



English

Pronunciation Program

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English Pronunciation Program

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *English Pronunciation Program*. This program will introduce you to the 41 sounds and stress, rhythm and intonation patterns of American English. It contains the following sections:

How to Pronounce the Sound

This section gives you a simple explanation of how to move your lips, tongue, jaw, etc. in order to pronounce the sound.

Typical Spellings for the Sound

Many pronunciation problems are due to inconsistent and irregular English spelling patterns. This section shows you the relationship between English pronunciation and its spelling.

The third section gives you practice pronouncing the new sound in the initial, medial and final position of words. The last section gives you practice pronouncing the sound in the context of sentences.

Using the English Pronunciation Program

You'll need a CD player. We also recommend a mirror to help you position your mouth and tongue to make the sound properly.

After you read the **How to Pronounce the Sound** and **Typical Spellings** sections, listen and then repeat the words and sentences while looking at the written text in the book. Work through each lesson until you feel you can say the words and sentences easily. Then do the lesson again without looking at the book.

Practicing the Lessons

In order to improve your pronunciation you will have to practice as much as possible. Practicing every day is ideal. If this is not realistic for you, practice three to four times a week. Practice sessions of 20-30 minutes work very well. You can listen while preparing dinner or while driving. Practice when you are relaxed so that you will do your very best.

*Remember, the more you practice,
the faster you will improve!*



Pronouncing American English Vowels

English spelling patterns are extremely tricky and irregular. They are not a reliable guide to how a word is pronounced. For example, the letters *ew*, *o*, *u*, *oo*, and *ue* can all represent the [u] sound. Let's take a look at the following words: *new*, *do*, *moon*, *blue*. They are all pronounced with the same vowel sound: [u].

This is very confusing, and that's why we use International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols in *English Pronunciation*. The IPA consists of a set of symbols in which one symbol always represents one sound.

Don't worry. You won't have to learn all of the symbols at once. Each sound will be explained individually. You will learn the symbols effortlessly as you practice each lesson.

Table 1 (Pronouncing Vowels) on the next page shows you the phonetic symbols and the typical spelling patterns for all the English vowels and diphthongs.

TABLE 1

PRONOUNCING VOWELS

KEY WORDS

Phonetic Symbol	Typical Spellings	Initial Position	Middle Position	Final Position
[i]	e, ee, ea, ie	<u>e</u> ven	tea <u>m</u>	see <u></u>
[ɪ]	i, ui, y	<u>i</u> t	qu <u>i</u> ck	-
[eɪ]	a, ay, ai	<u>a</u> te	pai <u>d</u>	awa <u>y</u>
[ɛ]	e, ea	<u>e</u> gg	hea <u>d</u>	-
[æ]	a	<u>a</u> pple	ha <u>t</u>	-
[ɑ]	a, o	<u>o</u> pera	fa <u>t</u> her	-
[u]	u, oo, ew, u	-	mo <u>o</u> n	yo <u>u</u>
[ʊ]	u, ou	-	pu <u>t</u>	-
[ʌ]	u	<u>u</u> p	so <u>m</u> e	-
[oʊ]	o, oa, ough	<u>o</u> h	coa <u>t</u>	tho <u>u</u> gh
[ɔ]	a, aw	<u>a</u> ll	cra <u>w</u> l	saw <u></u>
[ə]	a	<u>a</u> bove	ope <u>n</u>	soda <u></u>
[ɜ]	er, or	-	per <u>h</u> aps	col <u>o</u> r
[ɜ]	ear, or, ur	<u>e</u> arn	wo <u>r</u> k	fu <u>r</u>
[aʊ]	ou, ow	<u>o</u> ut	mo <u>u</u> se	no <u>w</u>
[aɪ]	i, igh, y	bi <u>t</u> e	sigh <u></u>	sky
[ɔɪ]	oi, oy	<u>o</u> il	co <u>i</u> n	to <u>y</u>



As you work your way through this section of the pronunciation program, you will often notice the words *vowels*, *diphthongs*, *lips*, and *jaw*. Take a moment to read over the definitions of these terms.



VOWEL

A vowel is a speech sound produced with vibrating vocal cords and a continuous unrestricted flow of air coming from the mouth. The vowels in English are represented by the letters A E I O U Y.



DIPHTHONG

A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds. It begins as one vowel sound and ends as another. While you are pronouncing a diphthong, your lips and jaw start out in the position of the first vowel, and glide into the position of the second vowel sound. The most common diphthongs in English are [eɪ], [oʊ], [aʊ], [aɪ], and [ɔɪ].

The various vowels and diphthongs are produced by changing the shape of your lips and raising or lowering your jaw.

The shape of your lips changes for each vowel sound. For example, the lips are very rounded and in a “kissing” position for the vowel [u] as in the words “you” or “soon.” They are spread wide into a “smiling” position for the vowel [i] as in the words “cheese” or “pizza.”

The size of your jaw opening also changes for each vowel sound. For example, the jaw is dropped the lowest and in a “yawning” position for the vowel [a] as in the words “father” or “pot.” It is raised high causing your mouth to be almost closed for the vowel [ɪ] as in the words “it” or “little.”

How to Pronounce [i]: The lips are spread into a “smile” position. The jaw is completely raised.

Typical Spellings for [i]: me, fee, sea

Less Common Spellings for [i]: piece, receive, key, police

[i] Words

Be sure to keep your lips in a smile position as you say [i].

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>e</u> ast	<u>f</u> eet	<u>m</u> e
<u>e</u> asy	<u>m</u> ean	<u>k</u> ey
<u>e</u> ach	<u>n</u> iece	<u>s</u> ee
<u>e</u> ven	rece <u>i</u> ve	agre <u>e</u>

[i] Sentences

He's teaching me.
Steve will leave the key.

