The Problem with English

Letters don’t represent sounds. No one knows what words sound like from reading them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>blue</th>
<th>through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few</td>
<td>shoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>due</td>
<td>boo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Presentation

1. A short History of English showing speaking as a different language than writing

2. The Sounds of English
   1. Consonants – sounds that stop
   2. Vowels – sounds that stretch

3. Take-away pronunciation tools students can use anywhere
The History of English

40 sounds

Spoken English

Angles Saxons Jutes + Vikings + William the Conqueror + William Caxton Printing Press + Newton + world languages + science + technology

450 + 800 + 1066 + 1476 + 1603 + 1684 + 1945 + 1981 + 2008

Catholic Church Latin ABC + Dictionary BBM + Bill Gates + Global English

Written English

26 letters

Old English + Middle English + Modern English + Global English

Written English for Common People + Electronic Messaging

Judy Thompson
I Have a Present For You
Checking in

- **English speaking** as completely separate from English writing
- The history provides **context** for students and their education so far
- It is **not their fault** that their speaking has not gone well

The slate is clean. It’s time for a fresh start. It is time for **change**.
The Power of Pattern

• Right now we teach details. We were trained to teach details.
• Details don’t make a difference
• Pattern is how toddlers pick up their first language, how you cook meals or clear the table, do math, music, drive a car...
• Patterns are the big picture
• Patterns are simple and always true
• www.radicalenglish.com
2. Sounds

There are 40 sounds in English

- 24 consonant sounds
- 16 vowel sounds

- Consonant sounds: STOP
- Vowel sounds: stretch
English Phonetic Alphabet (EPA)
Sound Notation

Explain the notation slash brackets
/makes the sound/

This is a dog.
– it makes the sound /woof/

This is a d - it makes the sound /d/
24 English Consonant Sounds

18 familiar
b, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, z
/b/ /d/ /f/ /g/ /h/ /j/ /k/ /l/ /m/ /n/ /p/ /r/ /s/ /t/ /v/ /w/ /y/ /z/

6 new
Sh, Ch, TH, Th, Ng, Zh
/Sh/ /Ch/ /TH/ /Th/ /Ng/ /Zh/
EPA Consonants

_ b _ d _ f g h _ j k l m n _ p _ r s t _ v w _ y z

/sh/ - shoe, sugar, nation, machine*
/ch/ - church, cello, picture
/TH/ - thing, thank, both, teeth
/Th/ - the, them, these, mother, brother
/Ng/ - singing, pink
/zh/ - genre, Asia, garage, usual, Taj Mahal

(* Transformation)
Old Friends

Old Friends

We walked and talked
And talked and walked
Walked and talked
Talked and walked

Ol’ Frenz

we wakt an takt
an takt an wakt
wakt an takt
takt an wakt

(* Transformation)
www.englishphoneticalphabet.pbworks.com
16 English Vowel Sounds

• The first thing people learn in a new language is the **names of the colors**

• Inside the names of 16 common colors in English are the **16 vowel sounds** of English

• Students learn the **colors of words** and crazy English **spelling is no longer a barrier** to confident speaking
## Thompson Vowel Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color Word</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>EPA</th>
<th>Phonetic Spelling</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gray</td>
<td>![Gray Color]</td>
<td>/Ay/</td>
<td>/grAy/</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>![Black Color]</td>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>/blak/</td>
<td>mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green</td>
<td>![Green Color]</td>
<td>/Ey/</td>
<td>/grEyn/</td>
<td>Pete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td>![Red Color]</td>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>/red/</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>gold</td>
<td>![Gold Color]</td>
<td>/Ow/</td>
<td>/gOwld/</td>
<td>note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olive</td>
<td>![Olive Color]</td>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>/oliv/</td>
<td>not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>![Blue Color]</td>
<td>/Uw/</td>
<td>/blUw/</td>
<td>cute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mustard</td>
<td>![Mustard Color]</td>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>/mustErd/</td>
<td>cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wood</td>
<td>![Wood Color]</td>
<td>/^/</td>
<td>/w^d/</td>
<td>good</td>
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<tr>
<td>turquoise</td>
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<td>boy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>/Or/</td>
<td>/Orenj/</td>
<td>door</td>
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Turn the card around slowly

Can you think of other words with the sound /Ay/?
What color is rain? Great? Play?

may
play
great
eight
name
rain
hey

/Ay/ gray

/Ayl/
What color is this?

Think of other words with the sound /a/
Spelling Doesn’t Matter Anymore

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may  play  great  eight  name  rain  hey

cat  at  hat  had  laugh  plaid

tree  teeth  meat  me  ski  piece  people

bed  head  said  friend  guest  many

Hot tip: Download the **Flashcard Word List** for crazy spellings of each color
Secret Treasure in the Vowel Chart

• Students understand the most important feature of English organically – you just wake it up in them
• English is a stress-based language
• The stressed syllable determines the color of the word
• Every word in English is a color
  BAnana is not a word
  Neither is banaNA
  The word is baNAna

There are no variations. Banana is a Black word
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What color is your name?

- It is one of the colors on the Thompson Vowel Chart
- Every word in English is somewhere on that chart!
- * Transformation

FYI

Accents don’t matter – everyone has an accent – only word stress matters
If the word-stress isn’t right, a native English speaker can’t guess what is being said
Old Friends

Old Friends
We walked and talked
And talked and walked
Walked and talked
Talked and walked

Ol’ Frenz
we wokt an tokt
an tokt an wokt
wokt an tokt
tokt an wokt
3. Tools and Take-Aways

- Thompson Vowel Chart – Every word in English is a color
- Elastic Band
  English is a stress-based language
- Freedom from constraints of the past. If someone can’t make themselves understood, word stress is the problem not accent or grammar
Take-Away for You

It was my goal to show a new way of looking at Spoken English and how to teach it And to assure you that a full range of materials are available if you are interested

www.englishphoneticalphabet.pbworks.com Teacher Judy’s Sound Dictionary App
Thank you

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I’d love to hear from you.