

# Phonetics & Phonology

Or: Why "Ghoti" sounds like "Fish"

# Intro Quiz: Trust Issues

Q: Why shouldn't you trust English spelling?

**A**

Option A

Because "ough" has 9 different pronunciations.



Option B

Because "phonetic" isn't even spelled phonetically.



Option C

Because the alphabet was designed by chaos demons.

*(Spoiler: They are all correct.)*

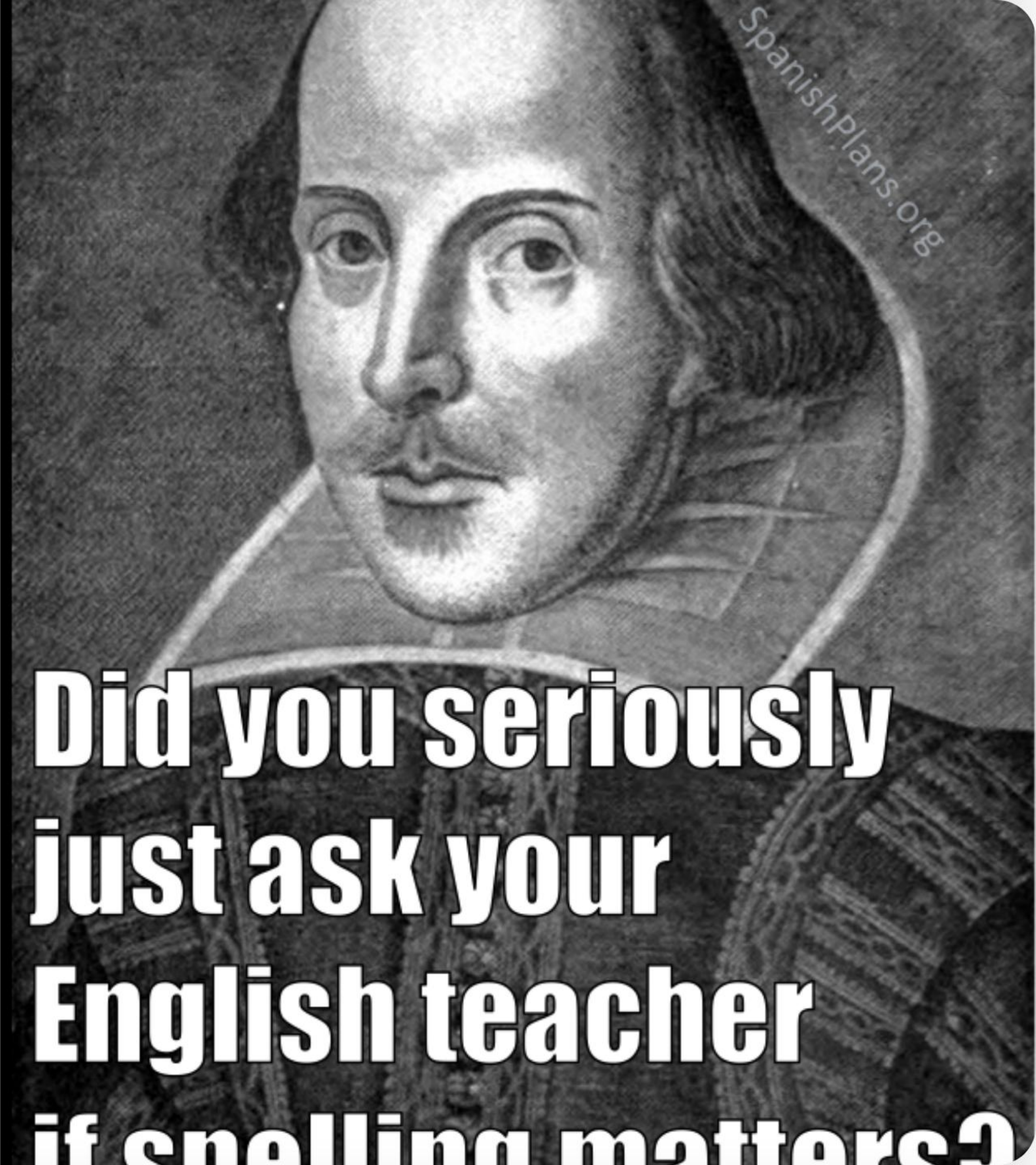


## Meme Placeholder

**To the User:** Please paste your "IPA Beer" meme here.

*Concept:*

- Customer: "I'd like an IPA."
- Bartender: "wɪtʃ bɪə wʊd juː laɪk?"
- Caption: Be careful what you ask for.



**Did you seriously  
just ask your  
English teacher  
if spelling matters?**



# The Rules of Transcription

Don't write letters. Write sounds.

- [ ] **Square Brackets:** Phonetics (The physical sound).
- / / **Slanted Brackets:** Phonology (The mental category).
- < > **Angle Brackets:** Orthography (The spelling).

