

Index to number references and vowel / consonant sounds

Vowel Phonemes			Consonant Phonemes		
01	/ɪ/	P <u>it</u>	21	/p/	<u>p</u> it
02	/e/	pe <u>t</u>	22	/b/	<u>b</u> it
03	/æ/	pa <u>t</u>	23	/t/	<u>t</u> ime
04	/ɒ/	po <u>t</u>	24	/d/	<u>d</u> oor
05	/ʌ/	lu <u>ck</u>	25	/k/	<u>c</u> at
06	/ʊ/	go <u>od</u>	26	/g/	ge <u>t</u>
07	/ə/	<u>a</u> go	27	/f/	<u>f</u> an
08	/i:/	me <u>a</u> t	28	/v/	<u>v</u> an
09	/ɑ:/	<u>c</u> ar	29	/θ/	<u>th</u> ink
10	/ɔ:/	do <u>o</u> r	30	/ð/	<u>th</u> at
11	/ɜ:/	gi <u>r</u> l	31	/s/	<u>s</u> end
12	/u:/	<u>t</u> oo	32	/z/	<u>z</u> ip

13	/eɪ/	day	33	/m/	man
14	/aɪ/	sky	34	/n/	nice
15	/ɔɪ/	boy	35	/ŋ/	ring
16	/ɪə/	beer	36	/l/	leg
17	/eə/	bear	37	/r/	rat
18	/ʊə/	tour	38	/w/	wet
19	/əʊ/	go	39	/h/	hat
20	/aʊ/	cow	40	/j/	yet
			41	/ʃ/	shop
			42	/ʒ/	leisure
			43	/tʃ/	chop
			44	/dʒ/	jump

Phonetic Alphabet

This table contains all the sounds used in the English language. For each sound, it gives:

- The symbol in the **IPA** — the International Phonetic Alphabet, used for writing [phonetic transcription](#).
- Two English **words** which use the sound. The underline shows where the sound is heard.
- The links labeled **Amer** and **Brit** play sound files (in [mp3 format](#)) where the words are [pronounced](#) in American and British English. The British version is given only where it is very different from the American version.
- If you want to speak good English, you have to know how to pronounce each of these sounds. You can learn more about each sound through the "**more**" link.

vowels	consonants	
IPA words	IPA	words
ʌ cup, l <u>u</u> ck	b	<u>b</u> ad, lab <u>ʊ</u>
a: a <u>r</u> m, fa <u>th</u> er	d	<u>d</u> id, la <u>d</u> y
æ ca <u>t</u> , bla <u>ck</u>	f	<u>f</u> ind, i <u>f</u>
ə a <u>wa</u> y, ci <u>ne</u> m <u>a</u>	g	<u>g</u> ive, fla <u>g</u>
e me <u>t</u> , be <u>d</u>	h	<u>h</u> ow, <u>h</u> ello
ɜ: tu <u>r</u> n, lea <u>r</u> n	j	<u>y</u> es, <u>y</u> ellow
ɪ hi <u>t</u> , si <u>tt</u> ing	k	<u>c</u> at, ba <u>ck</u>
i: see, hea <u>t</u>	l	<u>l</u> eg, <u>l</u> ittle
ɒ ho <u>t</u> , ro <u>ck</u>	m	<u>m</u> an, le <u>m</u> on
ɔ: ca <u>ll</u> , fo <u>ur</u>	n	<u>n</u> o, te <u>n</u>
ʊ pu <u>t</u> , cou <u>ld</u>	ŋ	<u>s</u> ing, fi <u>ng</u> er
u: blu <u>e</u> , foo <u>d</u>	p	<u>p</u> et, ma <u>p</u>
aɪ fi <u>v</u> e, <u>e</u> ye	r	<u>r</u> ed, tr <u>y</u>
aʊ no <u>w</u> , ou <u>t</u>	s	<u>s</u> un, mi <u>ss</u>
əʊ go, ho <u>m</u> e	ʃ	<u>sh</u> e, cr <u>ash</u>
eə whe <u>r</u> e, ai <u>r</u>	t	<u>t</u> ea, ge <u>tt</u> ing
eɪ sa <u>y</u> , ei <u>gh</u> t	tʃ	<u>ch</u> eck, <u>ch</u> ur <u>ch</u>
ɪə nea <u>r</u> , he <u>r</u> e	θ	<u>th</u> ink, bo <u>th</u>
ɔɪ bo <u>y</u> , jo <u>in</u>	ð	<u>th</u> is, mo <u>th</u> er
ʊə pu <u>r</u> e, tou <u>ri</u> st	v	<u>v</u> oice, fi <u>v</u> e
	w	<u>w</u> et, <u>w</u> indow A
	z	<u>z</u> oo, la <u>z</u> y A
	ʒ	plea <u>s</u> ure, vi <u>s</u> io A
	dʒ	<u>j</u> ust, lar <u>g</u> e A

Optional *r*

Many dictionaries use another symbol which looks like this: **ɹ**. This is not a sound — it is a short way of saying that an **r** should be [pronounced](#) only in American English. No **ɹ** is heard in British English.

For example, if you write that the [pronunciation](#) of *bar* is /bɑ:**ɹ**/, you mean that it is /bɑ:**r**/ in American English, and /bɑ:/ in British English.

Syllabic *l* and *n*

The symbols **l̥** and **n̥** show that the consonant **l** or **n** is pronounced as a separate syllable. Before the **l̥** or **n̥**, there is a very small vowel, which usually is even shorter than an **ə** sound.

You can hear the syllabic **l̥** in words like [little](#) /'lɪt̥^ə/ and [uncle](#) /'ʌŋk̥^ə/. The syllabic **n̥** can be heard in [written](#) /'rɪt̥^ən̥/ and [listen](#) /'lɪs̥^ən̥/.

Instead of the **ə** symbol, some dictionaries simply give an **l** or **n**, so that *little* is transcribed /'lɪtl/. Other dictionaries use the **ə** symbol (/ 'lɪtəl/).

The apostrophe (word stress)

Most dictionaries use the apostrophe symbol (') to show word stress. Usually, the apostrophe is placed before the stressed syllable in a word. [Word stress](#) is explained in our article about phonetic transcription.