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The Sounds of English

Theory and Practice for Latin American Speakers

José Vicente Abad Olaya

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José Vicente Abad Olaya

Facultad de Educación y Humanidades
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

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The Sounds of English

Theory and Practice for Latin American Speakers

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Photographer: Jorge Cano

Illustrators: José Vicente Abad Olaya and Luisa Fernanda Taborda

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To Jesus

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INTRODUCTION

This book was conceived as a pronunciation course textbook to be used under the guidance of a trained instructor; however, it can also be used for independent study by learners with an English proficiency level of B1 or above. Both teachers and students can read the book in sequence if they seek to work comprehensively on pronunciation, or they can use it as reference material by looking into any one of the English sounds for which they may need specific information and practice.

The text is aimed at Spanish speakers who are in pursuit of improving their English pronunciation. It specifically targets pre-service and in-service English teachers who are required to know how English sounds are pronounced. The text's main objective is to offer essential theory and practice on the pronunciation of the English consonant and vowel sounds. It particularly seeks to help English teachers whose mother tongue is Spanish not only to hone their pronunciation but also to acquire the technical elements necessary to teach the pronunciation of English sounds to others.

The body of the book is divided into three main parts. The first part focuses on theoretical and technical aspects of phonetics and phonology. It provides a definition of essential concepts, such as those of phoneme and speech sound; discusses the challenges posed by the spelling-pronunciation mismatch in English; presents the adjusted version of the International Phonetic Alphabet used in this book; and describes the process of speech production.

The second and third parts describe and provide practice on the English vowel and consonant sounds respectively. Each of the units covers two or more closely related sounds and is made up of the following sections:

- **Presentation.** It shows the sounds' phonetic symbols and describes the sounds' pronunciation, classification, and relation with Spanish.
- **Images.** Frontal pictures of the face and cross-section diagrams of the head show how each sound is made.
- **Spelling Patterns and Positions.** A table shows the most common spelling patterns for each sound and the positions within words where these patterns occur. Teachers are prompted to have their students repeat the pronunciation of each sound and the words included in the table in preparation for the following sections.

- **Interest note.** This section provides additional information about the sounds that are being studied in regard to aspects such as dialectal variations, pronunciation instructions, and associated theoretical concepts.
- **Introductory practice.** The exercises in this section are meant to provide practice in recognizing, producing, and contrasting sounds. They usually involve contrasting minimal pairs and choosing the word pronounced. These exercises require the guidance of the teacher. Although suggested answers are given for these exercises, teachers have the discretion to conduct them as they see fit.
- **Appropriation.** These exercises, which can be done individually or in pairs, are meant to facilitate students' appropriation of the sounds through a class guided practice. Teachers are encouraged to verify that students understand the instructions before they do the exercises and to correct the exercises as a whole-class activity once students have had enough time to complete them. Nevertheless, these activities do not require the teacher's guidance while students are doing them. Students are expected to do them on their own instead.
- **Consolidation.** These exercises are meant to promote the retention and transference of sounds by having students recognize, assess, and manipulate them in contexts other than the language classroom. They include suggestions to creatively use the sounds for communicative tasks or to assess how the sounds are used in the media by other speakers. They may also include tasks such as doing dictionary searches or visiting online sources to obtain further information and practice. These exercises are for students to complete by themselves as independent practice. Later revision and correction is at the discretion of the teacher.

1 | Essential Concepts

1.1 Phonetics and Phonology

The term *phonetics* comes from the Greek word **fonetike**, which means *the sounds of a language*. Phonetics is the branch of Linguistics that studies the sounds of speech; that is, the sounds humans use to communicate with one another through the spoken word.

Oral communication involves three physical elements: the transmitter of the message, the means through which the message is carried, and the receptor of the message. As a result, phonetics is divided into three branches that study each of these elements separately. Articulatory phonetics looks into the physiological processes involved in the production of speech sounds. Acoustic phonetics analyzes the environmental conditions under which those sounds occur. Receptive phonetics considers the physiological processes that allow for the reception of sound in the human ear. This book focuses primarily on articulatory phonetics.

Phonetics is complemented by phonology in the description of human speech. Phonetics studies the physical production, transmission, and reception of speech sounds. Phonology, on the other hand, focuses on how those sounds are processed by the human brain to convey and comprehend meaning.

1.2 Phonemes and speech sounds

The minimal phonological unit is the phoneme. To understand what a phoneme is, we must first distinguish what constitutes a speech sound. Not all the sounds we make with our phonatory organs are sounds of speech. Consider, for example, the sounds that you make when you laugh, cry, or yawn. Unlike them, speech sounds are systematically produced by our brain to form words. Speech sounds, therefore, have both a physical and a mental nature. A speech sound may be produced in various ways. For example, the sound [r] can be made with the tongue either curled up towards the teeth or bunched up towards the back of the mouth. These physical realizations of a speech sound are called **allophones**. A speech sound must also leave an unequivocal imprint in the mind of speakers and listeners that they will use to form words. This mental representation of a sound that constitutes a word-forming unit is called a **phoneme**.

When phonemes are put together in our brains, we hear not just strings of noise but comprehensible words. I will use two situations to illustrate this phenomenon. First, when you are mentally reading a passage, you are not physically producing sounds, but the sounds of letters are reproduced in your brain. Each of those sounds that form words in your mind are phonemes. Also, consider when you first started to learn English and heard a conversation between competent speakers. Even if you were able to hear every sound they made, what they said was incomprehensible to you (although it was perfectly clear for them). This shows that for listening comprehension to occur we must not only hear the sounds made by other speakers, but also train our brains to recognize phonemes as they form words in everyday conversation.

From the situation above we infer that yet another quality of phonemes is that they determine meaning. For example, when you combine the sounds [b]+[e]+[t], you hear the word *bet*. But if you substitute the [p] sound for the [b] sound, you will get the word *pet* instead. This situation can prove problematic if you do not accurately produce a correct version (allophone) of the phoneme you need to make a word, because then your interlocutor will not understand what you are trying to say or will understand something completely different.

1.3 The English spelling - pronunciation mismatch

There are languages in which almost every letter has a direct and unchanging correspondence to a sound. In Spanish, for instance, the vowel *a* is always pronounced [a]. That is why it is relatively easy to read Spanish, even before learning to communicate with it. English, however, is a horse of a different color. There is a well-known mismatch between the way words are written and the way they are pronounced. This apparent lack of correspondence between the written and the spoken word makes learners of English feel that they have to learn two languages for the price of one. A number of cases exemplify this phenomenon.

1. The same letter may be pronounced with different sounds. For example, the letter *a* sounds [æ] in the word *mat*, but it sounds [eɪ] in the word *mate*. The letter *t* sounds [t] in the word *table*, but it sounds [ʃ] (as *ch* in *church*) in the word *future*.
2. The same sound may be represented with different letters. For example, the sound [eɪ] is represented as *a* in *pane*; as *ai* in *main*; as *ay* in *day*; and as *ey* in *they*.
3. Many letters are pronounced with only one sound. For example, the *-ough* combination sounds [ɔ] in *brought*, and the *-ugh* combination sounds [f] in *laugh*.
4. Many sounds are represented with only one letter. For example, the letter *u* in *university* is pronounced [ju].
5. Some letters are silent. For example, *k* is silent in *know*, and *l* is silent in *walk*.
6. Some sounds have no letter to represent them. For example, the sound [æ] is made between the letters *m* and *c* in *McIntosh*.

For regular English students, learning some elements of phonetics and phonology is convenient because it can help them work out the challenges posed by this mismatch; for pre-service and in-service English teachers, doing it is indispensable because they have to teach pronunciation.

1.4 The phonemic alphabet

The phonemic alphabet, a system of symbols that represent speech sounds, is a useful tool in dealing with the spelling-pronunciation mismatch. In the study of English phonetics and phonology, the first and perhaps the most important step students must take is to learn such alphabet. At the beginning, however, this task poses some challenges. First, because many letters from the orthographic alphabet are used as part of the phonemic alphabet, speech sounds are represented between bars or brackets to distinguish them from letters. For example, the letter *a* (pronounced *ei*) is very different from the sound [a], and the letter *p* (pronounced *pi*) is different from the sound [p]. An accompanying challenge is learning to pronounce the sounds in isolation and not as part of words, as we do in regular conversation. Also, students must be aware that there are many phonemic alphabets. In fact, almost every English dictionary from a well-known publishing company has its own phonemic alphabet. Most of the symbols, especially those used for consonant sounds, are the same across different alphabets, but a few symbols may vary from one alphabet to the other. Students must become familiar with these variations.

In this book I use a variation of the alphabet proposed by the International Phonetic Association (IPA). This book's alphabet includes 14 vowel sounds, taking the four versions of schwa as only one sound; and twenty four consonants, not including some allophones, such as flap *t* [ʔ].

Table 1 shows the phonemic alphabet with some examples of words that include each sound. Right next to the examples in English, I indicate whether the sound is present in Spanish or has similarities to one of its sounds, and I give examples in this language when appropriate. Naturally, it is more difficult for Spanish speakers to recognize and produce those sounds for which they have no reference in their native language. Conscious and continuous practice, however, will prove effective in overcoming all these challenges.

The Phonemic Alphabet			
	Symbol	Example	Presence in Spanish
Vowel Sounds	[i:]	feet - sheep	In words such as <i>iglesia</i> or <i>indio</i>
	[ɪ]	fit - ship	Not in Spanish
	[eɪ]	pay - day	In words such as <i>peine</i> or <i>reina</i>
	[e]	pet - bed	In words such as <i>entre</i> or <i>enano</i>
	[æ]	mad - fat	Not in Spanish
	[ɑ]	arm - heart	Similar to a in <i>guardar</i>
	[ɔ]	fall - bought	Similar to the o in <i>hora</i>
	[oo]	so - boat	Not in Spanish
	[u:]	food - fool	In words such as <i>uva</i> or <i>uno</i>
	[ʊ]	put - full	Not in Spanish
	[ʌ]	fun-up	Not in Spanish
	[ə]	away - about	Not in Spanish
	[ə]	father	Not in Spanish
	[ɜr]	girl	Not in Spanish
	[aɪ]	mine - five	In words such as <i>aire</i> or <i>traiga</i>
[ɔɪ]	boy - toy	In words such as <i>estoy</i> or <i>oiga</i>	
[aʊ]	house - mouse	In words such as <i>causa</i> or <i>aurora</i>	
Consonant Sounds	[b]	bed - boy	In words such as <i>base</i> or <i>burro</i>
	[p]	pet - pool	In words such as <i>piso</i> or <i>pato</i>
	[d]	dip - do	Different, though similar to the first d in <i>dedo</i> .
	[t]	tip - to	Different, though similar to the second t in <i>tanto</i>
	[g]	give - go	In words such as <i>gato</i> or <i>guerra</i>
	[k]	kid - cow	In words such as <i>casa</i> or <i>kilo</i>
	[v]	vine - very	In words such as <i>vaca</i> as pronounced in Spain
	[f]	fine - fire	In words such as <i>fiera</i> or <i>fuego</i>
	[ð]	this - father	Similar to the second d in <i>dedo</i>
	[θ]	thanks - both	Similar to the z in <i>corazón</i> as pronounced in Spain
	[s]	so - bus	In words such as <i>sopa</i> or <i>susto</i>
	[z]	zoo - buzz	Similar to the s in words such as <i>mismo</i>
	[ʒ]	pleasure - beige	In words such as <i>yo</i> as pronounced in Argentina
	[ʃ]	shoe - wash	Not in Spanish, but similar to the sound used to quiet
	[h]	hat - house	In words such as <i>jarra</i> or <i>juego</i>
	[tʃ]	cheese - church	In words such as <i>chorro</i> or <i>chicha</i>
	[dʒ]	jet - judge	In <i>llama</i> as pronounced in parts of Colombia
	[m]	man - moon	In words such as <i>mujer</i> or <i>mamá</i>
	[n]	net - name	In words such as <i>nené</i> or <i>nube</i>
	[ŋ]	sing - wing	Similar to the sound made in words such as <i>tango</i>
[l]	lemon - let	In words such as <i>limón</i> or <i>labio</i>	
[r]	rose - car	Not present in Spanish. Not to confuse with Spanish r	
[w]	what - await	Similar to the u sound in words such a <i>guayo</i>	
[j]	yes - cure	Similar to the i sound in words such as <i>nieve</i>	

Table 1 The Phonemic Alphabet

1.5 Speech production

Our bodies are perfectly designed to ensure our survival on the planet. Following a principle of natural economy, many organs often perform multiple functions. Speaking, for instance, is a by-product of breathing, so the organs involved in breathing also play a part in the production of speech.

As air leaves our lungs and passes through the trachea (or wind pipe), it meets a pair of membranous folds known as the vocal cords. The cords are protected by an armor of cartilages known as the larynx (or voice box), which forms the Adam's apple. When we engage in breathing, the folds remain open to let the air pass through the resulting space, called glottis, but when we speak or sing, the folds are brought together by the muscles that control the movements of the larynx. Then, the pressure of the air below the folds causes them to vibrate, thus producing the human voice.

The vocal folds are extremely flexible membranes that crash together as many as 170 times per second to produce sound. On average, the folds measure between 1 to 1.5 centimeters long in women and children, and between 1.5 to 2.5 centimeters long in men. These dimensions account for the different registers of the human voice.

Voice professionals such as teachers, singers, radio hosts, and salespersons must take special precautions to keep their vocal cords in good health. Some recommendations include a) keeping your cords well hydrated, b) warming them up before any demanding vocal work, c) breathing deeply while speaking in public or singing, and d) avoiding any overuse caused by continuous screaming or whispering.

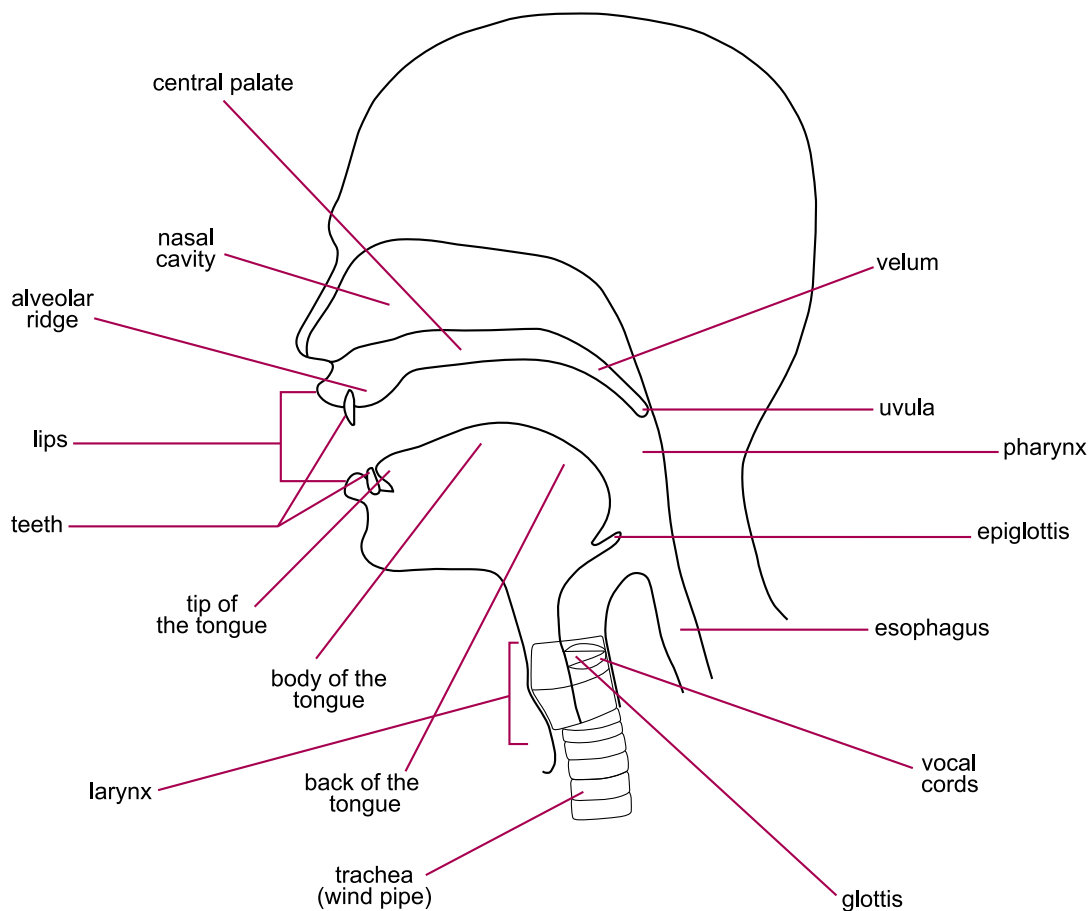
An initial classification of speech sounds is based on voicing; that is, on whether the cords vibrate to make the sound. **Voiced sounds** involve the vibration of the vocal cords. All vowel sounds and most consonant sounds fall into this category. **Voiceless sounds**, on the contrary, are produced without any vibration of the vocal cords. Classification based on voicing will be later described in the following chapters.

The primary sound produced by the cords is unintelligible. Only when it is transformed by the articulators in the face and the mouth it becomes speech. The main articulators are the teeth, the lips, the jaw, and the tongue. They adopt multiple positions to give each speech sound its distinctive qualities.

For the study of phonetics, the tongue has been divided into three main sections: tip, body, and back. Likewise, the palate is divided into three main sections: The alveolar ridge, or hard palate; the central palate; and the soft palate, or velum. All vowels and some consonants are classified according to the point in which the tongue approaches (for vowels) or touches (for consonants) a specific section of the palate.

To perform functions as varied as eating, breathing, and speaking, the body has other organs that help separate those processes. After the velum there is a dangling extension of the palate called the uvula. You may see this organ moving if you open your mouth widely and gag. The uvula plays the role of a door. It remains closed when we eat to prevent food from going into the nasal cavity, but it opens when we breathe through our nose and also when we make nasal sounds.

At the far end of the mouth you can see the pharynx, which is the vestibule that leads into different passages of the human body. At the base of the tongue there is another organ called the epiglottis, which also plays the role of a door. When we eat or drink, the epiglottis closes to prevent food from going into the wind pipe. But when we breathe, the epiglottis opens to let the air through the trachea. Both the uvula and the epiglottis are perfect examples of how the human body has specialized to perform multiple functions in a systematic way. On figure 1 you can see an illustration of the phonatory organs described above.



The organs of speech

2 | Vowel Sounds

In the production of vowel sounds, the airstream flows freely from the lungs through the vocal passage and out of the mouth. Also, the vocal cords close, so when the air hits them on its way out, they vibrate and produce sound. Therefore, all vowel sounds are voiced. The original sound made by the cords is later modified by the articulators: tongue, palate, teeth, lips, jaw, and facial muscles. These organs move in a particular way to reach a specific position, thereby giving each vowel its distinctive qualities. Vowel sounds are thus classified according to the following criteria:

Place of articulation. This is defined by the position that the tongue takes inside the mouth.

a. Height of tongue. Based on this criterion vowel sounds are:

- High. The tongue approaches the roof of the mouth, the jaw rises, and the lips barely open, as in the sound [i:].
- Mid. The tongue and the jaw remain in a mid-level position, as in the sound [ʌ].
- Low. The tongue flattens down inside the vocal cavity, the jaw descends, and the lips open, as in the sound [ɔ].

b. Position of the tongue. Based on this criterion vowel sounds are:

- Front. The blade of the tongue moves forward towards the teeth, as in [i:].
- Central. The tongue remains right below the palate, as in [ɹ].
- Back. The tongue moves towards the farthest back section of the vocal cavity, as in [u:].

Manner of articulation. This is defined by the way in which the facial muscles make the lips move.

