



Each word has a lazy vowel that just says "uh". The lazy letter is **purple and underlined**. The dot shows where the word splits. Point and say each word together.

20 schwa words with pictures

At the end the last a says "uh" (banana has two)



ba·nan·a



piz·za



ze·bra



pan·da



so·fa

At the start the first vowel says "uh" (pajamas has two)



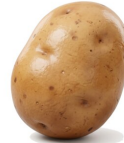
bal-loon



can-oe



paj-mas



pot-a-to



tom-a-to

In the last part a quiet "uh" before the last letter



lem·on



ba·con



li·on



pen·cil



cac·tus

In the middle some have more than one!



oc·to-pus



di·no-saur



as·tro-naut



el·e-phant



hip·po-pot·a-mus



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Schwa words list

Schwa is the lazy "uh" a vowel makes in a quiet part of a word. Every vowel can say it. The lazy letter is **purple and underlined**. Say each word the way you talk.

Schwa words by letter

a banaa soa pizaa zebra panda balloon about away salad giant
pajamas canoe

e seven open oven chicken children problem camel bagel elephant
telephene

i penil pupil (most lazy i's sound like a quick i: see below)

o lemon wagon dragon bacon melon lion pilot carrot octopus
dinosaur potato tomato

u cactus walrus circus possum minus upon ambulance hippopotamus

y y can spell schwa, but not in words a young child reads.

Sometimes it sounds like a quick i

rabbit basket muffin dolphin robin
cabin rocket helmet magnet
planet animal pelican

It says "uh" or a quick "i", depending on who's talking.
No purple: close calls.

Sometimes the vowel almost disappears

kitten mitten button kitchen
garden frozen tunnel pretzel

Many people say "kit-n" and "but-n". Fine to read, not first examples. No purple.

Little words that say "uh" in a sentence

a
a cat

the
the dog

was
it was fun

of
a cup of milk

Alone, **a** says "ay" and **was** has a short u. In a quick sentence they go lazy and say "uh".

Not schwa words many schwa lists online include these

other • mother • love

A strong "uh", not a lazy one: the o says short u in the loud part.

teacher • doctor

Bossy r, not schwa: the -er and -or have an r sound.

robot

No lazy vowel in American English: ro-bot, both vowels say their own sound.



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**Where is the lazy vowel?** cut out and sort the 10 cards

Grown-up says each word the way you talk. Listen for the lazy "uh". Is it at the **start** of the word or at the very **end**?



tu·ba



po·lice



ko·a·la



a·larm



so·fa



bal·loon



lla·ma



co·coon



co·bra



ca·noe

Lazy at the start

like a·bout

Lazy at the end

like so·fa

Where is the "uh"? say it, then tick one box

Say the word and find the "uh". Is it in the **loud part** (like **sun**) or a **quiet part** (like so·fa)?

sun ☐ loud ☐ quietsofa ☐ loud ☐ quietcup ☐ loud ☐ quietlemon ☐ loud ☐ quietbus ☐ loud ☐ quietpencil ☐ loud ☐ quiet**Read it out loud**

Grown-up reads it first the way you talk. Then your turn. The little words go lazy too.

1. The panda sat on the sofa.
2. A zebraa ate a banana.
3. Dad got a lemon and a melon.
4. The camel is in the wagon.
5. Seven balloons went up.
6. Mom had pizza and a salad.

Answer key. Lazy at the start: police, alarm, cocoon, balloon, canoe. Lazy at the end: tuba, koala, llama, cobra, sofa. "Uh" in the loud part: sun, cup, bus. In a quiet part: sofa, lemon, pencil.



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