

SUBTLE OVERTONES

One of the things that drives ESL students nuts is that other languages are more phonetic than English.

You are to come up with as many different English words (not names) as you can, that contain the unbroken, unhyphenated, sequence “one” —*pronounced differently in each word*. I ended up with 27 words on my list—2 of which I’d never encountered before (hint: one is an phenomenon in astronomy and one is a horse disease). Many pronunciations have more than one word that works: e.g., bone, cone, clone...zone, etc. are all examples of the same “one” sound, so just use one in your solutions list. When you’re done, submit your words, if you like, and I will check off all those that have unique pronunciations.

Here is a system to help you distinguish vowel sounds (n is just n):

a	as in bat
A	as in bait
e	as in bet
E	as in beet
i	as in bit
I	as in bite
o	as in bot
O	as in boat
u	as in butt
oo	as in soot
OO	as in boot
aw	as in bought
ə	as in the first syllable of about (schwa)
-	syllable division (sil-lə-bəl)

So: “one” in the word “bone” = On

Note: if you want to get really fancy, you may count differently stressed combinations of the same sounds as unique. The solution list based on that tweak might be longer than 27 words. I didn't try it. You can notate stress with the symbol ' . Thus, ri-kawrd' is the verb, and re'-kərd is the noun.

Note: Words were checked on the Free Online Dictionary, which cites The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th Edition. Send any solutions you want checked to Jill Tallmer: yidl@mac.com. I'm hoping you all come up with some I didn't find!