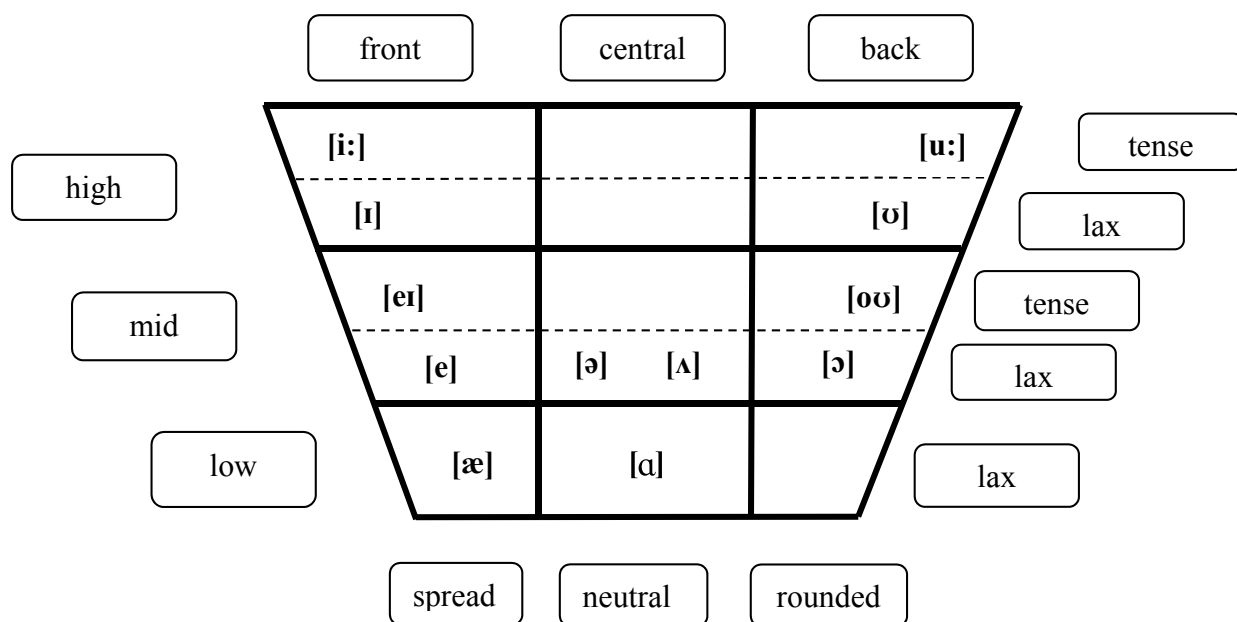
a. Tension of the facial muscles. Based on this criterion vowel sounds are:

- Tense. The muscles tense either to stretch the lips out, as in [i:]; or to narrow them into a round position, as in [u:].
- Lax. The muscles remain in a relaxed position, as in [ʌ].

b. Roundness of the lips. Based on this category vowel sounds are classified as:

- Spread. Lips are expanded horizontally, as in [i:].
- Neutral. Lips are neither too stretched out nor too rounded, as in [ʌ].
- Rounded. Lips tend to round and to stick out slightly, as in [u:].

Figure 2 shows how each vowel sound is classified according to the criteria already presented. Sound [i:], for example, is high, front, tense, and spread. Sound [ɔ], on the contrary, is low, back, lax, and rounded.

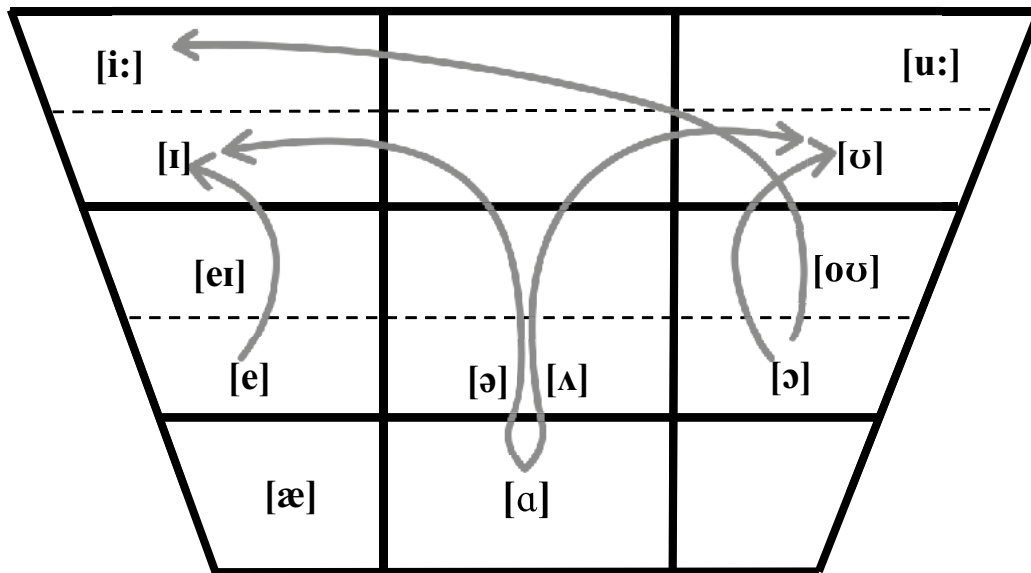


Vowel Sounds Classification

In the English language there are fourteen vowel sounds:¹ eleven simple vowels, including nine monophthongs and two sounds with adjacent glides; and three diphthongs. The nine single sounds (monophthongs) are [i:], [ɪ], [e], [æ], [ɑ], [ɔ], [u:], [ʊ] and the schwa sound [ʌ] with its variations.

A **glide** is a transition between two sounds, which could be either adjacent or non-adjacent. The two vowel sounds with adjacent glides are [eɪ] and [oʊ]. In the making of glides between neighboring sounds there is little change in the position of the articulators, as the two vowels share some qualities. The nine single sounds and two adjacent glides previously described constitute the eleven simple vowel sounds classified in the vowel quadrant above.

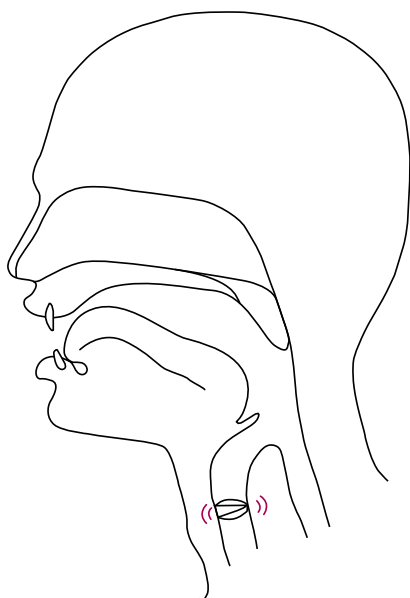
A **diphthong**², on the other hand, is a glide between two non-adjacent sounds in the same syllable. Unlike adjacent glides, diphthongs are made of two sounds that are distant from each other in the classification chart. The three diphthongs are [aɪ], [aʊ] and [ɔɪ]. Figure 3 shows how adjacent glides and diphthongs are formed.



Formation of Glides and Diphthongs

² The definitions of diphthong and glide used in this book are based on the work of Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010), which focuses on American English. However, British English considers eight diphthongs, which include not only the five glides presented here, but also three more ending in schwa [ə].

2.1 Sounds [i:] and [ɪ]



Sound [i:]. Known as *long I*, this sound is present in words like *bee*, *sea*, and *tree*. This sound is high, front, tense, and spread. The tip of the tongue rests against the lower teeth while the blade of the tongue is placed right behind the upper teeth and the hard palate, without touching them. The lips stretch out as though you were about to smile.



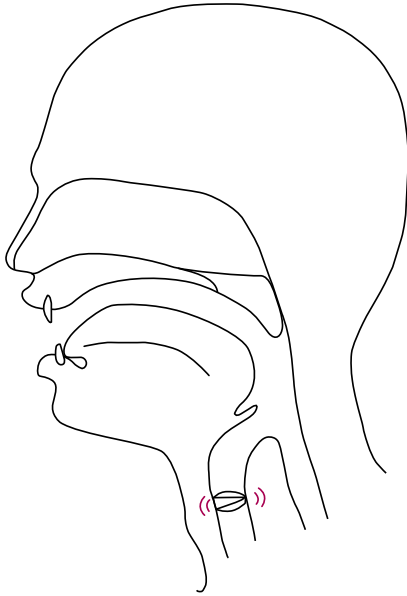
- Repeat after the teacher: [i:], [i:], [i:], [i:]¹.
- Read the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
e	eke	scene, these, breve	me, he, she
ee	eel	week, feel, wheel	bee, tree, see
ea	eat, east, easy	weak, meat, treat	sea, tea,
ie		niece, brief, thief	Brie
ei	either	neither	
eo - oe		people, amoeba	

Interest note

The two dots after the symbol indicate that the sound must be prolonged. This is a common feature for this sound, which explains why it is called *long i*. However, you might find the sound without the two dots in words such as *city* ['sɪtɪ] or *easy* ['i:zi]. In these cases you are to make the sound without lengthening it.

¹ As an additional practice, put your index fingers on the corners of your lips. Your fingers should move sideways as the lips stretch out to make [i:].



Sound [ɪ]. Known as *short I*, this sound is present in words like *bit*, *sit*, and *it*. This sound is high, front, lax, and spread. The tongue is in a slightly lower and more relaxed position than in [i:]. The lips barely move, and maintain a neutral position. This sound is quick and short.



Sound [ɪ]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[ɪ], [ɪ], [ɪ], [ɪ]².
- Repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
i	it, if	sit, mitt, wit, sick, wick, trick tip, lip, sip	
y		System, syllable	
u		busy, business, building,	

Interest note

Unstressed syllables often have the sound [ə]. However, the sound [ɪ] is also commonly used in unstressed syllables, even in vowels other than i; for example, in words such as *minute*, *chocolate*, or *ferret*.

² As an additional practice, put your index fingers on the corners of your lips. Your fingers should barely move away from a central position as you make [ɪ]

Introductory practice

1. Repeat the words. Go over each column first. Then read the minimal pairs from left to right to contrast both sounds.

[i:]	[ɪ]
eat	it
seat	sit
sheep	ship
meat	mitt
week	wick
leap	lip
deep	dip

2. Listen. **Circle** the word you hear in each case.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| a. eat / it | e. sheep / ship |
| b. wean / win | f. lean / Lynn |
| c. deep / dip | g. cheap / chip |
| d. beat / bit | h. feat / fit |

Appropriation

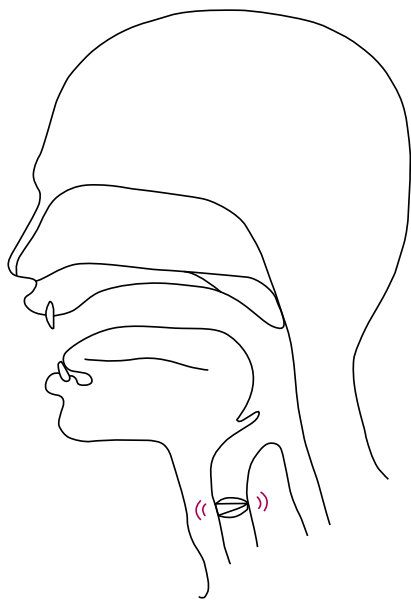
3. Read the following sentences. Underline the words pronounced with [i:]. **Circle** the words pronounced with [ɪ].

- Next week we'll leave for New York City.
- Pleased to meet you, Mr. Smith.
- I like to feel the breeze when I walk down the beach.
- I don't need to hear her weep all the time.
- You have to whip the egg whites to make cream.
- She gave a neat speech at Riggs' Theater.

4. In each group of words **circle** the one that is NOT pronounced with [i:]

- | | | | |
|----------|--------|-------|-------|
| a. beat | week | sit | seat |
| b. real | sqweak | dear | head |
| c. sheep | beer | bear | beard |
| d. clear | swear | weird | dream |
| e. dean | feat | best | beast |

2.2 Sounds [e] and [ei]



Sound [e]. Known as *print e*, this sound is present in words such as *every*, *pet*, and *elephant*. In Spanish this sound is present in words such as *enemigo* or *elegante*. This sound is mid, front, lax, and spread. The tip of the tongue rests against the lower teeth while the blade of the tongue is in mid-level position. The lips are stretched out, but not as much as for [i:]. Both lips and jaw are slightly opened in a relaxed manner.



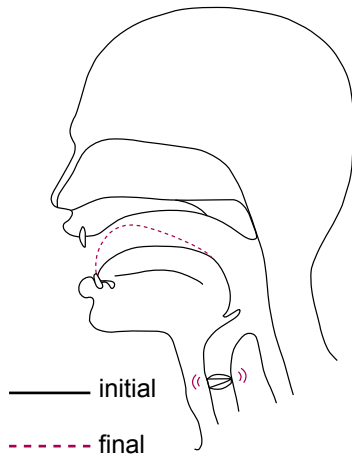
- Repeat after the teacher: [e], [e], [e], [e].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	At the beginning	In the middle
e	every, enemy, end, elf, error	check, bet, pet, pen, bell, red
ea ¹		bread, head, thread, ready, steady, leather
ae	aeronautics, aerobics, aerosol	anaerobic
ie		friend
a	any,	many, planetary, monetary
ai		again, said
eo		leopard, jeopardy
u		bury, burial

¹ It is pronounced [e] especially before “d”. This is, however, a tricky spelling pattern. Consider, for example, words such as *bead*, *eavesdrop*, or *plead*, in which *ea* is pronounced [i:].

Interest note

In some versions of the phonetic alphabet this sound is represented as epsilon [ɛ], the first letter of the Greek alphabet. However, most dictionaries and phonetic alphabets today, including the current version of IPA, favor the [e] sign to represent this sound.



Sound [eɪ]. Known as *diphthongized e*, this sound is present in words like *main*, *day* and *reign*. In Spanish a similar sound is produced in words such as *rey*, *ley*, or *peine*. This sound is mid, front, tense, and spread. The tongue moves from a mid to a high position, while the lips, which are somewhat extended, move from a slightly opened to a relatively neutral position.

- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [eɪ], [eɪ], [eɪ], [eɪ].
- Repeat the words on the table below.



Sound [eɪ] (1)



Sound [eɪ] (2)

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
a ²	age, ape, apron	lake, make, tape, mane, place, parade, state	
ai	aim,	rain, main, stain, braid, complain	
ay		haystack, waylay	day, May, play, stay
ei ³	eight, eighteen	deity, weight, neighbor, reindeer, vein, reign, deign	sleigh, neigh
ey			grey ⁴
ea		break, great	

² Analyze how the letter a is usually pronounced [eɪ] when it is in the following pattern: CaCe, in which C stands for *consonant*.

³ The *ei* pattern is usually pronounced [eɪ] when followed by -gh, -n, and -gn

⁴ *Grey* is the British form for *gray*, which is American. It refers to the color of smoke or ashes.

Interest note

In spite of its name, this phoneme is not a diphthong but a **glide**, that is, a transition between two neighboring sounds, which in this case are [e] and [ɪ].

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[e]	[eɪ]
met	mate
let	late
fret	freight
chess	chase
West	waste
red	raid
pest	paste
get	gate

2. Listen and **circle** the word you hear.

- Is it the *edge/age* of the chair?
- Can you find *Ed/aid* in the office?
- Who took the *bet/bait*?
- We are talking about my *debt/date*.
- The *pest/paste* is all over me.
- The *test/taste* was pretty good.
- I would like to *sell/sail* my boat.
- His *pen/pain* is awful, isn't it?

Appropriation

3. Read the following sentences. Write the sounds for the boldfaced words in the corresponding brackets. Example:

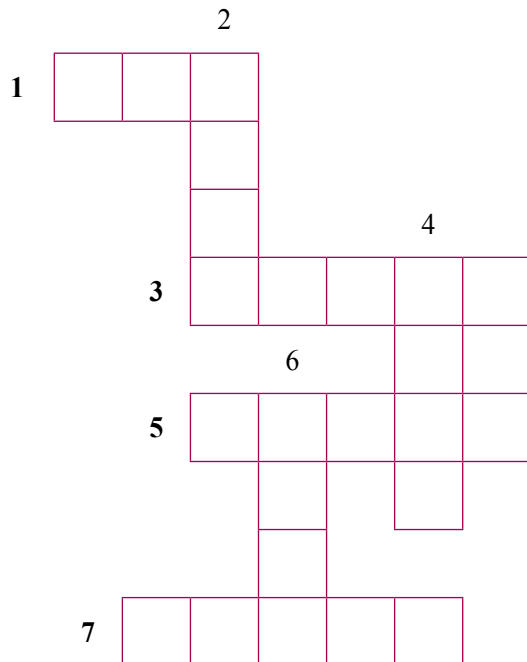
Mary bent over to pick up the **plate**. [e] [e] [eɪ]

- The **plane** arrived at **ten** to **eight**. [] [] [] []
- I need a **pen** to write out the **check**. [] []
- Jane** could **spend** all **day** **playing** **chess**. [] [] [] [] [] [] []

d. Her **face** was **red** after so much **exercise**. [] [] []

e. Steve had to **wait seven** minutes before his order **came**. [] [] [] []

4. Complete the crossword puzzle. The words are pronounced with [e] or [ei].

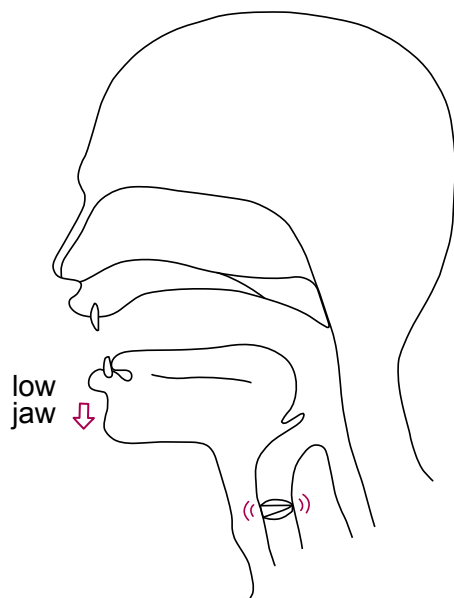


1. A creature with pointed ears and powers
2. The state of being known by many people
3. The opposite of a friend
4. The hair on the neck of a horse or a lion
5. A tall machine with a long arm used in construction to move heavy objects
6. Money you pay to live in a place that is not yours
7. To get in

Consolidation

5. Write a short conversation that includes at least three words with [e] and three words with [ei]. Practice the conversation with a partner.

2.3 Sounds [æ] and [ɑ]



Sound [æ]. Known as *diagraph*, this sound is present in words like *map*, *cat*, and *animal*. This sound is low, front, lax¹, and spread. The tongue is low near the floor of the mouth. The lips are slightly spread, but not as much as for [e]. The jaw is lowered, but not as much as for [ɑ].



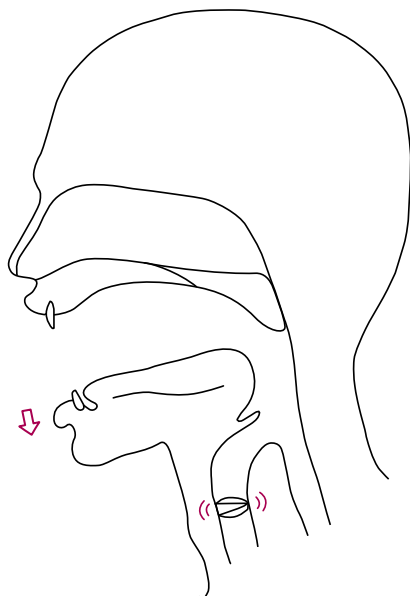
- Repeat after the teacher:
[æ], [æ], [æ], [æ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	At the beginning	In the middle
a + nasals	and, ant, animal, ankle, am, ambulance, anguish, anchovy	sand, band, land, pants, banana, Japan, Sam, ram, jam, lamb, sang, rang
a	a + plosives	cat, bat, rat, mad, sad, glad, lab, cab, fabulous, map, rap, happy, lag, rag, stack, rack
	a + fricatives	mass, class, jazz, smash, staff, laugh
	a + affricates	magic, match, catch

Interest note

- This sound does not exist in Spanish. However, it is present in other languages. For example, in Portuguese the word *pedra* (stone) is represented like this ['pæðrɐ].
- Diagraph appears only in **stressed** syllables. When the letter “a” is in unstressed syllables, it usually sounds [ə]. Compare atom ['ætəm] with atomic [ə'tɑ:mɪk].

