Running speech (10 marks)

The modern International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) dates back to 1888, when the International Phonetic Association created a phonetic alphabet designed so that it would apply in the same way to all languages.

The examples in 1-20 below use the IPA to transcribe short (and rather ordinary) utterances in English as they might sometimes be produced in running speech. In these examples the speaker has a Southern Standard British accent, but the accent itself is not relevant to the task.

1. [hiseggʊdiːvnɪŋtuːmi]
2. [aɪwʊggəʊ]
3. [aɪwʊd̪θɪŋksəʊ]
4. [ɪtwəzəgʊbmɔːnɪŋtəgəʊ]
5. [aɪsɔːwʌmbaɪk]
6. [aɪwʊdəvθɔːtsəʊ]
7. [aɪwʊdntel]
8. [aɪlʌvkeɪkəmbɹed]
9. [aɪkɑːŋkgəʊ]
10. [ɔːlgʊd̪θɪŋzkʌmtuənend]
11. [ɪtwʊgkʌmtuənend]
12. [hihədwʌn̪θɔːtəʊnli]
13. [aɪpʊt̪ðəbɹedɪn̪ðəbɹebbɪn]
14. [hisɔːwʌŋkɑːðeə]
15. [aɪkɑːn̪θɪŋkwaɪ]
16. [ðəsekəndaɪsɔːðəmðeə]
17. [aɪkɑːmbaɪkeɪkðeə]
18. [aɪlʌvmɪŋkkeɪkəndekstɹəstɹɒŋmɪns]
19. [aɪlʌvbɹedntəʊst]
20. [hisɔːðəsekəmbaɪk]

You'll notice the following features of these transcriptions:

- The square brackets indicate that the symbols are part of IPA, not ordinary spellings.
- They don't show boundaries between words.
- They show pronunciation, rather than spelling. For example, the [θ] symbol represents the sound at the beginning of the word *thin*, which is written in normal spelling with the letter sequence ‘th’.
- IPA symbols may distinguish more sounds than ordinary spelling does. For instance, the three symbols [n] [n̪] and [ŋ] represent three different sounds. The differences may not be very great, however, and you may not be used to thinking of them as different sounds.

Sometimes the way we pronounce words in running (normal) speech is different from the way we produce them on their own. For example, although the word *good* is normally pronounced [gʊd], in utterance 4 it is pronounced [gʊb] and in utterance 10 [gʊd̪]. The changes which may happen are not random, but are determined by the nature of the sound and its context.

Q4.1. Utterances 6 and 8 include the words *would* and *bread* respectively. Give the transcriptions of these two words as they appear in these two utterances.

Q4.2. Find three other examples of *bread* and four other examples of *would*. Give their transcriptions followed by the utterance numbers; for instance, for the word [gʊb] in utterance 4, you would write: [gʊb] (4)

Q4.3. The word *one* is pronounced by this speaker as [wʌn] when said on its own. Find the three examples of this word in the data above and give the transcriptions and utterance numbers as in Q4.2.

Q4.4. The following words appear at least twice in the data above:

a. second
b. mint (or mints)
c. can't
d. and

Find two instances of each of these words and identify them as in Q4.2.
For each word, also transcribe the word as it would be said by this speaker on its own.

Q4.5. What do you think the following two phrases are? Write them in ordinary spelling.
a. [bɹɛbmbʌtə]
b. [aɪwʊgŋkeə]

4.1.	
4.2. bread:	
would:	
4.3.	
4.4. a.	**on its own:**
b.	**on its own:**
c.	**on its own:**
d.	**on its own:**
4.5. a.	
b.	

Running speech (10 marks, 32 points)

Assigning points:

• 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3: 1 point for each form (total = 12) Both exact transcription and utterance number must be included and correct to receive each point. No partial credit. But ignore

- minor inconsistencies in transcription e.g. ɪ sometimes wrongly written (so long as sometimes it's right).
- irrelevant capital letters, e.g. B for b.
- incorrect extra entries (i.e. only count correct entries, don't deduct for incorrect ones).

• 4.4 a-d: 1 point for each form (plus correct utterance number) from the data, plus 2 points for each form on its own (total: 16). No partial credit.

• 4.5: 2 points for each of a and b if exactly correct (total: 4). 1 point if just one word is wrong.

4.1. wʊd	bɹed
4.2. bread: bɹed (13) bɹed (19) bɹeb (13) [Don't accept wrong segmentation, e.g. bɹebb]	
would: wʊg (2) wʊḏ (3) wʊd (7) wʊg (11) [Don't accept wrong segmentation, e.g. wʊgg]	
4.3. wʌm (5)	wʌn̪ (12)
wʌŋ (14)	
4.4. a. [sekənd] (16) [sekəm] (20)	**on its own:** [sekənd]
b. [mɪŋk] (18) [mɪn] (or [mɪns]) (18)	**on its own:** [mɪnt] or [mɪns]
c. two of: [kɑːŋk] (9) [kɑːn̪] (15) [kɑːm] (17)	**on its own:** [kɑːnt]
d. two of: [əm] (8) [ənd] (18) [n̩] (19)	**on its own:** [ænd] or [and] or [ənd]
4.5. a. bread and butter (or: bread in butter)	
b. I wouldn't care	

Comment

There are two challenges in this set of data: firstly, to identify some unfamiliar symbols, and secondly, to work out how some of the sounds are changing in particular contexts.