We eat meat.

How to Pronounce [ɪ]: The lips are relaxed and barely parted. The jaw is just a bit lower than for [i].

Typical Spellings for [ɪ]: is, gym, build

Less Common Spellings for [ɪ]: been, pretty, busy, women

[ɪ] Words

Remember your lips should hardly move as you pronounce [ɪ].

Beginning

if
ill
into
infant

Middle

win
tip
gym
quick

[ɪ] Sentences

Pick up the tickets.
Bill will visit the city.

[i] and [ɪ] Word Pairs

Remember to spread your lips into a smile for [i] and relax them for [ɪ].

[i]

eat

feel

seat

meal

[ɪ]

it

fill

sit

mill

[i] and [ɪ] Sentence Pairs

The outfit is neat.

Don't sleep.

The heels are high.

The outfit is knit.

Don't slip.

The hills are high.

How to Pronounce [eɪ]: [eɪ] is a diphthong. The lips are spread and unround. The jaw rises with the tongue and closes slightly during the production of this sound.

Typical Spellings for [eɪ]: age, paid, day

Less Common Spellings for [eɪ]: eight, they, great

[eɪ] Words

[eɪ] is a long sound. Be sure to prolong it.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>a</u> te	<u>r</u> ace	<u>da</u> y
<u>ai</u> m	<u>gr</u> eat	<u>gr</u> ay
<u>a</u> ble	<u>sa</u> me	<u>we</u> igh
<u>a</u> ging	<u>ma</u> ke	<u>awa</u> y

[eɪ] Sentences

Wait for the plane.
The lake is a great place.

How to Pronounce [ɛ]: The lips are spread slightly. The jaw is dropped slightly more than for [eɪ].

Typical Spellings for [ɛ]: test, bread

Less Common Spellings for [ɛ]: said, many

[ɛ] Words

Open your mouth just a little wider than for [eɪ].

Beginning

egg
ever
enter
empy

Middle

west
again
fence
left

[ɛ] Sentences

Ben went to get eggs.
The wedding is Wednesday.

How to Pronounce [æ]: The lips are spread. The jaw is dropped slightly more than for [ɛ].

Typical Spellings for [æ]: at, have

Less Common Spelling for [æ]: laugh

[æ] Words

Open your mouth just a bit wider than for [ɛ].

Beginning

ask
and
apple
after

Middle

tap
back
hand
laugh

[æ] Sentences

Dan ran out of gas.
Ann was dancing.

How to Pronounce [a]: The mouth is wide open and the jaw is dropped more than for any other vowel.

Typical Spellings for [a]: wach, sar, rack

[a] Words

Be sure to keep your lips in a “yawning” position as you say [a].

Beginning

on
arm
opera
honest

Middle

lock
want
body
farm

[a] Sentences

Stop watching the clock.
Park the car.

[eɪ] and [ɛ] Word Pairs

[eɪ]	[ɛ]
mate	met
pa <u>i</u> n	pe <u>n</u>
la <u>c</u> e	le <u>s</u> s

Sentence Pairs

That's a big whale.

That's a big well.

[ɛ] and [æ] Word Pairs

[ɛ]	[æ]
wre <u>e</u> k	ra <u>a</u> ck
ne <u>t</u>	gn <u>a</u> t

Sentence Pairs

Follow the men.

I'm not ten.

Follow the man.

I'm not tan.

[æ] and [a] Word Pairs

[æ]	[a]
ad <u>a</u>	od <u>a</u>
sac <u>a</u>	so <u>a</u> ck

Sentence Pairs

The sack has a hole.

It's in the packet.

The sock has a hole.

It's in the pocket.

How to Pronounce [u]: The lips are rounded into a “kissing” position. The jaw is completely raised.

Typical Spellings for [u]: use, pool, new, blue

Less Common Spellings for [u]: two, group, fruit, shoe

[u] Words

Remember to keep your lips in a kissing position as you say [u].

Middle

tool
moon
June
student

End

few
who
shoe
true

[u] Sentences

Do you want juice?
The pool was too cool.

How to Pronounce [ʊ]: The lips are relaxed and barely parted. The jaw is lower than for [u].

Typical Spellings for [ʊ]: bush, took, should

Less Common Spelling for [ʊ]: wolf

[ʊ] Words

Remember, your lips barely move when you say [ʊ].

push

look

full

wood

sugar

coold

cushion

woman

[ʊ] Sentences

The bushel was full.

Pudding is good.

[u] and [ʊ] Word Pairs

Remember to round your lips for [u] and relax them for [ʊ].

[u]
suit
fool
pool

[ʊ]
soot
full
pull

[u] and [ʊ] Sentence Pairs

We need a pool.

We need a pull.

Clean off the suit.

Clean off the soot.

How to Pronounce [ʌ]: The lips are relaxed and barely parted. The jaw is just a bit lower than for [ʊ].

Typical Spellings for [ʌ]: cut, won

Less Common Spellings for [ʌ]:

trouble, blood, was

[ʌ] Words

Your lips should hardly move as you pronounce [ʌ].

Beginning

us
under
ugly
onion

Middle

sun
love
cover
ton

[ʌ] Sentences

Cover up in the sun.

What was the color?

How to Pronounce [oʊ]: [oʊ] is a diphthong. The lips are rounded in an “O” position. The jaw rises with the tongue and closes slightly during the production of this sound.

Typical Spellings for [oʊ]: cone, road, low

Less Common Spellings for [oʊ]: goes, though

[oʊ] Words

[oʊ] is a long sound. Be sure to prolong it.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>o</u> ld	bo <u>o</u> t	g <u>o</u>
<u>o</u> pen	ro <u>o</u> se	lo <u>o</u>
<u>o</u> ver	mo <u>o</u> st	to <u>o</u>
<u>o</u> nly	pho <u>o</u> ne	tho <u>o</u> gh

[oʊ] Sentences

The hotel is open.
Joe wrote a note.

