

## English Pronunciation: Inconsistencies

In English, many letter combinations have different pronunciations. For example:

oo	–	5 different ways
augh	–	2 different ways
ea	–	3 different ways
ear	–	4 different ways
ough	–	9 different ways (see separate document)

1. The combination of letters '**oo**' can be pronounced in five different ways:

<u>'OO'</u>		<u>'U'</u>	<u>'UR'</u>	<u>'A'</u>	<u>'OW-O'</u>
boom	pool	book	floor	blood	cooperative
boot	roof	cook	moor	flood	coordinate
booze	room	crook			
cool	root	hook			
doom	smooth	foot			
droop	smoothie	look			
food	soon	rook			
fool	spoon	took			
hoop	stool	good			
loop	too	stood			
mood	tool	wool			
moody	tooth				
moon	troop				
noon	zoo				

2. The combination of letters '**augh**' can be pronounced in two different ways:

<u>'OR'</u>	<u>'ARF'</u>
caught	draught (UK) (USA: draft)
daughter	laugh
distraught	laughter
fraught	
naughty	
onslaught	
slaughter	
taught	

3. The combination of letters 'ea' can be pronounced in three different ways:

<u>'EE'</u>		<u>'E'</u>	<u>'AY'</u>
bead	heat	bread	break
beak	lead (verb)	breath	steak
beam	meat	dreamt	
bean	neat	head	
beat	read (present)	lead (metal)	
beast	seat	read (past)	
bleach	speak	threat	
breathe	steam	threaten	
clean	steal		
cream	streak		
deal	stream		
dream	teach		
each	team		
east	treat		
eat	wheat		
flea			

4. The combination of letters 'ear' can be pronounced in four different ways:

<u>'EER'</u>		<u>'AIR'</u>	<u>'UR'</u>	<u>'AR'</u>
appear	rear	bear	earth	heart
beard	sear	pear	heard	
clear	shear	tear (rip)	pearl	
dear	shears	wear		
ear	spear			
fear	tear (cry)			
hear	year			
near				

Video: <https://english.insl.com.br/files/videos/Ear.mp4> (1 min)

**Exercise.** Say the following sentences.

1. **Bread** is made from **wheat**.
2. I can **hear** a **bear**.
3. **Look** at the **moon**.
4. The nurse **took** my **blood** at **noon**.
5. My dad **taught** me how to **laugh** at myself.
6. I **heard** my **heart** **beating** fast.
7. The **head** chef always **cleans** the **steak** before cooking it.
8. The dentist **took** out a **good** **tooth** by mistake.
9. Let's take a **break** from the **cleaning**.
10. My **naughty** **daughter** is **distraught**.