WHETHER TO "O" or "AU"—THAT *IS* THE QUESTION

Our ability to **hear** the difference between a short *o* vowel sound (as in *tot*) and an *aw* vowel sound (as in *taught*) is dependent upon the particular word, upon regional accents, upon the correctness and clarity with which the speaker enunciates, and upon our own hearing acuity. If enunciation and hearing acuity are less than optimal—or if hearing *conditions* are less than ideal—these two vowel sounds can be very difficult to distinguish, causing stroking hesitation. And, if your shorthand is **spelling** dependent, the result can be steno strokes which don't match translation dictionary entries and therefore won't translate.

Phoenix Theory avoids this short *o* or *aw* vowel sound dilemma by stroking the short *o* sound and all derivations of the *aw* sound as AU. Using the same key combination to represent multiple similar vowel sounds is certainly not a new concept in machine shorthand. The vowel sounds in *took* and *pool* are distinct and easily distinguished—but they are **both** stroked AO. The vowel sounds in *fuel* and *duel* are even more distinct and more easily distinguished—but they are **both** stroked AOU.

If emphasis on phonics was not part of your early training in English, or if you've previously learned another machine shorthand theory requiring steno strokes to be conformed to vowel *spelling*, you may feel you'd be more comfortable—more successful—writing machine shorthand if you stroked the short *o* and *aw* vowel sounds based on spelling; e.g., doll (TKOL); fall (TPAUL).

The following exercises will help clarify that question for you.

Exercise One:
If you could not **see** the following words and did not know the **spelling**, could you distinguish between the *o* and *aw* sounds based solely on **hearing**? Have your teacher, classmate, or friend read the following words to you and see how readily you can distinguish between the vowel sounds.

d**o**ll, t**a**ll, tr**aw**l   **aw**esome, bl**o**ssom
c**au**se, c**o**smo   c**a**ll, c**aw**l, protoc**o**l
fr**au**d, tr**o**d, br**oa**d   p**au**city, atr**o**city
c**a**lm, c**o**met   ps**a**lm, s**o**mber
b**a**lm, b**o**mbay   gene**a**logy, rheumat**o**logy
c**au**ght, br**ou**ght, d**o**t   miner**a**logist, climat**o**logist
p**au**se, p**o**sitive   bure**au**cracy, dem**o**cracy

Easy, you say? Excellent! You are blessed with exceptional hearing acuity and a speaker with perfect enunciation.

Exercise Two:
Again have a teacher, classmate, or friend read the following list of words to you, reading **only** the words, without comment or clarification. As each word is spoken, identify the **vowel** sound you hear and have the reader enter the vowel in the blank.

Examples:

dock   O   fraud   AU

1.	stalk	___	11.	cawed	___	21.	balm	___	31.	bomb	___
2.	wont	___	12.	caught	___	22.	don	___	32.	stock	___
3.	bawdily	___	13.	caller	___	23.	calk	___	33.	cod	___
4.	knotty	___	14.	wok	___	24.	bodily	___	34.	dawn	___
5.	pawed	___	15.	popper	___	25.	mall	___	35.	bauble	___
6.	moll	___	16.	mach	___	26.	quad	___	36.	cot	___
7.	quod	___	17.	nod	___	27.	collar	___	37.	pauper	___
8.	gnawed	___	18.	tock	___	28.	mock	___	38.	fond	___
9.	cock	___	19.	bobble	___	29.	talk	___	39.	pod	___
10.	fawned	___	20.	want	___	30.	naughty	___	40.	walk	___

You had a 50/50 chance of being correct. How did you do?

Yes, I realize that if the words had been in some context so you knew what they *meant*, you would have gotten all of them correct—because you know how they're **spelled**? But the important question is: Can you **hear** the difference between the short *o* and the *aw* vowel sounds distinctly, quickly, and accurately enough to be able to distinguish between these sounds while writing machine shorthand at 200-plus words per minute?

But, fair enough: **If** you had known what the words meant, you *could* have gotten them all correct—because you know how they're **spelled**. What happens, however, if you don't know how a word is *spelled*—or can't recall the *spelling* quickly enough while writing shorthand at high speeds? That's a very important question, because in a language estimated at 800,000 words, a considerable portion of which include either a short *o* or *aw* sound, there are bound to be quite a few of those words you **don't** know how to spell.