How to Pronounce [ɔ]: The lips are relaxed and barely parted. The jaw is just a bit lower than for [ou].

Typical Spellings for [ɔ]: dog, fall, awe, cause

Less Common Spellings for [ɔ]: broad, caught

[ɔ] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>all</u>	<u>call</u>	<u>paw</u>
<u>off</u>	<u>long</u>	<u>raw</u>
<u>office</u>	<u>toss</u>	<u>draw</u>
<u>ought</u>	<u>bought</u>	<u>flaw</u>

[ɔ] Sentences

Call the boss.

Is your daughter tall?

Word Contrasts

[ʌ]

rut
stuck
fund

[oʊ]

wrote
stoke
phoned

[ɔ]

wrought
stalk
fawned

[a]

rot
stock
fond

Sentence Pairs

[ʌ]

Sarah ate the bun.

[oʊ]

Sarah ate the bone.

[ɔ]

I saw the store.

[a]

I saw the star.

How to Pronounce [ə]: This vowel is called “schwa.” [ə] occurs only in unstressed syllables of words. It can be spelled with any letter or combination of letters. The lips are completely relaxed and hardly move when you produce [ə].

[ə] Words

Remember that the syllable with [ə] is not stressed.

Beginning Syllable

alonge
upon
around

Middle Syllable

aggravate
melody
holiday

Final Syllable

sodaa
lesson
signal

[ə] Sentences

They arrived in Africaa.
Tina fell asleep.

How to Pronounce [ɜː]: The lips are protruded and partly open. [ɜː] occurs only in stressed syllables.

Typical Spellings for [ɜː]: girl, hurt, serve, word

Less Common Spellings for [ɜː]: learn, journey

[ɜː] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>earn</u>	<u>burn</u>	<u>stir</u>
<u>early</u>	<u>first</u>	<u>were</u>
<u>urban</u>	<u>worm</u>	<u>deter</u>
<u>urgent</u>	<u>heard</u>	<u>occur</u>

[ɜː] Sentences

Learn the verbs.

The girls were early.

How to Pronounce [ə]: The lips and jaw are in the same position as for [ɜ]. [ə] occurs only in unstressed syllables.

Typical Spellings for [ə]: paper, razor, after

Less Common Spelling for [ə]: nature

[ə] Words

Remember not to stress the syllable with [ə] in these words.

Middle

surprise
perform
perhaps
wonderful

End

color
father
picture
dollar

[ə] Sentences

The weatherer was wonderful.
Father is taller than mother.

[ɜː] and [ɝ] Word and Sentence Pairs

Be sure to stress the boldfaced syllable in each word.

Word Pairs

[ɜː]

person
derby
surplus

[ɝ]

percent
derive
surprise

Sentence Pairs

[ɜː]

It's a big **dessert**.
You can't get a **permit**.

[ɝ]

It's a big **desert**.
You can't **permit** it.

How to Pronounce [aʊ]: [aʊ] is a diphthong. The lips move from an open to a partly closed position. The jaw rises with the tongue and closes slightly during the production of this sound.

Typical Spellings for [aʊ]: sound, gown

Less Common Spelling for [aʊ]: plough

[aʊ] Words

[aʊ] is a long sound. Be sure to prolong it.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>out</u>	ab <u>out</u>	<u>how</u>
<u>ounce</u>	<u>loud</u>	<u>now</u>
<u>hour</u>	<u>house</u>	eyeb <u>row</u>
<u>outside</u>	<u>towel</u>	pl <u>ough</u>

[aʊ] Sentences

I found flowers.

How about a blouse?

How to Pronounce [aɪ]: [aɪ] is a diphthong. The lips move from an open to a slightly closed position. The jaw rises with the tongue and closes slightly during the production of this sound.

Typical Spellings for [aɪ]: ice, fly, pie, right

Less Common Spellings for [aɪ]: aisle, eye, buy

[aɪ] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>i</u> ce	<u>f</u> ive	<u>bu</u> y
<u>e</u> ye	<u>t</u> ime	<u>tie</u>
<u>a</u> isle	style	<u>dry</u>
<u>i</u> sland	<u>n</u> ight	<u>sigh</u>

[aɪ] Sentences

My tie has stripes.

I like pie.

How to Pronounce [ɔɪ]: This is a diphthong. The lips move from an open to a partly closed position. The jaw rises with the tongue and closes slightly during the production of this sound.

Typical Spellings for [ɔɪ]: voice, toy

[ɔɪ] Words

[ɔɪ] is a long sound. Be sure to prolong it.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>oil</u>	<u>coin</u>	av <u>oid</u>
<u>oily</u>	<u>noise</u>	ann <u>oy</u>
<u>oiliness</u>	<u>loyal</u>	en <u>joy</u>
<u>oyster</u>	<u>point</u>	em <u>ploy</u>

[ɔɪ] Sentences

Oysters can be broiled.
Enjoy the voyage.

Word Contrasts

[aʊ]

loudfowlowl

[aɪ]

liedfileaisle

[ɔɪ]

Lloydfoiloil

Sentence Contrasts

[aʊ]

Where's the fowl?It's a little owl.

[aɪ]

Where's the file?It's a little aisle.

[ɔɪ]

Where's the foil?It's a little oil.

STRESS, RHYTHM, AND INTONATION

Stress

In English, you need to use word and sentence stress correctly if you want your listeners to accurately understand the meaning of your words. You must stress certain syllables in words; otherwise they will be misunderstood or sound strange. For example, if you stress the second syllable of the word “present,” you will be pronouncing a verb which means “to introduce; to offer.” If you stress the first syllable by pronouncing “present,” you will be referring to a noun which means “a gift.”

