

## English Pronunciation: 'ough'

In English, the combination of letters 'ough' can be pronounced in nine different ways:

- |                         |                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. 'o' as in 'go'       | Example: <b>though</b>                |
| 2. schwa as in 'the'    | Example: <b>thorough</b> <sup>1</sup> |
| 3. 'or' as in 'sort'    | Example: <b>brought</b>               |
| 4. 'off' as in 'coffee' | Example: <b>cough</b>                 |
| 5. 'ow' as in 'cow'     | Example: <b>plough</b> <sup>2</sup>   |
| 6. 'uff' as in 'cuff'   | Example: <b>enough</b>                |
| 7. 'up' as in 'cup'     | Example: <b>hiccough</b> <sup>3</sup> |
| 8. 'oo' as in 'boot'    | Example: <b>through</b> <sup>4</sup>  |
| 9. 'ock' as in 'sock'   | Example: <b>lough</b> <sup>5</sup>    |

1 – schwa (British English) / 'o' as in 'go' (American English)

2 – plough (British English) / plow (American English)

3 – hiccough (British English) / hiccup (American English)

4 – can be written as thru' in American English

5 – Synonyms: lake, loch, lagoon

### Exercise 1.

Listen to your teacher pronounce the following words and repeat them. They are in groups of similar pronunciation.

1) -off	cough	trough		
2) -ort	bought	brought	fought	thought
3) -uff	enough	rough	tough	
4) -ow	bough	plough	drought	
5) -o	though	although	dough	
6) -oo	through			

past forms of verbs:  
buy, bring, fight, think

### Exercise 2.

Some names of cities, towns and districts also use the combination of letters 'ough'. Listen to your teacher say these names and repeat them:

**Slough, Loughborough, Peterborough, Loughton.**

**Exercise 3.** Practise saying these sentences:

- I have a lot of work to do, **though** I'm tired.
- When the going gets **tough**, the **tough** get going.
- Although** I am tired, I must continue working.
- I live near the park, so every day I walk **through** the park to go to work.
- Well, Bob. You have done a **thorough** job with this report – excellent!
- I have always tried to do my best **throughout** my life.
- I **thought** he was **thoroughly** wrong!
- The **tough** cow eats **enough** from the **trough** with its **rough** tongue.
- English is difficult, but it can be learned **through tough thorough thought, though!**

10. **Although I coughed roughly and hiccoughed throughout** the lecture, I **thought** that I could **plough through** it until the end.

11. Don't **hiccough though**, a **rough cough** is **thorough enough**.

**Exercise 4.** Complete the sentences using the given words (use each word once only). Refer to Annex 1 if necessary.

**thorough    though    thought    through    throughout    trough**

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ that you said that you wanted to study French.
2. I have travelled around the world \_\_\_\_\_ my life.
3. He is an extremely \_\_\_\_\_ person. Always perfect details!
4. I will promote her, \_\_\_\_\_ she will have to prove her worth!
5. You need to go \_\_\_\_\_ the shop to get to the parking area.
6. The world's economy is a series of peaks and \_\_\_\_\_ s.

**Exercise 5.** The following list are important words to know. Listen to the teacher say these words, then repeat them:

1	<b>although</b>
2	<b>bought</b> (past of 'buy')
3	<b>brought</b> (past of 'bring')
4	<b>cough</b>
5	<b>enough</b>
6	<b>though</b>
7	<b>thought</b> (past of 'think')
8	<b>through</b>

**Exercise 6.** Repeat this poem after the teacher:

I take it you already know  
Of 'cough', 'enough', 'although' and 'though'?  
Others may hesitate, but not you  
On 'bought', 'brought', 'thought', and 'through'?

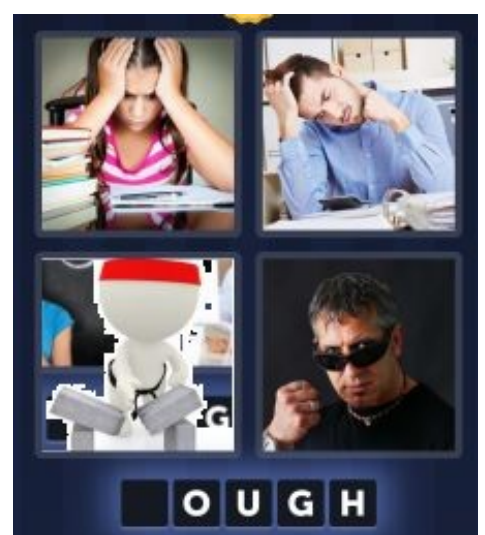
**Exercise 7.** Discover the words.



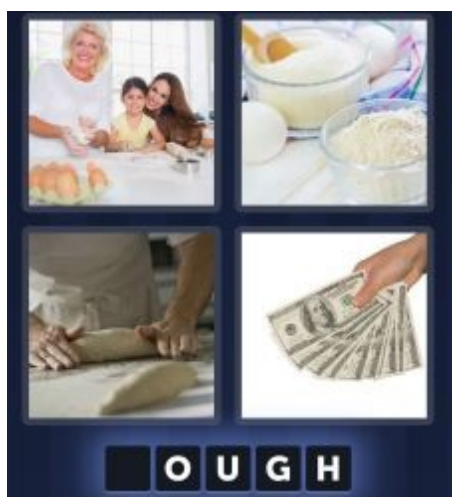
1. \_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_



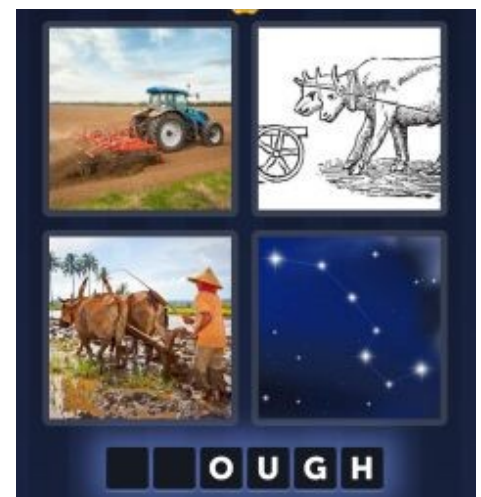
3. \_\_\_\_\_



4. \_\_\_\_\_



5. \_\_\_\_\_



6. \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested videos: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Uqj5L1NreVI> (1 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXamk4NHNz0> (12 mins)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iACq0AM\\_Mx8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iACq0AM_Mx8) (13 mins)

## Annex 1. Translations.

although	embora (no início da frase)
borough	bairro
bough	galho
bought	comprei/comprou/etc.
brought	trouxe/trouxemos/etc.
cough	tossir/tosse
dough	massa/dinheiro (informal)
drought	seca
enough	suficiente
fought	lutei/lutou/etc.
hiccough	solução
lough	lago
plough	arado
rough	áspero/violento/rascunho/difícil
thorough	minucioso/meticuloso
though	embora
thought	pensei/pensou/etc.
through	através
throughout	ao longo de
tough	duro/difícil
trough	cocho/baixa *

\* peaks and troughs = altas e baixas