On the first, many of the symbols will be the same as the letters we use in normal spelling: it is not unreasonable to guess that, for example, the symbol **k** corresponds to the letter *k*. It will of course be used whenever this sound occurs, whether it is spelt with a letter *k* or another letter, such as *c*: so *cake* is pronounced [keɪk].

There are, however, a number of unfamiliar symbols: for example, **ŋ**, which denotes a sound similar to **n** but produced with the back of the tongue against the soft palate. It is the consonant which is produced before the [k] in *think*: compare it to the [n] at the end of the word *thin*.

There are a number of symbols used in the data which involve diacritics below the main symbol. So the small 'bridge' under **d** in number 3 (**ḏ**) indicates the sound is a dental sound: it is produced with the tongue touching the back of the teeth, which is a little further forward than it is normally produced.

We could add more symbols to give a more detailed description of the pronounciation, but the symbols are kept to a minimum here.

The second aspect to the question is to work out the changes which occur to some of the words. The changes focussed on in this data are examples of the assimilation of the place of articulation: the exact position of the tongue in the mouth when producing a sound. They affect a [t] [d] or [n], and occur when these consonants are at the end of a word in anticipation of the following sound.

So the word *would* is pronounced with a final [d] in, for example, utterance 6; but this might change to a [g] if the following word begins either with a [g] (as in utterance 2: *would go*), or with a [k] (as in 11 *would come*). They have changed from an alveolar place of articulation (where the tongue touches the ridge behind the teeth) to a velar place of articulation (where the tongue touches the soft palate further back in the mouth). Or a [d] might change to a [b] before an [m], for example (as in *good morning* in utterance 4), or to a [d̪] before [θ] (*would think* in 3).

This affects sequences of these consonants also. So in number 9 the [nt] sequence at the end of *can't* has changed to a [ŋk] sequence because of the [g] at the start of *go*.

Students are not asked for an explanation but they might start to see a pattern. This will help in identifying the more difficult forms in 4.4 and identifying the utterances in 4.5.

These are more difficult because they involve other changes which happen in running speech. One of these is the frequent omission of a consonant in a sequence of consonants. So in 18 the [t] of *mints* is omitted, and in 15 the [t] in *can't think* has been omitted. This doesn't have to happen: so in 9 (*can't go*) it is still there, although it shows up as a [k].

Another change that often happens is that a vowel may be omitted. So in the utterance 19 (*bread and toast*), the vowel of the word *and* has been omitted (as well as the [d]).
In such cases, a sequence of consonants is formed, and both may assimilate their place of articulation to a following consonant, as in question 4.5.a: *bread and butter* [brebm̩bʌtə].
(Assimilation in consonant sequences including a nasal can be different in other contexts, but this is not explored in the current set of data)

It is very important to remember when considering all these examples that there is a lot of variation in speech. So these changes may occur on one occasion and may not on another. But they are much more common than often thought, since both speakers and listeners are usually unaware that they are making these changes. They happen a lot in fairly formal speaking contexts as well as conversational speech. They are rule-governed, as described above: they apply to particular sounds in particular contexts: they are not just random changes.

Normal orthographic versions of the utterances:

1.	[hiseggʊdiːvnɪŋtuːmi]	He said "Good evening" to me.
2.	[aɪwʊggəʊ]	I would go.
3.	[aɪwʊd̪θɪŋksəʊ]	I would think so.
4.	[ɪtwəzəgʊbmɔːnɪŋtəgəʊ]	It was a good morning to go.

5.	[aɪsɔːwʌmbaɪk]	I saw one bike.
6.	[aɪwʊdəvθɔːtsəʊ]	I would have thought so.
7.	[aɪwʊdn̩tel]	I wouldn't tell.
8.	[aɪlʌvkeɪkəmbɹed]	I love cake and bread.
9.	[aɪkɑːŋkgəʊ]	I can't go.
10.	[ɔːlgʊd̥θɪŋzkʌmtuənend]	All good things come to an end.
11.	[ɪtwʊgkʌmtuənend]	It would come to an end.
12.	[hihədwʌn̥θɔːtəʊnli]	He had one thought only.
13.	[aɪpʊt̥ðəbɹedɪn̥ðəbɹebbɪn]	I put the bread in the breadbin.
14.	[hisɔːwʌŋkɑːðeə]	He saw one car there.
15.	[aɪkɑːn̥θɪŋkwaɪ]	I can't think why.
16.	[ðəsekəndaɪsɔːðəmðeə]	The second I saw them there….
17.	[aɪkɑːmbaɪkeɪkðeə]	I can't buy cake there.
18.	[aɪlʌvmɪŋkkeɪkəndekstɹəstɹɒŋmɪns]	I love mint cake and extra strong mints.
19.	[aɪlʌvbɹedn̩təʊst]	I love bread and toast.
20.	[hisɔːðəsekəmbaɪk]	He saw the second bike.