An important feature of English is the use of stress within words. Every word of more than one syllable has a syllable that is stressed or said louder than the others.

Just as it is important to stress the correct syllable in a word, it is important to stress the correct word or words in a sentence. In English, specific words within a sentence are stressed or said louder to make them stand out. Your listeners may misunderstand you if you use sentence stress incorrectly. For example, “I didn’t say it,” implies “Someone else said it.” “I didn’t say it,” implies a completely different meaning altogether.

Rhythm

The rhythm of a language is created by the strong stresses or syllables in a sentence. In many languages, the vowels in all syllables are accented almost equally. This is not true in English. Conversational English is more rapid and less precise than formal speech. English speakers often speed up and reduce unstressed words

STRESS, RHYTHM, AND INTONATION

or syllables in sentences. For example, the six word sentence, “I would like butter and jam,” may be squeezed into four words, “I’d like butter’n jam.” Additionally, English speakers link words together into phrases that are separated by pauses. Improperly used pauses, like improperly used stress patterns, may cause your listeners to misunderstand you. For example, “I don’t know Tim,” implies that you don’t know a man named Tim. “I don’t know, (pause) Tim,” implies that you are telling Tim directly that you don’t know the answer to his question. Effective use of rhythm will help you to achieve more natural-sounding speech and be better understood.

Intonation

Intonation refers to the variation of pitch within a phrase or sentence. Intonation is created by the rising and falling pitch of your voice while speaking. Your intonation tells listeners whether you are making a statement or asking a question. For example, the statement, “He lives in Miami,” becomes a question, “He lives in Miami?” when you raise the pitch of your voice at the end of it.

As you can see, it is not always “what you say” but “how you say it” that counts! Correct use of stress, rhythm and intonation patterns is important to help you get your message across correctly and to sound more like a native English speaker.

Stress in Two- and Three-Syllable Words

Stress on the
1st Syllable

apple
teacher
yesterday

Stress on the
2nd Syllable

inite
tomorrow
banana

Stress on the
3rd Syllable

afternoon
absolute
personnel

Stress in Compound Nouns

Compound nouns are usually stressed on the first syllable.

airplane
bookstore
stop sign
ice cream

Stress in Noun/Verb Homographs*

Nouns are stressed on the first syllable; verbs are stressed on the second syllable.

Noun Phrase

good conduct
Sahara desert
win the contest

Verb Phrase

conduct the meeting
desert the ship
contest the will

Sentence

John will present the present.

*Nouns and verbs that are spelled the same. They are not always pronounced the same.

Sentence Stress in Adjective Noun Combination

The noun is stressed in the following sentences.

Linda went to the white house not the White House.
I have a black board not a blackboard.

Sentence Stress in Questions/Responses

The stress on words within a sentence often shifts to reflect a change in meaning.

Did Ken buy a car?

Did Ken buy a car?

Did Ken buy a car?

No, Ken borrowed a car.

No, Tom bought a car.

No, Ken bought a boat.

Contractions

A contraction is one word that is formed by combining two other words. Using contractions will help your speech sound natural.

Full Form Phrase

I am tired.

We do not know.

He is not home.

You are nice.

We have met.

Contraction Phrase

I'm tired.

We don't know.

He isn't home.

You're nice.

We've met.

Phrasing and Pausing

A phrase is a thought unit of speech. A pause is a brief moment of silence that helps to separate one phrase from another. Lengthy sentences should be divided into phrases. Be sure to pause between each phrase marked by the slanted lines.

Karen// my best friend// is out of town.

I lost my glasses// my ring// and my wallet.

Columbus// the famous explorer// was Italian.

Full Form Phrase

piece of cake

ham and eggs

Linked Phrase

piece a cake

ham 'n eggs

Intonation in Declarative Sentences and Requests

Declarative sentences and requests end with a falling intonation. ↘

Cindy is my friend. ↘

I bought a new car. ↘

Send the letter airmail. ↘

Intonation in “Key” Questions

Questions that require more than a yes/no answer end with a falling intonation. ↘

What time is it? ↘

Where did you park? ↘

How was the game? ↘

Intonation in “YES/NO” Questions

Questions that request a simple “yes” or “no” answer end with an upward intonation. ↗

May I see the menu? ↗

Does Michael smoke? ↗

Do you like wine? ↗

Intonation in Questions/Answers

Be sure to use a rising pitch at the end of each yes/no question and a falling pitch at the end of the answer.

Will you go? ↗

Yes, I will. ↘

Did Paul study? ↗

No, he didn't. ↘



PRONOUNCING CONSONANTS

As you have already discovered, English spelling patterns are inconsistent and they are not a reliable guide to the pronunciation of vowel sounds. Unfortunately, English spelling patterns are not a reliable guide to pronouncing consonant sounds, either. For example, the letters *s*, *sh*, *ss*, *ch*, and *ti* can all represent the [ʃ] sound. Let's take a look at the words *sure*, *she*, *tissue*, *machine*, *nation*. They are all pronounced with the same consonant sound: [ʃ].

This of course is very confusing. That's why we continue to use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols to teach you English consonant sounds. As with the vowels, each consonant will be explained individually. You will learn the symbols one at a time as you practice each lesson. Table 2 (Pronouncing Consonants) shows you the IPA symbols and the typical spelling patterns for all the English consonant sounds.

