Appendix A: How the Welsh and English codes compare

Below, you will find tables that will be useful for:

- Planning the move into English phonics in Year 3 in Welsh-medium schools.
- Planning Welsh phonics in English-medium schools.
- Making sense of errors. When a learner writes *fan* for *van*, or reads Welsh <u> as the vowel in *cup*, the tables show you why, and what to teach next.

The tables cover the correspondences that early phonics programmes actually teach. Rare spellings, and endings that belong to morphology rather than phonics (such as -ed and -tion), are left out on purpose.

How to read the tables

Each row shows one grapheme, what it says in Welsh, what it says in English, and how the two relate. The colour gives you the relationship at a glance:

- **Green (Shared):** it transfers.
- **Yellow (Partly shared):** the main correspondence transfers, but one language adds something extra.
- **Red (Different):** the same letters say different things in the two languages.
- **Blue (Welsh only or English only):** new learning, taught in the usual explicit way. The note tells you when learners already know the sound, so only the spelling is new.

Sound symbols used in the guidance are illustrated below. The length mark /ː/ indicates a long vowel. These broad examples describe sounds, not the number of written letters.

/θ/ as in thin, cath

/ð/ as in this, eistedd

/ʃ/ as in shop, siop

/ʧ/ as in chip

/dʒ/ as in jam

/ŋ/ as in sing, llong

/ɬ/ as in Welsh ll (llaw)

/χ/ as in Welsh ch (bach)

/ə/ as in about, yn

/ɨ/ — north Welsh u and clear y

long marks (ː) as in a lengthened vowel.

Where north and south Wales say things differently (/u/, /y/ and /i/), the notes say so. Check the examples against the Welsh your learners use.

Table A1:
Single letters

GRAPHEME	IN WELSH	IN ENGLISH	OVERLAP
a	/a/ short, long a: afal, tad	/æ/: cat; long spellings differ (Table A4)	Partly shared. Similar short vowel; long vowels written differently
b	/b/: bara	/b/: bat	Same
c	/k/ always: ci, ceg	/k/: -cat; /s/ before e, i, y: cell, city	Partly shared. English adds /s/; Welsh <c> never softens
d	/d/: dant	/d/: dog	Same
e	/ɛ/ short, long e: melyn, hen	/ɛ/: bed; long spellings differ (Table A4)	Partly shared. Similar short vowel
f	/v/: fel, afal	/f/: fun	Different. English <f> and <ff> both sound like Welsh <ff>
g	/g/ always: gardd, gêm	/g/: got; /ʤ/ before e, i, y: gem	Partly shared. English adds soft <g>; compare Welsh *gêm* and English *gem*
h	/h/: het	/h/: hat	Same
i	/ɪ/, /iː/: cinio, ci; consonant /j/: iaith	/ɪ/: sit; long i spellings differ (Table A4)	Partly shared. Short vowel close; Welsh consonant <i> has no English parallel
j	/ʤ/: jam (borrowed words)	/ʤ/: jam	Same
k	not used; c writes /k/	/k/: kit	English only. Sound = Welsh <c>
l	/l/: lolfa	/l/: leg	Same
m	/m/: mam	/m/: man	Same
n	/n/: nain	/n/: net	Same
o	/ɔ/ short, long o: toc	/ɒ/: hot; long spellings differ (Table A4)	Partly shared. Similar short vowel
p	/p/: pen	/p/: pig	Same
q	not used	always qu, /kw/: queen	English only
r	/r/ (rolled): radio	/r/: run	Same. Sound quality differs; the mapping transfers
s	/s/ always : sedd	/s/: sun; /z/ in is, dogs	Partly shared. English adds /z/; Welsh has no /z/
t	/t/: tad	/t/: top	Same
u	north /ɨ/, south /i/: un, munud	/ʌ/: cup; /ʊ/: put	Different. Completely different vowels
v	not used; f writes /v/	/v/: van	English only. Sound = Welsh <f>
w	vowel /ʊ/, /uː/: cwm, dŵr; consonant /w/: wedi	consonant /w/ only: wet	Partly shared. Consonant use shared; Welsh vowel <w> has no English parallel
x	not used (bocs)	/ks/: box	English only
y	/ə/: yn, mynydd (first syllable); clear vowel: dyn, final syllables	consonant /j/: yes; vowel: happy, my, gym	Different. The two systems differ entirely
z	not used natively (sw for zoo)	/z/: zip	English only. Welsh has no /z/