¹ Although classified here as lax, [æ] has some degree of tension.



Sound [ɑ]. Known as *print a*, this sound is present in words like *star*, *water* and *fox*. It is similar to the Spanish sound of *a* in words such as *ala* or *mamá*. This sound is low, central, lax, and neutral. The tongue is low in the oral cavity, with the tip positioned behind the lower teeth. The jaw is dropped very low, although its position may vary depending on phonetic context. The lips are semi-rounded, that is, neither stretched out nor too rounded.



Sound [ɑ]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[ɑ], [ɑ], [ɑ], [ɑ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	At the beginning	In the middle
a	arm, art,	want, dark, father, car, water, March.
o + plosives (t, d, p, b, g, ck, etc.)	oxen	cot, lot, pod, rod, cop, mop, cob, rob, blog, frog, rock, mock

Interest note

This sound has some **allophones** that have a representation of their own. On the one hand, there is [ɑ], a narrower version of *print a* that is made with the tongue in a neutral position. This variation is more common when followed by laterals or nasals, as in *art* [ɑ:rt] or *calm* [kɑ:m]. On the other hand, there is [ɒ], a more open version of the sound, with the tongue very flat and back in the oral cavity and the lips opened yet relaxed. This variation is more common when the sound is followed by stops, fricatives, or affricates, as, as in *hot* [hɒt] or *stop* [stɒp].

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[æ]	[ɑ]
rack	rock
pat	pot
sack	sock
cat	cot
map	mop
cap	cop
hat	hot

Appropriation

2. Read the following sentences. Underline the words pronounced with [æ]. Circle the words pronounced with [ɑ].
- She has published an article in a literature magazine.
 - John, the lame pirate looked at the map to find the treasure.
 - My aunt Anne loves Japanese gardens.
 - The concert was fantastic; we had an amazing night.
 - In the castle will be a dancing party.
 - I do not want to pat the cat.
 - I never forget to lock the office.
 - My garden has beautiful flowers.
 - Lucia wants to shop some drama tales.
 - The fox wants to eat cobs.

3. Find 12 words in the word search below. Then, place them in the table under the correct sound.

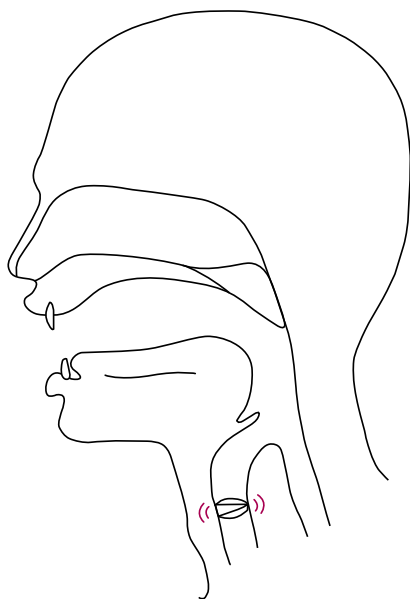
u	m	s	c	l	a	s	s	o	s	f	o
u	n	d	e	r	s	t	a	n	d	a	g
a	q	m	a	r	t	y	r	k	e	i	a
m	a	s	h	z	j	f	a	t	h	e	r
a	y	p	p	a	h	k	l	f	o	m	d
p	q	w	e	n	t	w	g	a	h	t	e
y	i	v	x	i	b	a	c	r	s	a	n
a	z	s	d	m	f	n	l	m	u	w	t
t	c	i	o	a	e	d	m	e	v	i	g
a	n	d	y	l	o	z	x	r	n	q	a
c	w	c	a	r	t	o	j	f	p	e	m

[æ]	[ɑ]

Consolidation

4. Look up on the internet the web site of the *University of Iowa*, go to its section on phonetics, and check the pronunciation of each of the sounds studied so far.

2.4 Schwa: [ʌ] and [ə]



This is the vowel sound of *uh-huh*, the interjection used to indicate agreement, acceptance, or understanding. There are two main variations of schwa that are used depending on whether the sound is in a stressed or in an unstressed syllable. **Stressed schwa** is represented as [ʌ], whereas **unstressed schwa** is represented as [ə].

Schwa is a mid, central, lax, and neutral vowel sound. The tongue is in the center of the oral cavity in resting position. The facial muscles are relaxed and the jaw is slightly lowered, although its position might change depending on the phonetic context. Finally, the lips are relaxed and barely move during the production of the sound, which is rather short and quick.



- Repeat after the teacher: [ʌ], [ʌ], [ʌ], [ʌ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	At the beginning	In the middle
u	up, ugly, under, uncle	cup, run, sun, bus, luck, study ¹
o	other, oven, one [wʌn]	done, some, come, month, love ²
a		was, what
oe		does
oo		blood, flood
ou		double, cousin

¹ Notice that *u* between consonants is usually pronounced as schwa in stressed syllables. However, there are some exceptions to this rule, such as *put*, *push*, *pull*, and *bull*, which are pronounced with [ʊ].

² The vowel *o* between consonants sometimes is pronounced as schwa, too; although this is also a common pattern for [ou], as in *dome*, *sole*, or *alone*.

Interest note

Schwa is the most common sound in English. To verify its ubiquitous nature, open an English dictionary to a random page and then scan the phonetic transcriptions on it. After doing this a couple of times, you will notice that schwa is present in virtually every page of the dictionary.

Sound [ə]. Unstressed schwa is present in words like *away*, *about*, and *banana*. It is made exactly as stressed schwa. The only difference is that it is represented this way [ə] when it appears in unstressed syllables.

Schwa significantly contributes to the particular way English is pronounced. The relaxed quality of English pronunciation could be partially attributed to the continuous repetition of this sound. Furthermore, as the most common weak sound, schwa helps to establish the distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables, whose combination ultimately determines the nature of English rhythm. Schwa also facilitates linking, a common feature of English pronunciation. Many function words in English are pronounced with schwa. For instance, words such as *to* [tə], *her* [ər], *him* [əm], *of* [əf], *the* [ðə], *and* [ən], and *a* [ə] are all made with this sound unless they are being emphasized. By reducing the vowels of unstressed syllables to [ə], [ɪ], or [ʊ], fluent English speakers can more easily connect words with each other. That is why they can speak at a rather fast pace and say a lot of words within relatively short utterances.

In consequence, learning to adequately pronounce schwa is essential to acquiring a good English pronunciation. Schwa often appears to be a difficult sound for most Latin American students of English, for it is not present in Spanish, but with practice they can learn to recognize it and produce it, too.

- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [ə], [ə], [ə], [ə].
- Repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions ³	
	At the beginning	In the middle
a	away, arrive, allow	relative, balloon, logical
e	enamel, employ ⁴	torrent, towel, raven, pavement
i		capital, council
o	of, obtain	lemon, dollop, patron, carrot
u	unsure, undo, upon	asparagus, minute, campus, focus
ai		mountain, certain
ia		musician, physician
io		caution, mention, action
ou		callous, joyous, carousel

³ There are a few words that end in schwa, such as *Asia*, *banana*, and *torte*

⁴ Although an initial e as part of an unstressed syllable is usually pronounced [ɪ], it is also safe to pronounce it as schwa.

Interest note

A good way to approach the correct pronunciation of unstressed schwa in a final syllable is by pretending there is no vowel sound whatsoever. In such cases, some dictionaries use no schwa, whereas others represent it in smaller size to indicate it is almost imperceptible. For example, *able* ['eɪb^əl] or *mountain* ['maʊnt^ən].

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[æ]	[ʌ]	[ɑ]	[ʌ]	[ɔ]	[ʌ]
cat	cut	lost	lust	bought	but
mat	mutt	boss	bus	caught	cut
rat	rut	lock	luck	dawn	done
fan	fun	cop	cup	gone	gun
rag	rug	cot	cut	naughty	nutty

2. Listen. **Circle** the word you hear in each case.

- I often *ran/run* back home.
- I have no *lock/luck*.
- He stepped on a *rat/rut*.
- That is a beautiful *color/collar*.
- He had an awful *cat/cut*.
- I don't like the *rent/runt*.
- He is always *begging/bugging*.
- Mike is a *naughty/nutty* guy.

Appropriation

3. In each group of words **circle** the one that is NOT pronounced with [ə]

- mountain president book enemy
- cat seldom famous problem
- curious estimate cell history
- wood again soda finally
- ago signal steel relative

4. Match each word with its corresponding phonetic transcription. Write each letter in the corresponding blank space.

___ lemon	a. ['rænsəm]
___ minuscule	b. ['sʌndeɪ]
___ ancient	c. ['lemən]
___ ransom	d. [ənbɪ'li:vəbl]
___ Sunday	e. ['eɪnfənt]
___ luscious	f. ['mɪnəskju:l]
___ unbelievable	g. ['lʌʃəs]

5. Read the following paragraph. Underline the words pronounced with [ʌ]. With a different color, underline also the words pronounced with [ə].

Love Rings Twice - by Bill Loguidice

Theirs was a true love, thought Tony, one to stand the test of time. Eva, his soul-mate, was somehow even more beautiful than the day they first met, he realized. And even though she always seemed to say something interesting, it ultimately didn't matter, as he was happy just to hear her soft, melodic voice. Someday soon, he imagined, they would have children together, and their love would blossom as a family. These wonderful thoughts made him feel warm and tingly inside. Suddenly, without warning, Tony was yanked from his daydream by the doorbell. He let out a long sigh, realizing that that would be the courier with the divorce papers.

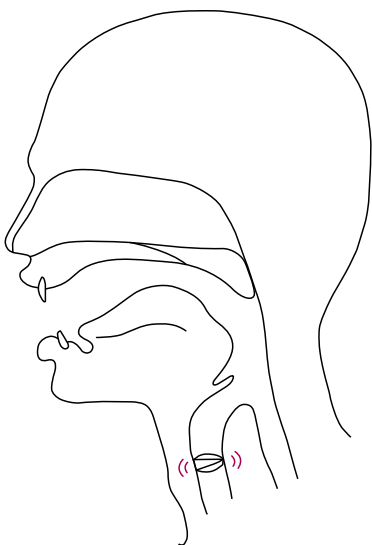
Consolidation

6. Come up with a list of 8 words that you think may be pronounced with schwa. In front of each word, try to guess what the phonemic transcription of those words is. Then, check in the dictionary to see whether you were right or not.

Word	Phonemic transcription
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

2.5 Schwa + r: [ə]

Sound [ə]. Known as *schwa + r* or schwa with hook, this is the sound of *er*, the interjection that some English speakers use when they are deciding what to say next. It is present in words like *girl*, *burn*, and *sister*.



This sound is mid, central, lax, and neutral. The blade of tongue is slightly above the neutral position with some bunching in the palatal region, while the tip might be a bit curled. The sides of the tongue touch the back teeth. The jaw is slightly lowered. The lips are usually a bit rounder than for schwa, but still keep a neutral position.

There are two versions of schwa + r. **Stressed schwa** is represented as [ɜ:] or [ɜr], whereas **unstressed schwa** is represented as [ə], and sometimes as [ər]. Thus, the transcription of *girl* would be [gɜrl], whereas the transcription of *sister* would be ['sɪstə] or ['sɪstər]. Students should be able to recognize these symbols. However, in this unit the sound will be represented as [ə] regardless of whether it is stressed or not.

- Repeat after the teacher: [ə], [ə], [ə], [ə]!
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.



Sound [ə]

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
-er	ermine ²	jerk, verb, concern, stern	father, singer, river
-ear	earth, early, earn	learn, pearl, heard	
-ir	irksome	confirm, girl, shirt, third	stir, fir
-ur	urban, urge, urn	sturdy, burn, curl, return	blur, fur, your
-or ³		work, world, word, worry	neighbor, doctor
-ar			near, dollar, polar, grammar
-yr		myrtle	

Interest note

Schwa + r is considered a controlled variation of the [r] sound. Therefore, the pronunciation of *girl* for an American would be [gɜ:rl] whereas for a British it would be [gɜ:l]; that is, in the case of schwa r, British speakers color it with the position of an r, but they do not really make an [r] sound. For more information regarding British and American pronunciation of the [r] sound, see unit 3.9.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[ə]	[ɑr]	[ə]	[ɔr]
heard	hard	fur	for
stir	star	purr	poor
burn	barn	stir	store
lurk	lark	firm	form
firm	farm	burn	born

2. Listen. Circle the word you hear in each case.

- burn/barn
- firm/farm
- stir/star
- lurk/lark
- fur/for
- pier/purr

¹ As an additional practice, imagine you are making a purr or a soft growl.

² Unusual pronunciation. Normally, a beginning er is pronounced [er-] as in error, or [ɪr-] as in eraser.

³ -or and -ar are generally pronounced [ɔr] and [ɑr] respectively. Only in unstressed syllables are they pronounced schwa + r. The cases of word, world, work, and worry are exceptions to be memorized.

Appropriation

3. Read the following text. Underline the words pronounced with [ə].

My sister is a nurse in the emergency room of a hospital. Yesterday, a girl with serious burns came in and needed to have surgery. After surgery, the girl's mother and father thanked the emergency room staff for saving the girl's life. My sister is proud of herself as well as the doctors and other nurses that she works with.

4. In each group of words circle the one that is NOT pronounced with [ə]

- | | | | |
|------------|---------|---------|----------|
| a. acre | inform | weather | sister |
| b. purple | plural | return | blur |
| c. stardom | stirrup | firmly | learning |
| d. curtain | certain | artful | urban |
| e. circus | clever | birth | doormat |

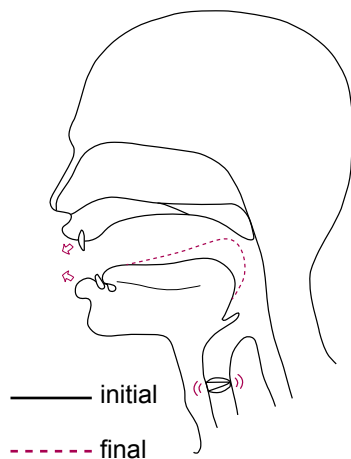
Consolidation

5. Practice reading the next list of words, first with an American accent, and then with a British one.

- a. girl
- b. first
- c. third
- d. bird
- e. nurse
- f. turn
- g. work
- h. her
- i. verb
- j. world
- k. earth
- l. journey

6. Listen to TV program, internet video, or radio show in British English. Try to identify at least five words with schwa + r and copy them.

2.6 Sounds [oʊ] and [ɔ]



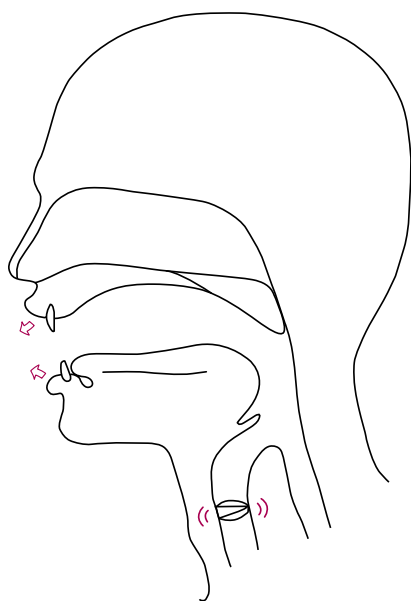
Sound [oʊ]. Known as *diphthongized o*. This sound is present in words like *no*, *rose*, and *cold*. This sound is mid, back, tense, and rounded. This sound is a glide between [ɔ] and [u], so the tongue, although always back, moves from mid to high position. The lips, which are initially opened for [ɔ], close to the rounder position of [u].

- Repeat after the teacher:
[oʊ], [oʊ], [oʊ], [oʊ].
- Read the words on the table below.



Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
o	over, open	home, phone, nose, close ¹	no, so, go
oa	oat	boat, coat, load, goat, foam	
oe		goes, toes, foes	toe, foe, throe,
ow	own, owe	sown, blown	sow, row, tow
old	old	cold, fold, sold	

¹ The o + C + e cluster (C stands for consonant) is a common one for this sound, as in *rose*, *rope* and *cope*.



Sound [ɔ]. Known as *open o*, this sound is present in words like *dog*, *all*, and *short*. This sound is mid, back, lax, and rounded. The tongue is slightly lower than for [ʊ] but upper than for [ɑ], and with its back towards the velum. The lips are opened in a rounded position.



- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[ɔ], [ɔ], [ɔ], [ɔ].
- Repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
o	or, offer	boss, long, for, store	
a	all	call, mall, salt, talk	
aw	awe, awful,	jaw, draw, lawn	paw, raw, straw
au	auto	caution, fault, pauper	
ou	ought	bought, fought	

Interest note

- The letter *o* in a stressed syllable may take different pronunciations. As explained previously, it is often pronounced as *print a* in words such as *hot*, *cop*, or *honest*. In British English these words are pronounced with [ɒ], that is, [hɒt], [kɒp], and [ˈɒnɪst]. In American English they are pronounced with [ɑ], that is, [hɑt], [kɑp], and [ˈɑnɪst]. Only in a few cases, especially when followed by an r, the vowel *o* sounds [ɔ], as in *short* or *store*.
- The past participle forms of some irregular verbs made with *-aught* or *-ought* are usually pronounced with [ɔ]. For example, *fought*, *taught*, *caught*, *bought*, and *thought*. However, many Americans are likely to pronounce these verbs with a *print a*. Therefore, words like *cot* and *caught* sound the same way for them, that is [kɑ:t].

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[oo]	[ɔ]	[oo]	[ʌ]
loan	lawn	note	nut
boat	bought	home	hum
coat	caught	phone	fun
low	law	known	nun

2. Listen. Circle the word you hear in each case.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| a. fought/fat | e. fall/foul |
| b. low/law | f. store/star |
| c. wrote/rut | g. core/car |
| d. caught/cat | h. cop/cup |

Appropriation

3. Read the following letter. Underline the words pronounced with [oo] and [ɔ]. Use different colors in each case.

August 1st,

Dear *Rose*,

I just arrived home. Thank you for the amazing time we had in Boston. Those days were awesome, and they will stay in my mind forever. Do you remember the night at the restaurant, when I made the waiter spill the drinks all over? It was so embarrassing! I felt awful, but then we laughed a lot. And what about those cute boots we bought during our shopping spree? I am now boasting them everywhere. Flirting with that guy from London during the boat ride was fun, too. Many things happened in our trip, but now we have to go back to normal. However, I want to spend some months abroad next year, and I would love it if you came with me. Let me know.