TABLE 2



PRONOUNCING CONSONANTS

KEY WORDS

Phonetic Symbol	Typical Spellings	Initial Position	Middle Position	Final Position
[s]	s, ss, c	<u>s</u> it	miss <u>ing</u>	fac <u>e</u>
[z]	z, zz	<u>z</u> oo	laz <u>y</u>	buzz <u>z</u>
[t]	t	<u>t</u> oe	ret <u>urn</u>	hat <u>t</u>
[d]	d	<u>d</u> ay	ladd <u>er</u>	head <u>d</u>
[θ]	th	<u>th</u> umb	auth <u>or</u>	bath <u>th</u>
[ð]	th	<u>th</u> em	moth <u>er</u>	breath <u>e</u>
[ʃ]	sh, ss	<u>sh</u> e	tissu <u>e</u>	fish <u>sh</u>
[tʃ]	ch, tu, tch	<u>ch</u> erry	natur <u>e</u>	wat <u>ch</u>
[ʒ]	si, ge	-	visi <u>on</u>	beig <u>e</u>
[dʒ]	j, g, dg	<u>j</u> ello	magi <u>c</u>	edg <u>e</u>
[j]	y	<u>y</u> es	may <u>or</u>	-
[p]	p	<u>p</u> ot	happ <u>y</u>	tip <u>p</u>
[b]	b	<u>b</u> oy	tab <u>le</u>	cab <u>b</u>
[f]	f	<u>f</u> un	aft <u>er</u>	if <u>f</u>
[v]	v	<u>v</u> ery	oy <u>e</u> n	dive <u>v</u>
[k]	c, ck, k	<u>c</u> oat	packag <u>e</u>	lik <u>e</u>
[g]	g, gg	<u>g</u> ive	ag <u>o</u>	egg <u>g</u>
[w]	w	<u>w</u> et	aw <u>ay</u>	-
[l]	l, ll	<u>l</u> ove	hell <u>o</u>	pill <u>l</u>
[r]	r, rr	<u>r</u> ock	merr <u>y</u>	car <u>r</u>
[h]	h	<u>h</u> it	beh <u>ind</u>	-
[m]	m, mm	<u>m</u> y	ham <u>mer</u>	fam <u>e</u>
[n]	n, nn	<u>n</u> ot	fun <u>ny</u>	in <u>n</u>
[ŋ]	ng	-	sing <u>er</u>	th <u>ing</u>



As you work your way through this section of the *English Pronunciation* program, you will often notice the words *voiced consonant*, *voiceless consonant*, *gum ridge*, and *soft palate*. Take a moment to read over the definitions of these terms.



VOICED CONSONANT

A voiced consonant is a sound produced with vibrating vocal cords. Place the palm of your hand on your throat while making a buzzing noise. You can feel your vocal cords vibrate as you say “ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ.”



VOICELESS CONSONANT

A voiceless consonant is a sound produced with no vibration of the vocal cords. Place the palm of your hand on your throat while making a hissing sound. You will not feel your vocal cords vibrate as you say “SSSSSSSSSSSS.”



GUM RIDGE/SOFT PALATE

The gum ridge is the hard part of the roof of your mouth just behind your upper front teeth.

The soft palate is the soft part of the roof of your mouth closest to the back of your throat.

The chart on the next page shows you which consonants are voiced and which are voiceless. It is not necessary to memorize the chart. Just place your palm over your throat as you pronounce the voiced and voiceless consonants. You will be able to feel the difference.



American English Consonant Sounds

Voiced

[b]

[d]

[g]

[v]

[z]

[ð]

[dʒ]

[ʒ]

[m], [n], [ŋ]

[j], [w], [l], [r]

Voiceless

[p]

[t]

[k]

[f]

[s]

[θ]

[tʃ]

[ʃ]

[h]

How to Pronounce [s]: The tongue tip is near the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [s]: sun, nice

Less Common Spellings for [s]: scenery, waltz

Remember to make the hissing sound of a snake when you say [s].

[s] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>s</u> ee	pencil	kiss
<u>s</u> top	less <u>s</u>	face
<u>c</u> ity	rac <u>s</u> ing	this
<u>s</u> peak	ans <u>w</u> er	house

[s] Sentences

See you in class.
I'm so sorry.

How to Pronounce [z]: The tongue tip is near the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [z]: zip, his

Less Common Spelling for [z]: xerox

[z] Words

Be sure your vocal cords vibrate when you produce [z].

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>z</u> oo	la <u>z</u> y	ma <u>z</u> e
<u>z</u> ero	ea <u>s</u> y	the <u>s</u> e
<u>z</u> one	di <u>z</u> zy	no <u>s</u> e
<u>z</u> ebra	bu <u>s</u> y	bre <u>z</u> e

[z] Sentences

What is the zip code?

Liza raised prize roses.

We're busy on Tuesdays.

[s] and [z] Word Pairs

Remember your vocal cords vibrate for [z] but not for [s].

[s]

Suesipsinkrice

[z]

zoozipzincrise**[s] and [z] Sentence Pairs**

What's the price?
I like the place.

What's the prize?
I like the plays.

[s] and [z] in Noun/Verb Pairs

Some nouns and verbs are spelled the same. However, when spoken, the letter "s" in the noun is pronounced [s] and in the verb as [z].

Noun Phrases ("s" = [s])

What's the use?
Make an excuse.
I have a house.

Verb Phrases ("s" = [z])

I use it.
Please excuse me.
The zoo will house
the animals.

How to Pronounce [t]: The tongue tip presses against the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth and is released quickly with a puff of air. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [t]: to, little

Less Common Spelling for [t]: walked

[t] Words

Your tongue tip should be pressed firmly against your gum ridge when you say [t].

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>t</u> wo	in <u>t</u> end	<u>a</u> t
<u>t</u> ime	un <u>t</u> il	vo <u>t</u> e
<u>t</u> ry	bet <u>u</u> een	pa <u>r</u> t
<u>t</u> eam	fi <u>t</u> teen	wa <u>i</u> t

[t] Sentences

Take the test.

