## HARD WORDS

## An Introduction to Clear Alphabet

I. English is not a phonetic language. It does not sound like it is written. It does not look like it is pronounced.
2. We can use Clear Alphabet to write the sounds of words, e.g. 'happy' = Ha pii. Clear Alphabet uses the normal Roman alphabet (abc) to represent the 48 sounds of English. [LINK]
3. There are 48 sounds in English but only 26 letters, so there is not a letter to represent each sound. Individual letters have to represent different sounds, e.g. 'a' is short in 'mat', but long in 'mate'.
4. There are 23 vowel sounds: 8 short, 5 long, and 10 diphthongs (double sounds).
5. There are 25 consonant sounds: 15 voiced (using the vocal cords) and 10 unvoiced (not using the vocal cords).
6. Each sound has its own identifier, e.g. short 'e' is written: $e$, while long ' $e$ ' is written ee. Each sound is always written the same way, so you always know how to pronounce it, e.g. 'cake' = Keik, and 'grain' = Grein.
7. In Clear Alphabet we can see the sounds, syllables, and stressed syllable in a word. Syllables are separated by one space. The stressed syllable begins with a capital letter, e.g. elephant = E I fnt.
8. Vowel sounds are made when air is not obstructed (free to move); consonant sounds are made by obstructing the air. Voiced consonant sounds are pronounced with the voice (vocal cords), while unvoiced consonant sounds do not need the voice. There are 8 consonant sound pairs, which are technically the same sound, but with a voiced and unvoiced version, e.g. $t$ and $d$ and $k$ and g. ( $t$ and $k$ are unvoiced while $d$ and g are voiced.)
9. The schwa sound is represented by uh in Clear Alphabet, but rarely, e.g. awake = uh Weik. It is more common for the schwa sound to be embedded at the end of a consonant sound, e.g. 'better' = Be t, or as part of a consonant cluster, e.g. 'garden' = Gar dn. When pronounced on their own all consonant sounds are followed automatically by a schwa sound. This is called an embedded schwa sound, e.g. doctor = Dok $t$. We know when there is an embedded schwa sound because there is no other vowel sound in the syllable. There must be a vowel sound in each syllable. [LINK]
10. There are a few English words which are phonetic, e.g. week = Week, hand $=$ Hand, frog $=$ Frog. [LINK]

Further resources:

- Clear Alphabet Chart (PDF)
- Clear Alphabet Sounds (MP3)
- Clear Alphabet Flashcards (PDF)
- Clear Alphabet Dictionary (PDF)
- 100 Basic Words with Clear Alphabet (PDF)
- Discussion Words - IPA Comparison (PDF)