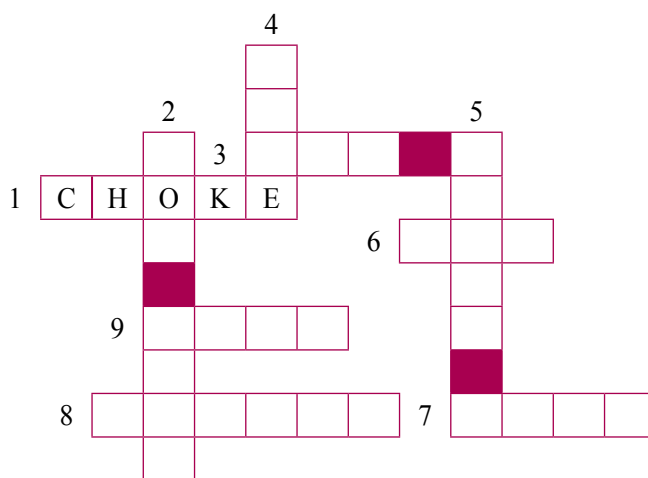
Hugs and kisses,

Rachel

4. Complete the crossword puzzle. Then, put the words under the right sound. The first clue was done for you.

CLUES

1. To not be able to breathe because something is in your throat.
2. A boat that pulls other boats with a rope or chain. Two words.
3. Opposite of high.
4. An empty space or opening.
5. A device that you use for talking to somebody who is in another place.
6. Preposition. A word that shows who will get or have something.
7. Higher than other things or people.
8. A person or thing that calls.
9. Having no hair or fur.

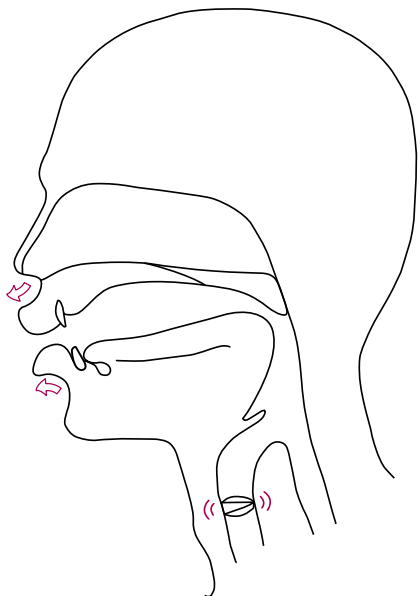


[ɔ]	[oʊ]
	<i>choke</i>

Consolidation

5. Make a list of eight words spelled with a middle o that may be pronounced [ɔ]. Practice pronouncing them with American accent and then with British accent.

2.7 Sounds [u:] and [ʊ]



Sound [u:]. Known as *long u*, this sound is present in words such as *fool*, *rule*, and *moon*. This sound is present in Spanish in words such as *uno*, *luna*, and *tú*. This sound is high, back, tense, and rounded. The back of the tongue moves upward toward the velum without touching it, while the tip rests against the lower teeth. The lips round and protrude a little as in a whistling position. The jaw is high and the facial muscles are tense. This sound is not at the beginning of any word.



Sound [u:]

- Repeat after the teacher: [u:], [u:], [u:], [u:]¹.
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

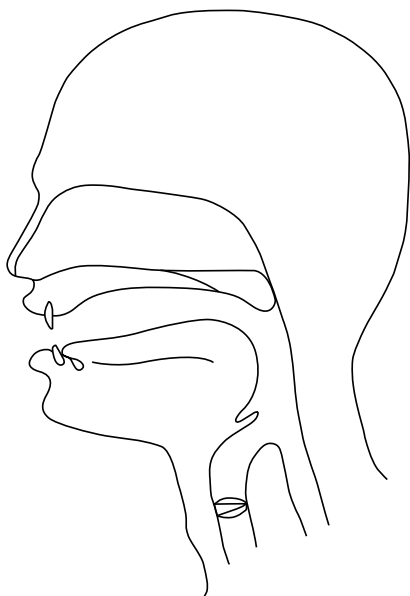
Spelling patterns	Positions	
	In the middle	At the end
u	June, rule, rude, duty, tune, nude	Timbuktu
oo	moon, balloon, pool, food, spoon	too, woo, kangaroo, igloo
o		do, to, who
ou	group, soup, boutique, bouquet	you
oe		shoe, canoe
ui	fruit, suit, recruit, cruise, bruise	
ue		blue, glue, true, rue, sue, due
ough		through, brougham ²
ew	steward, Newark, lewd	blew, stew, drew, new
eu	neutral, neurology, rheumatic, leukemia	Cordon bleu

¹ As an additional practice, remember to prolong the sound. A playful way to do this sound or to illustrate it, is to make a moo sound, as though you were a cow; or a boo sound, as though you were a ghost.

² A brougham is a type of old carriage with a roof and four wheels that was pulled by a horse.

Interest note

- As it happens with other long vowels, the two dots are used to indicate that the sound must be prolonged. Occasionally the two dots are omitted to indicate that the sound is shortened, as in the word *bouquet*.
- In some cases, **u** is always pronounced [ju:], as in *music, curious, pupil, unicorn, or universe*. Words such as *duty, duet, nude, tube, Tuesday, student, and new* are pronounced with [u:] in American English, but with [ju:] in British English.



Sound [ʊ]. Known as *short u*, this sound is represented with the Greek letter upsilon, and it is present in words like *bull, put* and *cook*. Although it is also classified as a high, back, and rounded sound, the tongue is slightly lower and the lips are less rounded than they are for [u:]. Also, keep in mind that short u is a lax, quick, and short sound that does not exist in Spanish.



Sound [ʊ]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[ʊ], [ʊ], [ʊ], [ʊ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions
	Only in the middle
u	bull, full, push, bush, sugar, cushion,
oo	book, cook, look, hood, wood, foot, tooth, rookie, cookie
ou	could, should, would
o	woman, wolf

Interest note

As you can see above, long u and short u share the *u, oo, ou, and o* spellings, which are rather unreliable, as they may be pronounced with other sounds, too. Consider, for instance, words such as **blood** ['blʌd], **floor** ['flɔ:r], **peanut** ['pi:nʌt], **sound** [saʊnd], or **women** [wi:men]. Therefore, it is necessary to memorize the correct pronunciation for the words with either one of these spellings.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[u:]	[ʊ]	[u:]	[ʌ]	[ʊ]	[oo]
kook	cook	Luke	luck	brook	broke
Luke	look	soon	sun	bull	bowl
pool	pull	school	skull	pull	pole
fool	full	shoot	shut	could	code
stewed	stood	root	rut	cook	coke

2. Listen to some words. Put an x on the sound with which each of them is pronounced.

1.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]	5.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]
2.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]	6.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]
3.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]	7.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]
4.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]	8.	[u:]	[ʊ]	[ʌ]

Appropriation

3. Read the following text. Underline the words pronounced with [u:]. Circle the words pronounced with [ʊ].

Luke and **Sue** just married. They went **to** **New** York for their **honeymoon**. But things did not go as planned. First, **during** the flight a very **rude** **steward** asked them to **move** to some uncomfortable seats with no **cushions**. Upon arriving at **Newark** Airport, the people from homeland **security** opened their **suitcase** in search of some smuggled **jewels**. When they finally made it to the hotel, all the **rooms** had already been **booked**, so they had to find a cheaper place to stay. Finally, **Sue** came down with the **flu**, so they had to stay in for the rest of the trip. It is a **good** thing they really love each other, or else they **would** not have made it **through**.

4. Classify the words from the list below into the right group.

food, stoop, good, look, juice, pull, prune, bull, groom, fluke

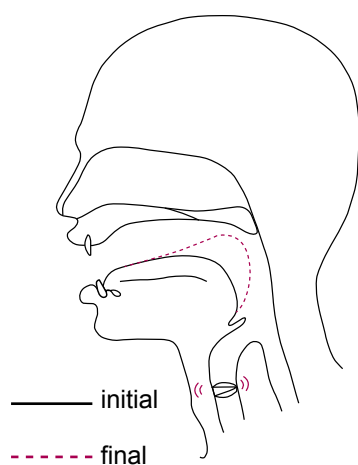
[u:]	
[ʊ]	

Consolidation

5. Write 5 sentences with at least two words that include [u:] or [ʊ] in each of them.

2.8 Diphthongs: [aʊ], [aɪ], and [ɔɪ]

As described at the beginning of the chapter, there are five main glides –transitions between vowel sounds- in English: two between adjacent sounds and three between non-adjacent sounds. The latter three, [aʊ], [aɪ], and [ɔɪ], are also considered diphthongs. A diphthong is, therefore, a glide between distant or non-adjacent sounds that occurs within the same syllable. Each of these three diphthongs is described below.



Sound [aʊ]. This diphthong is present in words such as *house*, *how*, and *cow*. In Spanish this sound appears in words such as *auto* or *auxilio*. The tongue moves from the low and central position of [a] to the high and back position of [ʊ]. In this transition the jaw first opens and then closes, while the lips change from a neutral position to a rounded position.

- Repeat after the teacher:
[aʊ], [aʊ], [aʊ], [aʊ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.



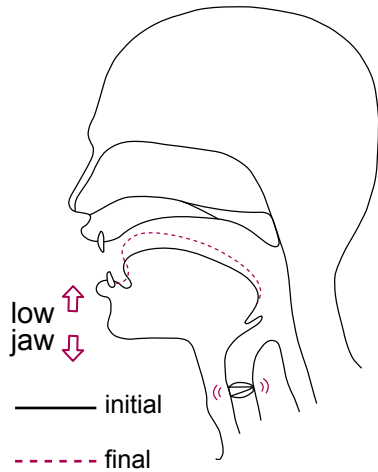
Sound [aʊ] (1)



Sound [aʊ] (2)

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
ow	owl	vowel, towel, tower, flower	how, vow, cow, bow ¹
ou	our, ounce, out	hour, loud, cloud, sound, pound, mouth, plough	

¹ Notice that the ow pattern is shared by the [oʊ] and the [aʊ] sounds. Thus, you have words such as bowl [boʊl] or flow [floʊ], and words such as *bowel* [ˈboʊəl] or *flower* [ˈflaʊə]. Even more, *bow* corresponds to the spelling of two different dictionary entries pronounced [baʊ] and [boʊ].

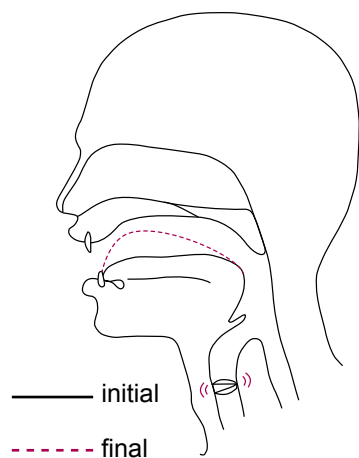


Sound [aɪ]. This diphthong corresponds to the phonetic transcription of *I* or *eye*. It is present in words such as *island*, *mine*, and *time*. In Spanish it appears in words such as *aire* or *vaina*. The tongue moves from the low and central position of [a] to the high and front position of [ɪ]. In this transition the jaw first opens and then closes, while the lips change from a neutral position to a spread position.

- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [aɪ], [aɪ], [aɪ], [aɪ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.



Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
i	I, ice, island, iron	like, time, dime, white	
ie		died, lied, skies, cries	die, lie
y		skyline, skylight, dye, eye	dry, cry, try, July, why
igh		night, right, light, might	high, sigh
uy			buy



Sound [ɔɪ]. This diphthong is present in words such as *oyster*, *oil*, and *boy*. In Spanish it is made in words such as *hoy* or *estoy*. The tongue moves from the low and back position of [ɔ] to the high and front position of [ɪ]. In this transition the jaw also opens and then closes, and the lips change from a rounded position to a spread position.

- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [ɔɪ], [ɔɪ], [ɔɪ], [ɔɪ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.



Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
oi	oil	coin, point, voice	hoi poloi ²
oy	oyster	annoyance, enjoyment	boy, toy, enjoy, decoy

Interest note

- The three diphthongs described above result from glides that start with the low sounds [ɑ] or [ɔ] and finish with the high sounds [ɪ] or [ʊ]. For glides that are formed in the opposite direction, the semivowels [j] and [w] are used in words such as *your* [jɔr] or *water* [wɔtə].
- A triphthong is a glide that moves along three different vowel sounds. There are five triphthongs that result from combining the two adjacent glides and the three diphthongs with schwa or schwa + r. These triphthongs are present in words such as *player* [pleɪə], *lower* [ləʊə], *fire* [faɪə], *hour* [aʊə], and *royal* [rɔɪəl].

² The hoi poloi is an insulting expression to refer to ordinary people.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

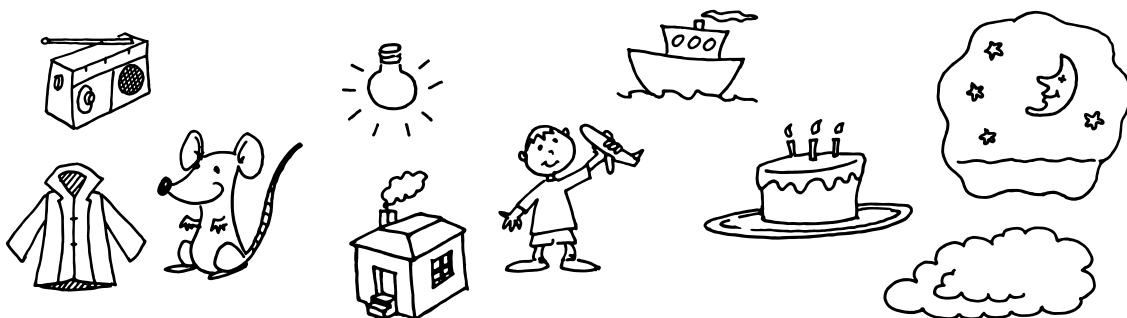
[aʊ]	[aɪ]	[aʊ]	[ɔʊ]	[aɪ]	[ɔʊ]
mouse	mice	house	hose	my	mow
louse	lice	rouse	rose	lie	low
loud	lied	crowd	crowed	cry	crow
how	hi	loud	load	die	doe
tower	tire	blouse	blows	align	alone

2. Listen. Circle the word you hear in each case.

- That is one ugly *mouse/house*.
- I heard a *cry/crow*.
- The teacher said *how/hi*.
- That was a *lewd/loud* man.
- Maggie got some *blouse/blows*.
- That rich lady likes to *doll/dole*.

Appropriation

3. Look at the pictures. Classify the words next to the corresponding sounds. Add two more words to each list. The first word has been done for you.



[ɔɪ]	<i>toy,</i>
[aʊ]	
[aɪ]	
[eɪ]	
[oʊ]	

4. Put an **X** under the sound with which each word is pronounced. Check the dictionary if need be.

	[ɔ]	[aʊ]	[ɔʊ]
a. Paul			
b. foul			
c. toll			
d. mall			
e. mole			
f. caught			
g. lounge			
h. stow			
i. now			
j. caution			

5. In each group of words **circle** the one that is NOT pronounced with [aɪ]

- a. mine dime mint crime
- b. cry drill dry try
- c. alive naïve navel nine
- d. thriller drier fryer pliers
- e. mime lime maim mind
- f. trying dying lying laying

Consolidation

6. Make a list of at least ten words with the three diphthongs studied in this unit. Then, write a short story using all those words. If possible, read the story to a partner and have him or her identify the words with the diphthongs.

3 Consonant Sounds

As described earlier, the voicing of a sound depends on whether the vocal folds vibrate during its production. Some consonants share the voiced quality of vowels, but others do not. Also, unlike vowel sounds, consonant sounds involve some obstruction of the air as it passes through the vocal tract. To create the obstruction, usually a flexible organ -the main articulator- gets in contact with a specific area of other more rigid phonatory organs. Both the place where articulators meet and the way in which the air is released determine the nature of consonant sounds. Thus, consonant sounds are classified according to the following criteria.

Voicing. According to this criterion, consonants can be classified as **voiced** or **voiceless**. This distinction creates some pairs of consonant sounds that share similar qualities except their voicing. Table 2 below shows this classification and the pairs of sounds that result from it. An excellent way to determine whether a sound is voiced or voiceless is to place your hand on your throat as you pronounce it. You should feel the vibration of the vocal folds every time you make the voiced sounds and no vibration at all when you make their voiceless counterparts.

Voiceless	[p]	[t]	[k]	[f]	[s]	[θ]	[ʃ]	[ç]	[h]								
Voiced	[b]	[d]	[g]	[v]	[z]	[ð]	[ʒ]	[ʒ]		[m]	[n]	[ŋ]	[l]	[r]	[j]	[w]	

Table 2 Classification of consonant phonemes by voicing

Some phoneticians believe, however, that voicing is not a fundamental criterion to classify consonant sounds, as some voiceless sounds could become voiced and vice versa depending on their **distribution**; i.e., the other sounds surrounding them during speech production. As a result, they have proposed the alternative criterion of **aspiration**, which is the relative force with which the air is pressed out of the vocal passage. It is generally agreed that voiceless sounds are **aspirated** (strong or *fortis*) whereas voiced sounds are **not aspirated** (weak or *lenis*). To experience the difference between sounds according to this standard, pronounce the voiced and voiceless sounds alternatively, but this time place your hand in front of your mouth without covering it. You should feel a strong puff of air coming out when you make the voiceless sounds and hardly any air when you make the voiced ones.

Place of articulation. It is defined by the place where articulators meet to obstruct the air as it circulates through the vocal tract. According to this criterion consonant sounds can be:

- a. **Bilabial.** The lips are usually pressed together for the entire duration of the sound, as in [m]; or for only part of it, as in [p] and [b]. The consonant sound [w] is also considered bilabial, because the lips, although not totally closed, are brought to a rounded position.
- b. **Labiodental.** The upper teeth are placed on the lower lip. Labiodental consonants are [f] and [v].
- c. **Dental.** The tip of the tongue is placed between the upper and the lower teeth. Dental (or interdental) consonants are [θ] and [ð].
- d. **Alveolar.** The tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge, the hard area right behind the upper teeth. Alveolar consonants are [t], [d], [s], [z], [n], and [l].
- e. **Palatal.** The blade of the tongue touches the central palate. Here some authors distinguish between post-alveolar sounds, which are [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ], and [r]; and a purely palatal sound, which would be [j].
- f. **Velar.** The back of the tongue touches the velum or soft palate. Velar sounds are [k], [g], and [ŋ].
- g. **Glottal.** The making of this sound is practically impossible to see unless you use especial equipment, for it is produced when the glottis, the space formed between the vocal folds, is narrowed. The only glottal phoneme of English is [h].

Manner of articulation. It is defined by the way in which the air is released during sound production. According to this criterion consonant sounds can be:

- a. **Plosives or Stops.** In general, this category includes all consonant sounds that are produced through a short burst of air. All other consonants are classified as **continuants**, that is, sounds which can be prolonged for as long as there is enough air left in the lungs. Although plosives are quick sounds, the process to make them can be divided into two general phases. In the initial phase, the articulators close the air passage completely, so air is contained and builds up behind them. In the second phase, the articulators rapidly open and thus release the accumulated air into a burst that produces the characteristic explosion-like sound. The name *stops* is owing to what happens in the initial phase; the name *plosives*, to what happens in the second one. The plosive sounds of English are [p], [b], [d], [t], [g], and [k].
- b. **Fricatives.** This category comprises all the consonant sounds that result from letting air out of the mouth through a narrow passage, which produces friction, very much like air slowly coming out of a punctured tire. The fricative sounds of English are [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], and [h].
- c. **Affricates.** These sounds are a hybrid between a plosive and a fricative. This notion can be better explained by describing the process to make them. The initial phase corresponds to that of a stop, which means that air is contained behind some tightly closed articulators. However, in the second phase air is released not through a sudden burst but through a continual flow that creates a fricative. There are only 2 affricate sounds in English: [tʃ] and [dʒ], whose phonemic representations incorporate their constituent stops and fricatives. Thus, [tʃ] corresponds to an initial [t] followed by a [ʃ], and [dʒ] corresponds to an initial [d] followed by a [ʒ].