What time is the party?

Turn off the TV and the light.

How to Pronounce [d]: The tongue tip is pressed against the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth and is released quickly. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [d]: do, fiddle

[d] Words

Be sure your vocal cords are vibrating when you pronounce [d].

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>day</u>	<u>under</u>	<u>find</u>
<u>door</u>	<u>ready</u>	<u>card</u>
<u>dollar</u>	<u>window</u>	<u>good</u>
<u>dance</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>ahead</u>

[d] Sentences

Ed had a cold.

Dad found the dog.

We made a date.

How to Pronounce [θ]: The tongue tip protrudes slightly between the upper and lower front teeth. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [θ]: think, bath, nothing

[θ] Words

Be sure your tongue tip is between your teeth when you produce [θ].

Beginning

thin
thank
thousand
Thursday

Middle

something
bathtub
heathy
birthday

End

path
moth
south
teeth

[θ] Sentences

Thank you both.
I'm through on the third.
Ruth is thin.

How to Pronounce [ð]: The tongue tip protrudes slightly between the upper and lower front teeth. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [ð]: the, bathe, other

[ð] Words

Be sure your tongue tip is between your teeth when you produce [ð].

Beginning

them
these
there
though

Middle

father
another
together
weather

End

bathe
smooth
clothe
breathe

[ð] Sentences

They bought leather.
I would rather have these.
Mother is bathing the baby.

[t] and [d] Word and Sentence Pairs

Remember, your vocal cords vibrate for [d] but not for [t].

[t]
bat
set
height

[d]
bad
said
hide

Sam made his bet.
Get the cart.

Sam made his bed.
Get the card.

[s] , [θ], and [t] Word and Sentence Contrasts

[s]
sin
seem

[θ]
thin
theme

[t]
tin
team

It's a sin.
It's a bass.

It's thin.
Take a bath.

It's tin.
It's a bat.

[z] and [ð] Word and Sentence Pairs

[z]
bays
close
breeze

[ð]
bathe
clothe
breathe

Feel that breeze.
It's not closing.

Feel them breathe.
It's not clothing.

[d] and [ð] Word and Sentence Pairs

[d]
day
dough
breed

[ð]
they
though
breathe

It's not wordy.
I see the ladder.

It's not worthy.
I see the lather.



How to Pronounce [ʃ]: The tongue tip is near but does not touch the gum ridge or hard palate. The vocal cords are not vibrating. [ʃ] is a continuous quiet sound: shhhhhhhhhh!

Typical Spellings for [ʃ]: shoe, chef, motion, special, assure

Less Common Spellings for [ʃ]: sure, ocean, tension, anxious

[ʃ] Words

Be sure your tongue tip does not touch any part of the roof of your mouth.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>sh</u> oe	f <u>ash</u> ion	pu <u>sh</u>
<u>sh</u> are	so <u>ci</u> al	wi <u>sh</u>
<u>sh</u> op	ti <u>ss</u> ue	fi <u>n</u> ish
<u>sh</u> ow	ma <u>ch</u> ine	Engli <u>sh</u>

[ʃ] Sentences

Polish the shoes.

Sheila finished washing the dishes.

How to Pronounce [tʃ]: The tongue tip is placed firmly against the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth. [tʃ] is a combination consonant. It begins as [t] and ends as [ʃ]. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [tʃ]: chop, nature

Less Common Spellings for [tʃ]: question, righteous

[tʃ] Words

Remember to feel your tongue tip touch your gum ridge.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>ch</u> air	mat <u>ure</u>	<u>each</u>
<u>ch</u> eck	kitch <u>en</u>	wh <u>ich</u>
<u>ch</u> ild	wat <u>ch</u> ing	ch <u>urch</u>
<u>ch</u> apter	pic <u>ture</u>	Mar <u>ch</u>

[tʃ] Sentences

How much do you charge?

The teacher is watching.

I chose a chease sandwich.



How to Pronounce [ʒ]: The tongue is near but does not touch the gum ridge or hard palate. [ʒ] is a continuous sound. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [ʒ]: decision, usual, massage

Less Common Spelling for [ʒ]: azure

[ʒ] Words

Be sure your vocal cords are vibrating for [ʒ] .

Middle

measure
casual
division
television

End

garage
mirage
prestige
camouflage

[ʒ] Sentences

I usually watch television.
The excursion was a pleasure.

How to Pronounce [dʒ]: The tongue is placed firmly against the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth. [dʒ] is a combination consonant. It begins as [d] and ends as [ʒ]. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [dʒ]: jet, age, fudge

Less Common Spellings for [dʒ]: educate, soldier

[dʒ] Words

Remember to feel your tongue tip touch your gum ridge.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>j</u> oy	engine	page
<u>j</u> ym	magic	college
<u>j</u> oke	major	manage
<u>j</u> elly	gradu <u>a</u> te	package

[dʒ] Sentences

I enjoy orange juice.

Joe is the manager.

How to Pronounce [j]: The tip of the tongue touches the back of the lower front teeth. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [j]: you, million, use

Note: The consonant vowel combination [ju] should not be confused with the vowel [u].

Example: fuel [ju], fool [u]

[j] Words

Be sure to produce [j] with your tongue tip against the back of your lower front teeth.

Beginning

year
yard
yellow
yesterday

Middle

mayor
lawyer
opinion
beyond

[j] Sentences

Was it humid in Utah?
You look young.

[s], [ʃ], and [ʒ] Word and Sentence Contrasts

[s]	[ʃ]	[ʒ]
mass	mash	match
seat	sheet	cheat
bass	bash	batch

Where's the bass?Where's the bash?Where's the batch?

