**Inglês Técnico**

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| **Objectives:**  Exploring the Complexity of the English Language.  Introduction to Syllable Structures, Phonetics, and Phonology.  To help students identify and understand syllable structures in English words. |

EXERCÍCIOS

**Look at the dictionaries (links below) to help you answer to the questions:**

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/>

<https://www.dictionary.com/>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

**Use this link for the IPA** <https://folenglish.com/phonemic-chart> to work on the sounds through an interactive phonemic chart designed specifically for English pronunciation.

**Introduction to Syllable Structures, Phonetics, and Phonology**

Mastering a new language, especially English, involves understanding its sounds, structures, and meanings. To build a strong foundation, we start with the basics: syllable structures, phonetics, and phonology. These elements are crucial because they form the building blocks of pronunciation and help us speak clearly and accurately.

**The Rhythm of Languages: Stress-Timed vs. Syllable-Timed**

Languages have different rhythms when spoken. Some, like English, are **stress-timed**, while others, like Portuguese, are **syllable-timed**.

**Stress-timed languages (like English, German, and Dutch)** have a rhythm where some syllables are spoken quickly, while others are stretched and emphasised. This means that not all syllables take the same amount of time to pronounce. For example, in the English sentence **"I went to the market** /aɪ **ˈwɛnt** tə ðə **ˈmɑːrkɪt**/**"** the words **"I," "to," and "the"** are spoken quickly, while **"went"** and **"market"** are stressed and take more time.

**Syllable-timed languages (like Portuguese, Spanish, and French)** have a more regular rhythm, where each syllable is spoken with nearly the same duration. This makes speech sound smoother and more even. For example, in Portuguese, **"Eu fui ao mercado"** has each syllable pronounced with a steady rhythm.

This difference explains why Portuguese learners of English sometimes pronounce words more evenly and may add extra vowel sounds between consonants. Understanding this helps learners adjust their pronunciation and develop a more natural rhythm in English.

**Why Syllables Matter**

To illustrate the importance of understanding syllable structures, let’s consider the pronunciation of the words 'late' in English and 'leite' in Portuguese. While these words are almost identical phonetically, they are spelled differently and exhibit one syllable in English and two syllables in Portuguese. The tendency of Portuguese learners, across all language levels, is to split the word 'late' in English into two syllables.

This tendency reveals that Portuguese learners often rely on a vowel sound to articulate a consonant clearly. In Portuguese, consonant sounds are typically followed, or preceded, by a vowel, which helps in their pronunciation. This aspect of the Portuguese phonetic system can present a challenge when learning English, where consonants can appear in clusters without intervening vowels or at the end of words without being followed by a vowel sound.

**Basic Organisation of Sounds in Speech**

To understand how we speak, let's break down the sounds into smaller parts. This will help us see how words are made and how we can pronounce them correctly.

**Speech is Made of Syllables:**

When we speak, we say words that are made up of smaller parts called syllables.

A syllable is like a beat in a word. For example, "cake" has one syllable, and "chocolate" has two (**choc-late**) or three syllables (**choc-o-late**).

**Each Syllable Has a Vowel Sound:**

Every syllable must have one vowel sound. This is the main sound you hear in the syllable.

Sometimes a syllable has other sounds around the vowel, like consonants, but it always has at least one vowel sound. This is the core of the syllable.

* **Focus on Sounds, Not Letters:** Spelling can be misleading because some vowel letters are silent (e.g., "love" /lʌv/).

It's essential for Portuguese learners to understand and recognise the different syllable structures in English, along with the distinction between short and long vowel sounds.

**Closed Syllables:**

In closed syllables, ***a syllable ends with a consonant***, and ***the vowel sound is shortened***.

Example: In the word 'cat,' the 'a' is a short sound, as opposed to the longer 'ai' sound in 'baby.'

