AFGHAN HANDCLAP ANTHRAX PHALANX JACKASS
EFFECT TENREC – an insectivorous mammal EGGSHELL
IMPRINT FINISH DISTRICT INFILLING VISITING
DIMINISHING MISSISSIPPI SIGILLISTIC – pertaining to seals PRIMITIVISTIC
OBLONG ONCOST ONDOL – Korean form of domestic heating HUBBUB SUNUP DUMBSTRUCK UNSUNG MUCKLUCK NUMSKULL

2 different single letters represent the same short vowel sound
JIFFY SKIMPY SIXTY SILLY PYRRHIC CYRILLIC CYLINDRICAL SICILY MIMICRY
INDIVISIBILITY MIDGET FIDGET WIDGET
3 different single letters represent the same short vowel sound
FIDGETY WITCHETTY - name of a grub  CICELY - various umbelliferous plants  CLINKETY
KITCHENY SYNTHESIS  INDEFINITY IMBECILITY INFELICITY
BUSYING BUSYSH

the same short vowel sound is represented both by a single letter and by a group of 2 vowels
BACK-DRAUGHT
WELL-READ BEDSPREAD
INBUILT BISCUIT  WILLIES INDIE
HOG-TROUGH COUGHDROP
UNROUGH BLOOD-SUCK

LONG VOWEL SOUNDS

the same single letter represents the same long vowel sound
MALA fide  EWE (pronounced AWA) - an African language  MTEPE (pron. MTAPA) - East African sailing craft
MEZE (pron. MAZA) - type of hors-d'oeuvres  REGGE (pron. RAGGA) - an Italian physicist
THEBE (pron. THABA) - a currency unit of Botswana  KERES (pron. KARAS) - a Pueblo Indian people
HEBE FII IVI (pron. EVE) - the Tahitian chestnut
ITI - Italian  HIFI NISI - decree nisi  GLYCYL - univalent radical derived from glycine
POLO KOMODO COCOBOLO - a central American tree

2 different single letters represent the same long vowel sound
VADE
VICHY PEWIT ELVY - Cathedral
IDRYL - a chemical  IDYL - type of short poem  THYMI - pl. thymus  VINYL

the same long vowel sound is represented both by a single letter and by more than one letter
A-TRAIN - satellite constellation
REHEAT DEBRIEF SPECIES MESEEMS TEPEE
HINDSIGHT SKYLIGHT
OBOE COCOA GO-SLOW
JUDEW

the same long vowel sound is represented twice by more than one letter
RAILWAY HAYWAIN LAISSEZ HEYDAY MAIGRET STRAIGHTWAY
EASTLEIGH SEAWEED
EYETIE EYEBRIGHT PIE-EYED
ROW-BOAT GO-SLOW
... and by the same letter group: MAINTAIN SIEGFRIED EINSTEIN OWN-GROWN JEWMEW

LONG AND SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS

the same single letter represents both long and short vowel sounds
ABAC - an alignment chart  ABRAM
RECESS DEFECT JESSE
SMILING CRISIS BJID VILLI
PHOTON ROBOT OSLO PROLONG GROTTO POSTBOX BRONCO
TUMULT
2 different single letters represent long and short vowel sounds
MATÈ SAKÉ ABBÈ CAFÈ JASPÈ — resembling jasper PÂTÈ HALLÈ ANDRÈ — as in André Rieu
SEAT — car (pron. SÀAT) DEHÀCHÈ
PENNÌ (pron. PENNE) — a Finnish monetary unit
IDLY IVY IMPLY TRY/NG CYCLIC HYBR/D
TIGRESS (pron. TIGR/IS)
... in addition, one of the 2 different letters may also represent both the long and short vowel sounds:
CYSTITIS TYP/FY/NG

3 identical letters represent 2 long and 1 short vowel sounds
ENSETE
IRITIS
BONOBQ
USUFRUCT

3 identical letters represent 1 long and 2 short vowel sounds
RE-CEMENT
DI/CL/NIC DIVIDING MISTIMING MIDWIFISH
MONOCOT MONDONGO

a single letter represents the short vowel sound; and more than one letter the long vowel sound
BALLET TRACKWAY PLÁNTAIN CAMPAIGN CALAIS ABSEIL
DEBRIS TEALESS GENTEEL THERMÆ (pron. THERME)
TIFFIN EYESTRING SEISMIC LEIBNITZ FEISTY INSIGN INDICT INSIGHT BUYING
HOLLOW OXBOB CROSSBOW BEAU-POT
UNDUE SUNDREW NEW-SPRUNG NEW-CUT YOU-UNS

a single letter represents the long vowel sound; more than one letter represents the short vowel sound
DEHEAD
PRICEY CRJKEY

more than one letter represents the short vowel sound; more than one letter the long vowel sound
DRAUGHT-WAY
SWEETBREAD
HEINIE — German soldier
DOUGH-TROUGH
ROUGH-HEWN

REPLACING THE LONG VOWEL SOUND WITH THE SHORT VOWEL SOUND or vv.

In some cases, where a long vowel sound is represented by a group of 2 vowels, one of the 2 vowels can be removed to make a word with the equivalent short vowel sound. Together these two words sometimes make a logical configuration; sometimes different tenses.
Logical Configurations
BAIT BAT CAIN CAN RAIN RAN MAIM MAM
vv...SAL’S SAILS AL’S ALS BRAD’S BRAIDS and LAD LAID MAD MAID!

BEAT BET MEAN MEN LEAN LEN NEAT NET DEAN’S DENS
FREED FRED STEEP STEP KEEN KEN CHIEF CHEF
vv...BEN’S BEANS BEST BEAST GREG GRIEG (coined name) SHREK’S SHRIEKS
vv...HIST! HEIST
vv...TOD’S TOADS GOT GOAT

Different Tenses
LEAD...LED BLEED...BLED BRED...BRED FEED...FED MEET...MET

In other cases, where the long vowel sound is represented by a group of one vowel and one or more consonants, the consonants can be removed to make a word with the equivalent short vowel sound. These two words together sometimes make a logical configuration.

Logical Configurations
SLIGHT SLIT
vv...SIS SIGHTS LIT LIGHT

THE PROPER COMMONS

J. JAMES MANCUSO
Niskayuna, New York

The challenge is to create prose using capitionyms-- words that are both proper and common nouns, and write parallel sentences. You must use them all as proper nouns in one, and then as common nouns, in the same order, in the companion sentence.

Here’s an example:

From March to May, Ford, a Polish Catholic from Buffalo, will study Mars as he travels from Turkey with Herb to China to meet up with Nick. Last year during Lent, he studied the Book of Job with another Pole from Nice, France, as they traveled from Reading, PA to Lima, OH in their Fiat. Next August, he and Bill, Tom, Rich, Peter, and Will plan to study Mosaic law.

As he does march there, he may ford many rivers, polish his knowledge of the church catholic, buffalo his companions, and though he mars his cuffs, he will eat turkey seasoned with an herb on fine china that is without a blemish or a nick. Since he lent out his book of jobs available, he decided to pole his way down river having a nice time reading about everything from lima beans to the Pope’s latest fiat. Such an august topic does far outweigh consideration of his phone bill and tom cats. Though rich with meaning, it will no doubt peter out, and they will then tour the mosaic tile sculptures.