- d. Nasals.** As air reaches the pharynx, it has two possible ways to leave the body: the nose or the mouth. For most consonants the velum rises, so air goes through the vocal passage. But in the case of nasal sounds, the velum lowers and air goes into the nasal cavity and out of the nose. The nasal sounds of English are [n], [m] and [ŋ]. There are a number of experiments you can try to verify their nature. For example, using your thumb and index fingers, open and close your nostrils as you produce the nasal sounds. You will notice that it is impossible to make them when your nostrils are closed. That is the reason they sound funny when people are congested. You can also touch the arch of your nose and feel it vibrate with a tingle as you produce the nasal sounds. Experiencing this sensation might take a while if you have never tried this before, so do not get discouraged if you do not feel it right away.
- e. Approximants.** These sounds occur when articulators approach each other to produce a consonant sound, but they do not completely close the air passage. Approximants are further subdivided into liquids and glides.
- f. Liquids** are approximants in which the articulators leave enough room for the air to flow in a rather unobstructed manner. Liquids are [l] and [r]. The phoneme [l] is considered a **lateral** because when it is produced the air flows mostly through the sides of the tongue. The phoneme [r] is also classified as a **retroflex** because the tongue curls back into the mouth to make it. Both liquids pose challenges to Hispanic learners because their pronunciation in English is not the same as in Spanish.
- g. Glides** are consonant sounds [j] and [w]. They are also called semivowels because although phonetically they are made as vowels, phonemically they behave as consonants; that is, they are combined with other vowel sounds exactly as other consonants are.

Table 3 shows the classification of English consonant phonemes according to the criteria described above. In the case of voice and voiceless pairs, the voiceless sounds are placed before their voiced counterparts.

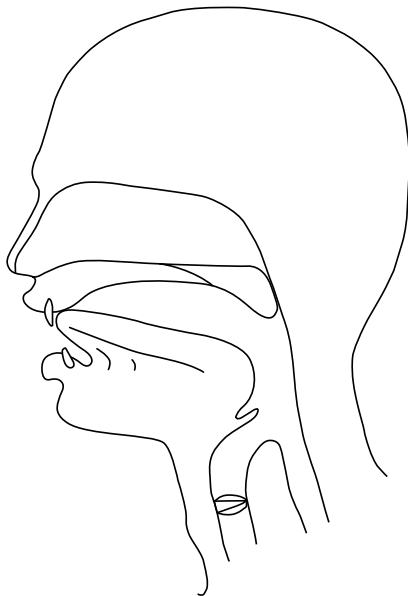
		PLACE OF ARTICULATION						
		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
MANNER OF ARTICULATION	Plosive	[p] [b]			[t] [d]		[k] [g]	
	Fricative		[f] [v]	[θ] [ð]	[s] [z]	[ʃ] [ʒ]		[h]
	Affricate					[tʃ] [dʒ]		
	Nasal	[m]			[n]		[ŋ]	
	Liquid				[l]	[r]		
	Glide	[w]				[j]		

Table 3 Classification of consonant phonemes by place and manner

3.1 Sounds [t] and [d]

Both sounds are alveolar plosives. This means that, in their initial phase, the tip of the tongue is positioned against the alveolar ridge to contain the airflow. Then, in their final phase, the tongue moves away from the roof of the mouth to release the air in a sudden burst. Even though they share place and manner of articulation, [t] is voiceless and aspirated, whereas [d] is voiced and not aspirated.

Sound [t]



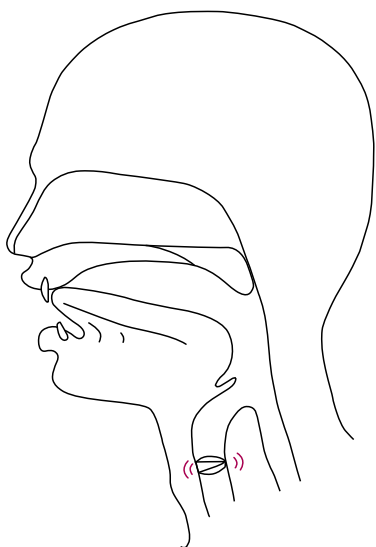
Sound [t]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[t], [t], [t], [t].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
t	tear, to, toe, table, true	late, state, after, center	meet, but, pet, fit, cat, best, cart, mint, bolt
tt		kitten, letter, butter, clutter,	mitt, mutt

Interest note

- These sounds have the following **allophones**.
 - a. **Flapped t and d.** When preceded by a vowel or an [r] and followed by a weak vowel, [t] and [d] are pronounced as an alveolar [ɾ], so the tip of the tongue briefly touches -or flaps- the alveolar ridge.
 In fact, the flap sounds like an [r] in Spanish words such as *caro* and *pero*, and it is phonetically represented with the symbol [ɾ]. You might hear it from American speakers in words such as *letter*, *butter*, *battle*, *kettle*, *teddy*, and *daddy*.
 - b. **Disappearing t.** When preceded by [n], a medial [t] tends to disappear, as in *center*, *winter*, *interesting*, or *Atlanta*. This is an example of **elision**, a common phenomenon that entails the elimination of some sounds in informal English conversation.
 - c. **Glottal t.** This occurs when [t] is made with a narrowing of the vocal folds, as in [h]. A glottal sound is phonetically represented with the symbol [ʔ]. A glottal [t] occurs especially when the consonant is followed by a weak vowel and [n], as in *mountain*, *certain*, and *written*. To feel the vocal folds closing, say [tn] and place your hand on your throat.
- These variations are common in General American and help distinguish it from BBC English. The Glottal [t] occurs in both accents. Some of these variations of [t] may prove harder to make than others. Although it is not essential for foreign learners of English to make them, they should be prepared to recognize them.

Sound [d]


Sound [d]

- Repeat after the teacher: [d], [d], [d], [d].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
d	dear, do, day, death, dull, doe, dance, door	window, meadow, pediatrics, padlock	need, bid, mud, bud, bed, stead, cod, pad
dd		caddie, pudding, ruddy, paddle, madden	odd

Interest note

- These consonants usually form clusters with [l] and [r], as in *cold*, *bolt*, *hard*, and *smart*; with [n], as in *brand* and *front*; and with [s], as in *snow*, *star*, and *best*.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[t]	[d]
fat	fad
mat	mad
neat	need
seat	seed
root	rude
tad	dad
tear	dear
tore	door

2. Repeat the following words and phrases after the teacher. Start with a British pronunciation. Then finish with an American pronunciation to practice the pronunciation of flapped [t] and [d].

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| a. butter | e. caddie |
| b. better | f. needy |
| c. water | g. put it on |
| d. battle | h. get it out |

Appropriation

3. Read the following sentences. Underline the words pronounced with a flapped [t] or [d], with a glottal [t], or with a disappearing [t]. If possible, use different colors in each case.
 - a. I don't like bottled water. I think it's better to drink from the fountain.
 - b. I am certain Betty did a great job in her interview.
 - c. It does not matter whether the movie is interesting. It's got to be entertaining.
 - d. Mattie got up later than usual. She's lucky the class has not started yet.

Consolidation

4. While watching an American TV series or video of your choice, pay attention to the making of flapped [t] and [d], glottal [t], and disappearing [t]. Copy at least two examples of each.

3.2 Pronunciation of final –ed

The –ed ending is used to make the simple past and past participle of regular verbs in English. Although the use of this suffix is grammatically simple, its correct pronunciation is often difficult for foreign learners because it responds to phonetic rules that are often unknown even by native speakers. However, adequately pronouncing these verb forms is fundamental to effective English speaking. The three rules are detailed below.

1. If the verb's base form ends in a voiceless sound, the –ed ending is pronounced [t]. Some examples are:
 - Worked [wɜːkt]
 - Stopped [stɒpt]
 - Kissed [kɪst]
 - Laughed [læft]
 - Washed [wɔːft]
2. If the verb base form ends in a voiced sound, the –ed ending is pronounced [d]. Some examples are:
 - Enjoyed [ɪnˈdʒɔɪd]
 - Lived [lɪvd]
 - Stored [stɔːd]
 - Manned [mænd]
 - Summed [sʌmd]
3. If the verb base form ends in [t] or [d], the –ed ending is pronounced [ɪd], or alternatively [əd]. Some examples are:
 - Wanted [ˈwɑːntɪd] or [ˈwɔːntɪd]
 - Started [ˈstɑːrtɪd]
 - Needed [ˈniːdɪd]
 - Invaded [ɪnˈveɪdɪd]
 - Recorded [rɪˈkɔːrdɪd]

The [t] and [d] phonemes play a crucial role in adequately pronouncing the –ed ending. But in order to successfully make them, Spanish speakers must remember that in English these sounds are alveolar and not dental. This means that the tip of the tongue must be placed against the alveolar ridge and not between the teeth.

Introductory practice

1. Read, listen, and repeat the examples above after the teacher.

Appropriation practice

2. Complement each case with other 3 examples. Share them with a partner, if possible.
3. Mark [t], [d], or [ɪd] in front of each verb to indicate its correct pronunciation.

1. looked		2. loomed		3. mandated	
4. started		5. recorded		6. talked	
7. invented		8. stammered		9. pleaded	
10. crammed		11. commented		12. busted	
13. remained		14. flopped		15. lagged	
16. horned		17. baked		18. rapped	
19. drummed		20. cooked		21. healed	
22. lived		23. coughed		24. sneezed	
25. limped		26. boxed		27. enjoyed	
28. cleaned		29. mopped		30. zoomed	

Consolidation

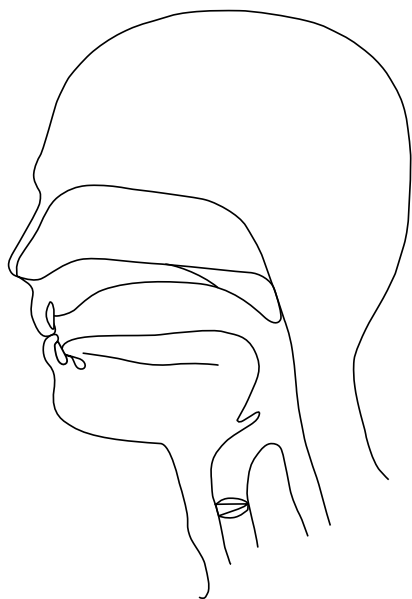
4. Write a list of some of the things you liked, loved, disliked, and hated when you were a child. Read the list aloud.
5. Recall a vacation trip. Describe it to a partner using at least five regular verbs.

3.3 Sounds [p], [b], [k], and [g]

These plosive sounds have been grouped because they are present in Spanish, so their pronunciation should be relatively easy for Spanish speakers. However, they are presented in voiced-voiceless pairs that with a common place of articulation to facilitate their contrast and the analysis of some specific characteristics.

Sounds [p] and [b]. Both are bilabial plosives. For their initial phase the lips come together to constrict the airflow. Then, the mouth is rapidly opened to release the accumulated air in a characteristic popping sound. Keep in mind, however, that [p] is voiceless and aspirated, whereas [b] is voiced and not aspirated.

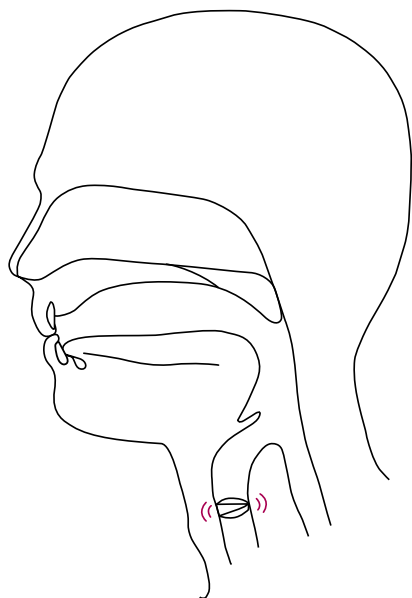
Sound [p]



- Repeat after the teacher:
[p], [p], [p], [p].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
p	panda, pet, port, peak	lipstick, paper, people, purple	clap, stop, nap, soup
pp		rapport, clipper, supper, ripple	

Sound [b]



- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[b], [b], [b], [b].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
b	bet, bike, blue, break, bus	table, tribal, ambush, noble	club, tub, crab, rib
bb		robber, rubber, rubbing	

Interest note

- These sounds form clusters with liquids, in words such as *blouse*, *plank*, *cable*, *apple*, *brown* and *prank*.
- These sounds are present in Spanish at the beginning of words such as *bueno*, *blanco*, *pero*, and *piso*. Nonetheless, the few words in Spanish that end in [p] or [b] come from English; for example, *rap* and *club*.
- Sometimes the letter b is silent, especially in the –mb cluster, as in *lamb* [læm], *tomb* [tʊm], *crumb* [krʌm], and *comb* [kʊm].

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

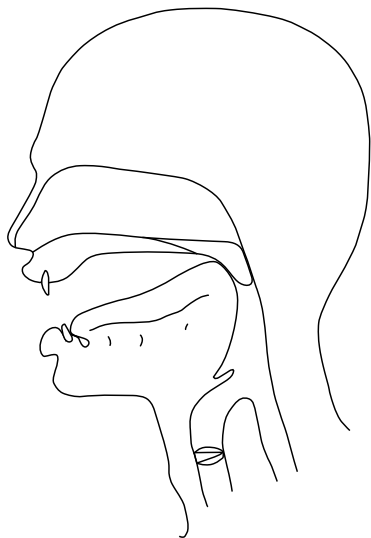
[p]	[b]
pile	bile
pit	bit
pet	bet
lap	lab
rapid	rabid
crappy	crabby

2. **Circle** the word you hear

- rapid/rabid
- cap/cab
- cup/cub
- rip/rib
- lope/lobe
- lap/lab

Sounds [k] and [g]. Both are velar plosives. The back of the tongue touches the velum, and then it quickly moves away from it to release air in a sudden burst. Keep in mind, however, that [k] is voiceless and aspirated, whereas [g] is voiced and not aspirated.

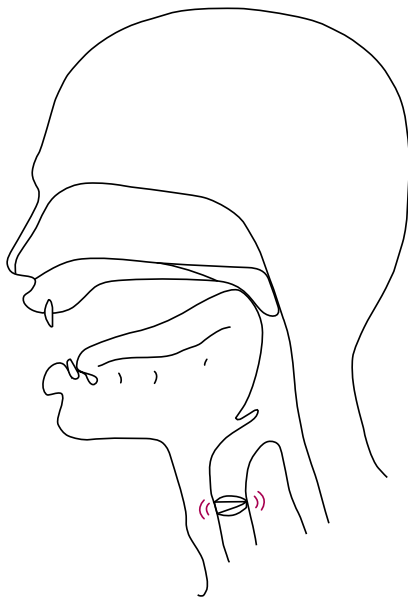
Sound [k]



- Repeat after the teacher: [k], [k], [k], [k].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
c	cut, cat, cape, crime	focus, secret, practice, doctor	plastic, basic, rustic
cc		occasion, occupy, tobacco	
k	kilo, kimono, kangaroo	plankton, linkage, skirt, sky	book, trunk, mask, ask
ck		lucky, buckle, fickle	snack, lack, back, rock
q	quite, question, queue	esquire, require, required	
ch	Christmas, chaos, chemist	bronchitis, trachea, backache	
cq		acquittal, acquisition, lacquer	
x		exercise, extortion, except	vortex, duplex, matrix

Sound [g]



Sound [g]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [g], [g], [g], [g].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
g	get, go, guitar, grow	begin, lagoon, dragon	log, beg, rag, snug
gg		ragged, flogged, blogger	egg
x		exam, example, exit	

Interest note

- The letter x is usually pronounced [ks], as in *expert* ['ɛkspərt] or *next* [nekst], but sometimes it is pronounced [gz], as in *exam* [ɪg'zɑm] or *example* [ɪg'zɑmpəl].
- Keep in mind that voiceless (aspirated) consonants shorten any preceding vowel sound, which, as a result, will sound longer before voiced (not aspirated) consonants. Therefore, [æ] sounds shorter in *cap* than in *cab*, [ʌ] sounds shorter in *pup* than in *pub*, and [ɑ] sounds shorter in *lock* than in *log*. Knowing this difference will be helpful in distinguishing between minimal pairs that contain voiced-voiceless counterparts.

Introductory practice

3. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[k]	[g]
cut	gut
class	glass
back	bag
block	blog
bicker	bigger
frock	frog

4. Circle the word you hear

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. I need a different <i>glass</i> / <i>class</i> | d. I could see his <i>cut</i> / <i>gut</i> |
| b. My cellphone is in the <i>back</i> / <i>bag</i> | e. He <i>logged</i> / <i>locked</i> his account. |
| c. Mike was bitten by a <i>buck</i> / <i>bug</i> | f. The nation is usually <i>lagging</i> / <i>lacking</i> . |

Appropriation

5. Transcribe these words from the phonemic to the orthographic spelling.

a. [blak]		f. ['trædʒɪk]	
b. ['plʌmə]		g. [tə'geɪdʒ]	
c. ['keməstri]		h. ['tuθpɪk]	
d. ['ʃɛkbʊk]		i. ['æktəpəs]	
e. ['trɪtmənt]		j. ['næpɪkɪn]	

Consolidation

6. Write 3 words for each of these sounds: [p], [b], [k], and [g]. One with the sound at the beginning, another one with the sound in the middle, and yet another one with the sound at the end. Then, write the phonemic transcription for each of those twelve words.

[p]			
[b]			
[k]			
[g]			

3.4 Sounds [s] and [z]

Both sounds are alveolar fricatives. These sounds are also considered **sibilants**, because the air stream is directed with the tongue towards the edge of the teeth, where the resulting friction creates a characteristic hissing sound. The palatal sounds [ʃ], [tʃ], [ʒ] and [dʒ] are sibilants, too. Finally, [s] is voiceless whereas [z] is voiced.

Sound [s]



Sound [s]

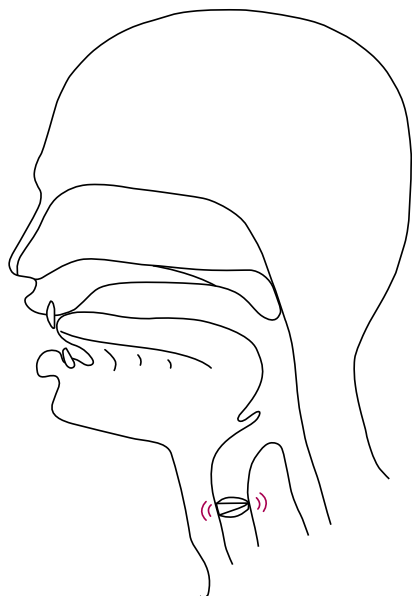
- Repeat after the teacher: [s], [s], [s], [s].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
s	sad, say, sold, Sunday	basket, fast, listen	bus, makes, yes
ss		dresser, message	kiss, less, class
c	cell, cent	pencil, race, lace	ice, lice, nice
sc	science	fascinating, lascivious	
x		oxen, taxi	six, tax

Interest note

- The consonant [s] forms initial clusters with [p] and [t] in words such as *spirit*, *star*, and *student*. This initial clusters are preceded by [e] in Spanish, as in *espíritu*, *estrella* and *estudiante*, so Spanish speakers tend to transfer this vowel sound to their pronunciation in English. This is a common mistake that should be avoided, with the exception of the word *especially*.
- The letter x is usually pronounced [ks], as in *oxen*, *taxi*, *six*, or *tax*. However, occasionally it is pronounced [gz] as in *exam*, or *example*.

Sound [z]



Sound [z]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[z], [z], [z], [z].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
z	zoo, zipper, zero, zebra	lazy, crazy, razor	daze, amaze, breeze
zz		dizzy, puzzle	buzz, frizz
s		busy, easy, music	rose, rise,

Interest note

Notice that some words that are written with s are pronounced with [z]. Although there is not a definite rule to explain it, this phenomenon usually occurs when the s is surrounded by voiced sounds.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[s]	[z]
Sue	zoo
sip	zip
bus	buzz
rice	rise
peace	peas
price	prize
fussy	fuzzy

2. Circle the word you hear.
- The president asked for *peas/peace*.
 - I think I heard a *bus/buzz*.
 - What a *fussy/fuzzy* little cat.
 - Let me get the *price/prize* for you.
 - The dog's *muscle/muzzle* is sore.