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| **Vowels** | **A** | **E** | **I** | **O** | **U** | **Y** |
| **Short Vowel Sounds** | **/æ/** | **/ɛ/** | **/ɪ/** | **/ɒ/** | **/ʌ/ + /ʊ/** | **/ɪ/** |
| **= Closed Syllables** | cat[kæt] | bed[bɛd] | sit[sɪt] | hot [hɒt] | but[bʌt], put[pʊt] | gym[dʒɪm] |

**Open Syllables:**

In open syllables, which end with a vowel, the vowel sound is elongated.

Example: In the word 'he,' the 'e' is pronounced as a long vowel, different from the short /e/ in the closed syllable of 'bed.'

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| **Long Vowel Sounds** | **/eɪ/** | **/iː/** | **/aɪ/** | **/oʊ/** | **/juː/ or /uː/** | **/aɪ/ or /iː/** |
| **= Open Syllables** | Baby /beɪ.biː/ | he [hiː] | I [aɪ] | No [noʊ]  Go [goʊ] | Music /ˈmjuː.zɪk/  zoo[zuː] | my[maɪ]  happy[ˈhæp.iː]  city" [ˈsɪt.iː] |

**Silent 'e' Syllables:**

In words like 'late,' the 'e' at the end is silent, but it makes the **previous vowel sound longer**.

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| **= Silent 'e' Syllables** | Cake [keɪk] | These [ðiːz] | like[laɪk] | bone[boʊn] | cute[kjuːt]  rude[ruːd] | Type[taɪp]  Style[staɪl] |

**Practice Activity**

Let's practice. Open your favourite English-English dictionary and use this link for the IPA <https://folenglish.com/phonemic-chart> to work on the sounds through an interactive phonemic chart designed specifically for English pronunciation.

Use our shopping list to practice identifying syllables and vowel sounds.

**Shopping List Words:**

1. Cornflakes

* **Syllables**: /ˈkɔːrn.fleɪks/ (2 syllables: *corn* + *flakes*)
* **Vowel sounds**: /ɔː/ (in *corn*), /eɪ/ (in *flakes*)

1. **Cake keik | 1syllable | long**
2. **Wine wain | 1syll | long**
3. **Lime laim | 1syllable | long**
4. **Chocolate tfok lat or tfok o laet | 2 or 3 syllables | short short or short long**
5. **Coffee ko fee | 1 syllable | short+long**
6. **Snacks snak | 1 syllab | short**
7. **Drinks dringk | 1 short | 1sylla**
8. **Almonds ah mond**
9. **Chorizo 3 syllab | short**
10. **Vegetables 3 sylla |**

**Word Sound Match-Up Activity**

Your goal is to match special codes (sounds written in IPA) with the right English words.

Click on this link for the IPA <https://folenglish.com/phonemic-chart>

There's no rush. Take your time to listen in your head and make your best guess. This is all about exploring sounds and patterns in English. Have fun with it!

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| /ˈrɪð.m̩/ | rhythm | /kriˈeɪ.ʃən/ |  |
| /pʊə/ (UK) or /pʊr/ (US) | poor | /ˌiː.kəˈnɒm.ɪk/ (UK) or /ˌɛk.əˈnɑː.mɪk/ (US) |  |
| /ˈaʊər/ (2 words) |  | /dɪˈsɪ.ʒən/ |  |
| /aɪ/ (2 words) |  | /ˌɪn.fərˈmeɪ.ʃən/ |  |
| /wɪtʃ/ (2 words) |  | /ʌnˈhæp.i.nəs/ |  |
| /θriː/ |  | /ˈdeɪn.dʒər.əs.li/ or /ˈdan.dʒər.əs.li/ |  |
| /hænd/ |  | / tiː.tʃɪŋ/ |  |
| /striːt/ |  | /ˈtʃiː.tɪŋ/ |  |
| /strɪkt/ |  | /ˈhəʊ.lɪ/ |  |
| /dʒʌmp/ |  | /ˈhɒ.lɪ/ |  |
| /ˈwɒfəl/ |  | /ˈbɛ.li/ |  |
| /ˈkɛtəl/ |  | /bɪ.loʊ/ |  |
| /kætəl/ |  | /ðɪs/ |  |
| /ˈkæn.dəl̩/ |  | /ðiːz/ |  |
| /kæn/ |  | /ˈæŋ.ɡri/ |  |
| /keɪn/ |  | /ˈhʌŋ.ɡri/ |  |