Exercise Three:
All of the following words are considered to be part of a college level vocabulary—which means they **should** be in *your steno writing vocabulary*. With very rare exceptions, machine shorthand is written from sound, so for this exercise, only the *pronunciation* of the words is shown, not the *spelling*. **Both** the short *o* and *aw* sounds will be represented by **au** in the pronunciation guide. Read the words, or have someone read them to you, and fill in the blank with the vowel key(s) you would use to stroke the sound represented by *au*.

1.	JAUN dus	___	14. REN uh sauns	___
2.	JAUN kwil	___	15. SOOP saun	___
3.	DIL uh taunt	___	16. es puh RAUN toh	___
4.	day TAUNT	___	17. pih RAUN uh	___
5.	lu KAUN ik	___	18. RAUN duh voo	___
6.	LEP ruh kaun	___	19. gaun uh REE uh	___
7.	naun shu LAUNT	___	20. GAUN ite	___
8.	ESH uh laun	___	21. KWAUN tum	___
9.	laun zhu RAY	___	22. KWAUN dum	___
10.	BAUN zeye	___	23. KWAUN sut	___
11.	BAUN seye	___	24. swaun YAY	___
12.	SAUN teem	___	25. PAUN chee	___
13.	SAUN uh rus	___	26. PAUN choh	___

27. BAR bu taul	___		76. vee BRAUT oh	___
28. yoo kuh LIP taul	___		77. RET uh naul	___
29. gu SHTAULT	___		78. aun WEE	___
30. pair uh STAUL sis	___		79. ZHAUN ruh	___
31. BAUL ux	___		80. HAUZ ur	___
32. BAUL sum	___		81. uh fees yu NAUD oh	___
33. KAUL uh form	___		82. KWAUSH	___
34. KAUL un dur	___		83. BAUX ite	___
35. kaul oh KAY shun	___		84. FRAUT	___
36. DEM uh raul	___		85. KAUF ee klauch	___
37. FAUL duh raul	___		86. KUM kwaut	___
38. DAUL fun	___		87. NAUK wurst	___
39. DAUF un	___		88. MAUK ish	___
40. PAUL tree	___		89. RAUK us	___
41. PAUL uh tee	___		90. SHISH kuh baub	___
42. MEN thaul	___		91. SKWAUB	___
43. PEN tuh thaul	___		92. NAUG uh hide	___
44. kaum RAD uh ree	___		93. gu STAUP oh	___
45. KAUM uh shur	___		94. SHNAUPS	___
46. AUM boo shur	___		95. de BAUCH	___
47. aun SAUM bul	___		96. hi BAUCH ee	___
48. MAUD lun	___		97. PWURZH wau	___
49. MAUD uh kum	___		98. foh PAU	___
50. DAUD ul	___		99. AUL fak shun	___
51. DAUT ul	___		100. SLAUL um	___
52. DAUD ur ee	___		101. vu WAUL uh	___
53. GAUD ur ee	___		102. AUD ile	___
54. KAUD ayt	___		103. VEE shee swauz	___
55. KAUD uh feye	___		104. KAU tur unt	___
56. KLAUD uh cunt	___		105. FLAUT sum	___
57. fuh SAUD	___		106. SOUR braut un	___
58. FYOO suh laud	___		107. FLAUK yu layt	___
59. JAUD pur	___		108. DAUS ul	___
60. LAUD uh num	___		109. KAY pauk	___
61. PLAUD it	___		110. ROR shauk	___
62. SAUD ur	___		111. glau KOEM uh	___
63. HAUS pus uz	___		112. kohl RAUB ee	___
64. AUS pi suz	___		113. muh KAUB ruh	___
65. kaus TIS uh tee	___		114. AUN tuh rauzh	___
66. KAUS tate	___		115. gu RAUT	___
67. AUS kul tayt	___		116. HAUN uh kuh	___
68. AUS kyool ayt	___		117. KEYE baush	___
69. PAUS uh tee	___		118. pih STAUSH ee oh	___
70. fu RAUS uh tee	___		119. GLAUT ul	___
71. ep ih GLAUT is	___		120. JUG ur naut	___
72. aub luh GAUT oh	___		121. lih GAUT oh	___
73. rih GAUT uh	___		122. WAUT ulz	___
74. myoo LAUT oh	___		123. KAU kuh soyd	___
75. ree SAUT oh	___		124. shwau du VEEV	___

