

How to Pronounce "the" in English

Normally, we pronounce "the" with a short sound (like "thuh"). But when "the" comes before a vowel sound, we pronounce it as a long "thee".

VOWEL SOUND	WE WRITE	WE SAY
A	the apple	thee apple
E	the egg	thee egg
I	the ice-cream	thee ice-cream
O	the orange	thee orange
U	the ugly fruit	thee ugly fruit

It is important to understand that it is the sound of the word after "the" that matters, not the spelling. We use a long "thee" before a vowel **sound**, not necessarily before a vowel. Look at these cases:

WE WRITE	WITH	WE SAY	WITH
the house	consonant (h)	thuh house	consonant sound
the hour	consonant (h)	thee our	vowel sound
the university	vowel (u)	thuh youniversity	consonant sound
the umbrella	vowel (u)	thee umbrella	vowel sound