**Fun Fact:** "Bang" ends with [ŋ]. There is no [g] sound, despite the spelling. "Photo" and "Enough" share the same [f] sound.

[ b æ ŋ ]



# Intro Quiz: Air Traffic Control

Q: What is the difference between a "Stop" and a "Fricative"?



Option A

A Stop blocks air completely; a Fricative creates friction.



Option B

A Stop is a red light; a Fricative is a yellow light.



Option C

A Fricative is just a Stop with commitment issues.



## Meme Placeholder

**To the User:** Please paste your "Suez Canal Ship" meme here.

*Concept:*

- Left (Fricative): Ship moving through narrow gap.
- Right (Stop): Ship stuck sideways blocking everything.





# Manner of Articulation

## Stops (Plosives)

Block airflow completely, then let it explode.

- **Voiceless:** [p], [t], [k]
- **Voiced:** [b], [d], [g]

## Fricatives

Almost block airflow, squeezing it through a narrow gap.

- [f], [v], [s], [z], [h]
- *"My love for you is like a fricative... it never stops."*

**Affricates:** The Remix. Start as a stop, release as a fricative (e.g., [tʃ] "cheap").

# The Consonant Chart

This chart maps sounds by:

- **Place:** Where in the mouth? (Lips, Teeth, Palate)
- **Manner:** How is air blocked? (Stop, Fricative)
- **Voicing:** Are the vocal cords vibrating?

m	mat	mæt
f	fat	fæt
v	vat	væt
w	wit	wɪt
θ	Teeth	ti:θ
ð	that	ðæt
t	tot	tɒt
d	dot	dɒt
n	not	nɒt
s	sit	sɪt
z	zit	zɪt
r	rat	ræt
l	lot	lɒt
ʃ	full	fʊʃ
ʒ	shot	ʒɒt



# Intro Quiz: Tongue Gymnastics

Q: To make the sound [i] (as in "heat"), where is your tongue?



Option A

High and to the Front.



Option B

Relaxing on the sofa.