AU vs. O   Author: Carol Webster Jochim

Even though all the words in Exercise Three are part of a college level vocabulary and are words you recognize from having seen or heard them previously, it would be extraordinary if you did not **hesitate** in making a decision on the stroking of at least some of them. Imagine the hesitation you would have on the thousands of words which you **haven't** seen or heard before. What about medical terminology? **Hesitation** and **decision making** are the two major impediments to writing speed.

To be a successful realtime writer, you must have a very extensive **writing vocabulary**. When dealing with a language estimated at 800,000 words, of which the average adult has a recognition vocabulary of only 30,000 to 35,000 words, it's obvious that you need to be able to **write** many words which you've never seen or heard before and, consequently, don't know how they're spelled. With Phoenix Theory, all words you can **hea**r are in your writing vocabulary. With spelling-dependent theories, only those words for which you know the correct vowel **spelling** are in your writing vocabulary. In this particular instance, if you conform your writing of the *o* and *aw* vowel sounds to vowel **spelling**, you can't write words containing those sounds for realtime translation unless you know how they're spelled—if you don't know the spelling of those vowel sounds, the words are **not** in your writing vocabulary. If you stroke all short *o* and *aw* vowel sounds as AU, all the words containing those sounds are in your writing vocabulary.

It might be tempting to think: "Ah hah! If I **know** a word is spelled with an *o*, I'll write it by spelling. If I don't know how it's spelled, I'll write it the way I think it *might* be spelled." Major mistake! First and foremost, an important part of being the best and fastest writer you can possibly be—and reaching that point as quickly as possible—is developing the muscle memory and automatic response of writing the *same sound the same way **every time you hear it***. No thought process involved, no hesitation—you hear a **sound** and your fingers automatically move to the correct position to stroke that sound, instantly and accurately. Secondly, there's no way to create a comprehensive translation dictionary based on: "If it's a word people know how to spell, the dictionary entries will be conformed to vowel spelling. If it's a word they might not know how to spell, the dictionary entries will be conformed to sound." No one can predict which words you—or anyone else—would or would not know how to spell. Nor can we create a dictionary which allows you to do both—so that the first time you hear it you can stroke it by sound, and then when you learn how it's spelled, thereafter stroke it by spelling.

Phoenix Theory believes—and hopes these exercises have demonstrated—that you'll be more comfortable **and much more successful** writing machine shorthand if you write **all** short *o* and *aw* vowel sounds as AU.

