



# BASICS

# ENGLISH

FOR  
PROFESSIONALS

English, Edition 1

The EFP Point  
2025/11/11

## Lesson 0: BASICS



## Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- ✚ Recognize and use alphabet, pronunciation and numbers in speech and writing;
- ✚ Understand alphabet, pronunciation and numbers;
- ✚ Improve sentence construction and pronunciation;
- ✚ Prepare for CEFR, Oral practice and school exams.



## PART I: ALPHABET AND PHONETICS

In this part of the lesson, we are going to learn to recognize, pronounce, and write the letters of the English alphabet. In addition, we will tackle phonetics.

### A- ALPHABET

The alphabet is **a set of letters or symbols** in a fixed order used to represent the basic speech sounds of a language. Indeed, the english language is comprised of 26 letters which are:

1. A	/ˈeɪ/	→ Apple
2. B	/ˈbi:/	→ Baby
3. C	/ˈsi:/	→ Cat
4. D	/ˈdi:/	→ Dog
5. E	/ˈi:/	→ Elephant
6. F	/ˈɛf/	→ Fish
7. G	/ˈdʒi:/	→ Goat
8. H	/ˈɛrtʃ/	→ Hat
9. I	/ˈaɪ/	→ Ice cream
10. J	/ˈdʒeɪ/	→ Juice
11. K	/ˈkeɪ/	→ Knife
12. L	/ˈɛl/	→ Lion
13. M	/ˈɛm/	→ Mango
14. N	/ˈɛn/	→ Nest
15. O	/ˈoʊ/	→ Orange
16. P	/ˈpi:/	→ Pizza
17. Q	/ˈkju:/	→ Queen
18. R	/ˈɑ:r/	→ Rabbit
19. S	/ˈɛs/	→ Sun
20. T	/ˈti:/	→ Tree
21. U	/ˈju:/	→ Umbrella
22. V	/ˈvi:/	→ Violin
23. W	/ˈdʌbl.ju:/	→ Water
24. X	/ˈɛks/	→ X-ray
25. Y	/ˈwaɪ/	→ Yellow
26. Z	/ˈzi:/ (UK: /ˈzed/)	→ Zebra

**MBL :** [Alphabet anglais - Lire et écouter la prononciation](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BELIZKpi1Zs>

🔊 *To your attention* : Pronunciation Tips

- **A, E, I, O, U** are **vowels**.
- The rest of the list are **consonants**.
- English pronunciation is different from French!
- Pay attention to letters like **J, H, R, W**.



## B- PHONETICS

Phonetics is the study of **speech sounds**. In the English language, some sounds do not exist like in French. So, it is important to learn how to **recognize and pronounce them correctly**. The **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)** is a system that helps you read the **exact pronunciation** of words from your linguistic support.

Letter	Word	IPA Pronunciation
A	Apple	/'æpəl/
B	Book	/bʊk/
C	Cat	/kæt/

### 1- Vowel Sounds

#### a- Definition

Vowels are speech sounds produced without significant blockage of air through the mouth and useful for many reasons:

- They form the **core of syllables**;
- **Mastering vowels improves pronunciation, listening, and intelligibility.**

#### b- Types of vowels in English

There are **four types of vowels** in English which are:

- ✓ **Short vowels**;
- ✓ **Long vowels**;
- ✓ **Diphthongs**;
- ✓ **Schwa (ə)**.

#### c- Short Vowels (Monophthongs)

Short vowels are quick and unstressed compared to long vowels.

IPA	Keyword	Examples
/ɪ/	kit	sit, ship, bit
/e/	dress	bed, pen, red
/æ/	trap	cat, map, apple
/ʌ/	strut	cup, luck, sun
/ɒ/	lot (BrE)	hot, clock, dog
/ʊ/	foot	put, book, cook

## d- Long Vowels

These vowels are **held longer** in duration and often involve clearer tongue position.

IPA	Keyword	Examples
/i:/	fleece	see, tree, eat
/a:/	palm	car, father, start
/ɔ:/	thought	four, talk, law
/u:/	goose	blue, food, school
/ɜ:/	nurse	bird, learn, turn

## e- Diphthongs (Gliding Vowels)

Diphthongs involve **two vowel positions in one syllable** (a glide).

IPA	Keyword	Examples
/eɪ/	face	say, eight, late
/aɪ/	price	my, sight, light
/ɔɪ/	choice	boy, join, toy
/aʊ/	mouth	now, out, house
/əʊ/	goat (BrE)	go, home, show
/ɪə/	near	here, idea, clear
/eə/	square	hair, care, share
/ʊə/	cure	pure, tourist

## f- Schwa /ə/

Schwa /ə/ is also known as neutral vowel. It is most the **common vowel sound** in English and occurs in **unstressed syllables**.

