

Exercise 1: Spelling English Phonemes

1. How many ways are there to spell the /sh/ sound in English?

Most people can easily name several, such as sh (as in *ship*), ti (as in *motion*), and ch (as in *chef*). However, the same people can read *ocean*, *social*, *special*, *tension*, *session*, *mission*, *sure*, and *conscience* even though they didn't list ce, ci, si, ssi, s, or sci as spellings for the /sh/ sound. They "just know" how to pronounce those words because they've seen them in print and read them over and over and over again during the course of their reading lives.

2. How many ways are there to spell the short /ě/ sound in English?

Again, most people can list several: e (as in *bed*), ie (as in *friend*), and ea (as in *bread*). But without consciously being aware that the /ě/ sound can also appear as ae, ai, ay, ei, u, a, and eo, the same people can still read and properly pronounce *aesthetic*, *said*, *says*, *heifer*, *bury*, *many*, and *leopard*. Here again, most skilled readers have some conscious orthographic knowledge; however, it pales in comparison to what they know implicitly and unconsciously.

For a complete list of the forty-four English phonemes and various spellings for them, see appendix E. (Visit go.SolutionTree.com/instruction to access appendices E, F, and G.)