

a

Spelling-to-sound

- 1 Where the spelling is **a**, the pronunciation differs according to whether the vowel is short or long, followed or not by **r**, and strong or weak.
- 2 The 'strong' pronunciation is regularly
æ, as in **cat** kæt ('short A'), or
eɪ, as in **face** feɪs ('long A').
- 3 Where **a** is followed by **r**, the 'strong' pronunciation is
ɑː, as in **start** stɑːt || stɑːrt, or
eə || e, as in **square** skweə || skwer;
or, indeed there may be the regular 'short' pronunciation
æ, as in **carol** 'kær əl (although in this position many speakers of GenAm use e, thus 'ker əl).
- 4 Less frequently, the 'strong' pronunciation is
ɑː, as in **father** 'fɑːð ə || 'fɑːð ər,
ɑː || æ, as in **bath** bɑːθ || bæθ,
ɒ || ɑː, as in **watch** wɒtʃ || wɑːtʃ (especially after w),
ɔː, as in **talk** tɔːk (especially before l), **warm** wɔːm || wɔːrm.
- 5 The 'weak' pronunciation is
ə, as in **about** ə 'baʊt, or
ɪ, as in **village** 'vɪl ɪdʒ.
Because of COMPRESSION, **a** is usually silent in the ending **-ally**, as in **basically** 'beɪs ɪk li.
Note that where the spelling is **a** the pronunciation is never ʌ.
- 6 **a** also forms part of the digraphs **ai**, **au**, **aw**, **ay**.

ai, ay

Spelling-to-sound

- 1 Where the spelling is one of the digraphs **ai**, **ay**, the pronunciation is regularly
eɪ, as in **rain** reɪn, **day** deɪ;
or, before **r**,
eə || e, as in **fair** feə || fer.
- 2 Occasionally with these digraphs the pronunciation is 'weak':
ə, as in **curtain** 'kɜːt ən || 'kɜːt ən (for a few speakers ɪ, thus 'kɜːt ɪn), or
ɪ, as in **Murray** 'mʌr ɪ || 'mɜː ɪ, when at the end of a word. (For **Monday**, etc., see note at **-day**.)

A

- 3 Note also the exceptional words **says, said, again, against**, usually pronounced with e.

au, aw Spelling-to-sound

- 1 Where the spelling is one of the digraphs **au** and **aw**, the pronunciation is regularly
 ɔ:, as in **author** 'ɔ:θ ə || 'ɔ:θ ər, **law** lɔ:.
- 2 In a few words, the pronunciation is
 ɑ: || æ, as in **laugh** lɑ:f || læf;
 or, in loanwords from foreign languages,
 əʊ || ou, as in **gauche**, or aʊ, as in **sauerkraut**;
 or, in BrE only,
 ɒ, as in **sausage** 'sɒs ɪdʒ.

A, a name of letter eɪ **A's, As, a's** eɪz

—Communications code name: Alfa
 ,A'1*, ,A-'1; ,A1('M); ,A,30'3 —These
 patterns apply to all British road numbers.
 ,A'4*; ,A4'paper

a indef article, before a consonant sound, strong
 form eɪ, weak form ə —See also an

a Latin prep eɪ ɑ: —See also phrases with this
 word

a, à French prep æ ɑ: —See also phrases with
 this word

a- comb. form 'eɪ, eɪ, 'æ, æ, ə —When it has a
 negative meaning, this prefix is usually eɪ
 (,athe'istic), though in some words there are
 alternative pronunciations with æ or ə
 (,a'moral), and sometimes ə is the only form
 (a'morphous). With other meanings, the
 pronunciation is regularly ə (a'way, a'spire),
 unless stressed because of a suffix, in which case
 it is 'æ (,aspi'ration).

