

THE SILENT DETECTIVE

Some letters do their job without making a sound. Your case: catch them.



Lead Investigator: Penelope

A thief has been swiping the silent letters out of words — leaving them spelled the way they SOUND. Restore every word to its true spelling.

The Case Opens

Every vowel has two jobs — and a thief in town.



CASE FILE: Sam “Sound-It-Out” Shortchange is stealing **SILENT** letters. Words are being left spelled just the way they sound. Only a detective who knows the rules can fix them.

THE BIG IDEA

Every vowel — **a e i o u** — has **two jobs**.

Short sound: the quick sound in cat, pig, dog.

Long sound: the vowel says its own **name**, like in cake, bike, home.

Here’s the secret the thief hopes you don’t know: when a vowel says its **name**, there is almost always an **extra letter** making it happen — and that letter is often **silent**. Find the silent helper, and you spell the word right.

- 1** Warm-up. Say each word out loud. Does the vowel say its **NAME** (long) or make a **short** sound? Circle one.

cake

long

short

cat

long

short

bike

long

short

pig

long

short

home

long

short

cup

long

short

Detective’s tip: if the vowel says its name, hunt for the silent helper. That’s your first clue on every case.

- 2** Sort the clues. Write **short** or **long** next to each word.

a) cat _____

b) cake _____

c) rain _____

d) hop _____

e) boat _____

f) pig _____

The Magic-E

The silent letter that wakes a sleeping vowel.

RULE 1 • MAGIC-E

A silent **e** at the end of a word reaches back over **one** consonant and makes the vowel say its **name**. The **e** makes no sound of its own — that's why the thief can sneak it away.

h o p e

silent e wakes the o!

c a p e

silent e wakes the a!

Watch it flip the whole word: **kit** → **kite**, **cub** → **cube**. Same letters — one silent e changes everything.

1 Add the magic-e! Rewrite each short word as its long word. The vowel will change its sound — the letters stay, you just add a silent **e**.

- a) **hop** → _____
- b) **cap** → _____
- c) **kit** → _____
- d) **cub** → _____
- e) **pin** → _____
- f) **tub** → _____

2 Crack the clue. Each answer is a magic-e word — don't forget the silent **e** on the end!

- a) something you eat on a birthday _____
- b) you ride it with two wheels and pedals _____
- c) the place where you live _____
- d) the number after four _____
- e) you eat your dinner off it _____
- f) you go down it at the playground 3 _____

finished? color the star! ☆

Two Vowels Walking

"When two vowels go walking, the first one talks."

RULE 2 • VOWEL TEAMS

Sometimes two vowels stand **side by side** as a **team**. The **first** vowel says its **name**; the **second** stays **silent** — a second silent helper for the thief to grab.

r a i n

the a talks, the i is silent

s e a t

the e talks, the a is silent

b o a t

the o talks, the a is silent

Common vowel teams: **ai** (rain), **ay** (play), **ea** (seat), **ee** (feet), **oa** (boat).

One special pattern to know: **igh** spells the long-i sound in **night** and **light**. It is *not* two vowels — here the **i** does the talking and the **g** and **h** are its two **silent** helpers.

- 1** Underline the vowel team in each word, then write it on the line. (The last one is the special **igh** pattern — write all three letters.)

a) r a i n → team: _____

b) s e a t → team: _____

c) b o a t → team: _____

d) f e e t → team: _____

e) p l a y → team: _____

f) n i g h t → pattern: _____

- 2** Crack the clue. Each answer uses a vowel **team** — two vowels together, first one talks.

a) water that falls from the sky _____

b) it floats and carries you on water _____

c) it is tall, green, and grows leaves _____

d) you sit down on it _____

e) cars drive on it _____

f) a group that plays together _____

Same Sound, Two Spellings

The thief's best trick — and how to beat it.

THE HARD CASE

Here is why spelling is detective work: the **same long sound** can be spelled **more than one way**. Long-**a** hides in **cake** (a_e), **rain** (ai), and **play** (ay). Your job is to pick the **right one**.

Position clues for long-a:

- **ay** at the **END** of a word: **play**, **day**, **say**.
- **ai** in the **MIDDLE**: **rain**, **train**, **paint**.
- **a_e** (magic-e) when a **consonant + e** finishes the word: **cake**, **plane**.

- 1** Long-a detective. Each word says the long-a sound. Circle the **RIGHT** spelling, then write the whole word.

something you eat on a birthday

cake / **caik**

water from the sky

rane / **rain**

what you do at recess

plai / **play**

it flies in the sky with wings

plane / **plain**

Now write the four winners: _____

- 2** Long-o and long-e. Spell each word. Choose a vowel team (oa, ee, ea) OR a magic-e (o_e) — whichever is right!

a) it floats on water (long-o) _____

b) to wish for something (long-o, magic-e) _____

c) you have two of them at the end of your legs (long-e) _____

d) you sit on it (long-e) _____

e) cars drive on it (long-o) _____

f) the place you live (long-o, magic-e) _____

The Thief's Fakes

Every spelling here sounds right. Only some ARE.



Sam left a pile of words behind. They all **SOUND** correct when you read them out loud — that's his trick. A real detective checks the spelling, not just the sound.

- 1** REAL or FAKE? Read each word. If it is spelled wrong, cross it out and write the real spelling. If it is already correct, write **REAL**. Careful — not all of them are fakes!

a) rane _____

b) hope _____

c) bote _____

d) kake _____

e) seat _____

f) nite _____

The rule the thief hopes you forget: a word only needs a silent **e** if nothing else is already making the vowel say its name. **rain** and **boat** already have a **vowel team** doing the job — adding an **e** would be doing the work twice. And short words like **rabbit** keep their **short** vowel — no **e** at all.

- 2** Does this word need a silent-e added, YES or NO? If YES, write the finished word. If NO, just circle NO.

rain (water from the sky)

YES / **NO** _____

hop (to WISH for something)

YES / **NO** _____

rabbit (the hopping animal)

YES / **NO** _____

fiv (the number after four)

YES / **NO** _____

boat (it floats on water)

YES / **NO** _____

plat (you eat dinner off it)

YES / **NO** _____

The Final Dictation

No word bank this time, Detective. You know the rules.



Last stack of stolen words. No hints, no bank — just you and the rules. Say each word, listen for the long sound, then decide: magic-e, or a vowel team?

1 Spell each word from its clue. Decide for yourself which pattern it needs.

a) what a person is called

b) it flies on a string in the wind

c) it is tall and has leaves

d) you wear it when it's cold

e) the opposite of dark

f) it flies in the sky with wings

g) the color of grass _____

h) you climb it or tie things with it

2 Close the case! Write ONE sentence about catching the thief. Use at least **two** words from your cases — spell them right!



THE VERDICT

CASE CLOSED

Every silent letter is back where it belongs. Sam “Sound-It-Out” Shortchange never stood a chance against a detective who knows that **silent doesn’t mean useless**.