

Phonetic Alphabet for English Language Learners

PA—**The Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)** is a system of **phonetic** symbols developed by linguists to represent each of the wide variety of sounds (phones or phonemes) used in spoken human language. This includes both vowel and consonant sounds. The IPA is used to signal the pronunciation of words. Each symbol is treated separately, with examples (like those used in the dictionary) so you can pronounce the word in American English.

Single consonant sounds

| Symbol | Sound | Example |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| p | p in "pen" | p in, p lay, t op, p retty, p oppy, p ossible, p epper, p our |
| t | t in "taxi" | t ell, t ime, t oy, t empted, t ent, t ender, b ent, t aste, t o |
| r or ʈ | t in "bottle" | b utter, w riter, r ider, p retty, m atter, c ity, p ity |
| ʔ or tˀ | t in "button" | c otton, c urtain, k itten, C linton, c ontinent, f orgotten |
| k | c in "corn" | c in "c ar ", k in "k ill ", q in "q ueen ", c opy, k in, q u il t |
| s | s in "sandal" | c in "c ell " or s in "s ell ", c ity, s inful, r eceive, f ussy, s o |
| f | f in "fan" | f in "f ace " or ph in "p hone " gh laugh, f it, p h oto , g raph |
| m | m in "mouse" | m iss, c amera, h ome, w oman, d am, mb in "b omb " |
| b | b in "boot" | b other, b oss, b aby, m aybe, cl ub, v erb, b orn, s nob b y |
| d | d in "duck" | d ude, d uck, d aytime, b ald, bl ade, d inner, s udden, d o |
| g | g in "goat" | g o, g uts, g iggle, g irlfriend, g ift, g uy, g oat, g lobe, g o |
| z | z in "zebra" | z ap, z ipper, z oom, z ealous, j azz, z ucchini, z ero |
| v | v in "van" | v ery, v accine, v alid, v eteran, a chieve, c ivil, v ivid |
| n | n in "nurse" | n ever, n ose, n ice, s udden, t ent, kn ife, kn ight, n ickel |
| l | l in "lake" | l iquid, l augh, l inger, l ittle, b elly, b ell, s oul, l anguage |
| y or j | y in "yacht" | y ield, y ucky, y esterday, y um, y ell, y ellow, y awn, y o |
| h | h in "house" | h appy, h ouse, h orse, h oliday, h eaven, h old, h ello, h i |
| r | r in "rabbit" | r iver, f orever, r iddle, r ight, w r in "w rite " w r in "w rong " |
| ɔ | w in "wolf" | w onder, w inter, w h in "w h ich", w itch, w h in "w h ere" |

Double consonant sounds and symbols

| Symbol | Sound | Example |
|--------|------------------------|--|
| ʃ | sh in "ship" | s in "s ugar ", ch in "m achine , sh ock, m ustache, w ish |
| tʃ | ch in "chip" | ch icken, ch urch, ch ildren, ch ick, ch ease, ch ose, ch air |
| θ | th in "throw" | th ink, th row, th rew, th rough, th ank, th eory |
| ð | th in "there" | th is, th e, th em, th ey, th ee, r hythm, b reathe, f ather |
| ʒ | s in "treasure" | A sian, m ea s ure, c asual, l eisure, p leasure |
| dʒ | j in "jacket" | j est, j acket, j uice, r e j oice, g in "g ym ", j in "J im ", j oy |
| ŋ | ng in "singer" | w ing, r ing, w rong, s trong, b ang, a nger, j ungle, f inger |

Single Vowel Sounds

| Symbol | Sound: with symbols | Example words |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--|
| ɑ | a in "f <u>a</u> ther" fɑ:ðɜ:r | car, nod, arm, cart, art, jar, awkward, distraught |
| ɔw | aw in "s <u>a</u> w" sɔw | law, thaw, bought, gnawed, ball, dawn, on, frog |
| i or i: | ee in "n <u>ee</u> d" ni:d | happy, glorious, need, pizza, read, cheese, succeed |
| u or u: | u in "r <u>u</u> de" ru:d | boot, too, to, two, group, shoe, rude, food, proof, cool |
| e | e in "b <u>e</u> d" bed | fed, men, bell, motel, hell, farewell, said, medicine |
| æ | a in "b <u>a</u> t" bæt | cat, bad, trap, have, bass, lamb, plaid, ant, aunt, ask |
| ʌ | u in "u <u>p</u> " ʌp | bus, cup, rut, but, up, drunk, love, summer, cousin |
| ɒ | o in "d <u>o</u> g" dɒg | hot, odd, wash, knot, fought, lot, body, sorry, obvious |
| I or i | i in "b <u>i</u> d" bɪd | kit, bid, hymn, kindergarten, sizzle, twitter, zip, jingle |
| ʊ or u | oo in "w <u>oo</u> d" wʊd | would, could, should, look, put, good, push, sugar |
| ɜ: | i in "b <u>i</u> rd" bɜ:rd | her, nurse, learn, pearl, circle, nerve, person, service |
| ə | e in "h <u>id</u> den" hɪdən | about, comma, supply, dozen, adjust, trust, must |

Double vowel sounds (diphthongs)

| Symbol | Sound: with symbols | Example words |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| aʊ or aw | o in "c <u>o</u> w" caʊw | brow, how, mouth, bow, allow, vow, now, announce |
| Iə | e in "h <u>e</u> re" hɪər | ear, mere, mirror, beer, sear, peer, we're, appear |
| ɔi/oy/oj | oy in "t <u>o</u> ys" tɔis | boil, choice, boy, voice, rejoice, soil, toy, avoid, royal |
| ei/ey/ej | ai in "r <u>a</u> in" rein | fate, day, break, train, vein, take, wake, mate, wait |
| ai/ay/aj | i in "k <u>i</u> te" kait | bite, my, price, vice, wine, kind, vine, rewind, bye |
| eə | ai in "ch <u>a</u> ir" tʃeər | hair, wear, various, air, care, rare, beware, hilarious |
| ʊə | ou in "t <u>o</u> urist" tʊərɪst | tour, sewer, lure, newer, fewer, viewer, you're |
| oʊ or ow | oa in "c <u>o</u> at" kout | goat, show, no, bow, grow, arrow, borrow, dough |

Examples of words transcribed in PA for pronunciation

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| tran·scribe: (træn -skraɪb') | peo·ple: (pi'pəl) | psy·chol·o·gy : (sai-k ɔ'lə- dʒi) |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|

Examples of English sentences transcribed into IPA symbols for pronunciation

| | |
|--|--|
| I am going to my friend's house to study for my history test. | Eɪ em goʊɪŋ tu maɪ frendz haʊs tu stʌdi fəʊr maɪ hɪstəri test. |
| Will you please tell me where I can find the Post Office? | Wɪl ju plɪz tel mi weər ei kæn faɪnd ðə Pəʊst ɔfɪs? |
| For the trip you will need a camera, hiking boots, binoculars, cotton socks, and a packed lunch. | Fəʊr ðə trɪp ju wɪl ni:d ə kæmrə, heɪkɪŋ butz, bɪnɒkjʊlərz, kəʔn sɒks, ænd ə pækt lʌntʃ. |

Created by Kelly Cunningham



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