**Office Small-Talk Dialogue with Tone Units**

**English Has a Rhythm!**

English is a **stress-timed** language. This means we speak with a **rhythm**, like a song with a beat!  
Some words are **stressed** (strong beats), and other words are **unstressed** (weak beats).

Imagine tapping your hand on a table to a rhythm:  
**STRONG - weak - weak - STRONG - weak...**

English moves fast, but it has a clear rhythm.

Practicing tone units will make you sound more natural and fluent!

**What Happens in Fast, Natural Speech?**

To keep the rhythm:  
- We **reduce** small, less important sounds (unstressed words like *the*, *to*, *and*).  
- We **speed up** between stressed words.  
- We **join** words together (connected speech), or sometimes we **drop** sounds.

**Why Is This Important?**

* It helps you **sound natural** when you speak English.
* It makes it **easier** to understand **native speakers**.
* It gives your speech **good rhythm** and **clear meaning**.

**What Are Tone Units?**

When we speak, we **don’t** say all the words the same way.  
We break them into **small groups** of words called **tone units**.  
Each **tone unit** has **one important word** that is **stressed** (the focus word).

Tone units help:

* Show **who, what, where, when, how, why**
* Make your speech **clear**
* Keep a **natural rhythm**

1. Read the small-talk dialogue below.
2. Use the [IPA transcription tool](https://tophonetics.com/) to convert the dialogue into phonetic transcription.
3. Break the sentences into ***natural tone units*** by identifying logical chunks (e.g., **who, what, where, when, how, why**)
4. Practice reading the dialogue aloud in pairs, focusing on:

* **Tone units** (natural phrasing and rhythm).
* **Stress and intonation** in key parts of the dialogue.

**Key Notes on Tone Units**

**Example Analysis:**

***Alex:*** *Good morning, Sarah.*

***/****ɡʊd* ***ˈmɔː.nɪŋ | ˈsæ.rə/*****First tone unit:** The main focus is "**morning**" (what).

**Second tone unit:** The person "**Sarah**" (who) is a natural break.

***Alex:*** *How was the team meeting yesterday?*

***/****haʊ wəz ðə* ***ˈtiːm ˈmiː.tɪŋ | ˈjɛs.tə.deɪ/***

**First tone unit:** The main focus is "**team meeting**" (who/what).

**Second tone unit:** The time "**yesterday**" (when) is a natural break.

**Chunk Size:**

Divide sentences into chunks that correspond to natural pauses or shifts in focus.

Keep tone units manageable; avoid placing too much in one unit.

Within each tone unit, one word typically receives the main stress (e.g., **Sarah**, **morning**, **meeting**, **Monday**).

**Intonation:**

Rising intonation is used for questions or to indicate incomplete thoughts.

Falling intonation is used for statements or finality.

**Dialogue:**

**Alex:** Good morning, Sarah. How was the team meeting yesterday?

***/****ɡʊd* ***ˈmɔː.nɪŋ | ˈsæ.rə/. /****haʊ wəz / ðə* ***ˈtiːm ˈmiː.tɪŋ | ˈjɛs.tə.deɪ/***

**Sarah:** Morning, Alex. It went well, but we need to adjust the project deadlines.

**Alex:** Why do we need to change them?

**Sarah:** Some tasks are taking longer than planned, especially in the marketing department.

**Alex:** I see. How can we make sure this doesn’t happen again?

**Sarah:** I think we should schedule weekly check-ins with the teams to track progress.

**Alex:** That sounds like a good idea. When do you want to start these check-ins?

**Sarah:** Let’s start next Monday. It will give everyone time to prepare.