1.	jaundice	JAUN dus	___
2.	jonquil	JAUN kwil	___
3.	dilettante	DIL uh taunt	___
4.	detente	day TAUNT	___
5.	laconic	lu KAUN ik	___
6.	leprechaun	LEP ruh kaun	___
7.	nonchalant	naun shu LAUNT	___
8.	echelon	ESH uh laun	___
9.	lingerie	laun zhu RAY	___
10.	banzai	BAUN zeye	___
11.	bonsai	BAUN seye	___
12.	centime	SAUN teem	___
13.	sonorous	SAUN uh rus	___
14.	renaissance	REN uh sauns	___
15.	soupcon	SOOP saun	___
16.	Esperanto	es puh RAUN toh	___
17.	piranha	pih RAUN uh	___
18.	rendezvous	RAUN duh voo	___
19.	gonorrhea	gaun uh REE uh	___
20.	gahnite	GAUN ite	___
21.	quantum	KWAUN tum	___
22.	quondam	KWAUN dum	___
23.	Quonset	KWAUN sut	___
24.	soigne	swaun YAY	___
25.	paunchy	PAUN chee	___
26.	poncho	PAUN choh	___
27.	barbital	BAR bu taul	___
28.	eucalyptol	yoo kuh LIP taul	___
29.	gestalt	gu SHTAULT	___
30.	peristalsis	pair uh STAUL sis	___
31.	bollix	BAUL ux	___
32.	balsam	BAUL sum	___
33.	cauliform	KAUL uh form	___
34.	colander	KAUL un dur	___
35.	collocation	kaul oh KAY shun	___
36.	Demerol	DEM uh raul	___
37.	falderol	FAUL duh raul	___
38.	dolphin	DAUL fun	___
39.	dauphin	DAUF un	___
40.	paltry	PAUL tree	___
41.	polity	PAUL uh tee	___
42.	menthol	MEN thaul	___
43.	Pentothal	PEN tuh thaul	___
44.	camaraderie	kaum RAD uh ree	___
45.	commissure	KAUM uh shur	___
46.	embouchure	AUM boo shur	___
47.	ensemble	aun SAUM bul	___
48.	maudlin	MAUD lun	___
49.	modicum	MAUD uh kum	___
50.	dawdle	DAUD ul	___
51.	dottle	DAUT ul	___
52.	doddery	DAUD ur ee	___
53.	gaudery	GAUD ur ee	___
54.	caudate	KAUD ayt	___
55.	codify	KAUD uh feye	___
56.	claudicant	KLAUD uh cunt	___
57.	facade	fuh SAUD	___
58.	fusillade	FYOO suh laud	___
59.	jodhpur	JAUD pur	___
60.	laudanum	LAUD uh num	___
61.	plaudit	PLAUD it	___
62.	solder	SAUD ur	___
63.	hospices	HAUS pus uz	___
64.	auspices	AUS pi suz	___
65.	causticity	kaus TIS uh tee	___
66.	costate	KAUS tate	___
67.	auscultate	AUS kul tayt	___
68.	osculate	AUS kyool ayt	___
69.	paucity	PAUS uh tee	___
70.	ferocity	fur AUS uh tee	___
71.	epiglottis	ep ih GLAUT is	___
72.	obbligato	aub luh GAUT oh	___
73.	regatta	rih GAUT uh	___
74.	mulatto	myoo LAUT oh	___
75.	risotto	ree SAUT oh	___
76.	vibrato	vee BRAUT oh	___
77.	retinol	RET uh naul	___
78.	ennui	aun WEE	___
79.	genre	ZHAUN ruh	___
80.	hawser	HAUZ ur	___
81.	aficionado	uh fees yu NAUD oh	___
82.	quash	KWAUSH	___
83.	bauxite	BAUX ite	___
84.	fraught	FRAUT	___
85.	kaffeeklatsch	KAUF ee klauch	___
86.	kumquat	KUM kwaut	___
87.	knackwurst	NAUK wurst	___
88.	mawkish	MAUK ish	___
89.	raucous	RAUK us	___
90.	shish kebab	SHISH kuh baub	___
91.	squab	SKWAUB	___
92.	naugahyde	NAUG uh hide	___
93.	Gestapo	gu STAUP oh	___
94.	schnapps	SHNAUPS	___
95.	debauch	de BAUCH	___
96.	hibachi	hi BAUCH ee	___
97.	bourgeois	PWURZH wau	___
98.	faux pas	foh PAU	___
99.	olfaction	AUL fak shun	___
100.	slalom	SLAUL um	___
101.	voila	vu WAUL uh	___
102.	audile	AUD ile	___
103.	vichyssoise	VEE shee swauz	___
104.	cauterant	KAU tur unt	___
105.	flotsam	FLAUT sum	___
106.	sauerbraten	SOUR braut un	___

107.flocculate	FLAUK yu layt	___	116.Hanukkah	HAUN uh kuh	___
108.docile	DAUS ul	___	117.kibosh	KEYE baush	___
109.kapok	KAY pauk	___	118.pistachio	pih STAUSH ee oh	___
110.Rorschach	ROR shauk	___	119.glottal	GLAUT ul	___
111.glaucoma	glau KOEM uh	___	120.juggernaut	JUG ur naut	___
112.kohlrabi	kohl RAUB ee	___	121.legato	lih GAUT oh	___
113.macabre	muh KAUB ruh	___	122.wattles	WAUT ulz	___
114.entourage	AUN tuh rauzh	___	123.Caucasoid	KAU kuh soyd	___
115.garrote	gu RAUT	___	124.joie de vivre	shwau du VEEV	___