



Native-like Accent Pronunciation Course

Introduction:

The IPA:

The International Phonetic Alphabet was created by the International Phonetic Association as a standardized way to write the sounds of spoken language. The English alphabet has 26 letters which represent 44 sounds. This means that one letter of the alphabet stands for more than one sound, and on the other hand, the same sound is represented by different letters of the alphabet.

Why do we need this?

Because English is not a phonetic language —there's not a 1:1 relationship between letters and sounds.

For example, these words: “Love”, “Cove” and “Move”:

They look the same except for the first letter. You might think they should be pronounced the same except for the first sound. But that's not the case.

‘Love’ has the UH as in BUTTER vowel. ‘Cove’ has the OH diphthong, and ‘move’ has the OO vowel. Uh, oh, oo. Love, cove, move. There are no rules to tell you which word should be pronounced which way, you just have to know. You just have to learn the pronunciation when you learn the word.

So again, we need IPA to write these different sounds so we can see that words are spelled the same, may still be pronounced differently.

There are many confusing factors for English pronunciation: First, there are **Homophones**- words that are spelled differently, but pronounced the same. For example, pear. Just one pronunciation for these two words: pear, pare. There are lots of homophones in American English. So, we need the IPA. Second, there are **Heteronyms**- words that are spelled the same, but are pronounced differently. Example: the word “Dove” which means the bird is pronounced as “Dove” exactly like the vowel in love while “Dove” the past of dive is pronounced as dove like cove.

When you write a sound, in IPA, with a symbol instead of a letter, there's no confusion.

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ɪ READ	ɪ SIT	ʊ BOOK	u: TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY	John & Sarah Free Materials 1996	
e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜ: WORD	ɔ: SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO	
æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑ: PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW	
p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

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Lesson 1

Part 1: SEAT /:i/ / SIT /I/ / SET /e/

Welcome to Lesson 1 of the Native-like Accent pronunciation Course!

Today, we're going to practice the difference between /i:

/(called long e) as in SEAT, /I/ (called short e) as in SIT, and /e/

(called eh sound) as in SET.

The secret to making the difference between these three sounds is how much you open your mouth:

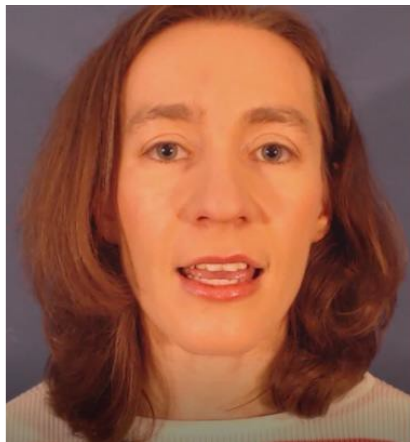
- For the sound in **SEAT**, your mouth is almost closed.
-
- For the sound in **SIT**, your mouth is a little more open.
-
- For the sound in **SET**, your mouth is even more

open.

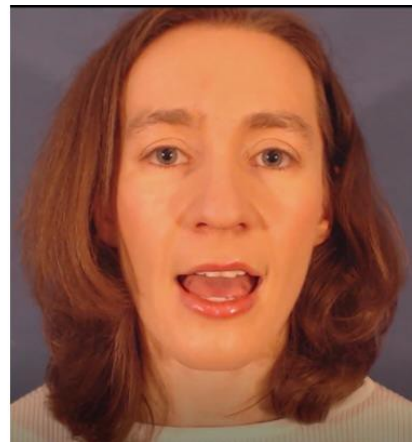
- Listen and repeat!



EE – SEAT



I – SIT



E - SET

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Let's practice each sound

individually. Common words like

SEAT:

- **easy**
- **each**
- **even**
- gr**een**
- pi**ce**
- k**ey**
- w**e**
- b**e**
- s**ee**

Notice that this sound can be spelled several different ways:

e / ea / ee / ie / ey

Common words like SIT:

- **it**
- **if**
- **is**
- li**ttle**
- bi**g**
- si**ck**
- wi**n**
- chi**ps**
- fi**nish**

Common words like SET:

- **egg**
- **extra**
- **end**



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- ten
- head
- friiend
- many
- said
- again

Notice that this sound can be spelled: e / ea / ie / a / ai

Now let's practice making the difference:

- leave / live
- heat / hit
- sheep / ship
- meet / met
- read / red
- teen / ten
- fell / fill
- mess / miss
- dead / did
- these / this

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Homework:

1) A- Record yourself pronouncing these words:

- beat / bit
- wheel / will
- seen / sin
- cheek / check
- feel / fell
- beast / best
- bitter / better
- hill / hell
- since / sense

1) B- Record yourself reading these sentences:

Focus on SEAT:

- ☐ He teaches reading to three people.
- ☐ We keep the sheep out of the heat.
- She ea doesn't believe we ea should eat

meat. Focus on SIT:

- There's a bit of chicken and fish in the kitchen.
- It's not a quick fix for the business.
- ☐ Jim lives in a big building in the middle of the

city. Focus on SET:

- ☐ Wendy said she met many men.
- ☐ My best friend Kevin checked the test.
- ☐ Don't put your wet, sweaty head on the bed.



Lesson 1

Part 2: CAME / GAME

In this part, we'll focus on the difference between **/k/ came** and **/g/game**.

Both of these sounds are made in the back of your throat. The only difference is that the C sound is unvoiced, and the G sound is voiced.

Let's practice these words with the sound in **came**:

- **c**at
- **k**ee**p**
- **c**ase
- **k**ill
- **a****c**count
- es**c**ape
- **f**a**c**t
- s**k**ip
- **c**ook**k**
- **c**a**k**e
- too**k**
- dar**k**

This sound can be spelled with **C** or **K**... but it's also included in some words with **X**. The word **explain**, for example, is pronounced **EK** – splain, and not **E** – splain. The word **excited** is similar – the correct pronunciation is **EK** – si – ted, and not **E** – si – ted. The words **taxi** and **relax** also have the “C” sound inside the letter X.

Another place this sound appears is in words spelled with **QU**, which in English, has the sound of **KW**. Be careful with words like **question** – the correct pronunciation is **KWES** – tion, and not **KES** - tion. Another example is **require** – the QU is pronounced with the same KW sound.



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Now let's practice some words with the "G" sound:

- **g**ive
- **gu**ess
- **g**one
- **gu**ide
- **a**gain
- **l**egal
- **a**ngry
- **l**u**gg**age
- **b**ag
- **d**og
- **l**eg
- **va****gue**

This sound can be spelled **g** or **gu**.

Be careful to avoid this common pronunciation error – in words that begin with GU + a vowel, the U is NOT pronounced:

- guard = **gard** (not *gward*)
- guide
- guess
- guitar

It's the same with words ending in -GUE:

- colleague
- fatigue
- morgue
- tongue
- intrigue
- synagogue
- vogue

(The only exception is the word "argue")



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The letters C and G in written English each have two pronunciations in spoken English.

- There is the “hard C” in the word “cat” – that’s the sound we’ve been studying in this lesson – and the “soft C” like in the word “city” – it sounds like an S.
- There’s the “hard G” in the word “gas” – that’s the sound we’ve been studying today – and the “soft G” like in the word “general” (we’ll study that sound later).

The general rule is that C and G are “hard” before the vowels A, O, U, or a consonant:

- cat, come, cut, class, fact
- game, go, gum, grow, glue

And C and G are “soft” before E, I, or Y:

- center, city, cycle
- general, giant, energy

Of course, there are some exceptions – as in the words **gift**, **tiger**, **gear**, and **get** – which have the “hard G” sound even though it’s followed by I or E.

Now let’s practice the difference. Listen and repeat these pairs of words:

- back / bag
- card / guard
- cave / gave
- class / glass
- coal / goal
- crate / great
- crime / grime
- cut / gut
- duck / dug
- pick / pig

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Homework:

- **1: Part 2: A- Record yourself pronouncing these words:**

1. anchor / anger
2. bucks / bugs
3. cap / gap
4. clean / glean
5. coast / ghost
6. crumble / grumble
7. lock / log

- **B- Record yourself reading these sentences:**

Focus on C:

- The **c**ook **c**almly and **c**arefully ba**k**ed the **c**arrot **c**a**k**e in the **k**itchen.
- The **c**lass **c**leared the table, **c**leaned the room, and **c**losed the door.
- The **c**rowd **s**creamed and **c**ried after the **c**ar **c**rash left the **q**ueen in **c**ritical **c**ondition.

Focus on G:

- I **g**ave the **g**irl a **g**reat **g**ift when she **g**ot a **g**ood **g**rade.
- **G**reen **g**rass **g**rew on the **g**round over the **g**raves.
- The **g**lamorous **g**olden **g**lobe **g**littered and **g**lowed in the **g**loomy light.

References:

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