Appropriation

3. Read the following lists of words. Circle the one that is NOT pronounced with [s].

- | | | | |
|------------|---------|----------|---------|
| a. place | silence | pressure | pose |
| b. secret | shoe | pasture | prose |
| c. pass | passive | passion | passage |
| d. science | sober | master | music |
| e. assure | assist | assault | assent |

Consolidation

4. **Alliteration** is a literary figure that involves the systematic repetition of a sound within a sentence to create a musical effect. Compose sentences with alliteration using the indicated sounds. Use the first sentence as an example.

[s] _____ *Steven seldom steps out of his solitude.* _____

[z] _____

[ʃ] _____

[θ] _____

3.5 Pronunciation of final –s

The letter –s is placed at the end of words to serve four grammatical purposes, as follows:

1. To make the plural form of most countable nouns. Examples: *cars, boots, pan, wagons*.
2. To indicate the conjugation of verbs in present tense for the third person singular. Examples:
a) *Mary often looks for bargains*. b) *He works 8 hours a day*.
3. To abbreviate *is*, the conjugation of the verb to be for the third person singular in the present tense. In this case –s is preceded by an apostrophe. Examples: a) *She's my best friend*. b) *It's not a big deal*. c) *Jack's traveling*.
4. To make the Possessive Saxon. Here the –s is also accompanied by an apostrophe. Examples: *Joe's car, Mike's truck*.

As it happens with the pronunciation of the –ed ending, the pronunciation of the final –s depends on the qualities of the preceding sounds. The three rules that determine the pronunciation of the final –s are described below.

1. If the word ends in voiceless sounds such as [p], [k], [f], [t], or [θ], the final –s is pronounced [s]. Some examples are:

Plural	marks [marks]
3 rd person singular	She laughs [læfs]
Abbreviation of <i>is</i>	Pat's out [pætsaʊt]
Possessive Saxon	Beth's exam [beθs]

2. If the word ends in voiced sounds such as [b], [g], [v], [d], [l], [r], or [ð], the final –s is pronounced [z]. Some examples are:

Plural	Jobs [jɒbz], cars [kɑːz]
3 rd person singular	She enjoys music. [ɪn 'dʒɔɪz] He loves you. [lʌvz]
Abbreviation of <i>is</i>	He's nice. [hɪz]
Possessive Saxon	Jim's work [dʒɪmz]

3. If the word ends in a sibilant sound such as [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], or [dʒ], the final –s is pronounced as [ɪz]. Sometimes, as in the case of plurals or verbs in present tense for the third person singular, the pronunciation rule becomes a spelling rule. Therefore, for the words ending in *s*, *z*, *sh*, *ch*, *ge*, or *x* we must add an *e* before the final –s. No abbreviation is used for *is* when the preceding words end in sibilant sounds. As for the Possessive Saxon, although no –e is added, the pronunciation of [ɪz] still applies.

Plural	watches [ˈwɑtʃɪz], boxes [ˈbɒksɪz], judges [ˈdʒʌdʒɪz]
3 rd person singular	She misses you [ˈmɪsɪz],
Abbreviation of <i>is</i>	No abbreviation is used. E.g. <i>Mitch is absent. Jazz is all I want to hear.</i>
Possessive Saxon	Rose's house [rouɪz], Max's pet [mæksɪz]

Introductory practice

1. Read, listen, and repeat the examples above after the teacher.

Appropriation practice

2. Mark [s], [z], or [ɪz] below the words in cursive to indicate their correct pronunciation. The first word was done for you as an example.

a. *Jim's* garage sale includes *watches*, *baseball gloves*, *old books*, *toys*, and *clothes*.

[z]

b. *Colombia's* geography has *rivers*, *mountain ranges*, *valleys*, *volcanoes*, and *deserts*.

c. Terry always *plants*, *picks*, *washes*, *cuts*, *peels*, and *cooks* her own *vegetables*.

d. *Luke's car's* not as fast as *Jim's*, but *it's* also not as expensive.

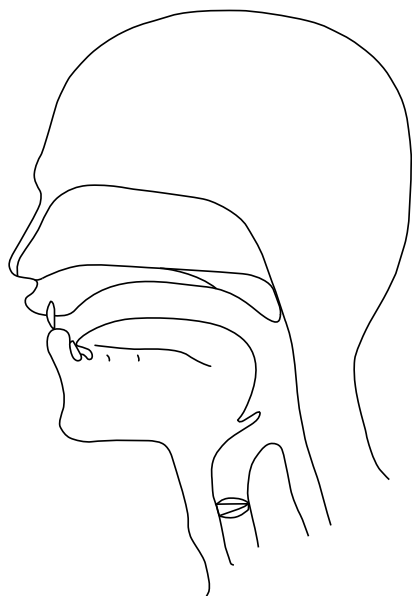
Consolidation

3. Come up with a list of other 4 sentences in which the final-s is used. Mark its correct pronunciation as you did in the previous exercise. Practice reading those sentences as well.

3.6 Sounds [f], [v], and [h]

Sounds [f] and [v]. Both sounds are labiodental fricatives. The upper teeth are gently pressed against the lower lip, and the air is released through the resulting gap. In Spanish, [f] is in words such as *frio* and *trofeo*, and [v] in words such as *vaca* and *nieve*. Even though they share place and manner of articulation, [f] is voiceless and aspirated, whereas [v] is voiced and not aspirated.

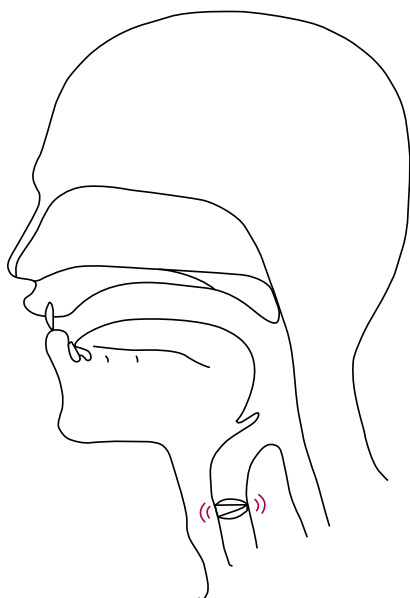
Sound [f]



- Repeat after the teacher:
[ffffff], [ffffff], [ffffff], [ffffff].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
f	for, farm, fit, from, fruit	rifle, wife, sofa, perfume	of, wolf, hoof, aloof
ff		office, giraffe, coffee	staff, stiff, cliff, off
ph	phone, photo, pharmacy	nephew, trophy, symphony	triumph, nymph, lymph
ugh		laughter, toughen,	cough, trough, rough

Sound [v]



Sound [v]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [vvvvv], [vvvvv], [vvvvv], [vvvvv]¹.
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
v	very, victory, voice, van, veteran, vote	lovely, envy, travel, every	have, leave, stove, move ²

Interest note

- In Latin American Spanish there is no phonemic distinction between b and v, but in English [v] is labiodental and [b] is bilabial. Making this distinction is crucial to having a clear English pronunciation.
- The plural of words that end in [f] is usually made with [v]. For example, *wolf* [wɒlf] – *wolves* [wɒlvz]; *wife* [waɪf] – *wives* [waɪvz]; and *hoof* [hu:f] – *hooves* [hu:vz].

¹ As additional practice, alternate making [f] and [v]. Touch your throat to feel the vibration of the vocal folds for [v]. Put your hand in front of your mouth to feel the aspirated air for [f].

² [v] is usually a final sound for the –ve final cluster.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[f]	[v]	[b]	[v]
feel	veal	bat	vat
few	view	boat	vote
fast	vast	base	vase
leaf	leave	bet	vet
ferry	very	berry	very

2. Listen to some words. Mark S (same) if you hear the same word. Mark D (different) if you hear two different words.

a.	S	D	c.	S	D	e.	S	D
b.	S	D	d.	S	D	f.	S	D

Appropriation

3. Read the following sentences. Underline the words pronounced with [f]. Circle the words pronounced with [v].
- Victor gave flowers to her girlfriend, Vicky.
 - Fred visited his friend Vincent in his native Venice.
 - Right above my sofa there is a photo of my father laughing.
 - I live in the fifth floor, so you will have to take the elevator.
 - Sophie has been wearing a perfume with a fantastic floral smell.
 - Raphael gave Valerie a very festive Valentine's card.

Consolidation

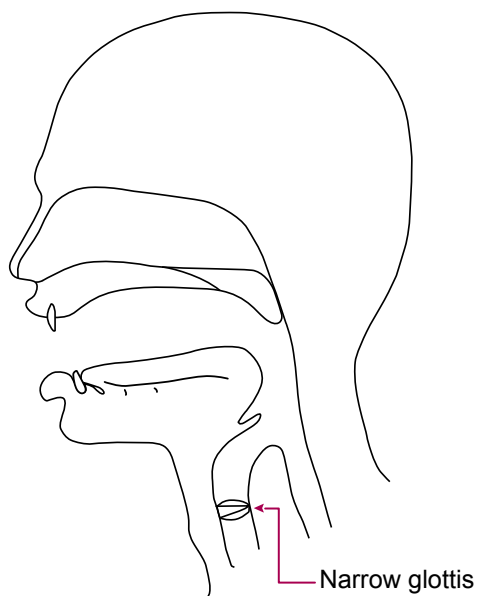
Interest note

The letter v at the end of a word is often pronounced [f] when the following word starts with a voiceless sound. Likewise, the letter f sometimes is pronounced [v], particularly at the end of a word that is followed by a voiced sound. This phenomenon by which a specific quality of a sound, such as its voicing, is transferred to a neighboring sound is called **assimilation**.

4. In the sentences below you will find examples of assimilation for the letters f and v. Underline the part of the sentence where this occurs —Use the first sentence as a model—. Then, provide other two examples.
- I have an important appointment, so I really have to go now.
 - She didn't get a thing of all I said during our conversation.

- c. It is important to have friends who appreciate you for who you are.
- d. After our divorce, my wife decided to throw all the stuff I had given her.
- e. _____
- f. _____

Sound [h]. A voiceless, glottal, fricative, [h] is the sound that people naturally make when they pant after doing some strenuous exercise. During its production the vocal cords approach each other, narrowing the glottis, i.e. the space between them. As the air passes through, it generates friction. However, the cords remain in a semi-relaxed position, which prevents them from vibrating. In Spanish, the [h] sound is present in words such as *jabalí* and *jadear*, which is precisely the meaning of panting.



Sound [h]

- Repeat after the teacher as though you were panting: [h], [h], [h], [h].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	At the beginning	In the middle
h	house, hello, hit, hat, hand	perhaps, rehearse, unheard
wh	who, whose, whole, where	

Interest note

The *wh* cluster in words such as *what*, *where*, and *which* is pronounced [hw] in some areas of the United States. As a result, [hw] is included as an additional phoneme in the description of American English.

Introductory practice

1. Contrast these words. Only those in the second column have the [h] sound.

	[h]
eel	heel
ill	hill
art	heart
ear	hear
I	hi

2. Circle the word you hear.

- I *fear/hear* lions.
- What a nice-looking *cat/hat*.
- That is a very ugly *cut/hut*.
- They stayed at a *motel/hotel*.
- He took a large *leap/heap*.
- I consider it *folly/holly*.

Interest note

The grammar rule that explains the use of the indefinite articles *a/an* is rooted in pronunciation rather than in spelling. Use **a** before a word starting with a *consonant sound*, and **an** before a word starting with a *vowel sound*. Therefore, say *a car*, *a table*, and *a university* (notice that *university* starts with the semi-consonant [j] and not with a vowel sound). Also, say *an apple*, *an orange*, and *an hour* (notice that *hour* starts with the [aʊ] sound as the h is silent).

Appropriation

3. Determine whether the h is silent or not. Then, write *a* or *an* in front of each word.

- He left about an hour ago.
- We stayed at ____ hotel with a nice sea view.
- He was ____ honorable man.
- All I need is ____ honest answer.
- My grandmother had to be taken to ____ hospital in town.
- She was ____ happy girl.

Consolidation

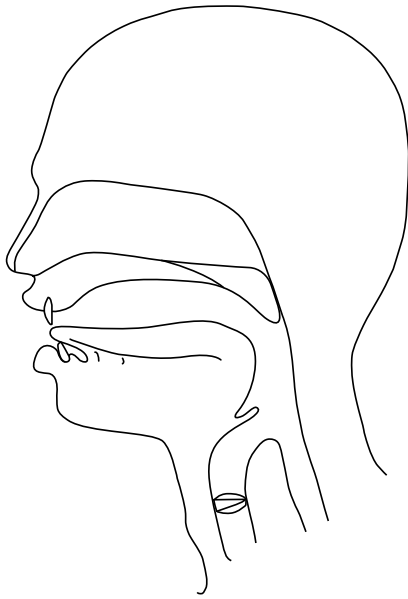
4. There are many silent letters in English. Underline the silent letters in the following lists of words. If there is a pattern, describe it and add an example. The first one is done for you.

Pattern	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
1. <i>silent w in wr cluster</i>	<u>w</u> rite	<u>w</u> rong	<i>wrist</i>
2.	know	knight	
3.	neighbor	weight	
4.	calm	palm	
5.	fought	caught	
6.	castle	wrestle	
7.	mountain	Britain	

3.7 Sounds [θ] and [ð]

These sounds are dental fricatives. The tongue is loosely positioned against the back of the teeth so that its tip sticks out a little while air is gently let out through the gap. Also, both sounds are spelled TH. However, [θ] is voiceless and aspirated, whereas [ð] is voiced and not aspirated. Although these sounds are rare in Spanish, [ð] is the sound of the second d in the word *dedo*, and [θ] is the sound of z in words such as *corazón* as pronounced by Spaniards.

Sound [θ]

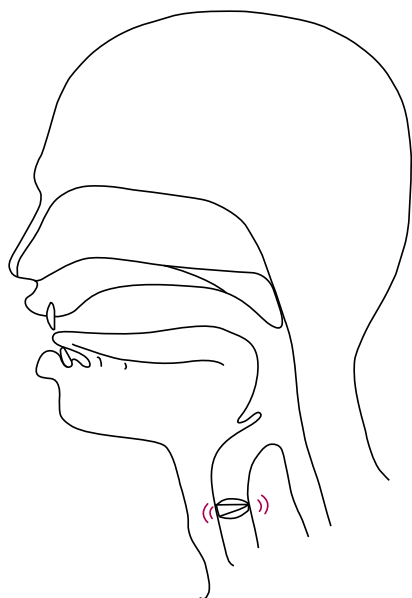


Sound [θ]

- Repeat after the teacher: [θ], [θ], [θ], [θ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
th	thanks, thunder, thief, Thursday, thirty, theater,	bathroom, method, panther, pathology, birthday	path, myth, both, truth, month, north, south

Sound [ð]



Sound [ð]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[ð], [ð], [ð], [ð].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
th	the, they, them, their, this, these, that, those	father, mother, brother, bother, leather, other, together	smooth, with ¹

Interest note

- Some nouns that end with *th* become verbs when an additional *e* is added. In such cases, the nouns are pronounced with [θ], and the verbs are pronounced with [ð]. Examples: bath [bæθ] and bathe [beɪð]; tooth [tuθ] and teethe [ti:ð]; breath [breθ] and breathe [bri:ð].
- The pronunciation of the word *with* will vary depending on the type of sound that follows it. If the following word starts with a voiced sound, the *-th* sounds [ð]; but if the following word starts with a voiceless sound, the *-th* is pronounced [θ]. Compare *with you* [wɪðjʊ] and *with care* [wɪθkɛr]. This is a case of regressive assimilation.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[t]	[θ]	[d]	[ð]
bat	bath	day	they
pat	path	udder	other
tanks	thanks	load	loath
tick	thick	bade	bathe

2. Listen to some words. Mark S (same) if you hear the same word repeated. Mark D (different) if you hear two different words.

a.	S	D	c.	S	D	e.	S	D
b.	S	D	d.	S	D	f.	S	D

Appropriation

3. Read the short dialogues. Underline the words pronounced with [θ] and with [ð] using a different color in each case.

- a. A: What are you *thinking* about?
 B: All *the things* I have to do.
- b. A: Could you pass *the Math* book on *the* desk?
 B: Do you mean *this* one *with the* red cover?
- c. A: Did *the* baby get a new *tooth*?
 B: Yes, but *the teething* process has been *bothering* her a lot.
- d. A: Which career *path* do you plan to follow: arts or teaching?
 B: I will combine *them* because I love *them both*.

4. Find the long version for the words in italics. Then, write [θ] or [ð] in front of each word according to its pronunciation. Use the first one as an example.

Short	Long
a. See you <i>mom</i>	<i>Mother</i> [ð]
b. Dangerous <i>path</i>	
c. My name is <i>Beth</i>	
d. I am good at <i>math</i>	
e. Hey <i>bro</i>	
f. Say hello to <i>grandpa</i>	
g. She is in the <i>tub</i>	
h. talk to ' <i>em</i>	
g. He will be here for the 4 th of July	

Consolidation

5. Listen to the song “With or Without You” by U2. Sing along to practice the [θ] and [ð] sounds.

3.8 Sounds [ʃ] and [ʒ]

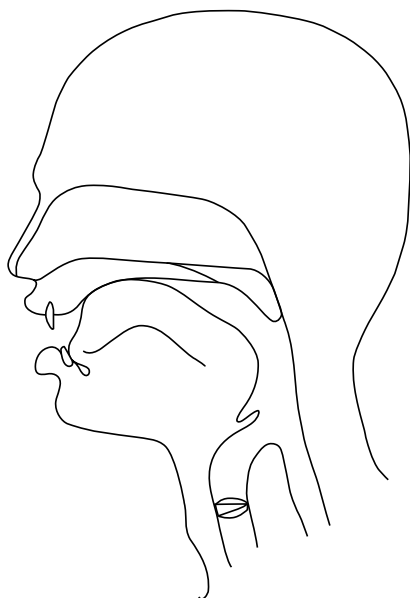
Both sounds are classified as palatal fricatives. Nevertheless, the tongue is placed right behind the alveolar ridge rather than against the central palate, so they could be considered post-alveolar.

Although [ʃ] is not present in Spanish words, it is easily recognized as the *Shhh* sound, commonly used to ask others to be quiet. This sound is present in words such as *shoe* or *wash*. The [ʒ] sound, on the other hand, rarely occurs in English. It is present in words such as *vision* or *treasure*. In Spanish this sound is comparable to the pronunciation of *y* or *ll* in the Southern-most regions of Latin America; for example, in the way Argentinians pronounce the words *yo* and *llave*.

By contrasting the palatal fricatives [ʃ] and [ʒ] with the alveolar fricatives [s] and [z], you will readily observe their distinctive features. Thus, if you make [s] and then [ʃ], or [z] and then [ʒ], you will feel the tongue moving backwards. You will also notice that for [ʃ] and [ʒ] the lips naturally round and protrude.

Even though they share place and manner of articulation, the [ʃ] sound is voiceless and aspirated whereas the [ʒ] sound is voiced and not aspirated. Provided that [ʃ] is more easily recognized by Spanish speakers, a way to approach the production of [ʒ] is to make a [ʃ] sound and then add vibration to it.

