

Basic 2. English sounds: symbols (IPA) to represent English vowels

Fundamental distinctions in the vowels of English:

	IPA symbols	Examples	Remarks
1	[i]	seat, beat, heat, need, believe, leave, scene	Single vowel - tense 'i'
2	[ɪ]	sit, hit, bit, it, bin, begin, give, live	Single vowel - lax 'i'
3	[ɛ]	pet, met, set, pending, send, any, many	Single vowel
4	[æ]	pat, mat, sat, pan, sand, apple, cat, land	Single vowel
5	[ʌ]	cod, cop, pop, mop, father, option, olive	Single vowel
6	[u]	pool, fool, noon, moon, cool, food, news	Single vowel - tense 'u'
7	[ʊ]	pull, full, would, should, could, wood, wool	Single vowel - lax 'u'
8	[ʌ]	cut, but, come, love, sun, son, number	Single vowel
9	[ɔ]	caught, bought, taught, law, saw	Single vowel
10	[ə]	ago, again, condition, occur, reason, happen	Single vowel
11	[eɪ]	game, name, great, mate, rate, late, gate	Double vowel
12	[aɪ]	pie, my, sigh, light, right, might	Double vowel
13	[aʊ]	cow, how, now, mountain	Double vowel
14	[oʊ]	radio, go, so, no, mow, toll, goal	Double vowel
15	[ɔɪ]	toy, boy, avoid, noise, choice, voice, oil, oyster	Double vowel
16	[ɜː]	turn, burn, herb, curl, perfect, service	vowel + 'r' when stressed
17	[ər]	baker, doctor, percent, teacher, color	vowel + 'r' when unstressed

* Important: Note that English vowels vary a lot depending on regions (dialects). We focus on General American English pronunciation spoken in Northern America (=> You can think of this as so-called "standard")

➡ Examples to show regional differences in pronouncing vowels

vowel [ɔ] 'daughter' 'coffee' 'law' 'mouse'

American English 1
American English 2
British English

(stress and pronunciation) Ca'ribbean (AE) ,Carib'bean (BE)

Canadian English pronunciation: <https://public.oed.com/how-to-use-the-oed/key-to-pronunciation/pronunciations-for-world-englishes/key-to-pronunciation-canadian-english/>

Basic 3. English sounds: symbols (IPA) to represent English consonants

Fundamental vowel distinctions:

IPA	Examples	Where to make
1 [s]	sit, basket, kiss, base, cease, basic, boss, fakes, spokesman	alveolar
2 [z]	zoo, busy, buzz, phase, amaze, zero, rose, salesman	alveolar
3 [ʃ]	shoe, nation, wish, fish, cash, finish	post-alveolar
4 [ʒ]	rouge, vision, measure, pleasure, leisure, asia	post-alveolar
5 [tʃ]	chair, witch, which, catch, match, children, China	post-alveolar
6 [dʒ]	jaw, magic, age, badge, message, judge, Jane	post-alveolar
7 [p]	pie, spy, peak, speak, apple, sharpen, stop, cap	lips
8 [b]	boy, rabbit, tub, cab	lips
9 [t]	team, steam, toy, story, tomato, cartoon, return, heat	alveolar
10 [d]	day, redeem, dose, made, mad, sad	alveolar
11 [k]	key, ski, care, scare, cake, chicken, thicken, sky, kick	velar
12 [g]	go, begin, egg, beg, gate	velar
13 [f]	fun, fine, office, leaf, if, half	labio-dental
14 [v]	van, vine, very, leave, have, of	labio-dental
15 [θ]	think, thing, bathtub, mouth, month, health, wealth	inter-dental
16 [ð]	the, father, smooth, bathe, clothe, there, worthy	inter-dental
17 [h]	hat, behind, house, (cf. herb, hour, honest, honored)	(in the mouth)
18 [m]	me, swim, seem, team	lips
19 [n]	no, run, seen, mean, sin	alveolar
20 [ŋ]	sing, playing, finger, singer, hanger (cf. changer, ranger)	velar
21 [r]	right, rate, rice, already, word, park, car, bar, here, girl, word	alveolar
22 [l]	light, late, lice, alright, feel, cool, tall, mall, milk, film, world	alveolar
23 [j]	you, yes, youth, young, yacht, huge, cute, music	palatal
24 [w]	we, away, one, won, win, weight	lips
25 [ɹ]	better, cutter, butter, water, writer, rider, leader, meter	alveolar
26 [ʔ]	kitten, bitten, beaten, mountain, captain, Manhattan, Jordan	glottis