

My birthday's on Thursday

/ɜː/

A

How to make the sound /ɜː/



- /ɜː/ is a long sound. Look at the diagram. Listen and say the sound. To make this sound, your mouth and your tongue should be very relaxed. Target sound: /ɜː/

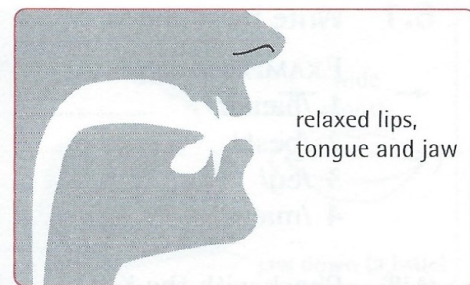


Note: /ɜː/ is a sound English speakers often make when they aren't sure what to say, and we often write it 'er'. Listen.



A: What date is it today?

B: Er, I think it's the tenth.



B

Sound and spelling



- /ɜː/ is spelled **ir**, **or**, **ur**, **our**, **ear** or **er**. Listen and say these words.

ir	bird	first	birthday	circle	thirty
or	word	work	world	worse	worst
ur	turn	Thursday			
our	journey				
ear	early	earth	heard	learn	
er	service	Germany	prefer	dessert	weren't verb university



Note: The words *her*, *hers* and *were* are often pronounced with /ɜː/. (See Units 38 and 40.)



- Now listen and say these sentences.



My birthday's on Thursday the thirty-first and hers is a week later.

- 1 My birthday's on Thursday the thirty-first, and hers is a week later.
- 2 When would you prefer, Tuesday or Thursday?
- 3 That was the worst journey in the world!
- 4 Have you ever heard this word?
- 5 A: The cakes weren't very good.
B: I thought they were.
- 6 She went to university to learn German.



Notice that there's always an **r** in the spelling of /ɜː/. Most Americans, Scots and Irish, and some other English speakers pronounce these **rs** (see Unit 22). Listen.

- 1 My birthday's on Thursday the thirty-first, and hers is a week later.
- 2 When would you prefer, Tuesday or Thursday?
- 3 That was the worst journey in the world!
- 4 Have you ever heard this word?
- 5 A: The cakes weren't very good.
B: I thought they were.
- 6 She went to university to learn German.

Important
for listening

Exercises

7.1 Listen and put the words in the correct groups.

A44

beard ear chair church curtains dirty door floor four girl horse
large March near nurse pair parked purse shirt shorts stars surfer
third warm wearing

words with /ɜ:/

- 1 church
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

words with /ɔ:/

- 1 door
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

words with /ɑ:/

- 1 car
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

words with other sounds

- 1 beard
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

7.2 Look at the picture and complete the sentences, using the words from Exercise 7.1.

- 1 The nurse is sitting on a next to the
- 2 The boy's a of and a
- 3 There's a man with a standing the
- 4 The girl's is on the next to the bed.
- 5 It's in the room.
- 6 The date is the of
- 7 There's a picture of a, and a picture of
- 8 There are flowers on the
- 9 Through the windows, you can see a, with a outside. There are some in the sky.



A45

Listen to check your answers. Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

7.3 Listen and write the numbers you hear.

A46

EXAMPLE 42

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 |
| 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 |

Check with the Key. Then listen again and repeat.

7.4 Listen and circle the word you hear. Check with the Key. If you find any of these difficult, go to Section E3 *Sound pairs* for further practice.

A47

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 <i>shirts / shorts</i> (⇒ sound pair 14) | 3 <i>bird / beard</i> (⇒ sound pair 20) |
| 2 <i>first / fast</i> (⇒ sound pair 19) | 4 <i>heard / head</i> (⇒ sound pair 17) |