

7 Schwa Vowels

If you tried to spell all the words on this menu you might be biting off more than you could chew! Many of the words contain schwa vowels. These are vowels in unstressed syllables. Schwa vowels are often difficult to hear and cause many spelling errors.

Supreme Family Restaurant

Chef's Specialties*

Chicken fingers with fries ...	\$8.95
Lasagna	\$9.65
Fresh halibut steaks.....	\$10.95
Smoked salmon	\$12.50

* Served with choice of broccoli or cauliflower

Desserts

Lemon meringue pie ...	\$3.25
Muffin (assorted)	\$0.85

Thinking about Words

1. Say the words muffin, lemon, chicken, and salmon aloud. Listen to the last syllable. The vowel sound you hear in each case is a schwa vowel.

Rewrite these words and circle the schwa vowel. How many different ways is this type of vowel spelled?

2. The pronunciation symbol for schwa vowels is /ə/. Replace this symbol with the correct vowel letter in each of the words below:

a) broccəli b) ləsagna c) cauləflower d) haləbut

Notice that even though the schwa vowel sounds almost identical in each word, the sound is spelled in three different ways.

Word Pattern

The vowel sound in many unstressed syllables is the schwa sound /ə/, as in the second syllable of bacon or family.

account
among
award
cabinet
catalogue
ecology
federal
forgotten
individual
magazine
opinion
relatives
religious
sensible
skeleton

OTHER PATTERNS

*children
*machinery
wrecked
wrench
wriggle

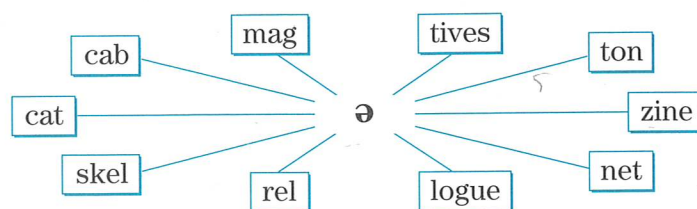
* frequently misspelled word

Working with Words

1. The blanks in the list words below each represent a schwa vowel. Rewrite the words and circle or highlight the letters you have supplied. Notice that the schwa sound can be spelled with any of the vowel letters. That's why it is so tricky!

- a) ecol_gy b) sens_ble c) relig__ _s
d) m_chin_ry e) ind_vidu_l

2. Unscramble the following syllables to make five three-syllable list words. The middle syllable in each word is a schwa vowel.



3. Complete the following analogies with list words:

- a) Province is to country as provincial is to _____.
b) Remembered is to forgotten as silly is to _____.
c) Parents are to offspring as adults are to _____.
d) Team is to athlete as group is to _____.

4. The list words **wrecked**, **wrench**, and **wriggle** all spell the sound /r/ with **wr**. Use the following clues to find other words from this family:

- a) a small bird: wr_ _
b) homophone for what you wear on your finger: wr_ _ _
c) opposite of right: wr_ _ _
d) connected to the hand: wr_ _ _
e) covering or cover: wr_ _ _ _ _

Writing and Revising

1. Behind every restaurant menu are good recipes. Using a food item of your choice, or one from the menu on page 27, find a recipe that contains your chosen item. Rewrite the recipe in your own words so that it is easy to understand.

LANGUAGE MATTERS

Many expressions contain *food* words. How many of these food sayings do you know? Choose a word that fits the blank.

candy ✓	nut ✓	pudding
mustard	potato ✓	sardines
the proof of the _____	a tough _____ to crack ✓	
can't cut the _____	a couch _____ ✓	
packed like _____	like taking _____ from a baby ✓	

2. What kind of food would be served in the “wacky” restaurants listed below? Make up a sample menu for one of them.

- The Whole Food Catalogue
- The Federal Food Cabinet
- Shipwrecked and Wriggled

3. a) A **catalogue** is a list of items in a collection. Think about items for which you have catalogues: books, music, stamps, coins, furniture, clothing, tools, and so on. Use the library to research types of catalogues or scan the ones you have at home.

b) Create a catalogue for something you collect. Consider using word processing, spreadsheet, or database software to record your data. Here is one method you might use to catalogue your music collection.

Artist	CD / Cassette / Album	Label	Date of Recording	Comments

The Editing Desk

Sentences: Sentence Parts A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. Every sentence needs the following:

Subject: what the sentence is about

Action: what the subject is doing

Subjects are usually nouns or groups of words that act as nouns. Action words are verbs. For example, "I agree with you" is a sentence. *I* is the subject and *agree* is the action or verb. The words *with you* complete the sentence by telling something about *I agree*.

Sentences can be made up of one word or many words. How many sentences are there in this paragraph from Martyn Godfrey's *Mystery in the Frozen Lands*?

“That means that the ships were abandoned. But why? Why were they dragging a boat across the ice to the south? Why did they vanish? Why Only the thought that I will know the answers very soon finally allows me to sleep.”

1. Choose six list words and write a sentence for each word. Label the subject and action words in your sentences. (Hint: Some action words can be made up of two words.)

2. Complete these sentences with either a subject or an action word where indicated.

- a) Cleaning up a _____ (subject) can be easy if you know how.
- b) First _____ (action) a bunch of garbage bags and boxes.
- c) Put anything you _____ (action) into bags. These you will _____ (action) away.
- d) Once the _____ (subject) is empty, _____ (action) the door.
- e) Don't let anyone in, not even _____ (subject)!
- f) That way your _____ (subject) will stay _____ (action) forever.

LANGUAGE MATTERS

Here are some famous quotations that people usually misquote. Can you substitute the underlined wording with the correct wording?

- a) "Money is the root of all evil."
- b) "Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no lies."
- c) "Beggars can't be choosers."
- d) "A penny for your thoughts."
- e) "Pride goeth before a fall."

a) The love of money b) fibs c) must be no d) thought e) destruction