- **about** (/ə'baʊt/);
- **teacher** (/ˈti:tʃər/);
- **problem** (/ˈprɒbləm/).

👉 **Important:** Mastering **schwa** is essential for **natural rhythm and connected speech** in English.

## 2- Consonant Sounds

### a- Definition

Consonants are sounds produced when the airflow is **partially or completely blocked** in the vocal tract. Each consonant can be described by three main features:

- ✓ **Place of articulation** - where the sound is made (lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, palate, velum, glottis, etc.);
- ✓ **Manner of articulation** - how the airflow is modified (stop, fricative, nasal, etc.);
- ✓ **Voicing** - whether the vocal cords vibrate (voiced) or not (voiceless).

### b- Table of English Consonant Sounds (IPA, description, examples)

The table teaches five groups of consonant describes below:

- ✓ **Stops / Plosives:** /p, b, t, d, k, g/
- ✓ **Fricatives:** /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/
- ✓ **Affricates:** /tʃ, dʒ/
- ✓ **Nasals:** /m, n, ŋ/
- ✓ **Approximants:** /l, ɹ, w, j/

IPA	Description	Voicing	Example words
/p, b/	Bilabial stops	/p/ voiceless, /b/ voiced	pat, bat
/t, d/	Alveolar stops	/t/ voiceless, /d/ voiced	top, dog
/k, g/	Velar stops	/k/ voiceless, /g/ voiced	cat, go
/f, v/	Labiodental fricatives	/f/ voiceless, /v/ voiced	fine, vine
/θ, ð/	Dental fricatives	/θ/ voiceless, /ð/ voiced	think, this
/s, z/	Alveolar fricatives	/s/ voiceless, /z/ voiced	see, zoo
/ʃ, ʒ/	Post-alveolar fricatives	/ʃ/ voiceless, /ʒ/ voiced	she, vision
/h/	Glottal fricative	voiceless	hat
/m/	Bilabial nasal	voiced	man
/n/	Alveolar nasal	voiced	net
/ŋ/	Velar nasal	voiced	sing
/l/	Lateral approximant	voiced	lip, tall
/ɹ/	Alveolar approximant ("R" sound)	voiced	red, car
/w/	Glide (semivowel)	voiced	we
/j/	Glide (semivowel)	voiced	yes
/tʃ, dʒ/	Affricates (alveo-palatal)	/tʃ/ voiceless, /dʒ/ voiced	cheese, judge



### c- Voiced and voiceless Pairs

Many consonants come in pairs with the same articulation but one voiced, one voiceless:

- ✓ /p/ - /b/
- ✓ /t/ - /d/
- ✓ /k/ - /g/
- ✓ /f/ - /v/
- ✓ /θ/ - /ð/
- ✓ /s/ - /z/
- ✓ /ʃ/ - /ʒ/
- ✓ /tʃ/ - /dʒ/

### d- Common Difficulties

- /θ/ and /ð/: tongue between or against the teeth (*think* vs *this*);
- /ŋ/: velar nasal, different from /n/ + /g/ (*sing* vs *finger*);
- /ɹ/: English "R" is not rolled or tapped; it is retroflex or bunched;
- **Final consonant voicing**: important in pairs like *leaf* vs *leave*, *bat* vs *bad*;
- /ð/ as in *this* ;
- /ʃ/ as in *she*.

VBL 🎧: [Apprendre IPA - Alphabet phonétique international - Symboles](#)

### 3- Stress, Rhythm and Intonation

Pronunciation includes attention to features such as:

- ✚ **Stress,**
- ✚ **Rhythm**
- ✚ **Intonation**

Stress is the relative emphasis or **prominence** given to a certain syllable in a word or word in a sentence. The English language uses **rising and falling intonation** to **ask questions or emphasize meaning**. When it comes to **rythm**, it's a **combination of both**.

- *Are you coming?* ↗ (rising intonation)
- *Yes, I am.* ↘ (falling intonation)

### ★ Tips for Beginners:

- ✚ Listen a lot (films, songs, videos)
- ✚ Repeat words out loud
- ✚ Practice with helpful videos like this one

**VBL :** [Syllables and Word Stress - English Pronunciation Lesson](#)

[WORD STRESS in English - What are the rules for Word Stress in English?](#)

[Pronunciation of 'th' - English In A Minute](#)

[English Pronunciation | The Letter 'A' | 9 Ways to Pronounce the Letter A](#)

[How to Pronounce all the VOWEL SOUNDS in BRITISH ENGLISH](#)



## PART II: NUMBERS

In this part of the lesson, we are going to review how to count numbers, practice and recognise a set of them.