Sound [ʃ]



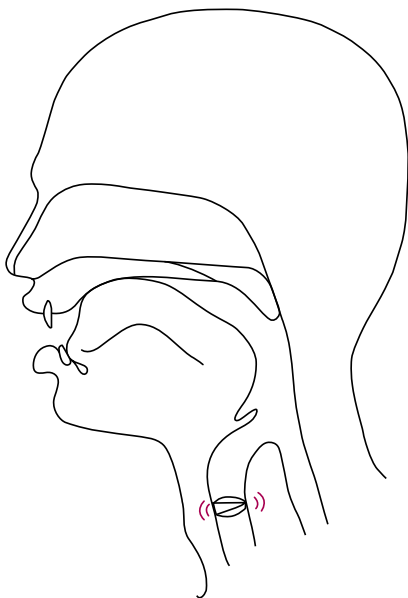
- Repeat after the teacher: [ʃ], [ʃ], [ʃ], [ʃ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
sh	shoe, show, shell, shop	Washington, sushi, cushion	wash, bush, rush, wish
s - ss	sure, sugar	mansion, pension, tension, mission, Russian, pressure, issue	
t		intervention, convention, patient, nation, partial	
ch	Chicago, ch auffer, ch iffon, ch ef	Michigan	gauche ¹
c – sc		vicious, tenacious, ancient, conscience,	
x		anxious, obnoxious	

Interest note

- Most words with the *-tial* and *-tion* suffixes are pronounced with [ʃ], except for rare exceptions such as *vision* or *decision*, which are pronounced with [ʒ].
- The *-sian* suffix, used to indicate country of origin, is often pronounced [ʒ], as in *Asian*, *Persian*, or *Malaysian*. *Russian*, pronounced with [ʃ], is an exception.
- A rare spelling for [ʃ] is x in the word *sexual*, whose pronunciation is [ˈsɛkʃuəl].

Sound [ʒ]



Sound [ʒ]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [ʒ], [ʒ], [ʒ], [ʒ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

¹ Gauche: [gəʊʃ] or [gouʃ] (adj.) awkward when dealing with people, often by doing or saying the wrong thing. e.g. What a gauche girl!

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	In the middle	At the end
s	-sion -sure -sual	vision, television, decision, division measure, pleasure, composure, treasure usual, visual, casual
z	-zure	seizure, azure
g	-ge	beige, rouge

Interest note

A rare sound in English, [ʒ] mostly appears in middle or end positions as shown above. The even rarer cases in which it occurs at the beginning correspond to words loaned from French. However, this sound is essential to the pronunciation of the affricate sound [dʒ], which is far more common in English.

Introductory practice

- Read and repeat the following words after the instructor. Underline the words pronounced with [ʒ].
 - treasure hunt scavenger hunt
 - institutional vision institutional mission
 - final option final decision
 - business trip leisure trip
 - Indonesian Croatian

Appropriation

- Transcribe the following words into the orthographic alphabet.
 - [ˈeɪʒə] _____
 - [ˈʃʊʒə] _____
 - [fiʒ] _____
 - [ˈpleʒə] _____
 - [ˈpreʒə] _____
 - [diˈvɪʒn] _____

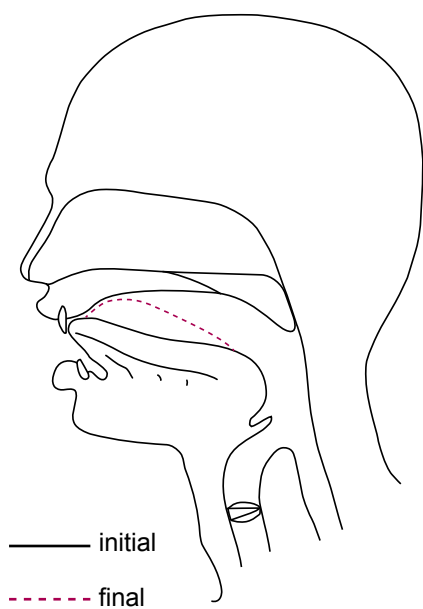
Consolidation

- As indicated above, the rare cases in which [ʒ] occurs in initial position correspond to French loans. Find one that means *type or style of art, music, film or literature*. Clue: It starts with *g*.

3.9 Sounds [tʃ] and [dʒ]

These are the only two **affricate** sounds of English. As explained earlier, affricates are the result of adding a plosive and a fricative. This means that air is first contained behind the articulators, and then released through a quick explosion that becomes a continuous flow. Whereas [tʃ] is the result of producing an almost imperceptible [t] that is immediately followed by a [ʃ], [dʒ] is the result of producing a [d] that is followed by a [ʒ]. As their respective constituents, [tʃ] is voiceless whereas [dʒ] is voiced. Both sounds are palatal (or, rather, post-alveolar) and involve some rounding of the lips.

Sound [tʃ]



Sound [tʃ]

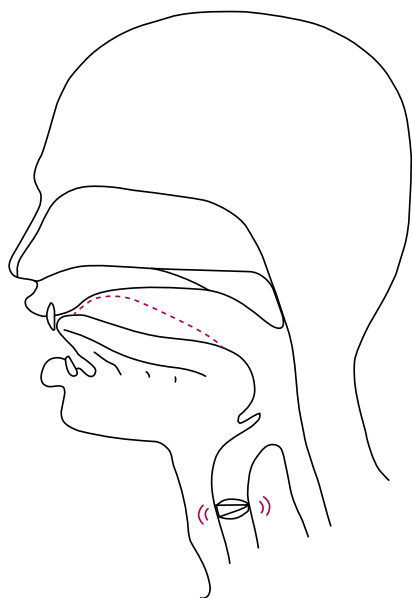
- Repeat after the teacher: [tʃ], [tʃ], [tʃ], [tʃ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
ch	chip, chair, cheap	teacher, artichoke, leeches	lunch, church, torch
tch		kitchen, butcher, pitcher	watch, witch, switch
-ture		culture, future, nature, picture	
-tion		question, digestion, suggestion	

Interest note

- Notice that *t* is pronounced [tʃ] in the *-ture* suffix; and in the *-tion* suffix, when this one is added to stems ending in *-est* such as *quest*, *digest*, or *suggest*.
- The common pronunciation for *-tch* is that of [tʃ]. However, sometimes the *t* that precedes the *ch* is pronounced as a glottal stop, represented as [ʔ]. In those cases words such as *witch* [wɪʔtʃ] could be pronounced [wɪʔtʃ].

Sound [dʒ]



Sound [dʒ]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[dʒ], [dʒ], [dʒ], [dʒ].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
j	jet, jelly, juice, jaguar	banjo, project, subject, major	
g	gym, gel, ginger	stranger, dangerous, geology	
-dge		badger, ledger, midget	dodge, judge, bridge
-d		education, soldier	

Interest note

- In Spanish, [ʝ] is a common sound present in words such as *choza* or *hechizo*; and [dʒ] is the initial sound of words such as *lluvia* or *yegua* in dialectal variations with what is called *yesimo*. As a result, making these sounds is relatively easy for Spanish speakers. However, their spellings as *t* and *d* in English do not occur in Spanish, so they can be problematic at first.
- A characteristic feature of adequate English pronunciation involves **connected speech**, the natural tendency to draw together words within the same breath. **Assimilation** is a phenomenon of connected speech by which neighboring sounds take on similar qualities. A good example involves the use of affricate sounds. Thus, when a final *-t* is followed by an initial *y*, the result in pronunciation is a [tʃ], as in *I want you* [aɪwʌntʃə]. Likewise, when a final *-d* is followed by an initial *y*, the result is a [dʒ], as in the phrase *I need you* [aɪni:dʒə].

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[ʃ]	[tʃ]	[tʃ]	[dʒ]
ship	chip	cheap	jeep
shop	chop	choke	joke
sheep	cheap	chin	gin
wash	watch	cheer	jeer

2. Circle the word you hear

- I hurt my *chin/shin*.
- The crowd was *jeering/cheering*.
- That is some nice *sheep/cheap* wool.
- The two nations *bridged/breached* their relations.
- Granny is *washing/watching* the baby.

Appropriation

3. Look up these words in the dictionary. Put a check under the right sound.

	[ʒ]	[ʃ]	[dʒ]	[tʃ]
beige				
sure				
badge				
brioche				
graduate				
mission				
adventure				
fortune				
seizure				
ocean				
decision				
soldier				
arrange				
fissure				
fusion				
cello				
Czech				
diction				
architecture				
oblige				

4. Read the following sentences. Link the words (_) where assimilation occurs. Underneath those words put a [ʃ] or a [dʒ] as each case may require. Use the first one as an example.

a. Would _ you like to come with us?

[dʒ]

b. I want you to leave.

c. Don't you know what people are saying?

d. Could you help me with these bags?

e. A: Did you finish your homework? B: Not yet.

Consolidation

5. Choose five words whose pronunciation was surprising to you. Look them up in an online dictionary, and verify their pronunciation using the audio feature that some of them have. Here are a good option.

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/es/diccionario/ingles>

3.10 Sounds [m], [n], and [ŋ]

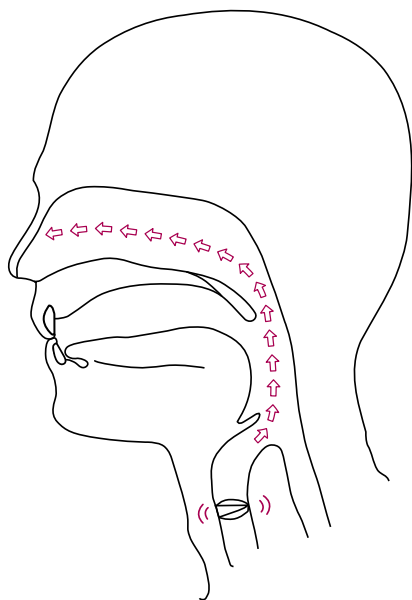
These are the three **nasal** sounds of English. For all the other vowels and consonants, air is let out through the mouth. But for [m], [n], and [ŋ] the oral cavity is completely obstructed, and the velum (soft palate) is lowered, so air is released through the nasal cavity instead.

Because all three are voiced sounds, when you make them you can feel the vibration not only on your throat but on your nose as well. If, for instance, you make a prolonged [mmmmm] sound and place your fingers against your nose ridge, you should feel a soft tingle on this area.

The obstruction of the vocal cavity occurs in the same three points of articulation used to make the plosives: the lips, the alveolar ridge, and the velum. Thus, [m] is a bilabial sound like [p] and [b]; [n] is an alveolar sound like [t] and [d]; and [ŋ] is a velar sound like [k] and [g]. However, as opposed to plosives and in the line of fricatives, these three sounds are **continuants**. This means that they can be produced for as long as we have air in our lungs.

The [m] and [n] sounds are pretty straightforward. They can be easily recognized in initial and medial positions in Spanish. For instance, [m] is present in words such as *mamá* or *momia*, and [n] in words such as *nené* or *enano*. The [ŋ] sound, on the contrary, is phonologically more complex, and it may pose more challenges to Spanish learners of English, so further explanations concerning this sound are provided in the following sections.

Sound [m]



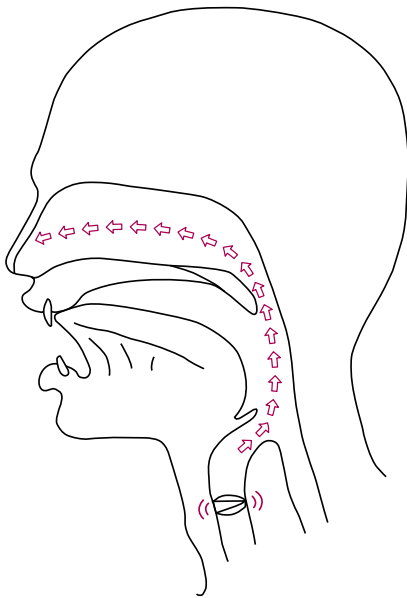
- Repeat after the teacher: [m], [m], [m], [m].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
m	mom, man, moon, my	lemon, number, remember	some, lame, ram, scum
mm		summer, trimmer, common	
mb		plumber, climber, numbing	comb, tomb, bomb
mn			column, autumn, solemn
lm		almond, alms	palm, calm, balm

Interest note

At the end of a morpheme, the *-mb*, *-mn*, and *-lm* clusters sound [m], and the letters b, n, and l are silent. However, when the letters that accompany m are in a separate syllable, they are pronounced, as in *zombie*, *amnesty*, and *almost*.

Sound [n]



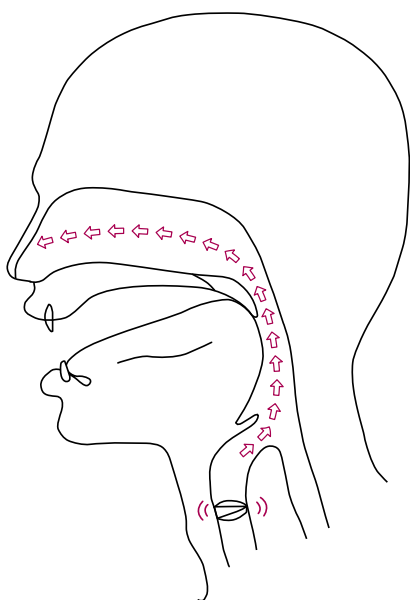
- Repeat after the teacher: [n], [n], [n], [n].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
n	new, never, now, net	Sunday, mentor, pencil	ten, run, dragon, cartoon
nn		sunny, nanny, manner	
kn	know, knight, knife	unknown	

Interest note

- **Syllabic n** [ŋ] usually occurs when the letter n is preceded by a fricative or a plosive in a weak syllable in medial or final position. In those cases, the [ŋ] is pronounced right after the consonant without any vowel sound in between, even if the spelling shows otherwise. Examples are *mountain* ['maʊntn], *threaten* ['θretn], and *redde*n ['redn].
- The g in the –ign ending is silent. Consider examples such as *foreign* ['fɔrən], *sign* [saɪn], and *sovereign* ['sɔ:vərən].

Sound [ŋ]



Unlike [m] and [n], this nasal sound does not have a corresponding grapheme (letter) to represent it. Instead, it occurs when the letter n precedes velar sounds [g] and [k]. The [ŋ] sound only occurs in medial and final positions. In Spanish, for example, it is present in words such as *mango*, *tango*, *banco* and *nunca*.

To recognize this sound, follow these steps:

1. Say the word *mango* quickly but naturally.
2. Say it again, but now extend the end of the first syllable. Say mannnnnnn-go.
Notice that for this extended sound, your tongue should not touch the alveolar ridge as it would for an [n]. Instead, it is placed against the back of your palate in preparation for the final [go]. The prolonged sound is [ŋ].
4. Repeat the same steps above, but this time with the word *banco*. Say bannnnnnnn-co, and become aware of the sound preceding the final [ko].

5. Now that you have identified the sound, say it by itself: [ŋŋŋŋŋŋŋŋŋŋ]. Remember that it is made with the back of the tongue against the velum (see the illustration), but that it is different from [g] or [k], which you should not attempt to prolong. Also, touch your nose and feel the vibration on it as you make the sound.

- Now read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below

Spelling patterns		Positions	
In the middle		At the end	
ng	[ŋ]	singer, hanger, hangover,	sing, ring, fang, long, working,
	[ŋg]	finger, single, longer, angry, hungry	
nk, nc	[ŋk]	banker, uncle, ankle, hanky	trunk, flunk, sink, rink, stink

Interest note

- The -nk cluster is always pronounced [ŋk]. However, the -ng cluster has two possible pronunciations: [ŋ] or [ŋg]. The rules that determine the pronunciation of -ng are as follows.
 - It is pronounced [ŋ] at the end of a morpheme, which can be either a root, such as *sing* in *singer* ['sɪŋə]; or a suffix, such as -ing in *working* ['wɜːrkɪŋ].
 - It is pronounced [ŋg] at the end of a root **only** when that root is used to make adjectives with the suffixes -ry, as in *hungry* ['hʌŋgrɪ]; -er, as in *longer* ['lɒŋgə]; or -est, as in *longest* ['lɒŋgɪst].
 - It is always pronounced [ŋg] in the middle of a morpheme, as in *finger* [fɪŋgə] or *single* [sɪŋɡl]. Pronouncing [ŋg] when only [ŋ] should sound is a common error of untrained non-native speakers.
- Spanish also counts with the characteristic nasal sound of *eñe* in words such as *niño* or *ñame*. Although [ɲ] and [ŋ] are similar, the former is palatal whereas the latter is velar.

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[n]	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]
noon	moon	sin	sing
net	met	bin	being
nice	mice	sun	sung
nut	mutt	run	rung
neat	meat	fan	fang

2. Read and repeat the words in each row.

[ŋ]	singer	stinger	stringy	banger ¹	ringing
[ŋg]	finger	longer	language	angry	single
[ŋk]	sink	thanks	donkey	trinket	drunk

¹ Banger: 1. a sausage 2. an old car that is in bad condition 3. a firework that makes a loud noise

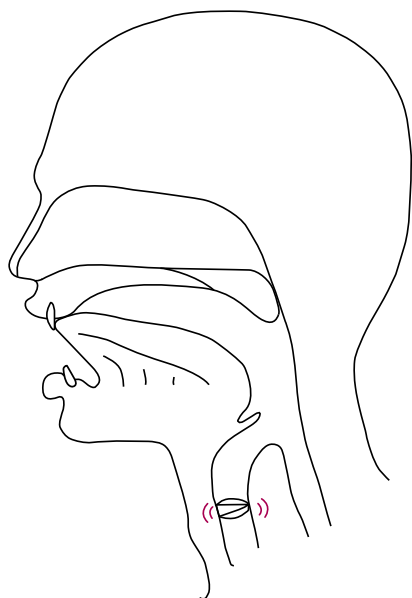
3.11 Sounds [l] and [r]

These consonant sounds are classified as **approximants**, because to make them the articulators approach each other without completely closing the air passage. They also fall under the category of **liquids**, approximants in which the articulators leave enough room for the air to flow similarly to the way it does for vowels.

The phoneme [l] is an alveolar sound because the tip of the tongue is placed against the alveolar ridge. Also, the jaw is slightly lowered and the sides of the tongue are pulled down, so the air flows not through the front of the mouth but along the cheeks. As a result of this unique quality, this sound is considered a **lateral**.

The [r] sound is classified as a **retroflex** because the most common way to pronounce it involves the tongue curling back into the mouth in the post-alveolar region. This phoneme is problematic for most Spanish learners of English because, although it is represented the same way in both languages, it is pronounced differently in each of them. In Spanish, the letter r is pronounced as a **trill**, at the beginning of words such as *rosa* or *rueda*, or as a **tap**, in the middle of words such as *caro* or *pero*. In both cases the tongue touches the roof of the mouth. For the pronunciation of [r] in English, however, there is NO contact between the tongue and the palate.

Sound [l]



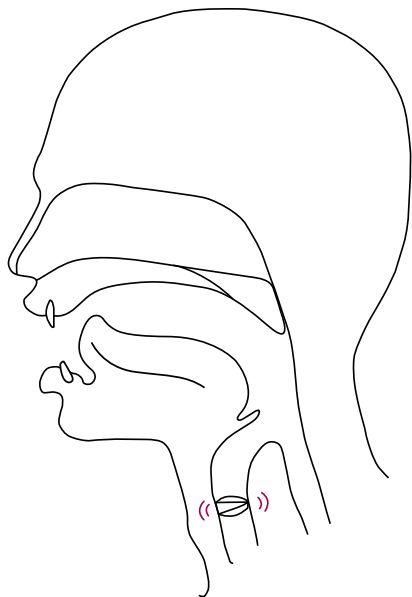
- Repeat after the teacher: [l], [l], [l], [l].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
l	lemon, light, luck, last	flute, alone, elegant, help	feel, pal, local, wool
ll	llama	hello, yellow, callous, bullet	mall, fall, bell, frill

Interest note

- **Syllabic l** [l̩]. Usually occurs when the letter l is preceded by another consonant in a weak syllable in medial or final position, especially for the *-le*, *-el*, and *-al* endings. In those cases, the [l̩] is pronounced right after the consonant without any vowel sound in between. Examples are *cattle* ['kæt̩l̩], *bottle* ['bɒt̩l̩], *struggle* ['strʌɡl̩], *muddle* ['mʌd̩l̩], *funnel* ['fʌn̩l̩], and *pedal* ['ped̩l̩]. Syllabic l is predominantly British. In most cases other English accents accept the introduction of a schwa between the l and the preceding consonant.
- The letter l is usually silent for the *-lk*, *-ld*, and *-lm* clusters. Some examples are *walk* [wɔk], *talk* [tɔk], *could* [kʊd], *should* [ʃʊd], *palm* [pɑ:m], and *calm* [kɑ:m].