[z] and [dʒ] Word and Sentence Pairs

[z]	[dʒ]
raids	rage
buds	budge
heads	hed <u>ge</u>
wades	wage

They viewed the heads.They viewed the hedge.

[tʃ], [dʒ] and [j] Word and Sentence Contrasts

[tʃ]	[dʒ]	[j]
<u>ch</u> eer	<u>ch</u> eer	<u>y</u> ear
<u>ch</u> oke	<u>j</u> oke	<u>y</u> olk

I like that chello.I like that jello.I like that yellow.

How to Pronounce [p]: The lips are pressed firmly together and then opened quickly with a puff of air. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [p]: pants, apple

[p] Words

Remember to produce [p] with a puff of air.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>p</u> ay	a <u>p</u> art	stop <u>p</u>
<u>p</u> ick	pa <u>p</u> er	ma <u>p</u>
<u>p</u> aint	pe <u>pp</u> er	ty <u>p</u> e
<u>p</u> iece	o <u>p</u> en	ta <u>p</u> e

[p] Sentences

Pick up the piece of paper.

Paula ate apple pie.

How to Pronounce [b]: The lips are pressed firmly together and then opened. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [b]: bite, bubble

[b] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>b</u> ee	ta <u>b</u> le	ro <u>b</u> e
<u>b</u> uy	ab <u>o</u> ut	mo <u>b</u>
<u>b</u> ite	rab <u>b</u> it	ri <u>b</u>
<u>b</u> est	ba <u>b</u> y	t <u>u</u> b

[b] Sentences

Betty bought a bike.

I borrowed a book.



How to Pronounce [f]: The top teeth touch the lower lip. The air stream coming from your mouth is continuous. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [f]: fun, offer

Less Common Spellings for [f]: tough, phone

[f] Words

Be sure your top teeth touch your lower lip when you produce [f].

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>fine</u>	co <u>ff</u> ee	<u>if</u>
<u>ph</u> oto	be <u>fo</u> re	sa <u>fe</u>
<u>fo</u> ot	o <u>ff</u> ice	co <u>ugh</u>
<u>fun</u> ny	ne <u>ph</u> ew	en <u>ough</u>

[f] Sentences

My friend is free at four.
Our favorite food is fish.

How to Pronounce [v]: The top teeth touch the lower lip. The air stream coming from your mouth is continuous. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [v]: vase

Less Common Spelling for [v]: of

[v] Words

Be sure your top teeth touch your lower lip and your vocal cords are vibrating when you produce [v].

Beginning

vine
very
vest
vote

Middle

oven
seven
heavy
move

End

save
move
live
have

[v] Sentences

Everyone will leave at five.
You are living very well.



How to Pronounce [w]: The lips are rounded into a "kissing" position. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [w]: want

Less Common Spellings for [w]: one, quick

Remember to round your lips into a "kissing" position when you produce [w].

[w] Words

Beginning

wait
want
wish
weather

Middle

away
 someone
always
queen

[w] Sentences

We always work on Wednesdays.
Willy went to Washington.

How to Pronounce [hw]: The lips are rounded into the same “kissing” position as for [w]. It is produced by combining the [h] consonant with [w].

Typical Spellings for [hw]: where, white

[hw]
when
wheat
white
what

[hw] Sentences

Where is the white whale?

Why does the baby whine?

Which whistle did you blow?

**[p] and [b] Word and Sentence Pairs**

[p]	[b]
cap	cab
cup	cub
rope	robe
Tie the rope.	Tie the robe.

[p] and [f] Word and Sentence Pairs

[p]	[f]
pile	file
pill	fill
pit	fit
It's a pear.	It's a fair.

[b] and [v] Word and Sentence Pairs

[b]	[v]
berry	very
best	vest
marble	marvel
What a marble.	What a marvel.

[f] and [v] Word and Sentence Pairs

[f]	[v]
half	have
safe	save
belief	believe
That's life.	That's live.

[w] and [v] Word and Sentence Pairs

[w]	[v]
west	vest
wine	vine
went	vent
Pick the wine.	Pick the vine.

How to Pronounce [k]: The back of the tongue presses against the soft palate and releases quickly with a puff of air. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [k]: kite, cat, rack

Less Common Spellings for [k]: chemical, queen, six

[k] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>c</u> ake	l <u>o</u> cker	t <u>a</u> ck
<u>c</u> opy	l <u>iq</u> uor	tal <u>k</u>
<u>c</u> oin	b <u>e</u> come	pl <u>a</u> gue
<u>k</u> ind	me <u>ch</u> anic	wee <u>k</u>

[k] Sentences

I can catch a cab.

Bake the cake.



How to Pronounce [g]: The back of the tongue presses against the soft palate and releases quickly. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [g]: get, goggle, plague

Less Common Spelling for [g]: exact

[g] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
go	begin	leg
<u>g</u> et	for <u>g</u> ive	ta <u>g</u>
<u>g</u> uess	aga <u>in</u>	pl <u>ag</u> ue
<u>g</u> love	vine <u>g</u> ar	lea <u>g</u> ue

[g] Sentences

Gail will get a dog.
The goose laid an egg.

How to Pronounce [l]: The tongue tip touches the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [l]: luck, yel

Remember to touch the gum ridge behind your upper front teeth with the tip of your tongue as you pronounce [l].

[l] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>l</u> ike	rea <u>ll</u> y	ta <u>ll</u>
<u>l</u> ook	ba <u>ll</u> oon	un <u>tl</u>
<u>l</u> emon	ye <u>ll</u> ow	pi <u>ll</u>
<u>l</u> ime	al <u>l</u> one	hi <u>ll</u>

[l] Sentences

I like the love.

Linda looks like a lmillion dollars.

The lflower is lovely.



