	Vowel Team	Rule	Examples	Tips for Teaching
1.	**'ai'** tr*ai*n, /ā/	Use at the beginning or in the middle of a word	r*ai*n, tr*ai*n, g*ai*t, expl*ai*n, compl*ai*n	Introduce 'ai' and 'ay' together in the same lesson. Instruction will include: • words with 'ai', 'ay', 'a', and 'a_e' spellings • homophones like *plain* and *plane* During the dictation portion of the lesson, remind students to listen for the location of the 'a' sound in the word in order to make their spelling choice.
	'ay' h*ay*, /ā/	Use at the end of a word	st*ay*, pl*ay*, pathw*ay*, Sund*ay*, tod*ay*, railw*ay*	
2.	**'oa'** b*oa*t, /ō/	Use at the beginning or middle of a word	b*oa*t, **oa**t, s**oa**k, c**oa**ch, s**oa**p, charc**oa**l, **oa**tmeal	Introduce 'oa' and 'ow' together in the same lesson. Instruction will include: • words with 'oa', 'ow', 'o', and 'o_e' spellings • homophones like *no* and *know* Remind students that when they hear /ō/ at the end of a word, it will likely be spelled with 'ow'. The words *toe* and *foe* are rare exceptions.
	'ow' sn*ow*, /ō/	Use at the end of a word, or before a final 'n' to spell /ō/	sn*ow*, fl*ow*, bl*ow*, bl*ow*n, sh*ow*, sh*ow*n, fl*ow*n	
3.	**'igh'** l*igh*t, /ī/	Use at the end of a word and often before a final 't'	l*igh*t, h*igh*, n*igh*t, r*igh*t, l*igh*t, f*igh*t, sl*igh*t, fr*igh*t	Instruction will include: • words with 'igh', 'i', and 'i_e' spellings • homophones like *night* and *knight* It is more common to use 'i_e', unless it is before a final 't'.

	Vowel Team	Rule	Examples	Tips for Teaching
4.	**'ee'** *tr**ee**, /ē/*	Use at the beginning, middle, or end of words (*eel, greed, see*)	*tr**ee**, **ee**l, gr**ee**d, st**ee**p, sl**ee**t, sp**ee**d, n**ee**d, br**ee**d*	Introduce 'ee' and 'ea' together in the same lesson. Instruction will include: • words with 'ee', 'ea', 'e', and 'e_e' spellings • homophones like *meet* and *meat* Because there is no clear spelling rule on when to use 'ee' or 'ea', you will need to use keywords to scaffold the dictation portion of your lesson. You might say, "It's the 'ee', /ē/, like *tree*," or "It's the 'ea', /ē/, like *eat*."
	'ea' ***ea**t, /ē/*	Use at the beginning, middle, or end of words	***ea**t, cl**ea**n, s**ea**, ch**ea**p, s**ea**t, sp**ea**k, l**ea**p, h**ea**p*	
5.	**'oi'** *b**oi**l, /oi/*	Use at the beginning or in the middle of words or syllables	*b**oi**l, **oi**l, v**oi**d, h**oi**st, p**oi**nt, j**oi**n, av**oi**d, t**oi**let, **oi**ntment*	Introduce 'oi' and 'oy' together in the same lesson. Instruction will include words with 'oi' and 'oy' spellings. During the dictation portion of the lesson, remind students to listen for the location of the /oy/ sound in the word in order to make their spelling choice.
	'oy' *t**oy**, /oi/*	Use at the end of words	*t**oy**, b**oy**, ann**oy**, enj**oy**, destr**oy**, empl**oy***	
6.	**'oo'** *b**oo**k, /o͝o/*	Use in the middle of a word	*b**oo**k, st**oo**d, sh**oo**k, h**oo**k, l**oo**k, t**oo**k, Br**oo**ke, n**oo**k, w**oo**d, h**oo**d, f**oo**t*	When introducing the vowel team 'oo' it is important to explicitly teach that it can make two different sounds. Start with the /o͝o/, as in *book*, which will be a new sound that students do not have a spelling for yet.

Scope and Sequence for Teaching Vowel Teams
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	Vowel Team	Rule	Examples	Tips for Teaching
7.	**'oo'** *br**oo**m*, /o͞o/	Use in the middle or at the end of a word	*br**oo**m, n**oo**n, z**oo**, f**oo**d, m**oo**n, c**oo**l, dr**oo**l, t**oo**l, b**oo**, aftern**oo**n, G**oo**fy, m**oo**d*	When introducing the vowel team 'oo' it is important to explicitly teach that it can make two different sounds. After students have learned the /o͞o/ sound introduce /o͝o/, as in *broom*, another new sound that students do not have a spelling for yet.
8.	**'ou'** **ou**ch, /ow/	Use at the beginning or middle of a word	**ou**ch, **ou**st, c**ou**nt, h**ou**se, gr**ou**nd, c**ou**nter, th**ou**sand, c**ou**ncil	Introduce 'ou' and 'ow' together in the same lesson. Instruction will include words with 'ou' and 'ow' spellings. There are a few exceptions where 'ou' in the middle of the word does not say /ow/ (*couple, trouble, cousin, would*). There are some exceptions when 'ow' says /ow/ before other letters, like in *crowd,* or when 'ou' says /ow/ before 'l' or 'n', like in *foul and noun*.
	'ow' c**ow**, /ow/	Use at the end of a word or before a final 'l', 'n', 'er' or 'el'	c**ow**, br**ow**, h**ow**, **ow**l, h**ow**l, fr**ow**n, d**ow**n, t**ow**el, p**ow**er, sh**ow**er	

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	Vowel Team	Rule	Examples	Tips for Teaching
9.	**'au'** Au*gust*, /aw/	Use at the beginning or middle of a word	**Au***gust*, **au***thor*, *v***au***lt*, *l***au***ndry*, *ex***hau***st*	Because there is no clear spelling rule on when to use 'au' or 'aw', you will need to use keywords to scaffold the dictation portion of your lesson. You might say, "It's the 'au', /aw/, like *August*," or "It's the 'aw', /aw/, like *saw*."
	'aw' *s***aw**, /aw/	Use at the beginning or end of a word, or before a final 'l', 'n' or 'k'	*s***aw**, **aw***e*, *cr***aw***l*, *d***aw***n*, *h***aw***k*, *dr***aw**, *y***aw***n*, *f***aw***n*, *squ***aw***k*	
10.	**'ea'** *br***ea***d*, /ĕ/	Use in the middle of a word and often before 'd', 'th', or '-sure'	*br***ea***d*, *h***ea***d*, *dr***ea***d*, *d***ea***d*, *spr***ea***d*, *w***ea***ther*, *m***ea***sure*	

Note: These are just some of the most common vowel teams. We provide a more in-depth look at these patterns because you will probably spend time explicitly teaching each of them. Other vowel teams are not as common in English words so they have not been included here. See **A Guide for Teaching the Letters and Sounds** for a comprehensive list of all letters and sounds in the Roman alphabet.

Visit the **Vowel Teams Skills Explainer** for step-by-step guidance on how to explicitly teach these vowel spellings.

ai

ai, *train*, /ā/
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Back

Teacher Tip: Copy the key points from this guide onto the backside of your vowel team flash cards for quick reference during instruction.