Sound [r]



- Repeat the sound after the teacher: [r], [r], [r], [r].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions		
	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
r	red, rose, river, real, rot	heart, park, fort, morning	car, star, for, more,
rr		berry, sorry, tarry, carriage	
wr	write, wrong, wrist, wrap		

Interest note

The pronunciation of r accounts for one of the most distinctive and well-known features among English accents. In fact, accents are classified into rhotic or non-rhotic depending on when the [r] sound is made. Speakers with **rhotic accents**, such as those from North America, Scotland, Ireland, and South-West England, pronounce the [r] sound every time it is spelled. On the other hand, speakers with **non-rhotic accents**, such as those from England, Wales, and Australia, only pronounce it when it precedes a vowel, as in *rose*, but they do not pronounce it when it comes after a vowel. Remember that schwa + r, represented as [ɜ] or [ə], is a variation of r for which the same principle applies.

Introductory practice

1. Read the transcription and contrast the pronunciation of these words with rhotic and non-rhotic accents.

Word	Rhotic (General American)	Non-rhotic (BBC English)
heart	[ha:rt]	[ha:t]
park	[pa:rk]	[pa:k]
car	[ka:r]	[ka:]
horse	[hɔ:rs]	[hɔ:s]
four	[fɔ:r]	[fɔ:]
bird	[bɜrd]	[bɜ:d]
girl	[gɜrl]	[gɜ:l]

2. Practice with minimal pairs. Circle the word you hear.

- a. The teacher had to *collect/ correct* the exams.
- b. Turn *light/right* please.
- c. The student gave a *long/wrong* answer.
- d. He *locked/rocked* the baby.
- e. I said *alive/arrive*.

Appropriation

3. Underline the words with syllabic l.

- a. He struggled with the bottle.
- b. Edible petals are rather brittle.
- c. The brindle¹ cat has bristly whiskers.
- d. If you stay out of squabbles, you will steer away from troubles.

4. Use the words in each box to complete the conversations below.

['ɑ:fisə(r)] ['kɔrnə(r)] [fɔ(r)] [kɑ(r)] [pɑ(r)k] ['kwɔ:(r)tə(r)] ['mi:tə(r)] [rɪ'tɜ:(r)n]

A: Excuse me _____, do you know where I can _____ the _____?

B: There is a parking space around the _____.

A: Is it _____ free?

B: Not really. You must deposit a couple of _____ in the parking _____ when you _____.

['ɔ:(r)də(r)] [ʃʊə(r)] ['pleɜ:(r)] [tʃeə(r)] [mɑ(r)ks] [bɔ:(r)d]

A: Charles, could you please help me put the room in _____?

B: Oh, _____, Ms. Berk. What do you need me to do?

A: Could you please erase those _____ on the _____ and arrange the _____.

B: My _____.

A: Thank you.

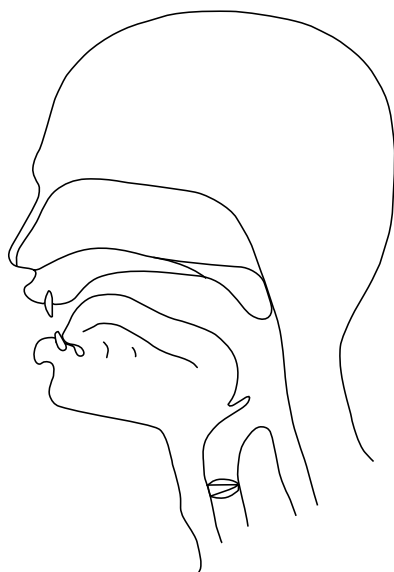
Consolidation

- Practice reading the conversations above, first with a rhotic and then with a non-rhotic accent. If possible, do it with a partner.
- Come up with a list of 15 words with initial, medial, and final r different from the ones used in this unit. Practice reading them with a rhotic and then with a non-rhotic pronunciation.

3.12 Sounds [j] and [w]

Both [j] and [w] are **approximants**, like [l] and [r], because the articulators do not come into full contact with each other when they are produced, so air flows in a rather unobstructed manner. They are also considered **semi-vowels** because they are pronounced like vowels, but they behave like consonants. On the one hand, [j], which is classified as a palatal sound, is comparable to a short [i]; On the other hand, [w] is considered a bilabial sound because of the roundness of the lips it shares with [u]. However, [j] and [w] occur only before a vowel sound, a common distribution for consonants. As a result of this characteristic, a transition with either an adjacent sound (glide) or a non-adjacent sound (diphthong) is created every time they are made, so some authors also classify them as **glides**.

Sound [j]



Sound [j]

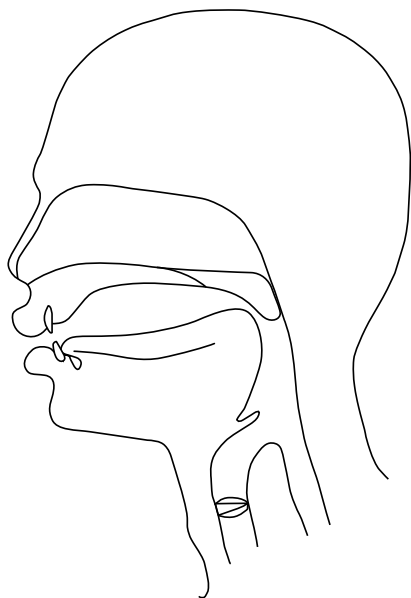
- Repeat after the teacher: [j], [j], [j], [j].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	At the beginning	In the middle
y	yes, yet, yellow, yeast, yoga, year	beyond, lawyer, royal, voyage
i		onion, companion, perennial
u [ju]	university, unicorn, uniform, unique	venue, queue, reduce, duke, fuel

Interest note

The pronunciation of initial or medial y as [ʒ] or as [dʒ] is generally assumed as a mispronunciation, which is rather common among Spanish speakers; for example, when they pronounce [dʒes] instead of [jes]. However, some Latino actors, such as Sofia Vergara, have popularized this and other pronunciation errors as speech markers of Latino culture.

Sound [w]



Sound [w]

- Repeat the sound after the teacher:
[w], [w], [w], [w].
- Read, listen, and repeat the words on the table below.

Spelling patterns	Positions	
	At the beginning	In the middle
w	water, window, willow, weather, wet	answer, power, always, forward, twelve
wh	what, where, whale, whim, whack	anywhere, somewhat, nowhere

Interest note

Some dialects of General American English pronounce the *-wh* cluster as [hw]. Therefore, some sounds taxonomies include this combination as an additional English phoneme. This pronunciation, notwithstanding, is universally accepted for words such as *who* [hu:] and *whose* [hu:z].

Introductory practice

1. Read and repeat each column first. Then, contrast these minimal pairs.

[v]	[w]	[dʒ]	[j]
vet	wet	Jess	yes
vat	what	jam	yam
vine	wine	jet	yet
veil	whale	jeer	year
vain	wane	juice	use

2. Circle the word you hear

- There is no *use/juice*.
- What a delicious *yam/jam*!
- There is a spider creeping up the *vine/wine*.
- He hit the *ball/wall* really hard.
- What an awful *jeer/year*.

Appropriation

3. Find five words with [w] and five words with [j] in this word search.

u	n	i	f	y	g	h	k	w	p
f	w	i	l	l	o	w	e	t	l
h	e	d	g	x	a	i	d	m	a
y	a	v	f	z	s	n	o	w	y
o	t	r	i	b	u	t	e	b	e
u	h	q	t	o	s	e	z	c	r
n	e	w	a	r	d	r	o	b	e
g	r	d	y	o	n	d	e	r	f

Consolidation

4. Watch a video of an interview with a Latino celebrity such as actress Sofia Vergara. Notice the way she pronounces initial or medial y. Identify other aspects of her pronunciation that distinguish it from native speakers' pronunciation.

Answer Key

2.1 Sounds [i:] and [ɪ]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. eat / b. win / c. dip / d. beat / e. ship / f. lean / g. cheap / h. fit

Appropriation

3. **Words with [i:]**: a. week, we, leave, city [siti] / b. pleased, meet / c. feel, breeze, beach / d. need, hear, weep / e. cream / f. neat, speech, theater. **Words with [ɪ]**: a. city / b. Smith / e. whip / f. Riggs

4. a. sit / b. head / c. bear / d. swear / e. best

2.2 Sounds [e] and [ei]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. edge / b. aid / c. bait / d. debt / e. paste / f. test / g. sail / h. pen

Appropriation

3. a. [ei] [e] [ei] / b. [e] [e] / c. [ei] [e] [ei] [ei] [e] / d. [ei] [e] [e] / e. [ei] [e] [ei]

4. *Across*: 1. Elf / 3. Enemy / 5. Crane / 7. Enter. *Down*: 2. Fame / 4. Mane / 6. Rent

2.3 Sounds [æ] and [ɑ]

Appropriation

2. **Words with [æ]**: a. has, an, magazine / b. at, map / c. Anne, Japanese / d. fantastic, had / e. castle, dancing / f. pat, cat / h. has. **Words with [ɑ]**: a. article / b. John / c. gardens / d. concert / e. party / f. not / g. lock, office / h. garden / i. Lucia, shop, drama / j. fox, cobs

3. **Words with [æ]**: class, understand, map, happy (backwards), animal, tad / **Words with [ɑ]**: martyr, father, garden, farmer, wand, cart.

2.4 Schwa: [ʌ] and [ə]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. ran / b. lock / c. rat / d. collar / e. cut / f. runt / g. begging / h. nutty

Appropriation

3. a. book / b. cat / c. cell / d. wood / e. steel

4. lemon - c / minuscule - f / ancient - e / ransom - a / Sunday - b / luscious - g / unbelievable - d

5. **Words with [ʌ]:** was, love, somehow, something, ultimately, just, someday, suddenly / **Words with [ə]:** to, the, even, beautiful, melodic, imagined, children, together, blossom, as, a, wonderful, suddenly, realizing.

2.5 Schwa + r

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. burn / b. farm / c. stir / d. lurk / e. for / f. pier

Appropriation

3. **Words with schwa + r:** sister, nurse, emergency, yesterday, girl, burns, surgery, mother, father, herself, doctors, works (some of these words are repeated).

4. a. inform / b. plural / c. stardom / d. artful / e. doormat

2.6 Sounds [oʊ] and [ɔ]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. fought / b. law / c. wrote / d. cat / e. foul / f. store / g. car / h. caught

Appropriation

3. **Words with [ɔ]:** August, home, Boston, awesome, forever, awful, bought, shopping, London, normal, abroad / **Words with [oʊ]:** Rose, those, over, so, boasting, boat, go, know

4. **Words with [ɔ]:** for - 6, tall - 7, caller - 8, bald - 9 / **Words with [oʊ]:** choke - 1, towboat - 2, low - 3, hole - 4, phone - 5

2.7 Sounds [u:] and [ʊ]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: 1. Muck / 2. Cook / 3. Luck / 4. Root / 5. Full / 6. Food / 7. Some / 8. Tooth

Appropriation

3. **Words with [u:]**: Luke, Sue, New York, honeymoon, rude, steward, move, cushions, Newark, jewels, rooms, flu, through / **Words with [ʊ]**: during, security, suitcase, booked, good, would.

4. **Words with [u:]**: food, stoop, juice, prune, groom, fluke / **Words with [ʊ]**: good, look, pull, bull.

2.8 Diphthongs [aʊ], [aɪ] and [ɔɪ]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. mouse / b. crow / c. how / d. loud / e. blows / f. doll

Appropriation

3. **Words with [ɔɪ]**: boy, toy **Words with [aʊ]**: house, mouse, cloud / **Words with [aɪ]**: night, light / **Words with [eɪ]**: radio, cake / **Words with [oʊ]**: coat, boat

4. **Words with [ɔ]**: Paul, mall, caught, caution. / **Words with [aʊ]**: foul, lounge, now. / **Words with [ɔʊ]**: toll, mole, stow

5. a. mint / b. drill / c. navel / d. thriller / e. maim / f. laying

3.1 Sounds [t] and [d]

Appropriation

3. **Words with flap [ɾ]**: a. bottled, water, better / b. Betty / c. matter, got to / d. Mattie, got up, later / **Words with glottal t [ʔ]**: a. fountain / b. certain / **Words with a disappearing [t]**: b. interview / c. interesting, entertaining / d. started.

3.2 Pronunciation of final –ed

Appropriation

3. **Verbs pronounced with [t]**: 1. Looked, 6. Talked, 14. Flopped, 17. Baked, 18. Rapped, 20. Cooked, 23. Coughed, 25. Limped, 29. Mopped / **Verbs pronounced with [d]**: 2. Loomed, 8. Stammered, 10. Crammed, 13. Remained, 15. Lagged, 16. Horned, 19. Drummed, 21. Healed, 22. Lived, 24. Sneezed, 26. Boxed, 27. Enjoyed, 28. Cleaned, 30. Zoomed / **Verbs pronounced with [ɪd]**: 3. Mandated, 4. Started, 5. Recorded, 7. Invented, 9. Pleaded, 11. Commented, 12. Busted.

3.3 Sounds [p], [b], [k] and [g]

Sounds [p] and [b]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. rabid / b. cap / c. cub / d. rip / e. lobe / f. lab

Sounds [k] and [g]

Introductory practice

4. Suggested: a. glass / b. back / c. bug / d. cut / e. locked / f. lagging

Appropriation

5. a. black / b. tragic / c. plumber / d. together / e. chemistry / f. toothpick / g. checkbook / h. octopus / i. treatment / j. napkin

3.4 Sounds [s] and [z]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. peace / b. buzz, / c. fussy / d. prize / e. muzzle

Appropriation

3. a. pressure / b. shoe / c. passion / d. music / e. assure

3.5 Pronunciation of final –s

Appropriation

2. **Words with [s]:** a. books / b. deserts / c. plants, picks, cuts, cooks / d. Luke's, it's / **Words with [z]:** a. Jim's, includes, gloves, toys, clothes / b. Colombia's, rivers, valleys, volcanoes / c. peels, vegetables / d. car's, Jim's / **Words with [ɪz]:** a. watches / b. ranges / c. washes

3.6 Sounds [f], [v], and [h]

Introductory practice

2. a. vet – bet / b. bat – bat / c. very – berry / d. leaf – leaf / e. base – vase / f. bicker – vicar

Appropriation

3. **Words with [f]:** a. flowers, girlfriend / b. Fred, friend / c. sofa, photo, of, father, laughing / d. fifth, floor, have to / e. Sophie, perfume, fantastic, floral / f. Raphael, festive / **Words with [v]:** a. Victor, gave, Vicky / b. visited, Vincent, native, Venice / c. above / d. live, elevator / f. gave, Valerie, very, festive, Valentine's

Consolidation

4. **Cases of assimilation:** a. have to / b. of all / c. have friends / d. stuff I

Sound [h]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. hear / b. cat / c. hut / d. motel / e. leap / f. holly

Appropriation

3. a. an hour / b. a hotel / c. an honorable / d. an honest / e. a hospital / f. a happy girl

4. **Silent letter clusters:** a. wr- e.g. wrist / b. kn- e.g. knuckle / c. gh- e.g. height / d. -lm e.g. psalm / e. -ght e.g. taught / f. -stle e.g. nestle / g. -tain e.g. certain

3.7 Sounds [θ] and [ð]

Introductory practice

2. a. bat – bath / b. both – both / c. mitt – myth / d. load – loath / e. tie – lie / f. tick – thick

Appropriation

3. **Words with [θ]:** a. thinking, things / b. Math / c. tooth / d. path, both / **Words with [ð]:** a. the / b. the, this, with the / c. the, teething, bothering / d. them

4. a. mother [ð] / b. pathway [θ] / c. Elizabeth [θ] / d. Mathematics [θ] / e. brother [ð] / f. grandfather [ð] / g. bathtub [θ] / h. them [ð] / i. fourth [θ].

3.8 Sounds [ʃ] and [ʒ]

Introductory practice

1. Words with [ʒ]: a. treasure hunt / b. institutional vision / c. final decision / d. leisure trip / e. Indonesian

Appropriation

2. a. Aisa / b. sugar / c. fish / d. pleasure / e. pressure / f. division

Consolidation

3. Genre

3.9 Sounds [tʃ] and [dʒ]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. chin / b. jeering / c. sheep / d. breached / e. washing

Appropriation

3. **Words with [ʒ]**: 1. Beige, 9. Seizure, 11. Decision, 15. Fusion / **Words with [ʃ]**: 2. Sure, 4. Brioche, 6. Mission, 10. Ocean, 14. Fissure, 18. Diction / **Words with [dʒ]**: 3. Badge, 5. Graduate, 12. Soldier, 13. Arrange, 20. Oblige / **Words with [ʒ]**: 7. Adventure, 8. Fortune, 16. Cello, 17. Czech, 19. Architecture.

4. a. would you [dʒ] / b. want you [ʃ] / c. Don't you [ʃ] / d. Could you [dʒ] / e. Did you [dʒ] – Not yet [ʃ].

3.10 Sounds [m], [n], and [ŋ]

Appropriation

3. a. moon / b. bring / c. thing / d. curtain / e. knives / f. length / g. stinking / h. plumber

3.11 Sounds [l] and [r]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. correct / b. light / c. wrong / d. locked / e. alive

Appropriation

3. Words with syllabic l: a. struggled, bottle / b. edible, petals, brittle / c. brindle, bristly / d. squabbles, troubles

4. First conversation: A. officer, park, car B. corner A. for B. quarters, meter, return / Second conversation: A. order B. sure A. marks, board, chairs B. pleasure

3.12 Sounds [j] and [w]

Introductory practice

2. Suggested: a. use / b. jam / c. vine / d. ball / e. jeer

Appropriation

3. **Words with [w]**: willow, weather, winter, snowy, wardrobe / **Words with [j]**: unify, young, tribute, yonder, year (new is also possible)

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Biographical Data



José Vicente Abad holds a B.A. in Teaching Modern Languages, with a concentration in English and Spanish, and a graduate diploma course (Specialization) in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, both from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Medellín. He also earned an M.A in Education from Saint Mary's University, Minnesota. As a complement to his academic education, for over ten years he has received formal vocal training.

Mr. Abad has worked as an English and Spanish teacher at Elementary and Secondary schools both in Colombia and U.S.A. He currently works as an English teacher, teacher educator, and researcher at Universidad Católica Luis Amigó. In recent years he has focused on the teaching of academic writing and pronunciation. He has been teaching English phonetics and phonology since 2011. He may be contacted at jose.abadol@amigo.edu.co.

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Do you speak English? Most people ask this question when they want to know whether you can communicate in this language. By doing it they evince the widespread tendency to equate our ability to speak with our overall communicative competence. Paradoxically, for most EFL and ESL learners, speaking is the most challenging skill and the last they get to develop to the full. Latin American students' reluctance to speak English often comes down to their fear of mispronouncing it. They soon learn that the pronunciation of English does not correspond with its spelling. However, most students ignore that a significant number of English sounds are not present in Spanish, and that they must be learned in order to pronounce English properly.

The main objective in writing this book is to help Latin American students of English, particularly novice and practicing English teachers, not only to hone their pronunciation but also to acquire the technical elements necessary to teach it. To that aim this book provides readers with essential theory and practice on the pronunciation of English sounds and contrasts them with those of Spanish. Although originally intended for classroom use, this book can also be used for self-study by learners with an English proficiency level of B1 (intermediate) or above.