How to Pronounce [r]: The tongue tip is raised and curled upward toward the rear of the roof of your mouth. It does not touch any part of the roof of the mouth. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [r]: read, her, bright

Less Common Spelling for [r]: write

[r] Words

Your tongue tip should not touch your gum ridge when you say [r].

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>r</u> ace	pa <u>r</u> k	ca <u>r</u> e
<u>r</u> un	ve <u>r</u> y	mo <u>r</u> e
<u>r</u> ich	o <u>r</u> ange	de <u>a</u> r
<u>w</u> rong	umb <u>r</u> ella	su <u>r</u> e

[r] Sentences

The train arrives at four.
The forecast is for rain.
Maryland is far.

[l] and [r] Word Pairs

[l]

leadlowlate

[r]

readrowrate

[l] and [r] Sentence Pairs

It seems long.I see the lock.It seems wrong.I see the rock.

[l] and [r] Blend Word Pairs

[l]

lightlayslow

[r]

rightraiserow

[l] and [r] Blend Sentence Pairs

I like lays.It's a good lue.I like raise.It's a good rew.



How to Pronounce [h]: The tongue moves into the position for whichever vowel follows [h]. The air stream coming from your mouth is continuous. The vocal cords are not vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [h]: hello, ahead

Less Common Spellings for [h]: who, whole

[h] Words

Just let out a puff of air as if you were sighing as you produce [h].

Beginning

help
who
hear
heavy

Middle

anyhow
exhale
uphill
behave

[h] Sentences

It is hot and humid.

Henry went home.

I was holding his hat.

How to Pronounce [m]: The lips gently press together. The air stream is directed out your nose and is continuous. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [m]: me, home

Less Common Spellings for [m]: column, comb

[m] Words

Just make a humming sound when you say [m]:
mmmmmm.

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>mine</u>	f <u>am</u> ous	ar <u>m</u>
<u>man</u>	su <u>mm</u> er	ha <u>m</u>
<u>maybe</u>	so <u>me</u> one	crea <u>m</u>
<u>mother</u>	<u>am</u> ong	ti <u>m</u> e

[m] Sentences

Mom is moving to Maine.
I'm coming home.
My name is Tim.



How to Pronounce [n]: The tongue tip is pressed against the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth. The air stream is directed out your nose and is continuous. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [n]: no, run

Less Common Spellings for [n]: knee, knowledge

[n] Words

Beginning	Middle	End
<u>n</u> ose	mo <u>n</u> ey	fu <u>n</u>
<u>n</u> ice	<u>u</u> nder	aga <u>n</u>
<u>n</u> ever	fu <u>n</u> ny	beg <u>n</u>
<u>k</u> now	an <u>n</u> imal	down <u>n</u>

[n] Sentences

Whenn do we beginn?
I don't know your nephew.
It's nice and sunny.

How to Pronounce [ŋ]: The back of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate. The air stream is continuous and is directed out the nose. The vocal cords are vibrating.

Typical Spellings for [ŋ]: ring, talking, sanking

[ŋ] Words

Be sure to raise the back of the tongue when you produce [ŋ].

Middle

angry
mingle
finger
tango

End

bang
wrong
talking
playing

[ŋ] Sentences

We're going fishing.

The young man is bringing a ring.



Final Consonants in English

A final consonant is any consonant that is the last sound in a word. Although “e” may be the final letter in the word, it is usually silent. A consonant is actually the final sound. Carefully pronouncing final consonants will help you to be clearly understood when you speak English.

Words

h <u>o</u> le	h <u>o</u> me	h <u>o</u> se	h <u>o</u> pe
pr <u>i</u> ze	pr <u>i</u> me	pr <u>i</u> de	pr <u>i</u> ce
at <u>e</u>	ac <u>h</u> e	ac <u>e</u>	ai <u>m</u>

Voiced/Voiceless Final Consonant Word Pairs

Voiced Final Consonant	Voiceless Final Consonant
hi <u>d</u>	hi <u>t</u>
leav <u>e</u>	leav <u>f</u>

Sentences

Carefully pronounce the final consonant in each boldface word.

Tim **left** his **cap** in a **cab**.

When speaking English the “-ed” ending of past tense verbs can be pronounced three different ways. Sometimes it’s pronounced [t]; sometimes it’s pronounced [d]; sometimes it’s pronounced like the new syllable [ɪd].

“-ed” produced as [t]

The past tense ending “-ed” will sound like [t] when the present tense ends with a voiceless consonant sound.

Present Tense

(last sound is voiceless)

talkt

wishh

laughh

Past Tense

(“-ed” sounds like [t])

talked

wished

laughed

“-ed” produced as the New Syllable [ɪd]

The past tense ending “-ed” will sound like the new syllable [ɪd] when the present tense already ends with either [t] or [d].

Present Tense

(last sound is [t] or [d])

paintt

Past Tense

(“-ed” sounds like [ɪd])

painted

Sentences

We washeded and waxeded our cars.
I painteded the house and cleaneded up.



In English the plurals are usually formed by adding an “-s” to the noun. Sometimes it is pronounced [s], sometimes it is pronounced like the syllable [ɪz].

“-s” produced as [s]

The ending “-s” will sound like [s] when the word ends with a voiceless consonant sound.

Singular Noun

(last sound is voiceless)

hat

lake

Plural Noun

(“-s” sounds like [s])

hats

lakes

“-s” produced as [ɪz]

The ending “-s” will sound like [ɪz] when the word ends with either [s], [z], [ʃ], [tʃ], [dʒ], or [ʒ].

Singular Noun

(last sound is [s], [z],

[ʃ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [ʒ])

prize

bus

Plural Noun

(“-s” sounds like [ɪz])

prizes

busses

Sentences

My shirts, skirts, and shoes are old.

We like onions and pickles on our hamburgers.

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