Table A2:
Consonant digraphs and other consonant spellings

GRAPHEME	IN WELSH	IN ENGLISH	OVERLAP
ch	/χ/: bach (a letter of the alphabet)	/ʧ/: -chip; /k/: school	**Different**
ck	not used	/k/: duck	**English only. Sound = Welsh <c>**
dd	/ð/: eistedd (a letter of the alphabet)	doubled d, /d/: add	**Different. Welsh <dd> sounds like English <th> in this**
ff	/f/: ffenest (a letter of the alphabet)	doubled f, /f/: off	**Same. Same sound; a letter in Welsh, a doubling convention in English**
ll	/ɬ/: llaw (a letter of the alphabet)	doubled l, /l/: hill	**Different. The Welsh sound is not used in English**
ng	/ŋ/: llong (a letter of the alphabet)	/ŋ/: sing	**Same. Occasionally <n> + <g> in Welsh (Bangor)**
ph	/f/: ei phen (mainly under mutation)	/f/: phone	**Same**
rh	voiceless r: rhaff (a letter of the alphabet)	not used	**Welsh only**
sh	not used; si writes this sound	/ʃ/: shop	**English only. Sound = Welsh <si>**
si	/ʃ/: siop	not a spelling unit	**Welsh only. Sound = English <sh>**
th	/θ/: cath (a letter of the alphabet)	/θ/: thin and /ð/: this	**Partly shared. Voiceless <th> shared; English adds /ð/, which Welsh writes <dd>**
wh	not used	/w/: when	**English only**
tch	not used	/ʧ/: catch	**English only**
dge	not used	/dʒ/: badge	**English only**

Table A3:

Vowel combinations

GRAPHEME	IN WELSH	IN ENGLISH	OVERLAP
ai	diphthong: gwaith	/eɪ/: rain	**Different. The sound represented by Welsh <ai> is close to that represented by English <igh> and <i-e> (light, time).**
au	diphthong: haul; very common plural ending (llyfrau)	/ɔː/: sauce	**Different**
aw	diphthong: mawr, llaw	/ɔː/: saw	**Different. The sound represented by Welsh <aw> is close to that represented by English <ou> / <ow> (out, cow)**
ei	diphthong: eira	/eɪ/: vein (less common spelling)	**Different**
eu	diphthong: teulu	rarely taught	**Different**
ew	diphthong: tew, mewn	/juː/, /uː/: new, flew	**Different**
iw	diphthong: lliw	not used	**Welsh only**
yw	diphthong: byw	not used	**Welsh only**
oe	diphthong: coed	long o: toe	**Different**
oi	diphthong: troi	/ɔɪ/: coin	**Same. A rare exact match**
oy	not used	/ɔɪ/: boy	**English only. Sound = Welsh <oi>**
ou	rare	/aʊ/: out	**English only**
ow	loanwords only	long o: snow; /aʊ/: cow	**English only.**
wy	diphthong: bwyd, mwyn	rare (Wye)	**Welsh only**
â ê î ô û ŵ ŷ	circumflex marks a long vowel: tân, môr, dŵr	not used	**Welsh only. English marks long vowels with letter patterns instead (Table A4)**

Table A4:

English-only vowel spellings, grouped by sound

ENGLISH SOUND	ENGLISH SPELLING	EXAMPLES	WELSH COMPARISON
long a	a-e, ay, (ai)	make, day, rain	No Welsh parallel; Welsh <ai>, <ei> sound different
long e	ee, ea, e-e, y	see, eat, these, happy	A similar vowel occurs in Welsh <i> as in *ci*. In southern varieties of Welsh, <u> may also have a similar pronunciation.
long i	igh, i-e, ie, y	light, time, pie, my	Close to Welsh <ai> (gwaith)
long o	oa, o-e, ow	boat, home, snow	Welsh long o (môr) is a pure vowel, not a glide
long oo	oo, ue, u-e, ew	moon, blue, flute, flew	Welsh writes this sound as <w> (dŵr)
short oo	oo	book	Welsh writes this sound as <w> (cwm)
or / aw	or, ore, aw, au	for, more, saw, sauce	No Welsh parallel; Welsh <aw> and <au> sound different (Table A3)
er	er, ir, ur	her, bird, turn	Welsh has no /**ɜ**/ vowel
ou / ow	ou, ow	out, cow	Close to Welsh <aw> (mawr)
oi / oy	oi, oy	coin, boy	Matches Welsh <oi> (troi)
air / ear	air, are, ear	hair, care, bear	No Welsh parallel