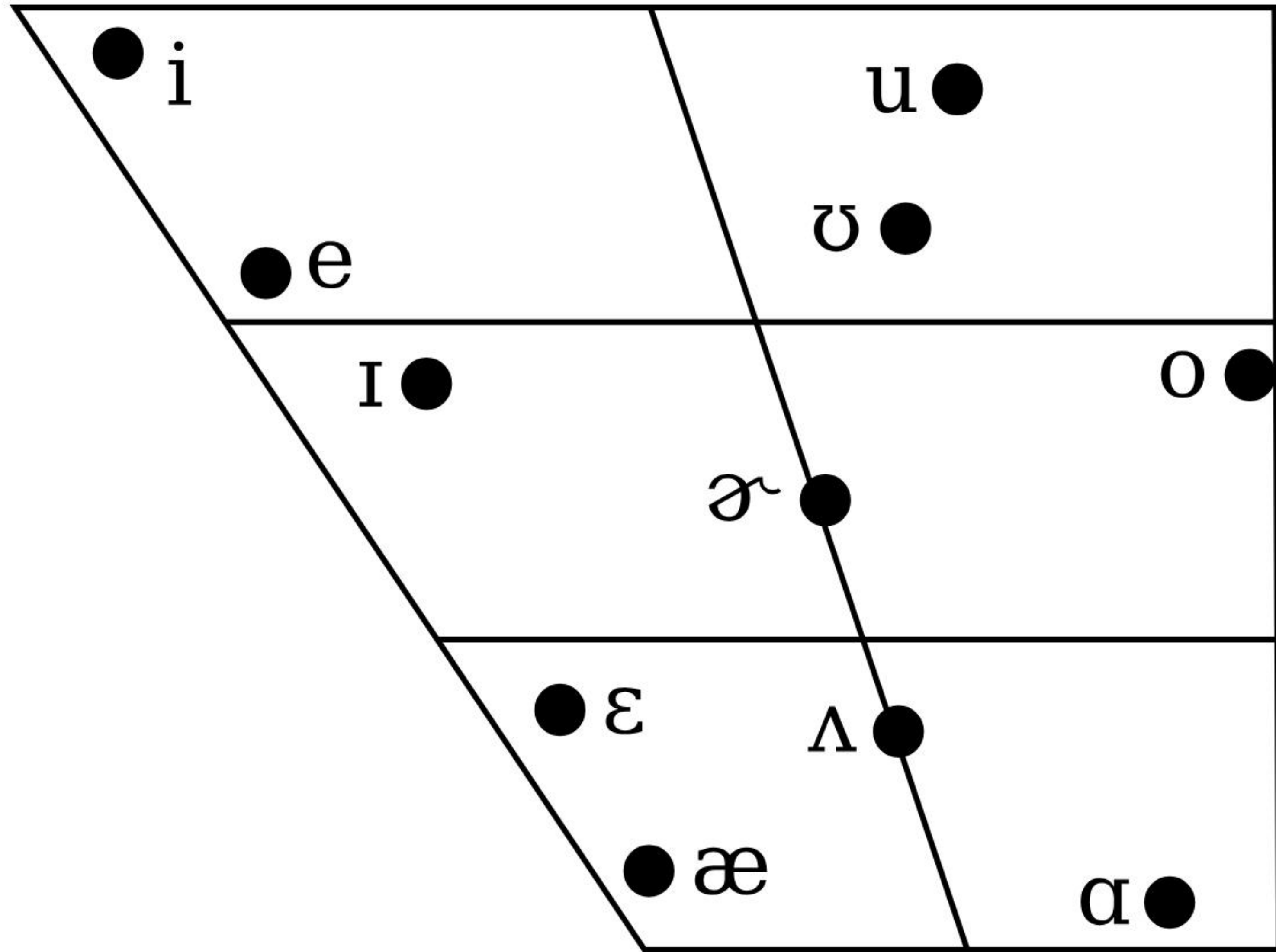


Option C

Trying to escape your mouth.



# The Vowel Quadrilateral



## Mapping the Mouth

- **High Front [i]:** "Bead" (Mouth closed, tongue forward).
- **Low Back [ɑ]:** "Bob" (Mouth open, tongue back).
- **The Schwa [ə]:** The sound of laziness. Central, unstressed, effortless. (e.g., "About").



# Diphthongs: Vowels on the Move

[ aɪ ]

Buy, Eye, My

*Gliding from Low to High*

[ aʊ ]

Cow, Doubt

*The "Ouch" sound*

[ ɔɪ ]

Boy, Noise

*The "Oy Vey" sound*

**Accent Note:** Americans pronounce the final [r] in "Car". British English drops the [r] and often uses diphthongs instead.



# Intro Quiz: Perception

Q: If a Phonologist looks at a dog, what do they see?



Option A

A contrastively meaningful  
sequence of segments.



Option B

A good boy.



Option C

[ d ɔ g ]



# Phonemes vs. Allophones

Phoneme / /

**The Mental Idea.**

If you swap a phoneme, you change the meaning.

*Example:* **Fat** vs. **Vat**.

Allophone [ ]

**The Physical Reality.**

Different versions of the same sound.

*Example:* The [t] in **Tar** (exploded) vs. **Star** (soft).



## Meme Placeholder

**To the User:** Please paste your "Futurama Fry" meme here.

*Concept:* "Not sure if those are allophones or different phonemes."





# Intro Quiz: Rhyme Time

Q: Which of these is a "Minimal Pair"?



Option A

Fan and Van.



Option B

Orange and Door-hinge.



Option C

Tomato and Tomato.



# Minimal Pairs & Phonotactics



## The Test

If changing **one** sound changes the meaning, those sounds are distinct phonemes.

- **Pair:** Fan vs. Van (/f/ vs /v/)
- **Set:** Big, Pig, Rig, Fig, Dig, Wig

## Phonotactics

The "Rules of the Club". Some sounds just can't sit together.

-  **Legal:** /pl-/ (Play), /kl-/ (Clean)
-  **Illegal:** /vl-/ , /nl-/ , /fsig/



# Intro Quiz: Fast Talk

Q: Why do we say "Hafta" instead of "Have to"?



Option A

Our brains anticipate the next sound (Assimilation).



Option B

Because enunciating is exhausting.



Option C

Both A and B.



# Why We Sound Different Than We Spell

## Assimilation

One sound copies a feature from its neighbor to make it easier to say.

*Example:* "I have to" → /v/ becomes voiceless /f/ to match the /t/. Result: "**Hafta**".

## Elision

Leaving sounds out completely (The "Ghost" sounds).

*Example:* "Friendship" → We usually drop the [d]. [frɛnʃɪp].

*Example:* "Camera" → We don't say Ca-me-ra. We say [kæmrə].



# Image Sources



<https://www.rizzolieducation.it/content/uploads/2023/01/image4-1.png>

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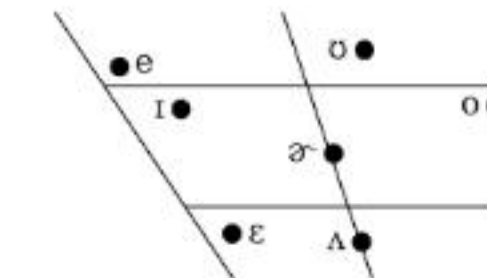
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IPA SYMBOL	Word	Transcription
p	pat	pat
b	bat	bat
m	mat	mat
f	fat	fat
v	vat	vat
w	wat	wat
θ	Teeth	θ

<https://englishlikeanative.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IPA-consonants.png>

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