Aachen 'ɑ:k ən —Ger ['ʔa: xən]

aah ɑ: aah'd, aahed ɑ:d aahing, aah'ing
 'ɑ:f ɪŋ || 'ɑ: ɪŋ aahs, aah's ɑ:z

Aalborg 'ɔ:l ɔ:kɔ:g 'ɑ:l- || -bɔ:kɔ:g —Danish
 Ålborg ['ʌl ɔ:kɔ:]

Aalto 'ɑ:lt əʊ || -ou —Finnish ['ɑ:l to]

aardvark 'ɑ:d vɑ:k || 'ɑ:rd vɑ:rk ~s s

aard|wolf 'ɑ:d |wulf || 'ɑ:rd- ~wolves wolvz

Aarhus 'ɔ: hu:s 'ɑ:-, -hus || 'ɔ:r- 'ɑ:r- —Danish
 Århus ['ɔ: hu:'s]

Aaron (i) 'eər ən || 'er ən, (ii) 'ær ən || 'er- —In
 BrE traditionally (i), and still usually so for the
 biblical character; but the personal name may
 nowadays be either (i) or (ii)

Aaronic (i) eə 'rɒn ɪk * || æ 'rɑ:n ɪk e-

ab æb —See also phrases with this word **abs**
 æbz

AB ,eɪ 'bi: ~s, ~'s z

ab- (i) æb, əb —As a true prefix meaning 'away',
 ab- is usually æb, though with unstressed and

reduced-vowel variants (ab'duct). It is always
 'æb when it means 'cgs unit' ('abvolt,
 ,ab'coulomb). With a vaguer meaning, it is
 mostly əb (ab'stain) unless stressed
 ('abdicate, 'abstract).

aback ə 'bæk

Abaco 'æb ə kəʊ || -kou

abacus 'æb ək əs ~es ɪz əz

Abadan ,æb ə 'dɑ:n -'dæn

Abaddon ə 'bæd ən

abaft ə 'bɑ:ft §-'bæft || ə 'bæft

abalone ,æb ə 'ləʊn i || -'louŋ- ~s z

abandon ə 'bænd ən ~ed d ~ing ɪŋ ~s z

abandonment ə 'bænd ən mənt →-əm-

abase ə 'beɪs **abased** ə 'beɪst **abases**

ə 'beɪs ɪz -əz **abasing** ə 'beɪs ɪŋ

abatement ə 'beɪs mənt

abash ə 'bæʃ **abashed** ə 'bæʃt **abashes**

ə 'bæʃ ɪz -əz **abashing** ə 'bæʃ ɪŋ

abashment ə 'bæʃ mənt

abate ə 'beɪt **abated** ə 'beɪt ɪd -əd || ə 'beɪt əd

abates ə 'beɪts **abating** ə 'beɪt ɪŋ || ə 'beɪt ɪŋ

abatement ə 'beɪt mənt ~s s

abatis, abattis 'æb ət ɪs §-əs; ,æb ə 'ti: , ' * * *
 || -ət əs -ə ti: ~es pl after s forms ɪz əz; for
 those who pronounce -ɪ-, the pl is written as the
 sing. but pronounced with added z

abattoir 'æb ə twɑ: || -twɑ:r -twɑ:r ~s z

Abba 'æb ə

abbacy 'æb əs ɪ ~ies ɪz

Abbado ə 'bɑ:d əʊ || -ou —It [ab 'ba: do]

Abbas (i) 'æb əs, (ii) ə 'bɑ:s

Abbasid ə 'bæs ɪd 'æb əs-, §-əd ~s z

abbatial ə 'beɪʃ əl

abbe, abbé, A- 'æb eɪ || æ 'beɪ 'æb eɪ —Fr
 [a be] ~s z

Abberton 'æb ət ən || -ət ən

abbess 'æb es -ɪs, §-əs; æ 'bes || -əs ~es ɪz əz

Abbeville 'æb vɪl 'æb ɪ vɪl, -ə- || æb 'vi:əl
 'æb ɪ vɪl —Fr [ab vil]