### A- Cardinal Numbers

Cardinal numbers tell you "how many." As you can read in the tables below numbers from 0 to 20 as well as Tens and Units.

Number	Word	Phonetics
0	Zero	/ˈzɪə.rəʊ/
1	One	/wʌn/
2	Two	/tu:/
3	Three	/θri:/
4	Four	/fɔ:r/
5	Five	/faɪv/
6	Six	/sɪks/
7	Seven	/ˈsev.ən/
8	Eight	/eɪt/
9	Nine	/naɪn/
10	Ten	/ten/
11	Eleven	/ɪˈlev.ən/
12	Twelve	/twelv/
13	Thirteen	/ˌθɜ:ˈti:n/
14	Fourteen	/ˌfɔ:ˈti:n/
15	Fifteen	/ˌfɪfˈti:n/
16	Sixteen	/ˌsɪkˈsti:n/
17	Seventeen	/ˌsev.ənˈti:n/
18	Eighteen	/ˌeɪˈti:n/
19	Nineteen	/ˌnaɪnˈti:n/
20	Twenty	/ˈtwen.ti/

Number	Word
30	Thirty
40	Forty
50	Fifty
60	Sixty
70	Seventy
80	Eighty
90	Ninety
100	One hundred
1000	One thousand
100 000 000	One million
1 000 000 000	One billion
1 000 000 000 000	One trillion

#### Rules for Larger Numbers

- **21 to 99:** Use the tens word followed by a hyphen and the units word. **Example:** 21 = Twenty-one, 45 = Forty-five, 99 = Ninety-nine.
- **100 and above:** Use "one hundred" for 100, "one thousand" for 1,000, "one million" for 1,000,000, etc. **Example:** 101 = One hundred one, 200 = Two hundred, 1,000 = One thousand.

#### 📌 Note on Pronunciation:

- 13-19: Stress the **second syllable** → *fourTEEN* ;
- 30, 40, 50: Stress the **first syllable** → *THIRTy*.

**VBL :** 🎥 Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers in English: FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH...

## B- Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal numbers show the **position** or **rank** of something in a sequence. As whole, add **-th** to the end of the cardinal number (*with exceptions*).

Example: **four** → **fourth** (4th), **eleven** → **eleventh** (11th)

Number	Ordinal	Examples
1	First	She won <i>first</i> place.
2	Second	He came in <i>second</i> .
3	Third	This is my <i>third</i> visit.
4	Fourth	Today is the <i>fourth</i> of July.
5	Fifth	I live on the <i>fifth</i> floor.
10	Tenth	My birthday is on the <i>tenth</i> .
21	Twenty-first	It's the <i>twenty-first</i> century.
31	Thirty-first	December <i>thirty-first</i> .

Cardinal Number	Ordinal Number
One	First
Two	Second
Three	Third
Five	Fifth
Eight	Eighth
Nine	Ninth
Twelve	Twelfth

🔑 **Important:** For compound numbers (21, 22, 33, etc.), only the **last digit** becomes ordinal. Only the last part changes!

### 📖 Spelling Rules:

- 20 → **twentieth**;
- 30 → **thirtieth**;
- 21 → **twenty-first**;
- 42 → **Forty-second**.

## Abbreviations for Ordinal Numbers

Abbreviations are formed by adding the last two letters of the ordinal word to the number:

- **1st** (First) ;
- **2nd** (Second) ;
- **3rd** (Third) ;
- **4th** (Fourth) ;
- **21st** (Twenty-first).

## C- Numbers in Context

Below, you will find some examples of how numbers (Ordinal and Carinal) are used in every day interaction. The present edition provides for further details.

### Dates

The standard spelling of date follows this structure:

*day of the week, the ordinal number + of + month year.*

- 03/08/2026 → Sunday, the 3<sup>th</sup> of August 2025.

### Time

AM and PM are simple abbreviation of Latin phrases used to identify the time in the 12-hour clock format instead of using 24 hours.

- **AM** stands for *ante meridiem*, which translates into English as '**before midday**'.
- **PM** is *post meridiem* and means in English '**after midday**'.

### Examples:

- 1:00 → *one o'clock a.m* ;
- 2:15 → *two fifteen or a quarter past two p.m*;
- 3:30 → *half past three a.m* or *three thirty a.m*.

### Money

The currency is read first in english, then the number.

- £5 → *five pounds* ;
- \$20 → *twenty dollars* ;
- Cfa100 → *One hundred cfa* ;

### Measurements

Anytime a process to find out the *size, length, or amount* of something, it calls for measurement. There are *metric system* and *imperial one*. Both are read the same way.

