

## Oneida Spelling System

### VOWELS:

Oneida has six vowel sounds. Unlike English each letter stands for one and only one sound. Here are the letters and the sounds they represent.

- “A” has the sound of the ‘a’ in ah or father
- “E” has the sound of the ‘e’ in egg or eight
- “I” has the sound of the ‘i’ in skii or machine
- “O” has the sound of the ‘o’ in hope or low

The remaining two vowels are nasalized. That means they are pronounced more through the nose than the usual English sounds. Roughly;

- “U” has the sound of the ‘un’ in tune
- “Λ” has the sound of the ‘on’ in son.

### CONSONANTS:

Most of the consonants have the same sound as they usually do in English. This is true for:

H, L, N, W, and Y

The letters “T”, and “K”, and “S” each have two pronunciations depending on the other sounds near them.

“S” often has a sound halfway between the ‘s’ in sea and the z-like sound of the ‘s’ in was. When it comes between two vowels it always has the z-like sound and when it comes before or after ‘h’, then it has the sound of the ‘s’ in sea.

“T” normally has the sound of the ‘t’ in city, water, stove.  
Notice in those words ‘t’ sounds more like ‘d’. If a ‘k’, ‘h’, or ‘s’ follows then the ‘t’ has the usual English sound as in top.

“K” normally has a g-like sound as in skill but if a ‘t’, ‘s’, or ‘h’ follows, it

CONSONANTS: (cont.)

sounds like the usual English 'k' as in kill.

OTHER SYMBOLS USED IN WRITING ONEIDA:

- “ ʔ ” is used to represent a special consonant sound (called a glottal stop) that English doesn't have. The sound is made by quickly stopping the flow of air in the throat, a kind of catch.
- “ ˈ ” this symbol is written above a vowel to indicate the stressed syllable in a word.
- “ ˙ ” this symbol is used after a vowel to indicate the vowel is lengthened or dragged out a bit. (Vowels marked with both the dot and the stress mark have a slightly falling tone.)
- “ \_ ” underlined sounds are whispered and not said aloud.

This, then, is the Oneida alphabet used in this booklet.

A, E, H, I, K, L, N, O, S, T, U, W, Y, ʔ

Some special combinations are:

“tsy” or “tsi” has the ‘j’ sound as in jam, or judge

“tshy” or “tshi” has the ‘ch’ sound as in church

“sy” has the ‘sh’ sound as in shoe or hush