- **2kg** → Two kilograms ;
- **3m** → Three meters ;
- **2 inch** , 5 pounds, 54m<sup>2</sup> → Fifty-four square meters and so on;
- **1USG** → **One US Gallon** → **Three oh eight Liters**.

## •% Fractions

For simple fractions, use the **cardinal number** for the **numerator** and the **ordinal number** for the **denominator**. If the **numerator** is **greater than 1**, the **denominator** is *pluralized*. For mixed fractions (**whole number + fraction**), use "and" between the whole number and the fraction.

Fraction	Words	Pronunciation
$\frac{1}{2}$	One half	/wʌn hæf/
$\frac{1}{3}$	One third	/wʌn θɜːd/
$\frac{1}{4}$	One quarter (or one fourth us)	/wʌn 'kwɔːtə/
$\frac{3}{4}$	Three quarters	/θriː 'kwɔːtəz/
$\frac{2}{3}$	Two thirds	/tuː θɜːdz/
$\frac{3}{5}$	Three fifths	/θriː fɪfθs/
1 $\frac{1}{2}$	One and a half	-
5 $\frac{2}{3}$	Five and two thirds	-

## % Phone number

When you spell your phone number, say each **digit separately**, not as a whole one.

**0752 418 903**: "Zero seven five two, four one eight, nine zero three"

- 0 = "zero" (or sometimes "oh" in casual speech)
- Double numbers can be said as: **55** → "double five"

## ☞ Bus number

To refer to bus number, say the number normally, like a name or code.

- Bus **12** → *Bus twelve* ;
- Bus **210** → *Bus two ten* ;
- Bus **503A** → *Bus five oh three A*.

## ✓ street, house or building number

Read them as a normal number or digit by digit for better clarity.

- **15 Main Street** → *Fifteen Main Street*;
- **206A King Road** → *Two oh six A King Road*;
- **104B** → *One oh four B* ;
- **Room or Floor 4** → *Floor four*.

## Years

### Rules:

- **Say in pairs:**  
1984 → *nineteen eighty-four*;  
2024 → *twenty twenty-four*.
- **For years ending in 00:**  
1900 → *nineteen hundred*;  
2000 → *two thousand*;  
2100 → *twenty-one hundred*.
- **For 2001-2009:**
  - 2001 → *two thousand and one (UK)*;
  - or *twenty-oh-one* (less common).

## Weeks & Months

**Week of July 15<sup>th</sup>** → the week of July fifteenth


- **Next week / Last week / This week**
- **Month:** *January, February...* → *in August, every March*

## 4. Decades

In English, the word for "*décennie*" is "*decade*".

- "**The 1980s**" = "**The eighties**" (or "**the 1980s decade**");
- "**This happened over a decade ago.**";
- "**The last decade**" (2020-2029, for example).

Figure	Say it like this
<b>1960s</b>	<i>The nineteen-sixties</i>
<b>2020s</b>	<i>The twenty-twenties</i>
<b>1990s</b>	<i>The nineties</i>

 **Important** : Add "**s**" at the end (no apostrophe!) → 1980s not 1980's



## 📅 Centuries

Cardinal Numbers are used to name centuries (e.g., 20th century for the 1900s). "The, in the, since the" is often used before the ordinal number when referring to a specific century (table).

Figure	Spoken as
<b>1500s</b>	<i>The fifteen hundreds</i>
<b>1700s</b>	<i>The seventeen hundreds</i>
<b>21st c.</b>	<i>The twenty-first century</i>

## 📅 Historical Eras

To express a **historical era** in English, you can use several common phrases and structures depending on the context. Here are the most common ways.

Figure	Say it like this
<b>300 BC</b>	<i>Three hundred B.C. (Before Christ)</i>
<b>50 AD</b>	<i>Fifty A.D. (Anno Domini or After Christ)</i>
<b>500 BCE / CE</b>	<i>Five hundred B.C.E. / C.E. (Before /Common era)</i>
<b>21st century</b>	<i>The twenty-first century</i>

**VBL/VBT:** [Numbers 1–100 – YouTube Video](#)

[How to Say Years in English](#)

[How to say the time in English](#)

[REAL ENGLISH: Talking about measurements: cm, m, km, ', ", lb, kg, g, oz, ml, cc](#)

[Telephone Numbers in English | How to say phone numbers in English | Essential English](#)

[How to read ALL NUMBERS in English - BIG NUMBERS, Decimals, Dates, Fractions, Phones, Ordinals](#)

[Jours de la semaine en anglais](#)

[Months in English | Learn English Vocabulary | Basic English | Months Pronunciation & Quiz](#)